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Goodhew, D.

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HISTORY WORKSHOP

STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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AUTHOR: D. Goodhew

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AFRICANA

In seeking an understanding of South Africa's past which takes account of the importance of those at the base of society, recent historians have provided remarkable insights by examining those previously dismissed as criminals. Whilst recognising the deeply anti-social behaviour of such people, researchers have pointed at the role such groups played in offering embryonic resistance to a racist, authoritarian state.[1] Such insights can, perhaps, be extended by exploring the impact of crime on a single black area, the efforts made by residents to police their townships and how such efforts related to wider political activity. The Western Areas of Johannesburg, and Sophiatown in particular, was famous for its gangs and gangsters and for its radical politics, especially in the 1950s. As such it makes an appropriate focus such a study. The subject can be seen as falling roughly into three parts: namely, the nature of criminal activity, the role of the South African Police (S.A.P.) and the actions of the residents themselves.

The Western Areas of Johannesburg comprised three townships: the freehold townships of Sophiatown and Newclare and, sandwiched between them, the municipal location Western Native Township (W.N.T.). The freehold areas came into being in 1905 and 1912 respectively, followed by W.N.T. in 1919. Despite an early preponderance of Europeans in Sophiatown and Coloureds in Newclare, the district was predominantly African in character by the 1930s. The rate of population increase, already rapid in the 1920s, was to grow even quicker in the following two decades, to the extent that in the 1940s the number of residents in the area more than doubled.

If the number of residents was constantly changing, the standard of living was both static and low. From the 1930s to the 1950s most adult males worked for a wide variety of small concerns in central Johannesburg whilst most women supplimented such wages by taking in washing, beer brewing and domestic service. There were, however, significant differences between the three townships and within them. The municipal control of W.N.T. meant that such practices as beer brewing were more difficult within its confines, whilst the population explosion of the 1930s and 40s was less pronounced there. Such control may have meant less freedom but it offered, in the shape of the location's Advisory Board, a channel of communication with the local and central state when the freehold townships had none. Moreover, both W.N.T. and Sophiatown had a markedly higher number of schools and churches than Newclare. The latter was further divided by the

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[1] C.van Onselen Studies of the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand (2 vols.) (London 1982) pp.171-202; T.Lodge Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 (London 1983) pp.100-102; D.Coplan In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black Music and Theatre (London 1985) pp.61-2; P.Bonner 'Family, Crime and Political Consciousness on the East Rand', Journal of Southern African Studies, 14, 3, 1988; C.Glaser 'Students, Tsotsis and the Congress Youth League: Youth Organisation on the Rand in the 1940s and 1950s', Perspectives in Education, 10, 2, 1988-9.

presence of a cohesive coloured community and, at the opposite end of the spectrum of respectability, a large concerntration of Sotho women brewers to whom migrant workers gravitated at weekends. In such conditions violent crime was only to be expected but its pattern and the nature of residents' responses to it were likely to vary considerably.

Several sources point to the comparative lack of crime in the Western Areas in the mid-1920s.[2] Instead it was the slumyards of central Johannesburg which were renowned for being crime-ridden at this time.[3] The late 1920s and early 1930s saw increased concern over violence in the Western Areas,[4] yet officials could still refer to W.N.T. as a 'model' location as late as 1930-1.[5] Therafter criminality seems to have increased markedly,[6] but it was only in the middle of the decade that the Western Areas became noted for crime, particularly violence and theft.[7]

With crime came constraints on living which characterised the area until its removal. It became extremely dangerous to venture outside after dark, especially at weekends, with societies and churches having to avoid meeting at such times to prevent injury to their members.[8] The criminals were most often young, frequently working in small groups or gangs.[9]

From 1937 onwards the 'crime wave' so often proclaimed in the white press seems to have become a reality in the Western Areas

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[2] Star, 7 January 1924; TAB GNLB 302:383/18 Proposed Court of Special Justice of the Peace, Newlands Secretary for Justice to Secretary of Native Affairs, 6 October 1925; CAD JUS 539:8266/29 Establishment of a Police Post at Newclare and Newlands F.M.Fulton, District Commandant S.A.P., to Secretary, Coloured Women of Newclare, 7 April 1926.

[3] Rand Daily Mail, 25 April 1927.

[4] Rand Daily Mail, 14 May 1925; Native Economic Commission 1930-2 Minutes of Evidence (N.E.C.) S.Mtoba, W.N.T. Advisory Board, p.7942, 15 May 1931.

[5] Rand Daily Mail, 27 March and 21 July 1930.

[6] CAD JUS 585:474/32 Johannesburg: Lawlessness of Natives F.Glen Leary, Additional Magistrate Johannesburg to The Magistrate, Johannesburg, 9 January 1932; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 26 November 1932, 29 April 1933 and 15 and 22 April 1934.

[7] CAD NTS 5308:51/313E(3) Johannesburg: Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare D.N.L. to Secretary of Native Affairs, 3 November 1934; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11 November 1934.

[8] Rand Daily Mail, 30 March 1935.

[9] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11 November 1934: Bantu World, 16 October 1937.

and across black Johannesburg.[10] Early in 1937 a headline in the Bantu World proclaimed that 'The Knife Is Finishing The Race,'[11] with the Western Areas in general noted as a place where such crime was concentrated.[12] In February alone over 400 victims of knife attacks from across the city where admitted to the Non-European hospital, 21 of whom subsequently died[13] The Bantu World began printing lists of each weekend's casualties[14] and the last years of the decade showed no easing of this trend.[15]

Africans in Johannesburg in the 1930s might well have looked askance at the idea of a later researcher seeking to explore the complexities of their relations with the police, for the matter was, to a degree, very simple. Africans consistently expressed profound mistrust of the police because of the pass and liquor laws and because of the brutal methods employed in their enforcement.[16] This was borne out by the complaints by whites of police brutality towards blacks which peppered Johannewburg's daily newspapers and the occasional convictions of policemen for assault.[17] However, any examination of policing is badly hampered by the difficulty of drawing any general conclusions from the welter of individual accusations, countered almost invariably by denials by the police. Yet away from the glare of publicity, policemen and officials were more candid. Such evidence provides the surest guide to the reality of the policing of black Johannesburg.

Reports of policing in general, and with regard to the Western

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[10] Bantu World, 23 January 1937; Star, 29 January 1937; Rand Daily Mail, 1937; Star, 23 February and 15 March 1937; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 3 April 1937; Bantu World, 28 August, 18 September, 16 October, 6 and 27 November and 25 December 1937.

[11] Bantu World, 23 January 1937.

[12] Star, 29 January 1937; Bantu World, 28 August and 16 October 1937; Johannesburg City Council Minutes, 620th Meeting, 23 November 1937.

[13] Star, 15 March 1937.

[14] Bantu World, 16 October 1937 et seq..

[15] Bantu World, 26 March 1938; Star, 21 May 1938; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 13 May 1939; CPSA AD1433/Cj3.4(3) Johannesburg Coloured-European Joint Council Minutes minutes of executive, 24 November 1939.

[16] See for instance: Umteteli Wa Bantu, 12 April 1930, Bantu World, 14 January 1933; CPSA AD843/B30.1 Rheinallt-Jones papers E.W.Lowe, Native Commissioner Johannesburg, to District Commandant S.A.P., Johannesburg, 7 February 1936.

[17] See for instance: Star, 8 September 1932 and 28 August 1934; Rand Daily Mail, 10 April 1934 and 7 May 1938.

Areas in particular, show that most of the cases dealt with by the police involved offences concerning passes and liquor which were perceived as crimes by the government but not by the black population.[18] This in turn was compounded by the extreme inflexibility with which such laws were enforced.[19] The following comment of the policeman in charge of Prospect Township may be taken as being true of the Western Areas, especially as the tempo of liquor raiding quickened towards the end of the 1930s.

> Q: Are you constantly searching for this liquor?
> A: That is about all we do down there - search for liquor. Of course we don't miss many cases when we come to notice anything else.[20]

Even supposing that such laws had been enforced with a degree of sensitivity and tact, it was inevitable that deep resentment would be generated: assaults on the police were very common.[21] Moreover, given the amount of time devoted to what could barely be considered crimes at all, genuine offences were badly neglected.[22]

If the policing of black Johannesburg was likely to be deeply disliked by those being policed, the behaviour of the police did much to encourage such unpopularity. African residents constantly complained of their harsh behaviour and frequent brutality - facts which were admitted by policemen, officials and liberal whites alike.[23] The immense scope for arresting

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[18] Native Economic Commission Report, 1930-2, pp.112-3; TAB GNLB 401:55/1 Native Unrest Deputy Commissioner S.A.P. Witwatersrand to Commissioner S.A.P., 2 April 1932; Umsebenzi, 4 May 1935; R.E.Phillips The Bantu in the City (Lovedale 1938) p.177.

[19] CAD NTS 9263:32/371(1) Johannesburg Joint Council of Africans and Europeans Memorandum by Johannesburg Joint Council, October 1931; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.18 10 December 1936, Det. Const. Kietzmann p.1260 , Sgt. Van Der Westhuizen p.1290, vol.90 29 April 1937 Fr.R.Raynes p.7682.

[20] CAD K118 Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Commission vol. 13, 26 June 1933, Sgt.T.R.Tyler.

[21] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.14 4 December 1936 Lt.Col.Spence p.921, vol.19 11 December 1936 Sgt.Van Der Westhuizen p.1321.

[22] Ibid. vol.90 29 April 1937 Fr.R.Raynes p.7682 and vol.94 4 May 1937 Det. Head Const. O'Connor p.8139.

[23] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 9 January and 14 October 1933; CPSA AD843/B24.2 Rheinallt-Jones Papers Johannesburg Joint Council to Minister of Justice, 2 December 1933; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.17 9 December 1936 G.Ballenden, manager of N.A.D., Johannesburg pp.1162-3, vol.18 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Kietzmann pp.1259-60, vol.19 11 December 1936 E.W.Wilkins Native

Africans, coupled with a court system so stretched that only a few minutes could ever be devoted to any one case, ensured that there was little likelihood of complaints of assault or wrongful arrest being heard.[24] Policemen lied habitually about such abuses[25] and whilst the 'Opperman-Cilliers case' laid bare widespread corruption between police and european liquor dealers,[26] corruption on a less spectacular scale was often practised on Johannesburg's black population.[27]

Technology further exacerbated this situation with the introduction in 1933 of motorised patrols, soon dubbed 'pick-up vans'. Such patrols offered a number of advantages for the police, conserving staff during a time of shortage, allowing rapid action, alleviating the problem of one policeman being caught alone and allowing a rapid getaway in a difficult situation.[28] However the vans also magnified the opportunities for abuses, provoking much protest and a number of attacks on the vans themselves.[29] Chief amongst the abuses was the largely indiscriminate choice of those who were 'picked up', ensuring that the appearance of the van was enough to put any nearby African to flight. Previously mentioned abuses such as assault

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Commissioner Johannesburg pp.1369-72, vol.89 28 April 1937 J.Hope Superintendent Diepkloof Reformitory p.7648 and Judas ex-African constable p.7656.

[24] CAD NTS 7670:86/332/1 Native Unrest, Police Reports,Witwatersrand Deputy Commissioner S.A.P. Witwatersrand to Commissioner S.A.P., 21 December 1936; CPSA AD843/B24.2 Rheinallt-Jones papers Draft memorandum by Johannesburg Joint Council for Police commission, c.1936-7; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.17 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Kietzmann p.1260, vol.19 11 December 1936 E.W.Wilkins Native Commissioner Johannesburg p.1381-2.

[25] CPSA AD843/B24.2 Rheinallt-Jones papers Johannesburg Joint Council to Minister of Justice, 2 December 1933; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.21 15 December 1936 Mr.Lawrence, Magistrate in Johannesburg 1922-33 p.1524-5; vol.91 30 April 1937 Johannesburg Joint Council pp.7849 and 7855, vol.96 7 May 1937 A.A.Walshe pp.8315-23.

[26] Star, 8 April 1936; Rand Daily Mail, 5 December 1936; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.85 22 April 1937 evidence of various former illcit liquor dealers pp.7038-7142.

[27] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.90 29 April 1937 Fr.R.Raynes p.7687, vol.91 30 April 1937 Johannesburg Joint Council p.7864.

[28] Ibid. vol.91 30 April 1937 A.F.Furness Assistant Surveyor of Excise Johannesburg p.7777, vol.93 3 May 1937 Det. Head Const. Mandy pp.7958-9 and Const. Bates p.7992.

[29] See for instance: Umsebenzi, 6 January 1934; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 5 May 1934; Rand Daily Mail, 20 January 1938.

and petty corruption were thus given much greater scope by the advent of the 'pick-up'.[30]

Alongside the technology employed by the police, the background of the recruits had a pronounced impact on their relations with black people. By the early 1930s, at least, the ignorant, young, brutal, Afrikaner policeman had become something of a cliché amongst black Johannesburgers. Even the studiously moderate Umteteli Wa Bantu castigated the police for 'unintelligence', labelling them 'mental defectives...dull-witted and prejudice-ridden inepts'.[31] That most policemen in Johannesburg in the 1930s were young Afrikaners from the countryside with a pronounced sense of the inferiority of black people does seem to have been the case.[32] In no little measure this was the result of their lack of experience. Knowing little of policing or of Johannesburg life and having a poor command of English they were badly prepared for their work.[33] Police pay was poor in comparison to that of other white workers and fell further behind as the decade progressed, so much so that by 1937 there was serious consideration of a strike.[34] White men who were brought up in Johannesburg and were better adapted to the local labour market, viewed policing as a second-rate occupation.[35] Likewise policemen lost no opportunity of changing to better-paid work, leading to a very high turnover and leaving most policemen with little experience.[36] The police force was drawn almost entirely from Afrikaners, a self-perpetuating quality

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[30] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.16 8 December 1936 Det. Const. Boy p.1142, vol.17 9 December 1936 G.Ballenden pp.1167-8 and Head Const. Brittan pp.1198-1200, vol.18 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Kietzmann pp.1259-60 and Sgt.Van Der Westhuizen p.1280a, vol.90 29 April 1937 Fr.S.Carter p.7690, vol.91 30 April 1937 Johannesburg Joint Council pp.7862-3.

[31] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 12 April and 11 October 1930. See also: Umsebenzi, 19 February 1932 and Bantu World, 7 March 1934.

[32] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.17 9 December 1936 G.Ballenden p.1162-3, vol.18 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Kietzmann p.1259.

[33] Ibid. vol.14 4 December 1936 Lt.Col.Spence p.924, and Major Long p.979, vol.17 9 December 1936 Head Const. Brittan p.1192-4 and 1200-01, vol.18 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Kietzmann p.1257-8, vol.19 11 December 1936 E.W.Wilkins Native Commissioner Johannesburg p.1381.

[34] Rand Daily Mail, 31 March 1937.

[35] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.14 4 December 1936 Lt.Col.Spence p.927.

[36] Ibid. vol.14 4 December 1936 Major Long p.980. 'At the present time we are training men for the mines and the municipal service.'

since English-speakers became reluctant to join through fear of isolation.[37] Despite attempts to raise the educational standard of recruits, it remained at Standard Six, however a number of recruits were, according to the Native Commissioner of Johannesburg, of an 'inferior type', being unable even to read passes.[38] Moreover, despite the extra pay offered to those with some fluency in an African language, very few policemen had such a skill, further complicating dealings with Africans.[39]

One result of such trends within police recruitment was that many of the white English-speaking Johannesburg community showed marked condescension and even hostility towards the mostly Afrikaner police.[40] Consequently the disinterest shown by the police towards the concern of English-speaking newspapers, politicians and clerics over police treatment of Africans may well have had as much to do with English-Afrikaner tension as with police disdain for Africans in itself. A recent study on the rural Transvaal has indicated how extreme racial intolerance on an ideological level might be combined with much intimacy in day-to-day relations,[41] yet it would seem that the extreme racial codes of the Afrikaner rural hinterland were activated amongst those who migrated to Johannesburg to join the police force.[42] In addition, friction and mutual incomprehension was often the result of the police demanding that Africans speak to them in Afrikaans.[43] Thus the cliche of the young, brutal and ignorant Afrikaner policeman had some basis in fact. A wide variety of factors intersected to ensure that the white police had little experience, limited education and were drawn from the poorer section of the white population - who were mostly Afrikaners.

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[37] Ibid. vol.18 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Kietzmann p.1258.

[38] Ibid. vol.19 11 December 1936 E.W.Wilkins p.1381, vol.21 15 December 1936 Col.Loftus p.1487; Bantu World, 7 April 1934.

[39] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.14 4 December 1936 Lt.Col.Spence p.929.

[40] Ibid. vol.17 9 December 1936 Head Const. Brittan pp.1192 and 1194.

[41] C.van Onselen 'Race and Class in the South African Countryside: Cultural Osmosis and Social Relations in the Sharecropping Economy of the South Western Transvaal, 1900-1950' (African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand seminar paper, 1 August 1988).

[42] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.17 9 December 1936 G.Ballenden pp.1162-3 and Head Const. Brittan p.1200, vol.18 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Kietzmann p.1259, vol.90 29 April 1937 Alpheus Dlamini p.7764.

[43] Ibid. vol.90 29 April 1937 Fr.R.Raynes p.7685, vol.91 30 April 1937 Johannesburg Joint Council p.7866.

These factors combined with work whose nature encouraged confrontation and the deployment of motorised patrols to ensure that relations between the police and the policed could hardly be worse.

One result of such developements was that officials expressed a distinct preference for older rather than younger police.[44] When it was suggested that the power to search without warrant should be vested in all policemen and not just officers, the Native Commissioner for Johannesburg remarked

> Experience has shown that matters of this nature should be handled with tact and discretion and it is questionable whether these qualities have been sufficiantly developed in the rank and file to enable them, on their own responsibility, to carry out this duty with due regard for the liberty of the subject.[45]

The value of the older policeman's 'experience' seems to have lain in his greater willingnes to ignore offences and take some consideration of those he policed, thus avoiding the conflicts provoked by a harsher regime.

Until the mid-1930s the most visible police presence in the Western Areas was a small police post in W.N.T.. Whilst raids for passes and for liquor caused much resentment, it was possible for some kind of rapport to be developed between police and residents. A clash between groups of migrant workers in Newclare was broken up by a combination of police and residents, whilst the police made efforts to ease the humilition of liquor-raiding, with those arrested being allowed to make their own way to the charge office rather than be lead through the streets until the raid was finished - as was the practice elsewhere.[46] Police in the Western Areas also practised unusual leniency regarding night passes in Sophiatown to those whom they knew to be 'of good reputation'.[47] However, the opening of a large new police station at Newlands led to the withdrawal of the police post at W.N.T..[48] The new station quickly became known for its harsh methods and lack of any empathy with the local

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[44] Ibid. vol.17 9 December 1936 G.Ballenden p.1173-4.

[45] CAD NTS 5394:51/313G Pt.1 Johannesburg Municipality, Kaffir Beer R.W.Norden, Native Commissioner Johannesburg to Chief Native Commissioner, Johannesburg, 30 September 1937. See also B.W.Martin, D.N.L. Johannesburg to Secretary of Native Affairs, 1 October 1937.

[46] Rand Daily Mail, 29 December 1927; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.17 9 December 1936 G.Ballenden pp.1166-7.

[47] Rand Daily Mail, 17 November 1934.

[48] Star, 26 June 1935; Minutes of Johannesburg City Council, 606th Meeting, 21 September 1936.

population.[49] The precise nature of police deployment had a significant impact on the nature of policing. The isolation of the station at Newlands increased in later years as it combined with other factors which divided the police from the policed.

The most graphic example of the possibilities for co-operation came from Alexandra where standholders reached a modus vivendi with local police whereby liquor raiding was restricted to daylight hours, pick-ups were excluded from the township and night-pass regulations were not enforced. This broke down in 1935 when a new constable was transferred to the area, but owners continued efforts to come to an agreement with the police.[50] This, in turn, was reflected in the divergence of police attitudes towards the township - one emphasising that most residents of Alexandra were 'the best type of persons', another stating that it was definitely dangerous even to enter the township.[51]

Mention should also be made of the municipal police. Whilst they were primarily agents of the location superintendent, the residents of W.N.T. looked upon them with much greater favour than the S.A.P. since they were not involved in pass or liquor raids, lived in W.N.T. itself rather than in barracks elsewhere and were far more visible in the township than the official police. Thus they were often called upon for help with smaller criminal matters.[52] The murder of one of the more long-serving municipal constables drew a marked response from the residents, hundreds of whom were present at his funeral.[53]

Africans were themselves employed in the S.A.P. in large numbers. Like their white counterparts they were poorly paid and were generally held in low esteem. One indication of this came in 1931 when over 10% of their number on the Rand were summarily dismissed as an economy measure.[54] As a result the standard of

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[49] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.19 11 December 1936 E.W.Wilkins, Native Commissioner Johannesburg p.1365; vol.89 28 April 1937 Dr.A.B.Xuma and R.V.Selope-Thema p.7595.

[50] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.90 29 April 1937 E.P.M.Zulu and others (standowners in Alexandra) pp.7701-06.

[51] Ibid. vol.17 9 December 1936 Head Const. Brittan p.1197, vol.22 17 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Barnard p.1604.

[52] Ibid. vol.15 7 December 1936 Major Binnie p.1003, vol.17 9 December 1936 G.Ballenden 1936 p.1175; Interview W.J.P.Carr.

[53] Bantu World, 27 October 1934.

[54] TAB MJB 3/6/29 Reports of the Parks and Estates Committee, Johannesburg report of the superintendent of locations, 17 August 1923; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 18 July 1931; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.18 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const.Kietzmann p.1246, vol.19 11 December 1936 A.L.H.Mulcahy Native Pass Officer Johannesburg

literacy was low and the temptations to indulge in petty corruption very strong.[55] The superintendent of the Diepkloof reformatory tersely characterised the average African policeman as 'a pimp and a bully'.[56] African constables themselves expresed a deep dislike for their conditions of work, which involved intimidation from white police, minimal free time and an humiliating uniform.[57]

Since most police were drawn from the less-educated sections of the Afrikaner and African population, it was not altogether surprising they were particularly drawn into conflict with educated English-speaking Africans in Johannesburg. The police took a particular pleasure in harrassing those deemed to be 'playing white'.[58] As a consequence church congregations, parties of school-children and even football teams found themselves under arrest.[59] Policemen in turn felt they were 'unfairly' provoked by

> the semi-educated type, who are inclined to be very very insolent...when asked for his pass - I have seen it - he will smoke a cigarette and delay, and adopt a surly attitude, practically inviting a man to assault him.[60]

Less educated Africans were looked upon with more favour, partly because only Africans with some education were ever likely to

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p.1355

[55] Bantu World, 7 April 1934; CAD NTS 7670:86/332/1 Native Unrest, Police Reports, Witwatersrand Deputy Commissioner S.A.P. Witwatersrand to Commissioner S.A.P., 22 March 1937; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.14 4 December 1936 Major Long pp.973-4., vol.90 29 April 1937 E.P.M.Zulu and others pp.7709 and 7712.

[56] Ibid. vol.89 28 April 1937 J.Hope p.7646.

[57] Ibid. vol.89 28 April 1937 Tom Mkise pp.7649-50, vol.96 7 May 1937 Native Constables Hlatwayo and Moshesh pp.8368-9.

[58] Bantu World, 7 April 1934.

[59] CPSA AD843/B24.2 Rheinallt-Jones papers Johannesburg Joint Council to Minister of Justice, 2 December 1933; Rand Daily Mail, 25 December 1934 and 11 March 1935; Star, 19 September 1935; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.17 9 December 1936 G.Ballenden pp.1167 and 1178 and Head Const. Brittan pp.1198-9, vol.18 10 December 1936 Det. Head Const. Kietzmann p.1263, vol.19 11 December 1936 E.W.Wilkins p.1372, vol.90 29 April 1937 Fr.R.Raynes pp.7682 and 7684 and E.P.M.Zulu and others pp.7712-13 and 'Alpheus Dlamini p.7764, vol.91 30 December 1937 Johannesburg Joint Coucil pp.7860-3, vol.96 7 May 1937 Native Det. Corp. Mashaba p.8371.

[60] Ibid. vol.17 9 December 1936 Head Const. Brittan p.1200, vol.19 11 December 1936 E.W.Wilkins p.1377.

seek legal redress for police abuses.[61]

Caught between escalating violence on the streets and policing which may reasonably be described as abysmal, Africans in the Western Areas responded in two ways: sporadic resistance to the police themselves and attempts to provide alternative policing in the form of a 'civic guard' of residents. The introduction of 'pick-ups' led to impassioned protest[62] and a number of Newclare residents successfully excluded the vans from the township on one weekend, with similar action a few weeks later in W.N.T..[63] Newclare remained a place entered by the police only with some trepidation. In a series of incidents one man was killed when a policeman had to shoot his way out of the township to escape and a number residents were freed from police custody by crowds of other residents on two occasions.[64]

The first instance of home-grown policing came from W.N.T.. From the early 1930s the township's superintendent was happy to supplement policing with patrols of residents arranged by the Advisory Board, who would bring suspects to the location office where officials would decide whether or not to pass them on to the S.A.P..[65] However this arrangement seems to have lapsed by the middle of the decade for there were demands by residents and Advisory Board members for it to be reinstated.[66] Outside the location the standowners of Sophiatown and Newclare pushed strongly for a similar arrangement, but their persistent appeals were rejected by both the police and the Council.[67] That it was the Advisory Board and the standowners who formed the nucleus for such demands is not without significance, for whilst the idea of civic guards had widespread support - one meeting to

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[61] Ibid. vol.18 10 December 1936 Sgt. Van Der Westhuizen p.1289, vol.89 28 April 1937 Dr.A.B.Xuma and R.V.Selope-Thema p.7595

[62] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 5 May 1934.

[63] Umsebenzi, 6 January and 17 March 1934.

[64] Rand Daily Mail, 19 May 1936; Star, 27 September 1937; Rand Daily Mail, 20 January 1938.

[65] N.E.C. Evidence of G.Ballenden p.7722 12 May 1931, S.Mtoba W.N.T. Advisory Board p.7938 15 May 1931; Interview W.J.P.Carr.

[66] Bantu World, 13 June 1936; CPSA AD1433/Cj2.1.20(1) Johannesburg Joint Council Copy of Resolutions passed by meeting of residents of the Western Areas, 24 November 1938.

[67] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 4 May 1932; CAD K80 Police Commission vol.90 29 April 1937 Fr.R.Raynes p.7683; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 29 April 1939.

call for them drew 500 people[68] - it was also a manifestation of hostility in a generational conflict between the older residents and youths who formed the bulk of the criminals, with one aim of the residents being the general control of the youths. Nor was this an isolated phenomenon: elsewhere on the Reef civic guards were operating successfully in Benoni, Alexandra and Pimville, where an informal court was set up by the chairman of the Advisory Board to try those caught by the patrols.[69]

If the criminals remain somewhat shadowy figures from the existing sources, their impact on daily life in the Western Areas became increasingly dramatic as the 1930s progressed. This was further exacerbated by the policing of the area, which involved wholesale persecution of black people and was ineffective in curbing crime. Such persecution was particularly acute for Africans with some education and/or a preference for urban culture in dress and lifestyle. It was the very same people who were at the forefront of attempts to police the townships more effectively. Yet aside from local location officials, who were noticeably more responsive to residents' grievances, neither the police nor the local authorities showed any enthusiasm for such moves.

> The reported intention of native ratepayers in Sophiatown to form civic guards to repress lawlessness in the township will if carried out, bring them into direct conflict with the law. The Star was informed this morning that any such organisation would be definitely illegal and would not be permitted either among natives or among Europeans.[70]

The question of who should apply the law remained more important than how it should be applied.

The social trends which encouraged criminality were greatly stimulated in the years following the onset of war in 1939. The population, which was already increasing rapidly, more than doubled in the 1940s. Prices jumped but wages climbed only slowly after them. The acute pressure on housing and education became critical, provoking massive squatting movements and marooning large numbers of children who could not obtain/continue education and were too young to find work.

In such a context it was hardly surprising that the high levels of violent crime of the late 1930s were not checked in the

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[68] CPSA AD1433/Cj2.1.20(1) Johannesburg Joint Council Copy of Resolutions passed by meeting of residents of the Western Areas, 24 November 1938.

[69] CAD K80 Police Commission vol.90 E.P.M.Zulu and others pp.7706-7; Bantu World, 15 January 1938; Rand Daily Mail, 15 June 1939.

[70] Star, 7 May 1932.

1940s. Even the new and, by existing standards, very salubrious coloured township of Coronationville could not avoid becoming emeshed in this pattern.[71] As in the previous decade, violent robberies and rapes were most common at weekends, at night and in particular areas - notably on buses and trams and in transport termini. One immediate consequence was the cutailment of most social, religious and political activities in the evenings. The criminals were still identified as being mostly young and as working in groups or gangs. The Christmas and New Year holiday was a particularly dangerous period, since workers were returning to the townships with larger pay-packets to cover the break.[72] During 1942 fear of a 'crime wave' was particularly acute in white Johannesburg, yet such fear belied the fact that crime, though high, had not suddenly increased.[73]

The police force, already far from effective, was further hampered by the enlistment of many of its members at the beginning of the war. The number of arrests dropped sharply.[74] This shortfall both reinforced the desire of residents to police the area themselves and, just as important, provided the political space to allow them to do so. The result was the government-administered Civilian Protection Service (C.P.S.). Although european detachments of this body appeared soon after the start of the war, the first mention of activity amongst black Johannesburgers came late in 1941 and its development was somewhat sluggish after that. In the following year it was actively seeking recruits in Sophiatown, mainly through the agency of the Anglican mission there and Bantu World, which appealed especially 'to the educated and informed section of our readers.'[75]

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[71] See: I.A. WRDB 350/8/11 Policing: Coronationville.

[72] See, for instance: Bantu World, 6 April 1940; Star, 22 October 1940; Bantu World, 22 February and 22 March 1941; I.A. CHD (Second Series) 98/A6153 Medical Services in Native Townships Extract from Agenda of Public Health Committee, 6 January 1942; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 14 November 1942; I.A. WRDB Non-European Juvenile Delinquency S.Mabeta to Manager Non-European and Native Affairs Dept., 29 December 1943; Star, 26 February 1944; CAD NTS 5618:51/313I Pt.1 Church and School Sites E.H.Wilson, Overseer Cape Coloured Section, Apostolic Faith Mission to Native Commissioner,Johannesburg 8 August 1945; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 24 November and 22 December 1945.

[73] Report of Committee Appoited by the Ministers of Justice and Native Affairs to Investigate the Position of Crime on the Witwatersrand and Pretoria (July 1942) p.7.

[74] Johannesburg City Council, Minute of the Mayor, 1939-40, Report of the Manager, Non-European and Native Affairs Dept..

[75] I.A. CHD (second series) 21/B4120 Civic Guard Medical Director, C.P.S. (non-european) to G.Ballenden Director C.P.S. (non-european), 6 November 1941; CPSA AB632 Community of the

However little was heard of actual patrols by this body until late in 1943 and in the meantime other groups of residents were active. The Sophiatown Night Watch Patrol Corporation emerged in 1943, formed by a number of property owners, led by Ben Mabuza who owned an eating house in central Johannesburg and was one of the few Africans in the area to live in a manner approaching that of middle class europeans. The Corporation was well connected - with Pixley Seme lobbying the government for them - and was carefully organised, but seems to have done little actual patrolling.[76] In W.N.T. 'Christmas Watchman', composed of residents led by Advisory Board and Vigilance Association members, patrolled the township during the holiday throughout the war and afterwards.[77]

Yet when the C.P.S. did finally become operative it was much larger than the above bodies, with over a thousand volunteers across Johannesburg's black townships, managed by seven white officers -though such management can only have been very sketchy. Of the volunteers, 165 were at W.N.T., whilst Sophiatown and Coronationville had 55 each and Newclare none at all. The volunteers received training, uniforms and drill. They were a much more professional force than earlier or later Civic Guards.[78]

The C.P.S. thus confirmed and accentuated a trend whereby more respectable institutions such as anti-crime patrols, churches, thrift and more stable nuclear families were most common in W.N.T. and, to a lesser extent in Sophaiatown but were far less apparent in Newclare.[79] The patrols, composed mostly of older men and keen to encourage parents to 'exercise proper control' over

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Resurrection Minute Book, Sophiatown, vol.1, 21 April 1942; Bantu World, 27 June and 22 August 1942; CPSA AD1433/Cj2.1.22(3) Johannesburg Joint Council Correspondence D.Maud to E.Hellman, 6 July 1942; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 26 September 1942.

[76] CAD NTS 7251:250/326 Sophiatown Night Watch Patrol Corporation P.ka I. Seme to Secretary for Native Affairs, 16 October 1943; Major D.Baillie for Deputy Commissioner, Witwatersrand S.A.P., to Manager, Non-European and Native Affairs Dept., 3 January 1944.

[77] I.A. WRDB 351/2 Non-European Juvenile Delinquents Superintendent, W.N.T. to Mangager, C.P.S. 10 January 1944; Johannesburg City Council Minutes, 725th meeting, p.963, 27 March 1946.

[78] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 20 November 1943.

[79] A partial account of such developments can be found in D.Goodhew 'Respectability vs. Unrespectability: Religion, Education and Crime in the Western Areas of Johannesburg in the 1930s', a paper presented to the Southern Africa Seminar, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford 17 January 1990.

their offpring also represented a pronounced generational split.[80] Their overall head was the Manager of the N.E.N.A.D. in Johannesburg, whilst a number of the white staff were location superintendents or assistant superintendents. This developed the already clear links between residents' patrols against crime and municipal officials which had been visible in the previous decade.

The commander of the C.P.S. claimed to have reduced crime in the townships by three-quarters. Even if this estimate is perhaps excessive, the plaudits of residents, officials, councillors, police and church leaders would suggest that they were highly effective. Although the level of violent crime in the district was high throughout the decade, the massive social changes then taking place make it surprising that it was not higher and suggest that the C.P.S. was of some value.

The C.P.S. may also have had a role in dampening down opposition to the government.

> Major J.C.E.Scheepers, the commandant of the C.P.S. points out (that) the members have often been able to restore order at mass meetings which have been noisey and tended to get out of hand.

However the participation of a number of radical leaders such as Edwin Mofutsanyana and P.Q.Vundla would suggest that the C.P.S. was by no means a government stooge.[81]

Towards the end of the 1940s and in early years of the following decade the situation worsened considerably across the Reef as a whole and in the Western Areas in particular. The district became hideously unsafe. The pattern of assault and rape remained much the same, with youthful groups attacking individuals, particularly on pay-days and in transport facilities.[82] One indicator of the level of violence came in

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[80] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 20 November 1943.

[81] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 7 September 1946.

[82] Bantu World, 4 January; I.A. WRDB 350/8/11 Policing: Coronationville Policing of Coronationville, 12 May 1947; Bantu World, 26 July 1947; CPSA A410/B2.8.10 Ballinger Papers/Correspondence Huddlestone Trevor Huddlestone to Margret Ballinger, 19 May 1948; I.A. TD 72:14/1/3 Blacks (Natives) on Vehicles (Apartheid) vol.8 General Manager of Transport to Station Commander, Newlands 21 July 1948; Bantu World, 24 July 1948; I.A. TD 72:14/1/3 Blacks (Natives) on Vehicles (Apartheid) vol.8 Incident Report, J.J.Van Dyk, conductor, 11 June 1949; Bantu World, 31 December 1949; CAD ARB 1049:A153/60 Native Juvenile Unemployment Native Youth Board, Secretary's Report, 1949-50; Bantu World, 25 February, 12 and 19 August and 9 September 1950; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11 November 1950; USPG Papers X/1097 Ekutuleni Annual Reports, 1950 and 1950-51; Johannesburg

March 1951 when the Bantu World began listing those admitted to hospital each weekend, most of whom had been stabbed or otherwise assaulted. The list became a regular feature of the paper until it was discontinued late in the following year. The number of those mentioned who were from the Western Areas usually ran into double figures, often totalling twenty or thirty each weekend, including several fatalities.[83] Such figures can only offer very rough guide for many who were assualted did not seek hospital treatment or were robbed without assault. Nonetheless it does does give substance to concern over crime.

Still more impressionistic, though vivid, evidence comes from fiction and memoir dealing with the late 1940s and 50s. Can Themba wrote of

> The sudden fear of dark location alleys. The shifting aside to avoid the attention of young hooligans who sit and swear on shop corners.[84]

Bloke Modisane remebered

> ...living in my own room trembling with fear, wondering when it would be my turn, sweating away the minutes whilst somebody was screaming for help, shouting against the violence which was claiming for death another victim...I am either a coward or very careful. I have been stabbed only once, and it was a flesh wound.[85]

This picture of endemic violence and fear is reinforced by a

Non-European Affairs Dept. (N.E.A.D.) Survey of the Western Areas of Johannesburg (1950) pp.25 and 27; I.A. WRDB 350/8/11 Policing: Coronationville Draft Report, Lawlessness in Coronationville, 2 February 1951, giving details of a petition calling for better policing signed by almost all the residents; I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Minutes of the Deputation of the Johannesburg Joint Advisory Boards to the chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee, Johannesnurg, 13 February 1951; Bantu World, 14 and 28 July 1951; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 25 August 1951; Johannesburg N.E.A.D. Sample Survey of the Western Areas of Johannesburg (1951) p.17; Johannesburg N.E.A.D. Annual Report of the Manager 1950-1, 1951-2, 1952-3; I.A. TD 179:19/11/63 Pt.7 Services: Newlands Kudumo Mabuduga, Sophiatown Native Bus Users to City Tramway Dept., 8 May 1952.

[83] Bantu World, 3 March 1951 et seq..

[84] Can Temba 'Marta' in Drum, July 1956.

[85] B.Modisane Blame Me On History (London 1963) p.59 and p.148.

number of other writers.[86]

Whilst it may be correct as a general rule to be sceptical of newspaper reports of 'crime waves', what was taking place in the Western Areas of Johannesburg from the late 1940s fits this description exactly and had deep implications for the social and political history of the area.

Ironically it was in April 1947 that the C.P.S. was disbanded, despite protests that it should retained.[87] Four months later their reinstatement was the focal point of a vigorous campaign centred in Sophiatown and led by the African Citizens League, headed by Trevor Huddleston. The League held a number of well attended meetings in the township and lobbied the government, but remained a campainging body and did not attempt to patrol the townships.[88] Elsewhere, in Orlando and Pimville, Civic Guards were formed, despite the adamant opposition of the S.A.P..[89] Early in 1948 the African Citizens League formed a Vigilance Committee out of various organisations and interest groups in the township and this body continued to lobby for Civic Guards though it met with little success.[90]

However the by-now traditional practice of 'Christmas Watchmen' in W.N.T. and other townships continued until at least the late 1940s. Such patrols seem to have had considerable effect in reducing crime and were conducted with the full approval of the Council. The latter even provided oxen to be roasted and distributed amongst residents as an incentive (although Noordesig only received a sheep).[91] At Pimville, the Advisory Board continued to organise a Civic Guard largely unnoticed to the end of the decade and beyond.[92]

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[86] E.Mphahlele 'Lesane' in Drum, March 1957; L.Nkosi Home and Exile (London 1965) p.17; K.Vundla P.Q.: The Story of Philip Vundla of South Africa (Johannesburg 1973) pp.27, 30-1; D.Mattera Gone With The Twilight (London 1987) pp.50 and 149.

[87] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 7 September 1946 and 19 April 1947.

[88] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 23 August 1947; Bantu World, 14 and 25 October 1947; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 8 and 22 November 1947.

[89] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 29 November and 6 December 1947.

[90] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 17 and 31 January 1948; Bantu World, 20 March 1948; CPSA A410/B2.8.10 Ballinger Papers/Correspondence Huddleston Commissioner, S.A.P. to Margaret Ballinger.

[91] Johannesburg City Council Minutes, 725th meeting, 27 August 1946 p.963; 731st meeting, 25 February 1947 p.215; 743rd meeting, 24 February 1948 p.174.

[92] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 8 October 1949; CAD NTS 5732:51/313K Pt.1 Johannesburg Municipality, Native Advisory Boards Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board 25 January 1950; CAD NTS

A key cause of crime was the increased harshnes with which pass laws were enforced on youths who had not lived in Johannesburg since birth. The fear of being 'endorsed out' led many to crime. Advisory Board members countered this by using what influence they had with the location superintendent and the pass office to obtain passes for them.[93]

However the situation was so serious that more drastic measures were ffelt to be necessary. On several occasions in 1950 and early in 1951 residents of W.N.T., led by the Advisory Board and the Vigilance Association, began organising a Civic Guard, but held back because of police opposition.[94] The extent of violence in daily life finally proved the stronger stimulus. In August 1951, at a meeting of some 500 residents of W.N.T. and Sophiatown in W.N.T., led by the Advisory Board of W.N.T. and the Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare Non-European Ratepayers Association, endorsed and inaugurated Civic Guard patrols (also called bangalalas - those who do not sleep). Such patrols continued until they were outlawed by the government late in 1952.

In W.N.T. the leading figures were P.Q.Vundla, Elias Moretsele and P.J.Moguerane. Vundla could reasonably be seen as amongst the most radical and popular political leaders on the Rand at this time - having been active with the Communist Party in the 1940s, in union organisation, as leader of the Tram Boycott of 1949 and in all A.N.C. campaigns up to mid-1955. Moretsele was less prominent in local politics but was a key figure in A.N.C. politics in the 1940s and 1950s, whilst Moguerane, although a leader in the 1949 Tram Boycott, was more sympathetic to the more conservative A.N.C. National Minded Bloc. However the rest of the Advisory Board, including the normally very cautious

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5735:51/313K Pt.1 Minutes of Meetings of Advisory Boards, Johannesburg Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board 24 January 1951.

[93] CAD NTS 5735:51/313K(1) Minutes of meeting of Advisory Boards, Johannesburg Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Board, 26 January 1949; Bantu World, 2 December 1950; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 10 February and 10 March 1951; CAD NTS 5735:51/313K(1) Minutes of meeting of Advisory Boards, Johannesburg Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Board, 20 June and 28 November 1951.

[94] Bantu World, 27 May, 3 and 10 June 1950; IA WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Minutes of Meeting of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board and Cllrs. P.R.Moroka and R.V.S.Selope-Thema, 19 November 1950; CAD NTS 5735:51/313K Pt.1 Minutes of Meetings of Advisory Boards, Johannesburg Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board 24 January 1951; I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Report of Manager, N.E.A.D. to Non-European Affairs Committee, 8 February 1951; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 10 March 1951.

nominated members, also fully supported the Civic Guard.[95]

In Sophiatown the leading Civic Guards comprised the organisers of the main owners' association and the Sophiatown branch of the A.N.C. Youth League, though not without occasional tension.[96] This blurring of organisational boundaries was less visible in other campaigns in Sophiatown at this time. During the removal campaign a variety of groups protested in isolation and only occasionally acted together.[97]

In W.N.T. the Civic Guard worked closely with the location administration. Municipal police accompanied patrols, which were organised from the Advisory Board's office. Several months after the start of the movement Vundla publicly thanked the superintendent for 'his kind sympathy towards the movement.'[98] Moreover the Manager of Johannesbburg's N.E.A.D. gave his public endorsement to the movement and implicitly attacked the police for not supporting it. In private he endeavoured to obtain insurance cover for patrol members, though without success.[99]

Such cooperation with local officials was not viewed as cooption by residents. Rather, the founding of the Civic Guard was accompanied by regular, well-attended meetings, drawing in residents from all the townships (though Newclare was less prominent) and from variety of groupings.[100] During the early months of 1952 a number of Civic Guards from Sophiatown and

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[95] I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Acting Deputy Manager to Acting Manager, 17 September 1951.

[96] Bantu World, 15 and 22 September 1951; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 13 October 1951. The Civic Guard in Sophiatown is sometimes referred to as the African United Youth Protection Service.

[97] The two main groupings for the owners were the above mentioned Ratepayers Association and the Anti-Expropriation and Proper Housing Committee, from which the A.N.C. and the Youth League remained distinct.

[98] I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Superintendent, W.N.T. to Manager, N.E.A.D., 8 September 1951; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 10 November 1951.

[99] Star, 13 September 1951; I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Manager, N.E.A.D. to South Africa Mutual Life Assurance and Norwich Union, 19 November 1951; Manager, N.E.A.D. to Secretary, W.N.T. Advisory Board, 19 November 1951.

[100] Rand Daily Mail, 17 August 1951; Bantu World, 25 August 1951; Rand Daily Mail, 27 August 1951; Bantu World, 1 September 1951; I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Report of meeting in W.N.T. by Superintendent, W.N.T., 13 September 1951; Bantu World, 22 September 1951; I.A. WRDB 18/67 Report of meeting at W.N.T., 26 September 1951; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 6 October 1951; Bantu World, 20 November 1951; Rand Daily Mail, 28 November 1951.

Newclare were arrested on various charges of assault and possession of dangerous weapons. In response women supporters became particularly prominent, finding bail money and holding a demonstration outside the court.[101] Court hearings were crowded whilst a prominent radical lawyer defended the Newclare guardsmen.[102] In the midst of court porceedings a large function in support of the Civic Guards was organised in W.N.T. by women in the township. The Civic Guard marched in to the township led by the City Engineer's Brass Band and were adressed by Huddleston and Dr.Xuma amongst others, whilst the superintendent of the township sent a letter of thanks.[103] The occasion not only offers a guide to the esteem in which the movement was held but, in its militaristic character, points to its role in affirming the dignity of those associated with it. As has been suggested with regard to the Amalaita, a social unit of a rather different stamp, so in a similar way the Civic Guard was crucial in asserting a decolonised manhood.[104] Whilst those charged were acquitted, tension between the Civic Guards and the 'Russians' gang led to even greater pressure for the guards disbandment. To counter this a petition of 3000 signatures was organised by Sophiatown residents and several large gatherings took place in support of the movement.[105]

Such widespread backing was a reflection of the Civic Guards' success in making the townships a safer place to go about in. There are a large number of statements to this effect by residents, officials, clergymen and even individual policemen.[106] The compliments of the last mentioned group are the most remarkable, given the trenchant opposition of many in the S.A.P. to the idea of a Civic Guard. Whilst senior officers fell over themselves to denouce the movement as 'just another gang',[107] members of the lower ranks were less censorious. The commander

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[101] Star, 7 February, 1952; Bantu World, 23 February 1952.

[102] Star, 29 February 1952; Bantu World, 15 March 1952.

[103] Rand Daily Mail, 18 February 1952; Bantu World, 1 March 1952.

[104] C. van Onselen Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand (2 vols) (London 1982) p.59.

[105] Star, 4 April 1952; Bantu World, 2 August and 6 September 1952.

[106] I.A. WRDB18/67 Potential Native Unrest Minutes of Non-European Affairs Committee, 4 October 1951, cutting from Rand Daily Mail, 18 October 1951 with attached note; Rand Daily Mail, 23 February 1952; Star, 28 and 29 February, 1 to 4 April 1952; Drum, May 1952; CAD NTS 9655:520/400(12)(1) Application for Approval of Organisations: Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare: Civic Guards K.D.Morgan, Native Commissioner Johannesburg to Director of Native Labour (D.N.L.), 28 May 1953.

[107] Star, 14 March 1952.

of the Newlands Police Station estimated that the rate of crime had been 'at least halved' since the formation of the guards, an impression confirmed by other more junior police.[108] One constable was particularly forthcoming, emphasising his dependence on the guards. 'I always used to go to Moses and Sam and ask them to look out for some suspects that I wanted.'[109]

However the population of the Western Areas was by no means undifferentiated and the Civic Guards reflected a number of these differences. Perhaps the most obvious characteristic of the movement was that it drew its support mainly from middle-aged and older residents and from parents in particular. This in part reflected the situation where criminals tended to be younger and their victims tended to be older. Yet such conflict overlapped with broader, generational conflict. Thus one key leader in W.N.T.

> ...advocated the improvement of behaviour of children in general. He said children address their elders disrespectfully and parents should see that they play their part at home. In trains and buses the young peple are never willing to offer their elders seats. Courtesy should be taught in the home.[110]

There are some indications that ethnicity was an underlying factor in the Sophiatown Civic Guards, in the form of Tswana influence.[111] However the clashes with the 'Russians' produced many contradictory reports, united only by the conviction that ethnicity was the main underlying cause. Amid such speculation clarity is the first casualty and it would require far stronger evidence to flesh out such an assertion. In addition the Sophiatown Civic Guard were quite able to work with the Civic Guard in W.N.T. which seems to have been drawn from all ethnic groups.

The movement was not without its problems. Although the police became increasingly keen to portray them as a mafia-type organisation, there were instances where guards were 'over-

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[108] Star, 28 and 29 February 1952.

[109] CAD NTS 9655:520/400(12)(1) Application for Approval of Organisations: Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare: Civic Guards I.Mendelow and Browde to Minister of Native Affairs, 20 December 1952, enclosing trial transcripts dated 28 February 1952.

[110] Bantu World, 1 September 1951; Interview O.M.Makapan with D.Goodhew, 31 May 1989.

[111] Bantu World, 6 September 1952; CAD NTS 9655:520/400(12)(1) Application for Approval of Organisations: Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare: Civic Guards I.Mendelow and Browde to Minister of Native Affairs, 20 December 1952, enclosing trial transcripts dater 28 February 1952.

zealous' in their duties.[112] More serious was the problem of identification. Civic Guards were distinguished only by an armband, making it a simple matter to commit robberies whilst impersonating them.[113]

Such ructions were as mere teething troubles in comparison to the series of battles between members of the Civic Guard and the 'Russians' gang and between various groupings within the latter. These all took place in Newclare, starting in Christmas 1951 and only petering out in the second half of 1952. 'Battles' is not hyperbole - at their height such conflicts involved thousands of the residents of the Western Areas as well as drawing thousands of others from across the Rand. As a result thirty one people were killed whilst several hundred were injured.[114]

This was by no means the first time the 'Russians' had found their way into the headlines. From the late 1940s onwards, groups of Sotho[115] migrant workers had become notorious in particular sections of the Reef (Newclare South, Pimville, Moroka and Benoni) for violent clashes with other groups of workers and for extorting money from other location residents.[116]

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[112] Bantu World, 15 September 1951; I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Acting Deputy Manager to Acting Manager, 17 September 1951.

[113] Bantu World, 6 October 1951; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 10 November and 8 March 1952; Drum, January 1952.

[114] See: Rand Daily Mail (RDM), 27 December 1951 and 30 January 1952; Umteteli Wa Bantu (UWB), 2 February 1952; Star, 10 March 1952; UWB, 15 March 1952; Bantu World (BW), 15 March 1952; RDM, 17 March 1952; Star, 15 and 19 May 1952; UWB, 24 May 1952; RDM, 26 May 1952; Star, 27 May 1952; RDM, 30 June 1952; BW, 5 July 1952; Star, 5 July 1952; UWB, 5 July 1952; RDM, 7 July 1952; BW, 12 and 19 July 1952; RDM, 28 July 1952. Until May the clashes were between the Civic Guards and the 'Russians', but from May onwards they were mostly between two groupings within the 'Russians'.

[115] Some sources dispute whether the 'Russians' were wholly Sotho.

[116] CAD NTS 5732:51/313K Pt.1 Johannesburg Municipality: Native Advisory Boards Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board, 25 January 1950; Bantu World, 11 February, 6 March and 2 September 1950; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 2 September 1950; CAD NTS 5735:51/313K Pt.1 Minutes of Meetings of Advisory Boards, Johannesburg Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board, 24 January 1951; Bantu World, 27 January 1951; Star, 29 January 1951; I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Report of Manager, N.E.A.D. to Non-European Affairs Committee, 8 February 1951; Bantu World, 24 March and 16 June 1951.

Other researchers have discussed the nature of this gang[117] and only a limited discussion of its character will be attempted here.

The Civic Guard movement in Newclare had been less dynamic than in Sophiatown and W.N.T.. Patrols began three months later than in the other townships, in mid-November 1951.[118] As in the other townships the guards seem to have come from older residents, with standowners highly visible and mostly from Newclare North.[119] The Newclare movement was also as intimately bound up with radical politics as in the other townships through the participation of J.B.Marks and Ben Kenosi, who had been active with the Communist Party in the area in the 1940s.[120]

A survey in 1950 pointed to the distict division in Newclare between the more 'respectable' on the northern side and the 'rougher' inhabitants on the southern side and this divide seems to have been crucial to the tension underlying the clash.[121] An official emphasised that it was 'Responsible members of the native community' who were alarmed at Russian activity. A speaker at a meeting in W.N.T. characterised the 'Russians' as being 'distinct from respectable Basuto' (perhaps wishing to distance Sotho inhabitants from anger against the 'Russians'), whilst Vundla called them 'an uncultured and uncivilised element.'[122] Guy and Thabane's remarkable study of Johannes Rantoa suggests that the 'Russians' held an equal disdain for Africans who valued education and literacy and for places like Sophiatown where Africans were seen as simply living like whites.[123] One extreme manifestation of this was a threat by the 'Russians' to

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[117] J.Guy and M.Thabane 'The Ma-Rashea: A Participant's Perspective' in B.Bozzoli (ed.) Class, Community and Conflict (Johannesburg 1987); D. Van Tonder 'Gangs, Councillors and the Apartheid State: The Newclare Squatters' Movements of 1952' (African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, seminar paper, 23 October 1989).

[118] Bantu World, 17 November 1951.

[119] Interview Gladys Marks with D.Goodhew 14 October and 9 December 1988.

[120] I.A. WRDB 158/15 Newclare Squatters Superintendent, W.N.T. to Manager, N.E.A.D., 5 September 1952; Interview Gladys Marks.

[121] Johannesburg N.E.A.D. Survey of the Western Areas of Johannesburg (1950) p.26; Interview Gladys Marks.

[122] I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Report of Manager, N.E.A.D. to Non-European Affairs Committee, 8 February 1951, Report of meeting at W.N.T., 12 March 1952; Bantu World, 22 March 1952.

[123] J.Guy and M.Thabane 'The Ma-Rashea: A Participant's Perspective' pp.440 and 447.

kill Trevor Huddleston, a staunch supporter of the Civic Guards and deeply popular in the district.[124]

Culture interlocked with demography to exacerbate such divides. As the conflict continued, those who did not support the view of whichever group predominated where they lived, moved out. The result was a drain of population from Newclare South, with many 'Russians' only coming in to the area at weekends, and a small proportion of women compared to men. Newclare North retained parity in the ratio of women to men.[125] Moreover the Civic Guards constantly emphasised their need to defend their families, but were concerned lest by staying away from work they might lose their jobs. No such arguments were used spokesmen for the 'Russians'.[126]

To a substantial degree the conflict expressed and did much to construct a division between the respectable and the unrespectable. The respectable would be those who held work not normally taken by migrant labour, were with their families, upheld to some degree a respectable culture emphasising education, churchgoing, law and order. The unrespectable represented the antithesis of respectability in one or more of its elements. Most inhabitants did not fit neatly into either category. The educated tsotsi, the beer-brewing stalwart of the church and the artisan who led the 'Russians' should by no means be seen as freaks. Rather it was only in moments of severe crisis that such identities were likely to solidify.

After the fighting in early March, a number of residents of Newclare North and South moved to the other side.[127] However the mass exodus which formed the main Newclare squatters movement only began in mid-May.[128] This was the upshot of friction between the 'Russians' and the 'Hlubi' - between the Matsieng and those, Sotho or not, who lay outside them and resented having to pay

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[124] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 30 August 1952.

[125] I.A. WRDB 158/15(1) Newclare Squatters Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Non-European Affairs Committee and General Purposes Committee, 2 July 1952; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11 June 1955.

[126] Star, 11 March 1952; I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Report of meeting of Western Areas residents at W.N.T., 12 March 1952; Bantu World, 15 March 1952; Guardian, 20 March 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 24 March 1952; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 29 March 1952.

[127] Guardian, 14 March 1952; Bantu World, 5 April 1952.

[128] The interaction of local politics, local and central governmewnt has been well covered in D. Van Tonder 'Gangs, Councillors and the Apartheid State: The Newclare Squatters' Movements of 1952' (African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, seminar paper, 23 October 1989).

money to the Matsieng.[129] Yet it is unclear to what extent the squatters should be identified with the Civic Guards. The May clashes seem to have arisen from within Newclare South and without any intervention from the Civic Guard. The first mention of any joint action came over a month after the bulk of the squatters had moved out of Newclare South and in subsequent clashes the squatters did not always fight with the aid of the Civic Guard.[130] Whilst the squatters shared the high ratio of women to men of the Civic Guard,[131] they had much in common with 'Russian' culture. Of 148 shacks on one site, the inhabitants of at least 83 were thought to be actively brewing and 'many loafers and passless' were there.[132]

The inability of the police to prevent such substantial disorder left them wide open to criticism and even to the charge that they were aiding the 'Russians'. The main police response came in the form of massive pass raids, involving the sealing off of the whole township, but with no attempt to uncover those responsible for the violence.[133] Newspapers, councillors and officials grew increasingly exasperated with the lack of results.[134] At a Council committee meeting invited police officers were attacked by several councillors and officials. One policeman claimed in reply that there was

> ...no definite evidence against the leaders of the rival groups...the factions would always find some excuse for fighting.

Apart from the light this throws on police fatalism towards crime in black areas, the statement was flatly contradicted by several of those at the meeting. Police claims that legal constraints prevented them acting against those known to have extorted money or who occupied rooms vacated by the squatters

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[129] J.Guy and M.Thabane 'The Ma-Rashea: A Participant's Perspective' p.445; Bantu World, 17 and 24 May 1952; Star, 27 May 1952.

[130] I.A. WRDB 158/15(1) Newclare Squatters Report by Manager, N.E.A.D. to Non-European Affairs Committee, 26 june 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 30 June 1952; Bantu World, 5 and 12 July 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 7 July 1952.

[131] Bantu World, 7 June 1952; Star, 13 June 1952.

[132] I.A. WRDB 158/15(2) Newclare Squatters Manager, N.E.A.D. to Councillor Hurd, 27 October 1952.

[133] Guardian, 13, 20 and 27 March 1952; Star, 14 March, 2 and 4 April 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 18 April 1952; Star, 15 May 1952.

[134] Rand Daily Mail, 17 June 1952; I.A. WRDB 158/15 Newclare Squatters Report of Manager, N.E.A.D. to Non-European Affairs Committee, 20 June 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 2 July 1952.

were likewise questioned.[135] The idea of banishing some of the leaders which was suggested at this time was also ignored, despite its use on later occasions for both criminals and political opponents of the state.[136]

The clear antagonism of the S.A.P. towards the Civic Guards compliments other evidence which would suggest a less than impartial attitude. The hounding out of J.B.Marks and his family from Newclare South by the 'Russians' does seem to be linked to police dislike of Marks' political activities.[137] Other observers also suspected collusion.[138] Police behaviour towards the 'Russians' in Newclare was and remains baffling. A force not otherwise known for its delicacy chose an unfortunate moment to become entangled in legal niceties. If the S.A.P. can hardly be accused of causing the clashes, and whilst such unrest presented a formidible problem, the police certainly exploited it to attack the Civic Guard. Inept and implicated, the lot of the police was a far from happy one.

Although the conflict did not erupt again after July 1952 it had a profound impact on the area's history. Newclare South remained turbulent throughout the 1950s, dominated by 'Russian' conflicts and cut off from the rest of the district. The troubles also cut right across the Defiance Campaign and may help to explain why the Western Areas did not play a more prominent role than it did. The participation of leading radical leaders in the Civic Guard also alienated all opponents of that movement from the wider campaigns such leaders were involved in.

However difficult, some judgement on the relative merits of the Civic Guard and the 'Russians' is essential. Each can be seen as defending 'their' territory and people from the other, but the *S.A.P.'s glib concertina analysis of the two groups as being as* bad as each other will not wash. The Civic Guard emerged to police a deeply unsafe area alongside movements with a proven ability to offer a modicum of safety and wide popular support. Whilst their fighting usually only involved only other migrant workers, the 'Russians' had no wider goals and were generally feared for their extortion activities. Thus the Civic Guards role in this huge communal implosion was, in essence, a tragic one, not merely that of 'another gang.'

Late in 1952 the conflict was resolved with the removal of the

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[135] I.A. WRDB 158/15(1) Newclare Squatters Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Non-European Affairs Committee and General Purposes Committee, 2 July 1952.

[136] Bantu World, 17 July 1954; R.E.Pretorius 'Banishment: Germiston's Answer to Opposition in Nelspruit Location' (History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 1987).

[137] Interview Gladys Marks.

[138] T.Huddleston Naught For Your Comfort (London 1956) p.86.

squatters and the banning of all Civic Guards by the central government.[139] The Civic Guards in the Western Areas reacted both by lobbying vigorously for government recognition and by ignoring the order to disband.[140] This was cut short by a further round of arrests of 46 guards from the three townships.[141] Events followed the pattern laid down in earlier trials. The guards were defended by top radical lawyers, whilst women played a key role in protest.[142] The latter were well represented at a meeting in W.N.T. of 700 residents of the Western Areas, and followed it with deputations of women to the location superintendent and the Native Commissioner.[143] The role of gender in the movement was not restricted to the guardsmens' machismo and the role of women in these appeals may, perhaps, imply a reflection of assumptions amongst officials regarding the 'weaker sex's' need for protection. Women seem to have had specific reasons for supporting the civic guards beyond common fear of robbery and concern as parents.[144] 'Tsotsidom' was inextricably bound up with premarital pregnancy and aside from problems with lobola the burden of caring for illegitimate children was likely to fall upon older women. A further motivation was the awareness that along with the tide of violent crime came rape.[145]

Public meetings continued to press for the guards' reinstatement,[146] but as 1953 progressed a series of applications by the Civic Guards of W.N.T., Sophiatown and Newclare for government recognition were processed and rejected.[147] Verwoerd wholeheartedly endorsed the view of the S.A.P. even suggesting

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[139] Rand Daily Mail, 18 December 1952; Star, 19 December 1952.

[140] CAD NTS 9655:520/400(12)(1) Application for Approval of Organisations: Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare: Civic Guards I.Mendelow and Browde to Minister of Native Affairs, 20 December 1952, White Segapo and Others to Minister of Native Affairs, 24 December 1952; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 3 January 1953; Bantu World, 10 January 1953.

[141] Rand Daily Mail, 12 January 1953; Star, 29 January and 23 February 1953.

[142] Star, 11 March 1953.

[143] Bantu World, 24 and 31 January and 21 February 1953.

[144] Bantu World, 23 February 1952.

[145] Bantu World, 30 May 1953; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 13 June 1953; C.Glaser '"The Mark of Zorro": Sexuality and Gender Relations in the Tsotsi Subculture on the Witwatersrand, 1940-60' (unpublished paper) pp.21-3.

[146] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 23 May 1953; Bantu World, 30 May 1953; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 13 June 1953.

[147] Bantu World, 12 September 1953.

that the 'Russians' were 'more sinned against than sinning' and less reprehensible than the Civic Guards.[148] It was now clear that the suppression of the Civic Guards was intended to be permanent.

The outlawing of the Civic Guards did not coincide with any diminution in the conditions conducive to crime. As far as numbers of convictions are a guide, it would seem that violent crime became distinctly more prevalent in the mid-1950s.[149] Towards the end of the decade there seems to have been a levelling off, though these were exceptional years as the area's population was being rapidly reduced by removal.[150] Such trends could offer little comfort to the residents of Western Areas, for whom daily life remained as fraught with danger as it had been since the late 1930s.[151] Thus, when a junior official was quoted belittling concern over township crime, the Manager of N.E.A.D. issued a swift correction and carpeted the official concerned.[152]

The Advisory Boards of Johannesburg may have been assured that they were 'flogging a dead horse' in raising the issue of Civic Guards but they continued to press for action against crime.[153] Lobbying continued and in one instance residents, municipal police and the S.A.P. combined against gangs in W.N.T.. This incident was all the more remarkable because it occurred at the height of agitation against the removal of Sophiatown in which the Advisory Board of W.N.T. was heavily involved and which

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[148] Star

[149] I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Minutes of meeting between Deputy Commissioner, Witwatersrand S.A.P., Non-European Affairs Committee and Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board, 14 December 1955; S.A.I.I.R. broadsheet, 16 February 1956.

[150] I.A. WRDB 212/2/1(1) Annual Reports Annual Reports, W.N.T. 1955-6, 1956-7, 1957-8, 1958-9.

[151] See, for example: Bantu World, 10 October 1953 et seq.; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11 September 1954; I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board, 28 September 1955, Minutes of meeting of Non-European and Housing Committee with Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board, 22 August 1956; Star, 21 January 1957; The World, 22 March and 12 July 1958; Star, 12 November 1959; The World, 22 October 1960.

[152] I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Manager, N.E.A.D. to Editor, Rand Daily Mail, 9 December 1955.

[153] I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Deputy Manager to Manager, N.E.A.D., 29 October 1953.

meant constant confrontation which the S.A.P..[154] The later months of 1955 saw a further push by groups across Johannesburg to obtain action against crime, in which the demand for government recognition for Civic Guards was prominent.[155] The police response was divided. Whilst senior police officers remained adamantly opposed to the idea, the commander at Newlands was more favourable and the Manager of the N.E.A.D. again began to encourage their formation.[156] Backed by the continuing pressure of residents and the support of officials, Civic Guards continued to be proposed through the rest of the decade and beyond, but S.A.P. opposition remained sufficient to stifle such hopes.[157]

These appeals were bound up with continuing popular support and even in 1960 a meeting in W.N.T. calling for Civic Guards drew 300 people.[158] Violence could nonetheless be reduced by less formal means. Vundla in particular made strenuous efforts: calling together warring gangs for 'peace conferences', persuading individuals to foreswear violence and continuing to work with the Superintendent of W.N.T. to try and sort out passes and employment.[159]

Moreover, whilst the Civic Guard encouraged unity in the Western Areas in 1951-2, after their suppression they became caught up in various local conflicts. A split occurred in the Sophiatown

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[154] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11 September 1954; I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Minutes of the Joint Advisory Board, 24 September; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 12 January 1955.

[155] I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Gangs Advisory Board minutes, W.N.T., 6 September 1955; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 8 October 1955; I.A. WRDB 210/6(1) Monthly meetings of the Joint Advisory Board with the Non-European and Housing Committee Minutes of meeting, 14 October 1955; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 22 October 1955; Bantu World, 3 December 1955.

[156] Golden City Post, 4 December 1955; I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Manager, N.E.A.D., to P.R.Mosaka, 3 January 1956.

[157] I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Advisory Board minutes, W.N.T., 13 August 1957; I.A. WRDB 401/112/1 Tenants Associations, W.N.T. Secretary, Advisory Board, W.N.T., to Manager, N.E.A.D., 19 June 1957, Manager, N.E.A.D. to Secretary, Advisory Board W.N.T., 4 July 1957; The World, 5 November 1960; I.A. WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Secretary, Advisory Board, W.N.T., to Manager, N.E.A.D., 8 November 1960, Manager, N.E.A.D. to Deputy Commissioner, Johannebsurg S.A.P.,6 December 1960, Deputy Commisssioner to Manager, N.E.A.D., 28 December 1960.

[158] The World, 5 November 1960.

[159] I.A. WRDB 351/2 Non-European Juvenile Delinquents W.N.T. Advisory Board minutes, 7 February 1956; K.Vundla P.Q.: the Story of Philip Vundla of South Africa (Johannesburg 1973) pp.48-9.

Civic Guard, though this does not seem to have had any wider ramifications.[160] In W.N.T. the Civic Guards became caught up in struggles between groups fighting for seats on the Advisory Board. The sitting members, who had organised the Tram Boycott of 1949 were challenged by a group advocating capitulation to the Council and the return of the trams to alleviate the dire transport situation. Ex-Civic Guards who were now employed by P.U.T.C.O. to marshall bus queues were reported as threatening opponents of the Advisory Board members.[161] In response the Tram Restoration Committee proposed a 'Peacemakers' Movement', intended

> To protect the poeple's lives and properties and to forestall the activities of hooligans and other criminal elements when the tram service is restored as we hope it will be, and also as propaganda against possible undesirable candidates for the membership of the Advisory Board.[162]

Official unease and Vundla's personal ascendancy in W.N.T. combined to scotch such plans, but they are suggestive of the havoc possible when crime prevention mixed with local politics, as was the case in Orlando.[163]

Largely missing from this account so far is an examination of S.A.P. in the 1940s and 1950s, yet this is crucial to an understanding of policing and criminality in the area. In contrast to almost all other parties involved in the district, the police on several occasions dismissed concern over crime, emphasising that everything that could be done was being done and stressing that the situation was normal.[164] During wartime

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[160] CAD NTS 9655:520/400(12)(1) Application for Approval of Organisations: Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare: Civic Guards I.Mendelow and Browde to Private Secretary, Office of the Minister of Native Affairs, 14 April 1953.

[161] I.A. WRDB 81/2(1) Native Transport S.E.Lekubu to Director, P.U.T.C.O., 8 February 1953.

[162] I.A. WRDB 401/1/12/1 Tenants Associations, W.N.T. J.S.Mtimkulu and A.W.Mahlalela to Manager, N.E.A.D., 12 October 1953.

[163] K.S.French James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party in the Development of Local Politics in Soweto (M.A. Wits 1983) pp.215-220.

[164] I.A. WRDB 350/8/11 Policing: Coronationville Deputy Commissioner, Witwatersrand S.A.P. to Manager, N.E.A.D., 13 November 1940; I.A.WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Officer Commanding Railway Police, Western Transvaal, to Manager, N.E.A.D., 26 November 1953, Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board, 29 September 1954, Deputy Commissioner, Witwatersrand S.A.P. to Native Commissioner, Johannesburg 28 December 1955, Deputy Commissioner, Witwatersrand S.A.P. to Manager, N.E.A.D. 25 July

years and after the S.A.P. was greatly hampered by a manpower shortage, but it was substantially augmented in the late 1940s and 1950s.[165] Yet residents and officials noted that police patrols were rarely seen in the area, whilst the police, having greatly increased their numbers, continued to complain of staff shortages.[166] The only occasion where regular patrolling is mentioned was in the aftermath of the clashes between the Civic Guard and the 'Russians', when the S.A.P. was at pains to prove the Civic Guard was unnecessary.[167]

Part of the problem lay in the fact that the bulk of the extra police drafted into the area were Africans.[168] The population of the Western Areas disliked such police as much as (if not more than) the white police. This dislike was particularly acute amongst the more educated Africans who dismissed the African S.A.P. as 'an uneducated lout', 'not up to urban standards of civilisation...they don't understand city life'.[169] This may have been in part a question of prejudice based class and/or culture, but it was well grounded. African police continued to be badly paid, ill-trained, often illiterate and helped enforce deeply unpopular laws with no little zeal. It was not surprising that few black Johannesburgers were interested in such employment and

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[165] Umteteli Wa Bantu, 11 October 1947; CAD ARB 1049:A153/60 Native Juvenile Unemployment Committee N.E.A.D. Report on Crime in Johannesburg with Emphasis on the Native Adolescent (1951); I.A.WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Officer Commanding Railway Police, Western Transvaal, to Manager, N.E.A.D., 26 November 1953, Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board, 29 September 1954, Deputy Commissioner, Witwatersrand S.A.P. to Manager, N.E.A.D. 25 July 1956.

[166] I.A. WRDB 18/67 Potential Native Unrest Report of Manager, N.E.A.D. to Non-European Affairs Committee 29 October 1951; I.A. WRDB 212/2/1(1) Annual Reports W.N.T. Annual Report 1955-6, 1956-7, 1957-8, 1958-9.

[167] CAD NTS 4200:51/313(8) Johannesburg Municipality Annual Report, Manager, N.E.A.D. 1952-3.

[168] Star, 16 November 1953.

[169] CPSA AD843/G4-5 Rheinallt-Jones papers/Justice/Police Hon.Sec. Johannesburg Joint Council to Commissioner of Police, 29 May 1940; CPSA Xuma papers ABX 410930c Dr. Xuma's evidence to the Commission on Kaffir Beer, September 1941; I.A. TD 72:14/1/3 Blacks (Natives) on Vehicles (Apartheid) vol.8 D.W.Bopape, Secretary Transvaal A.N.C. to General Manager of Transport, 7 May 1945; Umteteli Wa Bantu, 3 January 1953 and 3 December 1955; A.Hutchinson Road To Ghana (London 1963) p.36-7.

most were drawn in from areas well away from the Rand.[170]

However the main problem remained that the police spent most of their time enforcing laws to control and coerce the black population and not chasing criminals. Throughout the period there was a constant stream of complaints from the residents of the Western Areas that the police did little patrolling, but that there were frequent raids for passes and liquor. This state of affairs worsened considerably from late 1949 when a tram boycott inaugurated a period of six years of campaigning in which the Western Areas became arguably the most politicised district on the Rand. The police responded with massive armoured raids and patrols which led to major conflict with the residents in 1949-50 and 1958, whilst sporadic attacks on the police remained as common as they had been in the 1930s. The implementation of removal plans worsened this process with increasingly frequent permit raids to prevent others migrating into the township as it was being cleared.

In such circumstances it was hardly surprising that they became almost irrelevant to crime and remained deeply hated by the population. However, such laws were hated all the more because of the gratuitous assault and petty corruption which accompanied them.[171] In particular it was the educated and those seen as playing white who were singled out for harsh treatment.[172] A 'black Englishman' was especially vulnerable and Afrikaans had

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[170] CPSA AD843/G4-5 Rheinallt-Jones papers/Justice/Police Minutes of meeting between Johannesburg Joint Council and police, 4 April 1940; I.A. TD 72:14/1/3 Blacks (Natives) on Vehicles (Apartheid) vol.8 Inspector's report, 23 January 1949; Umteteli Wa Bantu 3 January 1953; I.A. WRDB 385/3(1) Supply of Liquor to Natives Memorandum by Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board to Chief Magistrate of Jannesburg; New Age, 10 July 1958.

[171] See, for instance: Bantu World, 28 June 1941; CPSA Xuma papers ABX 4411156 copy of letter by Rev. M.Scott to the Minister of Justice, 15 November 1944; Star, 27 February 1950; Bantu World, 20 June 1953; Golden City Post, 6 November 1955; Interview Fr. Domonic Whitnall, Mirfield Yorkshire, 21-2 March 1987; Interview Irene Dilooane; C.Themba 'Marta' in Drum, July 1956; B.Modisane Blame Me On History (London 1963) pp.35-8; D.Mattera Gone With the Twilight (London 1987) pp.8-9; Interview Irene Dilooane; Interview Canon Bertram Moloi.

[172] See, for instance: CPSA AD843/G4-5 Rheinallt-Jones papers/Justice/Police Fr.R.Raynes to Commandant, Newlands police station, 14 March 1940; Star, 25 October 1947; CAD NTS 5732:51/313K Pt.1 Johannesburg Municipality, Native Advisory Boards Minutes of Johannesburg Joint Board, 25 January 1950; Bantu World, 12 Novem,ber 1955; Trevor Huddleston Naught For Your Comfort (London 1956) pp.25-7.

always to be used.[173] Alternatively, pretending to be simple might engage with white police paternalism and so prevent arrest.[174] It would be misleading to see all the S.A.P. in this light. There were some exceptions who worked hard against crime and established some kind of rapport with the black population. This fact could be highly significant in moments of crisis.[175]

An exploration of policing in a black township is liable to turn up some unusual material, but one particularly remarkable document was the minutes of a discussion of the S.A.P. by Johannesburg's location superintendents and senior officials of the city's N.E.A.D.. It is striking both for its candour and for contradicting the attitude of such men when corresponding with the S.A.P. concerning complaints made by black residents. Then the S.A.P.'s denials were usually accepted.[176] Relations between black people and the police amounted to 'almost a state of war', with police 'not backward in using fists and batons'. Moreover,

> European policemen treated the Native as though he were, to a limited degree, a human being.

Whilst,

> A great deal of trouble is caused by different treatment being given to people who give Policemen free drink and those who didn't....The average European Policemen did not know how to read a Reference Book, so much less a Native Policeman. Very often Natives who should not be arrested were arrested were arrested, and those who should be were not.

Regarding complaints, it was recognised that '...the Natives are really wasting their time by complaining.' The African constable was seen as even worse, being '...inclined to hammer his people very much more than a European constable would.'

Yet the enlightenment of the N.E.A.D. staff should be

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[173] The World, 29 August 1959; B.Modisane Blame Me On History (London 1963) p.90.

[174] T.Matshikiza Chocolates For My Wife (London 1961) pp.82-3; B.Modisane Blame Me On History pp.58-9.

[175] I.A.WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Note of Discussion Between Senior Superintendents and Manager, N.E.A.D., 1 August 1957; D.Mattera Gone With The Twilght (London 1987) p.53.

[176] I.A.WRDB 351/1 Native Crime Note of Discussion Between Senior Superintendents and Manager, N.E.A.D., 1 August 1957; I.A. WRDB 350/1 Police Raids: Treatment of Natives by S.A.P. and I.A. WRDB 350/8 Policing of Natives by S.A.P.. These last two files are full of a large number of comlaints by individuals against the S.A.P. where, in most cases, the denials of the police were accepted as ending the matter.

overstated, and the conflict between Administrators and police was overlain by English-Afrikaner tension which probably worsened the lot of black residents. Rather, the position of the administration towards the black population was essentially the same as the police. However, needing the day-to-day cooperation of the residents, officials were far more sensitive to the virtues of the carrot over the stick. When pointing out the municipal police's role in catching criminals despite their supposedly administrative function, one official noted,

> If all such incidents were referred to the S.A.P. Stations I have absolutely no doubt that the crime position would deteriorate substantially and from my point of view, what is perhaps even more serious, the esteem presently enjoyed by the municipal staff would largely disappear.[177]

'Hammering the Native' was just about all the S.A.P. was good for. They formed one horn of a dilemma which had always ensnared the population of the Western Areas of Johannesburg but which became critical from the late 1930s onwards. The other horn was comprised of those acts of violent robbery and rape which became endemic in the district from the late 1930s and made it truly a hell to live in. Whatever the sociological factors encouraging (if not demanding) theft, the results were macabre. In between lay the bulk of the population, not passive but organising a series of initiatives to offer a modicum of safety, culminating in the Civic Guard movement of 1951-2. Its membership and leadership testify both to the deep popularity of such measures and their inseparability from radical political iniatives of the period. The movement was also evidence of and helped reinforce the cluster of cultural values which might be termed respectability and which played a crucial role in dividing the townships and in formulating political initiatives. As a consequence, it may be asked whether any significant alliance between criminals and radical politics was ever a practical possibility.

The Civic Guard movement also exposed marked differences between local government and officials on the one side and the S.A.P. and the central state on the other. The Johannesburg Council and N.E.A.D. was hardly a democratic body, but on this issue it made common cause with the black population. The central government's inaction, above all in playing Pontius Pilate over the Civic Guard and the 'Russians', spoke volumes. Rather than being an implicit challenge to the state, crime in the Western Areas acted as one further means of control. It is not the least of the ironies of South Africa's history that its rulers should legitimate their rule on their supposed ability to enforce law and order but should be able to live more easily with crime than with its suppression.

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[177] I.A. WRDB 254/11 vol.2 Non-European Police Staff: General Manager, N.E.A.D. to Town Clerk, 18 December 1959.