

Charles Roux

The role of the Native Advisory Board and the succeeding Urban Bantu Council of Mangaung, Bloemfontein, 1945-1973

Summary

In the absence of political and executive powers the Native Advisory Board and Urban Bantu Council of Mangaung could do very little to remedy their community's urgent socio-economic and political grievances. Any success depended on the arbitrary decision of the authorities, who responded to requests only when this was of benefit to themselves, and otherwise deferred decisions indefinitely. The two bodies consequently had no prospect of greater powers. Their most important role was as municipal sources of information on African socio-economic and political needs, thought and opinion, and they proved to be in the majority of cases responsible and persistent champions of their community's interests.

Die rol van die Naturelle-Adviesraad en die opvolgende Stedelike Bantoeraad van Mangaung/Bloemfontein, 1945-1973

Die Naturelle-Adviesraad en Stedelike Bantoeraad van Mangaung het, in die afwesigheid van politieke en uitvoerende bevoegdhede, weinig sukses met die dringende sosio-ekonomiese en politieke griewe van die swart gemeenskap behaal. Hulle sukses was afhanklik van die arbitrêre mag van die owerhede wat slegs aan versoeke voldoen het indien hierdie owerhede self bevoordeel is. Andersins is versoeke onbepaald uitgestel. Die twee liggame het gevolglik onveranderd sonder die vooruitsig op meer bevoegdhede voortbestaan. Hulle grootste prestasie was uiteindelik hulle rol as informante van hulle gemeenskap se sosio-ekonomiese en politieke behoeftes, gedagtes en sienswyses, en om hulself in die meeste gevalle as verantwoordelike en volhardende kampvegters van hulle gemeenskapsbelange te bewys.

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The City Council of Bloemfontein was one of the first local authorities in South Africa to establish a Native Advisory Board to allow its African residents some part in the administration of their township, Mangaung. This was in 1913. Ten years later the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, No 21 of 1923, was promulgated to standardise legislation on urban Africans by allowing Native Advisory Boards to serve as a communicative link between residents and their local authority, and requiring suitable and sufficient housing for urban Africans. This Act was the first in a series of this nature, which was to culminate in the Natives (Urban Area) Consolidation Act, No 25 of 1945.¹

The Native Advisory Board of Mangaung existed until 1 August 1968, when it was succeeded by the Urban Bantu Council system in terms of the Law on Urban Bantu Councils, No 79 of 1961.² The Urban Bantu Council system existed only for five years, until August 1973, when it was replaced by the Bantu Administration Board system in terms of the Act on the Administration of Bantu Affairs, No 45 of 1971. As soon as such a Bantu Affairs Administration Board was instituted, all control of African urban affairs, assets and liabilities of the local municipal African revenue account was taken over from the local authority by the Administration Board.³ The Administration Board, which exercised new powers and functions, falls outside the scope of this article, which limits itself to the period up to August 1973, when the City Council of Bloemfontein exercised direct authority over the Advisory Board and the Urban Bantu Council.

- 1 Cf T R H Davenport, African Townsmen? South African Natives (Urban areas) legislation through the years. *African Affairs*, 1969, 68 (271): 95. Mangaung is the traditional name for the African townships of Bloemfontein. This name must not be confused with Mangaung as the name for the new municipality which includes Bloemfontein, Thaba Nchu and Bothshabelo.
- 2 Free State Archives Bloemfontein (FAB), Archival Group, Bloemfontein Municipality (MBL), MBL 14/1/3/1, Vol II, Minutes, Urban Bantu Council, 8.10.1969: 185; *Die Volksblad* 1.8.1973.
- 3 FAB, MBL 3/1/65, Mayor's Minutes, 31.3.1973: 49-51.

1. Background and aims

The main aim of this article is to evaluate the role of the Native Advisory Board and its successor, the Urban Bantu Council, in Mangaung in the period from 1945 to 1973. The preceding years of the Native Advisory Board have already been investigated.⁴ Two considerations which motivated this study on the Mangaung Native Advisory Board and its successor are their ostensible absence from publications on the Native Advisory Board system in South Africa, and the extensive criticism so readily levelled at the system. Well-known authors on local administration, like L Reyburn, L Kuper and T R H Davenport, discuss the Native Advisory Board system and its operation in several large cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth. Discussion of the system's role in Mangaung remains conspicuous by its absence.⁵ It is therefore fitting to trace this role and to determine whether the doubts about its efficiency expressed in various quarters were justified. Although the Urban Bantu Council existed only for five years, it is also included in this evaluation because it was to all intents and purposes a continuation of the Native Advisory Board (despite the inclusion of tribal or homeland representatives) with no differentiation in power or function. These two bodies thus concluded an era of urban African participation within a municipal administrative environment.

The system of Native Advisory Boards applied in South Africa after 1945 as a means of providing a voice for the residents of African townships had counterparts in at least five other African countries, namely Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Nyasaland (Malawi), Tanganyika and Kenya. The functions of these boards were similar in so far as they were advisory, but differed

4 Cf C J P le Roux, Rol van die Naturelle-adviesraad op plaaslike bestuursvlak in Bloemfontein, 1923-1948. *Contree*, April 1989, 25: 5-11.

5 Consider T R H Davenport, African and urban local government after 1910. Grahamstown, undated manuscript; J E Mathewson, The role of urban Bantu administration as a basic component of the policy of separate development. *The South African Municipal Magazine*, October 1960, 44(517): 11-2; L Kuper. *An African bourgeoisie: race, class and politics in South Africa*. London: Yale University Press, 1965; L Reyburn, The urban African in local government. *South African Institute of Race Relations*, 1960, 9: 7-23.

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in the cases of Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika and Kenya in that these countries included African members in their city councils, enabling them to exercise full powers on matters affecting the interests of their townships.⁶ In South Africa the policy of separate development and the resultant legislation promulgated by the National Party government after 1948 kept the African politically subjected, and urban Africans were not permitted seats on white councils in central or local government.⁷

The Native Advisory Boards were among the many African statutory bodies, like the School Boards and the Native Labour Committees, which shared the subordination of Africans to a general policy of racial separation, including administrative and executive domination by the white authorities. From the viewpoint of these authorities, the African members' participation in the statutory bodies implied acceptance of their racially subordinate role and restricted field of action. For Africans, however, participation did not necessarily mean subordination, because positions on the statutory bodies could be used to undermine the structure of domination. They provided opportunities for organising the people and improving living conditions. Policy could not be changed directly, but pressure could be exerted by skilful organisation.⁸ One aim of this study is to determine to what extent the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung and its successor succeeded in this respect.

The strategies adopted by the members of the Native Advisory Board will also be analysed. It should be borne in mind that the Board was run essentially by white officials who seemed paternalistic and conservative in the sense that they tended to resist change. The relative success attained by the Board needs to be evaluated. The role which Board members played, their channels of communication and the resources they used will likewise be put into perspective.

6 C L Coles, The African and local government. *The South African Municipal Magazine*, June 1960, 43(513): 19; Reyburn, *The urban African in local government*, 1960: 58-61.

7 C F J Muller (ed), *Five hundred years, a history of South Africa*. Pretoria: Academica, 1981: 490.

8 Kuper, *An African bourgeoisie*, 1965: 328.

The Second World War (1939-1945) introduced the notions of self-government and nationalism into African political circles in South Africa. The possibility of participation in the statutory bodies, not as docile subordinates, but as fighting advance guards of the African liberation movement, was hotly debated. Two opposing views crystallised: one that all available means should be used, both protest and compromise; the other that there should be no co-operation with the statutory bodies, that they should be boycotted, since they were designed for the subordination (enslavement) of the African people.⁹ At best, participation was tolerated by political organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC), which allowed its members freedom of choice. The political affiliations of the members of the Mangaung Advisory Board after 1945 are unfortunately not known, as the central government explicitly banned political matters from Board meetings to prevent political agitators from disrupting them.¹⁰

The Advisory Boards had the potential to play a decisive role in promoting law, order and the socio-economic interests of their people. To the mind of the local authorities, however, they still involved too many irresponsible and refractory people who were not serving the interests of the community. For this reason there were conflicting opinions as to whether the Boards' advisory powers should be expanded by the conferral of certain executive powers in the post-war years.¹¹

The position of the Boards in the post-war period was actually an untenable one. It was a time of acute socio-economic problems in areas such as health, housing and infra-structural amenities like the provision of water and sewerage facilities. When recommendations were made or grievances voiced, they were dismissed as unfounded or responded to with empty promises. Having only an advisory capacity, the Boards were unable to alter discriminatory legislation, and this left them vulnerable to the anger of the community, which

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*: 328-9; M Wilson & L Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa*, II. London: Oxford University Press, 1971: 229.

11 FAB, MBL 3/1/38, Mayor's Minutes, 1942, 1944, 1946.

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blamed them for doing nothing to promote their welfare.¹² The treatment eventually meted out to the Boards discouraged intelligent, capable residents from standing for election.

In this context, this article also aims to determine the extent to which the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung became an effective instrument recognised by the authorities concerned, with due weight being given to its views and recommendations in order to boost its stature and morale. The successful Native Advisory Board system of Benoni demonstrated that morale could be boosted by the addition of further administrative duties to its standard statutory duties, turning it into a “board of enquiry” into disciplinary action and the allocation of trading sites and residential houses. The touchstone by which the Board may be judged is the extent of its influence on issues which would normally have to be referred to the City Council. In the case of Benoni, full recognition enabled the Board to make a meaningful contribution to the welfare of the African township, and its members to participate actively and positively in township affairs.¹³

Two last conditions for an effective Native Advisory Board were the local authority’s provision of training facilities for African municipal workers and municipal officials’ cultivation of a positive relationship with members of the Board. The attitude of the manager of the Department of Native Administration, who acted *ex officio* as chairman of the Board, was particularly important. The experience of Native Advisory Boards was that these officials were, in general, far too anxious to assume the role of “guardian” of the Africans, considering them incapable of managing their own affairs. It is human nature to become discontented when one is underestimated or ignored, which may lead to carelessness and irresponsible conduct. Recognition of work done is an important means of cultivating responsible, content workers.¹⁴ This article will investigate the extent to which these conditions were met by the relevant officials and municipal bodies in order to arrive at a fair assessment of the role of Mangaung’s Native Advisory Board and its successor, the Urban Bantu Council.

12 Wilson & Thompson, *Oxford history*, 1971: 229; Kuper, *An African bourgeoisie*, 1965: 343.

13 Mathewson, *The role of urban Bantu administration*, 1960: 12-3.

14 *Ibid*, p 13. W D Kotze, *Die noodsaaklikheid van goeie menseverhoudinge. The*

2. Functions of the Board and Urban Bantu Council

A fair evaluation of the roles of these two bodies naturally calls for a brief consideration of their prescribed functions. Both the Institute of Race Relations and the Native Laws Commission of Enquiry (the Fagan Commission) commented in 1947 on the permanency of the urban African, which entitled him to some form of representation in local affairs, pre-supposing executive functions exceeding the much debated and limited advisory functions.¹⁵ The local authority prescribed the functions of its Native Advisory Board. No regulation concerning its African community could be made or withdrawn without consultation with the Board.¹⁶

The 1923 Act did not prescribe more than a consultative or advisory function for Native Advisory Boards, but it did oblige local authorities to seek such consultation. However, the instructions of the Act were not explicit enough to compel local authorities to consider a Board's advice, let alone act upon it. The Act of 1945 attempted to close this loophole by requiring local authorities to report to the Minister of Native Affairs on all consultations with the Boards. The functions of the Boards were also specified in greater detail. In addition to commenting on proposed township regulations, which after 1945 required ministerial or provincial approval, Boards could give their opinion on any matter referred by the local authority or by the Minister via that authority, including matters of urban African interest such as housing, transport, education or health facilities. The Act made certain that the Minister was kept informed of the Boards' views. The Boards' function remained advisory, however; neither administrative nor executive functions had ever been contemplated. The aim was to establish cordial co-operation between the African members of the Boards and their local authorities, with the intention of ensuring that the African view received serious consideration.¹⁷

Advisory Boards directed their recommendations to responsible Native Affairs Committees of the City Councils. In the case of

South African Municipal Magazine, September 1962, 44(40): 15-7.

15 Reyburn, *The urban African in local government*, 1960: 32-4.

16 J F Holleman, *The tightrope dancers*. *The South African Municipal Magazine*, February 1959, 41(498): 17.

17 *Ibid.*: 18-9.

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Bloemfontein, the Native Affairs Committee consisted of five white councillors, including the Mayor, as chairman, and the manager of the Department of Native Administration. Native Affairs Committees were able to diminish the advisory powers of the Boards, because Board members were excluded from meetings between the committees and the City Councils. Executive decisions affecting Africans' welfare were thus taken for or against them, but never with them. It was in the Committees that policies were shaped and direction given to recommendations and new projects. When faced with criticism from the Boards, the Committees might close ranks like a "charmed circle".¹⁸ As far as is known, however, this never occurred in the case of the Bloemfontein Committee.

Fundamentally, the task of the manager of the Department of Bantu Administration was to carry out the policy prescribed by the City Council's Native Affairs Committee and to apply the laws and regulations presented to him. However, his position was fraught with conflicting loyalties. If he was an expert on urban African affairs and sympathetically inclined (as both C R Cooper and G J Viljoen as successive managers of Mangaung indeed proved to be) he could be a valuable ally to the Board, acting as a conduit between it and the Native Affairs Committee. His position remained, however, unenviable. In addition to being a municipal employee and as such the servant of the City Council, which represented the dominant interests of the white electorate, he was only empowered to exercise his duties under the revokable licence issued to him by the Minister of Native Affairs. He therefore had to serve two masters who often did not see eye to eye with regard to urban policy. It is surprising that the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung found its way through all this complexity with only advisory powers at its disposal.¹⁹

18 Kuper, *An African bourgeoisie*, 1965: 331-2.

19 M de Jongh, *Interaction and transaction: a study in councillor behaviour in a black African township*. Unpubl DPhil thesis, Rhodes University, 1979: 146-8; Holleman, *Tightrope dancers*, 1959: 15-7; G J Viljoen, *Die taak van 'n lokasiesuperintendent*, II. *Munisipale Aangeleentede*, Februarie 1960, 25(294): 15-7. Davenport, *Africans and urban local government after 1910*. Grahams-town, undated manuscript.

The advisory function of the Native Advisory Board should not be underestimated. A statutory provision enabled the Board to initiate constructive proposals on any local matter concerning its community's welfare and interests, and obliged its local authority to take note of its views. This, together with the Board's right to consider and make recommendations on the annual estimates of income and expenditure under the Native Revenue Account as well as on whether to establish a beer brewing monopoly for the local authority, did confer considerable financial responsibilities upon the Board.²⁰

State controls such as legislation passed by the ruling National Party to regulate local authorities and the lives of urban Africans put the advisory powers of the Native Advisory Boards to the test. Measures ensuring racial segregation and labour control were tightened to preserve the socio-economic and political interests of whites. Bread-and-butter issues like housing, infra-structural facilities and wages were the most discussed topics at the local level, while the franchise, land ownership and the pass laws were tackled at the national level by the reactionary ANC and PAC. The series of bannings and detention orders served on these and similar organisations after the upheavals of 1962 meant that the Native Advisory Boards became the only official voice of the urban African.

These, then, were the circles of power within which the Native Advisory Boards had to operate. It remains to be seen how successfully the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung availed itself of its prescribed powers in order to enhance the well-being of its community.

3. Strategies for action

Careful strategy played an increasing role in the actions taken by the Advisory Board and its sub-committee. These included using various channels of communication, making concerted efforts for change and expressing aggression, urgency and dissatisfaction.

20 Holleman, *Tightrope dancers*, 1959: 19; The Native Laws Amendment Act, No 36 of 1944, Articles 5 and 6 were consolidated in Article 19 of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, No 25 of 1945. For a detailed discussion of the functions of Native Advisory Boards, consult J D Rheinalt Jones, *Native urban administration. The functions of Native Advisory Boards. Race Relations*, 1946, 13(2): 53-60.

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The American author Rao stresses the importance of lively interaction or communication in the socio-economic and political spheres of committees. Communication causes people to recognise their own importance in the power structure, motivating them to participate actively in discussions aimed at making the authorities aware of the community's needs.²¹ The channels of communication open to the Advisory Board and its sub-committee included regular attendance at meetings, repeated complaints about housing and infra-structural facilities, memoranda, and delegations to municipal committees and organisations such as the police, railway and educational authorities to clarify issues relating to crime, railway timetables and additional high school facilities.

Richards and Kuper indicate in their study of council structures and decision-making in Central African states that the inability to make decisions due to political and legal barriers did not spell disaster for the Board's members. Despite the white chairman's external power-base, which enabled him to direct the decision-making process, every board or council contained within itself a decision-making elite consisting of a number of influential members, which provided an element of unified command. Despite conflicting interests, this elite would, at times, unite its fellow members to formulate decisions in the interests of their electors or their own interests as leaders. By their deliberations, these influential members guided the rest of the Board through disagreements.²² In the case of the Mangaung Advisory Board, the six members of its sub-committee were usually prominent members acting as an elite group. At one stage, one member was a health inspector of the Native Administration Department, another a teacher, two artisans and two traders. The sub-committee, also known as the Central Committee, demonstrated its increasing self-reliance and administrative ability by playing a decisive role in the Board's decision to accept the annual estimates for the Native Revenue Account.²³

21 L Rao, *Communication and development*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966: 654.

22 For a detailed discussion of the decision-making process, consult A Richards & A Kuper (eds), *Council in action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971: 18-9, 21-3.

23 FAB, MBL 1/2/3/1/58, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 18.4.1957: 2.

The sub-committee met once a month to discuss important matters, whereafter it entered into discussions with the Board to clarify sensitive issues. The full Board, including the members of the sub-committee, then convened with the chairman to report and make recommendations on issues such as measures to combat crime, juvenile delinquency and overcrowded buses. The sub-committee actually played a prominent role in the affairs of Mangaung, acting as the power behind the Board.²⁴ The discussions among members of the Board, its Sub-Committee and the City Council were typified by lively interaction. The overall impression was one of unity and friendliness, except for the discussions on the beer hall question and the deficits of the Native Revenue Account during the late 1940s. In most cases, the influential members of the sub-committee seem to have agreed with the wishes of the City Council. They realised that co-operation with the Council strengthened their advisory powers and safeguarded their positions, in particular in the case of those members nominated by the Council.

The one outstanding strategy used by members of the Advisory Board of Mangaung was their concerted attempt to bring about changes which would free them and their people from the constraints that they had identified. The most appropriate examples of this strategy relate to the issues of municipal representation, influx control measures, freehold property rights, appropriate housing and infra-structural facilities, and the dire financial position of Mangaung's residents. These were probably the most important issues, and they cropped up continually from the Board's inception in 1913, and continued to engage its successor, the Urban Bantu Council, until 1973.

3.1 Municipal representation

In general the years before 1945 were typified by the extremely patronising attitude adopted by the officials of the Bloemfontein Municipal Authority. The behaviour of the members of the Mangaung Native Advisory Board was characterised by servility. Relations between municipal officials and members of the Board were more personal and amicable.²⁵ After 1945 the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung became

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Cf Le Roux, Rol van die Naturelle-adviesraad, 1989: 5-11.

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more involved in political issues at both local and central governmental levels. Municipal representation and the pass laws came under fire, as did issues of race relations, social discrimination and the Board's lack of power. The Board consequently entered the post-war era in an unsound relationship with the City Council. The Native Affairs Committee of the Council blamed the Board for being ineffective because its members were chosen by an instigating minority, agitating for direct representation on municipal councils, which would be in conflict with the national policy of separate development.²⁶

African political organisations like the ANC and African trade union movements were indeed exploiting grievances such as the absence of an African municipal franchise, low wages, housing shortages and the regulations pertaining to urban administration. Cost-of-living allowances had last been raised before the war, and there were renewed calls for direct representation on municipal councils to improve welfare benefits generally. The Bloemfontein Non-European Child Welfare Society ascribed the ineffectiveness of the Board to the absence of Africans from municipal councils. The Advisory Boards Congress, supported by the Natives Representative Council, voted in favour of direct representation on municipal councils in 1948, 1949 and 1951.²⁷

The Native Advisory Board of Mangaung, like its peers in the rest of the country, met with formidable opposition to direct representation on municipal councils. The Fagan Report proved that nearly all city councils, including Bloemfontein, expressed their opposition to such innovations in 1948. This denial of municipal rights to Africans illustrates the general tendency for unenfranchised groups to suffer discriminatory treatment. To Mangaung's Advisory Board, it boded frustration and disappointment in its quest to improve the socio-economic conditions of its community.

In 1946 five members of the Board complained about its powerlessness. Their position had become untenable as residents blamed them for unpopular regulations and increased taxes which had been approved despite the Board's objections. The Board criticised the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 for requiring that it

²⁶ *The Friend*, 21.11.1946, Housing of natives.

²⁷ *The Friend*, 20.3.1945, Unrest among natives; Davenport, Africans, [sz]: 20.

should be consulted, yet neglecting to stipulate the steps to be taken if the City Council, after such consultation, refused to accept the Board's recommendations. In a last effort to increase its status and powers, the Board petitioned the Congress of Native Advisory Boards. However, this was to no avail, and the Congress was reprimanded by the Union Department of Native Affairs for discussing national political issues like voting rights, which fell outside the scope of their work.²⁸ Realising that co-operation was necessary to sustain their advisory powers in the absence of municipal representation, the Board resolved in 1947 to hold regular meetings with the Native Commissioner, who acted as the local representative of the Department of Native Affairs. The Commissioner served as an important contact for the Board, facilitating matters of policing and crime in Mangaung.²⁹

3.2 Lodgers' permits and influx control

The issues of lodgers' permits and influx control were classic examples of a powerless advisory board using all the means at its disposal in a vain attempt to succeed. The new lodgers' permit regulations required permits to be renewed monthly instead of annually from April 1945. These regulations, prescribed by the Union Department of Native Affairs, were meant to supplement the pass laws in tracing undesired vagrant Africans in urban townships. Monthly renewals would also help to tighten control over the movements of Africans trying to find employment.³⁰

The Native Advisory Board of Mangaung was among the first to protest vehemently against the new permit regulations, arguing that Africans had to leave their employment to queue up at the office of the Municipal Department of Native Administration, with the possibility of losing a day's wages or even being dismissed. Their situation was also one of insecurity because every African feared being ap-

28 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/42, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 12.9.1946: 2; *Race Relations News*, January 1956, 18(1): 21.

29 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 7.3.1945: 2.

30 *Ibid.*

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prehended, and felt like an alien.³¹ The members of the Board were evidently under great pressure. They were unable to see the matter through, especially after residents, supported by the ANC, sent a second petition to the Native Affairs Committee. The petition conveyed a vote of no confidence in the Board and demanded its resignation for failing to look after the interests of the residents.³² In a final bid to win back support and simultaneously to coerce the City Council to repeal the regulations, the Board advised residents not to pay the permit fees. The Native Affairs Committee reminded the Board that only permit holders who paid their fees were eligible to vote for candidates in Board elections.³³ This won the lodgers' permit debate for the Council. The Board members saw their positions as more important than the permit debate, which they realised was a losing battle.

The Native Laws Amendment Act, No 46 of 1937, whose major concern was influx control, was a severe test for the advisory powers of the Mangaung Native Advisory Board. This Act increased the powers of the Minister of Native Affairs, enabling him to compel a local authority to implement any relevant section of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945. The Act tended to disrupt family life, by increasing influx control and the expulsion powers of the local authority in order to implement the labour and housing policies of the Government. It only allowed African women and the adult children of aged or disabled persons to enter municipal areas to join their families. The Board's petitions to the Native Affairs Committee for unrestricted entry of Africans were to no avail, because strong central control weakened municipal autonomy in local African administration. This put the Board in an even worse position because its potential ally in the local authority was overpowered by an ideologically driven central power. The Board was eventually only able to express dissatisfaction with the Act's restrictions on the entry of Africans into Mangaung (Article 10).³⁴

31 FAB, MBL, 1.2.4.1.39, Minutes, Native Affairs Committee, 10.8.1945: 3.

32 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/41. Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 17.1.1946: 2.

33 FAB MBL, 1/2/4/1/41, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 8.3.1946: 6-9.

34 P Maylam, The rise and decline of urban apartheid in South Africa. *African Affairs*, January 1990, 89(354): 66-7; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 13.2.1945: 2; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/40, Minutes, Native

The stricter influx control and measures for the expulsion of Africans surplus to the labour market, enacted in the 1952 Native Laws Amendment Act and the Bantu Labour Law No 67 of 1964, prompted the ANC to join forces with the Board's protest action in the English Press. Pressure on the Board to lessen the impact of the influx control measures on the residents of Mangaung increased during the 1960s. Its duty to report work seekers, new arrivals and African visitors staying longer than two weeks (in contravention of the law), made the Board unpopular in Mangaung. Hundreds of prosecutions under Article 10 resulted in broken families, and Board members were stigmatised as collaborators in a system which they actually rejected.³⁵

The inflexibility of these regulations made it difficult for the Board to contribute to the smooth running of the township. Like its counterparts elsewhere in the country, the Board was actually assisting Government in discriminating socially and economically against its own people, knowing well that such a policy was worsening African rural impoverishment by preventing rural Africans from taking up employment in urban areas. The Board thus became an unwilling accomplice to the process of rural African impoverishment and the disruption of family life in urban townships.

3.3 Freehold property rights

The issues of freehold property rights, which originated long before the Second World War, exemplified the persistence of the Board on a key question. Backed by the ANC and the Advisory Board Congress, the Board raised the issue repeatedly in discussion with the Native Affairs Committee between 1949 and 1954. The discussions, unlike those on the lodgers' permit issue, were cordial and at no time confrontational, probably because of the checkmate position pertaining to the lodgers' permit question and the fact that the Committee members, as well as the Board's chairman, frankly explained that the

Advisory Board, Annexure A, 20.8.1945: 1; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/46, Minutes, Native Affairs Committee, 6.10.1949: 2.

35 *The Friend*, 18.9.1956. Location Board criticised; Maylam, Rise and decline, 1990: 69; T W A Koller, The Institute of Administration on Non-European Affairs. *Municipal Affairs*, December 1967, 33(388): 25.

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Government would definitely not consider granting property rights to urban Africans on account of its policy of separate racial development. Government, however, was not averse to the granting of long leases (25 years or more). The ANC Memorandum of 1952, which unequivocally undertook to fight with all its might against racial separation and for freehold title, undoubtedly played a decisive role in the Board's decision to leave it to the ANC to handle both this issue and the voting question, which were of national importance. The Native Advisory Board of Mangaung would henceforth limit its attention to local matters in order to avoid confrontation with local and central government.³⁶

3.4 Financial matters and administrative competence

The unfortunate course of the lodgers' permit question and the sensitive issues of the franchise and freehold title impressed the necessity of mutual goodwill and co-operation on the members of the Native Advisory Board and the Native Affairs Committee. Their good intentions were soon tested by critical deficits in the Native Revenue Account of Mangaung and an ineffective municipal bus service. Overcrowded buses, meaningless timetables and too few bus shelters forced residents of Mangaung to queue for hours at bus stops, causing them to arrive late at work and to face dismissal.³⁷ The situation reached critical proportions in March 1947 when a deputation of delegates representing the Native Advisory Board, the ANC and the All-African Congress (a country-wide political organisation) called on the manager of the Department of Native Administration, G J Viljoen, and the Native Affairs Committee with a complaint about the frustrations of the bus service. These delegates significantly stated that representations through the Native Advisory Board had been made to no avail since 1941.³⁸

36 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/46, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 7.11.1949: 1; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/48, Report, Manager, Dept Native Administration, April 1951: 3; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/53, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 13.2.1945: 2.

37 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 13.2.1945: 2.

38 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/43, Report, Manager Dept Native Administration, February 1947: 7; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 7.3.1945: 2; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/42, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 20.6.1945: 1.

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The Native Affairs Committee kept its promise to be open and co-operative regarding complaints from the Board by recommending that the Transport and Electricity Committee should comply with the Board's bus proposals. The Board actually stressed that its proposals ought not to be regarded as complaints, but as "an effort to find a solution to the transport problem". This indicated the Board's co-operative and docile spirit, as well as the realisation of its dependence on the goodwill of the responsible Native Affairs Committee. The Transport and Electricity Committee raised excuses such as the shortage of money and material, which delayed the solution of the bus crisis until 1971, again stressing the powerlessness of the Board.³⁹

The Council's low esteem of the Board's administrative abilities was affirmed when the Board decided to consult residents about the proposal to raise taxes (as had been the case with the lodgers' permits). The decision was unwise as it reflected negatively on the ability of the members to act with self-confidence as responsible members of a duly constituted body of local government. As a legally constituted body such a Board elected by the residents to represent them, should think and act on behalf of residents and not depend upon them to make decisions. The procedure was in any case a time-consuming practice which delayed the administrative process.⁴⁰

Despite opposition from the Board and the residents of Mangaung, the City Council eventually decided to raise taxes instead of cutting municipal services, which could have endangered the health of Mangaung (and indirectly of white Bloemfontein). These were financial and health risks which the Board ignored for the sake of its own popularity and position in the community. In the ensuing debate on the question of a beer hall which was proposed by the City Council, in an attempt to curb illicit brewing and crime, the majority of the Board's members acknowledged that their sole reason for opposing the erection of a beer hall under municipal management

39 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 7.3.1945: 8; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/42, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 20.6.1946: 1; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/73, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 11.11.1963, Annexure A: 3; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/63, Mayor's Minutes, 13.3.1971: 39.

40 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 18.4.1945: 1-2.

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was to gain the support of their electors and ensure their positions on the Board.⁴¹ In this sense the Board abided irresolutely by the wishes of a certain sector of its community, abrogating their responsibility and declining the opportunity to rely on their own insight in deciding what would be best for their people in the long run. They again shifted the onus onto their electors.

The hostel riot of October 1957 cast a much darker cloud over the Advisory Board of Mangaung because it raised serious questions about the trustworthiness, impartiality and discretion of the members. The manager of the Municipal Department of Native Administration indicated that at least two members of the Board's sub-committee, J Sesing and D Mapena, deputed to investigate the causes of the riot, had falsely blamed the white Superintendent of Mangaung. They neglected their duty to investigate all the contributing factors. Viljoen, who also acted as chairman of the Board, surmised that some members had a personal grievance against the Superintendent, and had falsely accused him in an attempt to have him removed from his post. Misusing their influential positions in the sub-committee, they had tried to manipulate the decision-making process in the manager's Department, thus violating the trust the manager reposed in them. As a consequence, the Board was not invited to join the Native Affairs Committee in forming a Commission of Enquiry into the circumstances of the riot, or to participate in the ensuing crime investigation in Mangaung in 1965.⁴²

In endeavouring to deflect attention from their administrative incompetence and to regain their electors' approval, members of the Board were in no way apologetic or meek in their discussions with representatives of the Union Department of Native Affairs on the issue of the financial deficit. They stated that Mangaung was the responsibility of the City Council and that the Council had neglected its duty to the township, referring to the poor infrastructure such as bad streets and dirty night-soil pails as well as to the low wages which precluded the majority of residents from paying the raised taxes. It was unfair to

41 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/66, Minutes, Native Affairs Committee, 5.7.1961: 9.

42 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/66, Minutes, Native Affairs Committee, 10.4.1958: 23-32.

have to pay higher taxes for services to which they were lawfully entitled but which they did not receive.⁴³

Reflecting on the administrative inabilities of the Board, a leading member, D Mapena, affirmed a spirit of non-co-operation among members, albeit only a minority. The reasons included political motivations like self-government and nationalism, which were rife after 1945, as well as the expectation of elected members that members nominated by Council should not express views contrary to their own. Such an expectation was, in the light of the Board's limited advisory powers, detrimental to its trustworthiness and efficiency. To eradicate such malpractices the general suggestion of the Board's members was to abolish the ward (block) electoral system, thus enabling electors to contest any ward, in order to elect suitable persons to serve the entire community.⁴⁴

During the 1960s there was no agreement on the degree of administrative efficiency of the Advisory Board of Mangaung and the Native Advisory Board system. It received both positive and negative criticism. No less a personage than Dr H F Verwoerd, the Prime Minister and former Minister of Native Affairs, described the system as a "hopeless failure" because it simply served as a platform for agitators. Verwoerd's remark was too generalised to have real substance, however.⁴⁵ On the other hand, G J Viljoen, manager of the Bloemfontein Department of Native Administration, and T Koller, manager of the Johannesburg Department of Native Administration, both expressed appreciation for their respective Advisory Boards' constructive proposals on improving conditions in their townships. Though less than 37% of registered voters used their vote in Board elections, which cast doubt on the political maturity of Board members, Viljoen and Koller were convinced that the Boards were able to do a great deal of good.⁴⁶

43 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/40, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure B, 22.8.1945.

44 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/48, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 19.10.1950: 3.

45 *The Friend*, 18.9.1956, Native Advisory Boards a failure.

46 Davenport, *Africans*, [sa]: 56; Mathewson, *The role of urban Bantu administration*, 1960: 17.

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Viljoen detected a sense of corporate responsibility emerging among members of his Board, along with a clear desire to play a constructive role as leaders of their people in the field of local administration. Over the years, members of the Board had developed enough to justify some executive role in the administration of their own affairs, especially in view of the fact that African countries to the north were gaining national independence after 1960. However, South Africa's racial segregation policy counteracted efforts by African leaders to advance their manpower, resulting in a widespread sense of injustice and resentment.⁴⁷

In the 1960s, the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung surprised many of its critics, including the City Council, on financial matters. The Board revealed an increasing awareness of its financial responsibilities, probably due in part to the escalating costs of housing and infra-structural facilities in the new suburbs, but most of all to the improved efficiency of its sub-committee in financial matters. The sub-committee continued to apply sound financial measures to ensure a balanced revenue account.⁴⁸

The financial position of Mangaung's residents was one of the Board's major concerns. At least 80% of the residents lived below the breadline. To improve their financial position, the Board demanded higher wages for workers in both the public and the private sector. It concentrated on creating employment opportunities in municipal organs which rendered services to Mangaung, such as the offices of the Department of Native Administration, the municipal bus and taxi services, nursing, trading and the building industry. The deliberations of the Board with the Native Affairs Committee in an attempt to secure employment opportunities for residents revealed the members' resourcefulness and their concern for their people's welfare. The

47 *Ibid*: 58; *The Friend*, 19.8.1960, A change of heart; 2.5.1961, Anxious days ahead; 16.4.1962, Editors admire our Bantu housing.

48 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/54, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure F, 8.4.1954; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/71, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 17.4.1963: 2.

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Board used the Smit Report to support its bid for African employment opportunities despite the Government's discriminatory racial segregation policy.⁴⁹

The Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945, which empowered local authorities to regulate or prohibit hawking and peddling within the African township, made it imperative for the Board to use all its powers of persuasion to secure employment opportunities for its people.⁵⁰ In a memorandum to the Native Laws Commission in 1946, F J Molise and D Msikinya, two leading Board members, lamented the dilatory attitude of the City Council towards improving the financial position of its African residents. They warned the Council that such an attitude made residents suspect local officials of ill will, thus "getting their backs up". The Board's somewhat belligerent strategy was successful as the Native Affairs Committee decided in 1947 as a matter of policy to appoint Africans in municipal positions which served only Africans.⁵¹

These concessions to the Board, and after 1968 to the Urban Bantu Council, coincided with the Government policy of letting Africans serve their own people.⁵² The lenient and co-operative spirit demonstrated by the City Council in allowing more buses, ambulances and taxis, including African drivers, was of course also due to the steady increase in Mangaung's population and the resultant overcrowding of transport facilities. These considerations sustained the Advisory Board's efforts to create employment opportunities for its people.

The sub-committee of the Board demonstrated its understanding of administrative procedures by asking probing questions about the housing loan programme and the erection of shops for prospective African traders. After more than 25 years of requests from the Board, the City Council approved trading sites for Africans in Mangaung in

49 *Race Relations News*, February 1954, 16(2): 23; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 22.3.1945: 3; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/43, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 20.2.1947: 3.

50 FAB, MBL, 3/1/48, Mayor's Minutes, 31.3.1956: 18.

51 *The Friend*, 21.11.1946, Native town councils recommended; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/43, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 16.10.1947: 2.

52 FAB, MBL, 3/1/63, Mayor's Minutes, 31.3.1971: 41.

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1948. The sub-committee participated in the drafting of trade regulations and was directly involved in the establishment of 40 general dealers and 60 fresh produce dealers in the late 1960s. They also checked house plans and the allocation of building sites to prospective house-builders in the new suburbs. Board members' constant petitioning for hospital facilities for Mangaung resulted in the establishment of the Pelonomi Hospital in 1970. This was a substantial contribution to the social welfare of Mangaung. The chairman's comment was, "the Advisory Board fought hard in the past and representations were made to the Provincial Authorities".⁵³

The Board's campaign to create more employment opportunities for the residents of Mangaung was impeded by the provisions of the Native Building Workers' Amendment Act, No 60 of 1955. This Act made it illegal for any person to employ an African on skilled work, such as bricklaying or plumbing, in any white area. The purpose of the Act was to ensure that African building workers were employed only in African townships, to prevent them from endangering the employment opportunities of white building workers in the white urban areas. It was only in 1966 that the Wage Board decided to increase the wages of municipal workers. The Urban Bantu Council failed to persuade the Wage Board to increase wages further. In 1972 the Mayor himself admitted that wage structures were still too low.⁵⁴

The Advisory Board of Mangaung utilised two strategies to combat the deteriorating financial position of its people. It pleaded continuously with the manager of the Native Administration Department (who was of course also its sympathetic chairman) to exercise patience towards indigent residents who were in arrears with their taxes and it humbly endeavoured to persuade the Wage Board to raise the wages of African workers, supplying a memorandum containing statistics of the low wage structure and proposed increases to meet

53 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/41, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure B, 14.2.1946: 3; FAB, MBL, 3/1/62, Mayor's Minutes, 31.3.1970: 83; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/45, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 1.7.1949: 2.

54 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/77, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 9.2.1966: 68; FAB, MBL, 3/1/64, Mayor's Minutes, 31.3.1972: 85; FAB, MBL, 3/1/62, Mayor's Minutes, 31.3.1970: 83; FAB, MBL, 3/1/48, Mayor's Minutes, 31.3.1956: 17.

the high cost-of-living.⁵⁵ The fact that it stressed its humility twice in the memorandum indicates that it realised the limitations of its powers and that it felt responsible for improving the financial situation of its people.

The Board and the Urban Bantu Council nonetheless played a leading role in communicating the dire financial position of the residents of Mangaung, including recommendations for possible employment opportunities, to the City Council. Evidently, as was proved by the successful Native Advisory Board system of Benoni, the allocation of additional administrative duties (for trade regulations and building sites) to the standard statutory duties of the Mangaung Board also served to boost morale and encourage positive participation of members in the affairs of their townships.

4. Racial tolerance of officials

The question of racial intolerance, however, impacted negatively on relationships between members of the Board and municipal officials. The English Press confirmed the belief of Viljoen, who was also chairman of the Mangaung Native Advisory Board, that there was a feeling of mutual antagonism between white officials and African residents in Bloemfontein in the 1960s. Viljoen admitted that the multiplicity of restrictive legislation for African townships was the reason for this. The only remedy lay with individual municipal officials who had to apply such legislation tolerantly and sympathetically, taking the dire socio-economic and political circumstances of the urban African into account.⁵⁶

From his position as President of the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs of Southern Africa, Viljoen was able to speak convincingly of the intolerance among municipal officials, including those in Bloemfontein. Research conducted on contact be-

55 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/44, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 21.9.1950: 1; FAB, MBL, 3; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/47, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 21.9.1950: 1; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/62, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 12.3.1959; 3-4.

56 *The Friend*, 18.1.1962, Apartheid policy must go...; FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/59, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 6.11.1957: 1-2.

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tween white municipal officials and urban Africans in Bloemfontein and six other major cities in South Africa revealed a remarkable lack of contact, stressing the extreme importance of consultation and discussion about the manner in which legislation and regulations were implemented. The employment of officials who were racially prejudiced, not trained to work with Africans and incapable of understanding their outlook on life, their aspirations, or the legislation pertaining to them, certainly impacted negatively on the Advisory Board's administrative abilities.⁵⁷

In Bloemfontein many instances of intolerance and non-consultation by white officials were encountered. During the 1960s Board members complained regularly that the attitude of officials in the office of the Bantu Affairs Commissioner was inattentive and lax, in fact bordering on racial prejudice. Social matters such as juvenile delinquency, child maintenance, seduction and divorce cases figured prominently in the work of the Board. However, members were sent from pillar to post between the Commissioner's Office and the Superintendent of Mangaung, and confronted with conflicting procedures for maintenance and divorce cases.

The Commissioner acknowledged the unsatisfactory situation in his office, blaming it on insufficient and inexperienced staff. The Board's complaints were dealt with by the Commissioner, who clarified the procedures for maintenance and divorce cases via the Supreme Court, and also promised to upgrade staff relations in his office.⁵⁸

The Board's unpleasant experience with the office of the Native Affairs Commissioner proved that it was unfair simply to blame the Board for administrative incompetence and not achieving its aims, particularly after 1960. The Board's inability to achieve consistent success was due mainly to confusing governmental red tape proce-

57 *The Friend*, 2.10.1958, Be tolerant ...; 5.2.1958, Proposal for new native control; J Gerdener, Local authority and good race relations. *Munisipale Administrasie en Ingenieurswese*, January 1969, 34(401): 42-7. Consult *Race Relations News*, June 1963: 5-6, and April 1971: 2 for the negative attitudes of municipal officials in Johannesburg and the Paarl, and the consequences.

58 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/72, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 4.11.1964: 2.

dures, the excuses of officials with regard to money and staff shortages, and the poor human relationships cultivated by racially prejudiced or plainly inexperienced officials. These latter considerations were a general problem at local and central government levels and were often commented on by senior officials. Mutual relations between Native Advisory Boards and government officials, generally speaking, left ample room for improvement, according to administrators of Native Administration Departments in 1972.⁵⁹

5. The Urban Bantu Council (UBC)

The Urban Bantu Councils Act, No 79 of 1961, allowed for the democratic election of an Urban Bantu Council, comprising urban and homeland representatives and an African chairman. The Urban Bantu Council of Mangaung came into existence on 1 August 1968 and lasted until 1 August 1973. By virtue of Article 4 the Council had the same functions as its predecessor, but with the assent of the Minister of Bantu Affairs it could exercise additional judicial, administrative and financial advisory powers. Both the Urban Bantu Councils Act of 1961 (as succeeded by the Urban Bantu Councils Act, No 49 of 1970) and the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act, No 46 of 1959 seemed, contrary to their aims, to promote African migration to urban centres where attractive socio-economic prospects beckoned. These laws consequently lost favour with the white, essentially conformist Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs, which relied on such laws to turn back the flow of African migration from the urban centres to the opportunities offered by self-rule in the so-called homelands.⁶⁰

The UBC was in effect only a continuation of its predecessor, the Native Advisory Board. While there were some advances, such as an African chairman, the members being known as councillors and elected on an ethnic basis instead of on a ward (or block) basis, returning thirteen instead of the former eighteen members, there was

59 Gerdener, *Local authority and good race relations*, 1969: 47 and March 1972: 5-10.

60 *Die Volksblad*, 1.8.1973, Hoofartikel; Davenport, *South Africa, a modern history*. London: Macmillan, 1991: 369.

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no difference in the merely advisory powers of the UBC. Four councillors were elected to represent the South Sotho national unit, six for the Tswana national unit and three for the Xhosa national unit.⁶¹

The members of Mangaung's Advisory Board initially had great expectations of the new body. They expressed themselves in favour of the new dispensation in a small majority vote of ten to seven (one absent), describing the Advisory Board system as "outmoded and useless". The minority, however, felt themselves not yet experienced enough to accept more responsibilities than had been exercised by the Board.⁶² When the majority realised that the City Council had decided to confer no more powers on them as counsellors of the UBC than they had enjoyed on the Advisory Board, they expressed their dissatisfaction by blaming the City Council for not being interested in improving their governing competence and thus also uninterested in the progress of Mangaung and the homelands. The responsible Management Committee, which had replaced the Native Affairs Committee, replied that the UBC was not yet long enough in existence to be able to take over the management of affairs in Mangaung.⁶³

The unexpressed reason for the decision not to extend the responsibilities of the UBC of Mangaung was probably the City Council's continued lack of trust in its administrative capabilities, in the light of its dubious role in the hostel riot of 1957, its non-recognition in the investigation into crime in Mangaung and the four neglect-of-duty cases during the 1960s. A complete new dispensation for urban African government was also in prospect, as the Bantu Administration Bill was to be tabled in Parliament in 1971. Finally, local and central government were still operating in the ideological atmosphere of separate racial development, which presupposed a subjected urban African population.

There was no real difference between the role played by Mangaung's Native Advisory Board and that of its UBC. The UBC,

61 For a detailed discussion of the powers of Urban Bantu Councils, voting procedures and qualifications of voters, consult Davenport, *Africans*, [sic]: 65-70 and FAB, MBL 14/1/3, Vol I, Minutes, Management Committee, 17.9.1968: 1-14.

62 FAB, MBL, 1/2/4/1/78, Minutes, Native Advisory Board, 17.8.1966: 2.

63 FAB, MBL, 14/1/3/1, Vol II, Minutes, Joint Meeting, Urban Bantu Council and Management Committee, 10.6.1970: 5.

which retained a few members of the Board, as well as its strategies, accomplished nothing important. In June 1972, three years after its inception, the UBC, as the Board had done, expressed its dissatisfaction with the City Council's neglect of long overdue matters. It enumerated fourteen issues, which was actually indicative of the failure of both bodies to contribute substantially to the upliftment of Mangaung's socio-economic life. The issues were familiar, such as low wages, the acute shortage of bus transport, housing and infra-structural facilities, and the shortage of creches and high school facilities to accommodate the increasing numbers of children.⁶⁴

The complaints about these issues originated before 1945 and the issues themselves were more than 50 years old by 1968. The City Council's excuses remained the same, namely shortages of money, staff and materials (depending on the nature of the issue) or that investigations were still in progress. These excuses were accompanied by the usual promise that the matter was receiving attention or would have to be postponed for consideration under the following year's budget, or indeed indefinitely.

6. Conclusion

Relations between the Native Advisory Board and the UBC, on the one hand, and the City Council and its responsible committee, on the other, remained generally speaking cordial and co-operative, despite the arbitrary position of the Council. These two bodies realised that, having advisory powers only, they could not afford to follow any strategy other than demanding, requesting or expressing dissatisfaction. The few instances of confrontation always remained at the verbal level. Both bodies therefore failed to effect, whether through the Press, memoranda, deputations or skilful public organisation, for any improvement in the living conditions of the Mangaung community.

Possible successes, such as the Board's representations for a relaxation of influx control or more employment opportunities, were subject to the formidable state controls of the Nationalist Government and its

64 FAB, MBL, 7/4/17/5, Vol I, Community Service and Housing, 13.1.1967 - 20.12.1972; FAB, MBL, 14/1/31, Vol III, Minutes, Urban Bantu Council, 13.6.1972; *The Friend*, 11.2.1972.

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municipal supporters, who frustrated the Board's objectives in order to keep the urban African subservient, in the socio-economic interests of their white electors. The fact that the Board and the UBC were expected to refrain from dealing with issues from a political platform at the national level was fatal to their advisory powers. Indeed, their success or failure was actually arbitrary, depending on the authorities, who rendered a request effective only if it benefited themselves. If not, the usual excuses and deferral followed.

The members of the Advisory Board and the UBC were respected in their community, but their strategies were neutralised by officials, who were often unsympathetic or inexperienced, and operated from a strong political power base. The City Council is to be blamed as instrumental to the lack of complete administrative efficiency in the two bodies, because it provided neither training exercises nor salaries that could encourage better performance. The Council was inclined to act as a guardian, implying that the Board was incapable of managing its own affairs. Despite these setbacks the members continued to serve because they mistakenly believed that their strategies would change the advisory system. This consideration was accompanied by other motivating factors such as ambition, prestige and possible access to greater resources. Meetings were consequently conducted in a well-behaved manner. Occasional arrogant or accusatory behaviour reflected the members' pent-up feelings about the limitations of the advisory board system in general and their continued failure on specific issues.

In the absence of political and executive powers the two bodies could do very little to remedy their community's urgent grievances. Improvements in Mangaung (as in other urban African centres) generally materialised only after long drawn-out debates. The impotence of the two bodies, the interminable delays in the handling of their recommendations and the achievement of only minor victories in the context of major defeats were causes of frustration for the residents of Mangaung and of mounting resentment against the members of the two bodies.

That the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung and the UBC existed as such, without any prospect of ever becoming anything more, may be understood in the context that it would be difficult to find any ruling authority in any part of the world which would do

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justice to the demands of a poor, underprivileged sector of the community as long as such a sector had no effective say in its own government. Ultimately, the greatest merit of these two bodies was their role as municipal informers on African socio-economic and political needs, including the thought and opinion of the community. Both bodies, assisted by the wise and tactful manager of the Department of Native Administration and Chairman of the Board, proved themselves in the majority of cases to be responsible and persistent champions of their people's interests.