

THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE AND SUPPORTIVE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN CRIME PREVENTION IN MANGAUNG, BLOEMFONTEIN, 1945-1976

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1. INTRODUCTION

The alarming increase in crime numbers for juveniles and the continuous increase in the prison population after 1945 indicate that the South African penal system on its own was unable to solve the crime problem of South Africa.¹ It is consequently the aim of this article to determine to what extent the South African Police, stationed in the suburb of Batho in Mangaung, succeeded in providing sufficient and proper services to prevent crime and to protect the lives and property of the residents. To this end this article also aims to evaluate the direct involvement and co-operation rendered by other local authorities like the City Council of Bloemfontein and its relevant departments, the courts and the Union Department of Native Affairs, including the black community of Mangaung.

The years 1945 to 1976 demarcate the research field of this article. These years represent an era of socio-economic and political significance for the urban black in South Africa. The First and Second World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945 respectively), which intensified the industrialization process, caused the City Council of Bloemfontein, like most other local authorities, large and small, in the country, to struggle with an almost overwhelmingly influx of blacks and whites from the rural districts. Such urbanization tendencies involved the South African Police, the municipal authorities, the courts and the Union Department of Native Affairs in various socio-economic complications like the rising cost of life, low wage incomes, overcrowding, crime and poverty. Important legislation like the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, No. 25 of 1945 and the Children's Protection Act, No. 33 of 1960 were framed to cope with these urban black questions. The

¹ Department of History, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.
R Graser, **Die oorsake van die hoë misdaadsyfer in Suid-Afrika: Enkele beskouings** (Nasionale Instituut insake Misdaadvoorkoming en Rehabilitasie van Oortreders, W.O. 313, Observatory, geen datum), p. 1.

year 1976 is an apt cut off point for this article, being the year of the Sharpsville massacre, representing a new generation of black youths, who thought in terms of new educational and economic (trade union) perspectives. In government circles there were even talks of political change.²

Municipal authorities by law play an important supportive role in crime prevention. Thus in this article the role of the City Council of Bloemfontein and the information and support services rendered by its Department of Native Administration, Native Advisory Board and Social Welfare Service is prominent. The overseeing Native Affairs Committee was responsible to the City Council. The police service is dependent on the cooperation of the local municipal authority for providing the necessary proper infrastructure like decent streets and electric lighting to enable the police to utilize maximum mobility for crime investigations.

The Riekert Commission pointed out the decisive role the municipal Department of Native Administration played in the control of black attitudes and behaviour in the urban environment. Officials assigned to manage the administration of the black urban townships had to have a thorough knowledge of the viewpoint and cultural background of those blacks that were still in a certain stage of detribalization, in order to cultivate an attitude of mutual trust and respect. Urban black administration not only consisted of the application of legislation and municipal regulations, but also included the handling of human relationships and then specifically relations between officials and the urban blacks.³

The many-faceted Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 served as a framework for City Councils to govern their black townships. The act laid down rules for the pursuit of the idle, dissolute and disorderly black resident. It was also part of the legislator's intention to establish Native Advisory Boards to assist township management and to promote housing schemes and infrastructure to accommodate the increasing black population after industrialization in the wake of the world wars.⁴

The customary legislative mandate of the police is the responsibility for the protection of life and property and the maintenance of law and order. Stemming directly from this mandate are the functions to control crime and violations of the law, and the enforcement of regulations. These two functions include apprehension

² Free State Archives, Bloemfontein (FAB), MBL 1/2/4/1/40, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 9 November 1945, p. 2; DS Krige, **Die transformasie van die Suid-Afrikaanse stad** (Bloemfontein, 1988); **The Friend**, 18 October 1976, "Leading the way" (Leader).

³ Republic of South Africa, **Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Legislation affecting the Utilization of Manpower** (RP 32-'79, Pretoria, 1979).

⁴ TRH Davenport, **South Africa, A modern history** (London, 1991), pp. 235-6.

and referral for prosecution or other appropriate actions like municipal social welfare assistance, and secondly the enforcement of a vast number of restrictions imposed by law or municipal regulations on people's day-to-day activities for the purpose of protecting the safety and rights of the general public. By virtue of the original Natives (Urban Areas) Act, No. 21 of 1923 the City Council of Bloemfontein framed the Administrator's Notice, No. 48 of 1932 to regulate loitering in the streets of Mangaung at night, the brewing of Bantu beer and the purchase of strong liquor, including a ban on the carrying of dangerous weapons like knives and knobkerries (clubs). The township manager was authorized to prohibit a dance, party or forms of amusement consisting of more than five persons or which in his opinion could cause disturbance or abuse.⁵

Since at least 50% to 75% of criminal acts are being committed by juveniles under the age of 18 years, a large proportion of police work involves the detection, investigation, apprehension and referral of these juveniles. Law enforcement officials in the United States of America have always been concerned with the control of juvenile crime. Since the Second World War police organization in the USA began placing particular emphasis on their work with juveniles, and a definite trend in the development of specialized juvenile police services has been established. Public demand in the USA for more activity in the field of juvenile control and a growing realization that apprehension and punishment alone are not sufficient to curb the tide of delinquency, contributed to the increasing emphasis on alternative programmes to combat or contain the increasing juvenile crime and gang activities, for example counselling the parents or guardian on the need to give more supervising care. These duties the police have accepted largely as a matter of custom.⁶

2. CONDITIONS FOR CRIME PREVENTION

L Glanz, writing on juvenile offence in South Africa, indicated that up to 85% of the time of police officers is taken up by interpersonal services like protecting and supporting the community they serve, which means mediating, facilitating and performing social welfare services, rather than actual law enforcement. The South African Police, however, has a very poor image among the black urban population for its handling of juvenile crime and delinquency. Juveniles complained that they were arrested and spent a week in police cells without being charged. This happened because South Africa disposed of insufficient places of safety where

⁵ FAB, BOV 1/175, File N9/11/2, **Administrateurskennisgewing**, No. 48/1932, Artikels 34-6, pp. 12-3; E Eldefonso, **Law enforcement and the youthful offender: Juvenile procedures** (New York, 1967), p. 85.

⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 82, 86; C Bartollas, **Introduction to Criminology – order and disorder** (New York, 1990), p. 370.

juveniles could be accommodated before being charged. Perhaps more serious is the fact that the police do not receive special training with respect to juvenile core practices and juvenile problems. The police are often trying to cope with the system while nobody helps them to cope with the causes of juvenile delinquency. The inability of the police to cope with juvenile crime may be ascribed to the unpleasant first interaction of juveniles with untrained police officers, having long-term consequences for the police and the community. It is thus also an aim of this article to determine to what extent the Batho Police Station in Mangaung lived up to these training requisites and performed the above-mentioned customary duties.⁷

Such emphasis is placed on so-called real police work, both in practice and in training, that more specialized responsibilities like the prevention of juvenile offence are either neglected or discarded. It is evident that the prevention of juvenile offence is not only the work of municipal or private social welfare organizations, but the police force is also directly involved and should work in close co-operation with welfare departments. Furthermore it is imperative that the community is co-opted as partner in crime prevention. To what extent the Batho Police liaison with both social welfare departments and the community of Mangaung developed strategic plans to contain crime is worth investigating. It is indeed the conviction of criminologists and sociologists in South Africa and the USA that direct community involvement by the police is a prerequisite for successful crime prevention or at least the containment of crime. Community involvement has been proved to have a favourable impact on crime prevention.⁸

Crime prevention is aimed at the early identification of potential offenders as well as circumstances fostering deviant behaviour. The latter, involving a complex variety of socio-economic conditions including the process of social disorganization and disintegration resulting from the process of urbanization and detribalization, falls outside the scope of this article. The early identification of potential offenders involves the appointment of specially selected police officers to serve specific schools where they inform the learners about personal safety and matters concerning the negative effects of juvenile offending. Selected members of the police force could serve as worthy role models, turning would-be juvenile offenders into law-abiding residents of their township.⁹

⁷ L Glanz, **Preventing juvenile offending in South Africa, workshop proceedings** (HSRC, Pretoria, 1994), pp. 69-70.

⁸ **Ibid.**, p. 63.

⁹ For a discussion of conditions responsible for juvenile delinquency and gangsterism in Mangaung, consult CJP le Roux, "The performance of tsotsi gangs and the causes leading to their formation in Mangaung, Bloemfontein, 1945-1976" (Unpublished manuscript, Bloemfontein, 2003); Glanz, pp. 64-5.

Final conditions for judging the effectiveness of any action taken by the Batho Police against crime in Mangaung are police patrols by vehicles and on foot by sufficient and qualified police officers stationed at strategically situated, well-manned police stations. R Graser, South African National Director of the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Nicro), referred in particular to these conditions for effective crime control and personal contact with the members of the community, implying that these conditions were to a certain extent neglected by the South African Police.¹⁰ Ascertaining the effect of such neglect, if any, for effective crime control in Mangaung, is an important aim of this article.

3. THE CRIME SCENE IN MANGAUNG FROM 1945 TO 1976

The dedication of the Batho Police and its commander to crime prevention was seriously questioned when the Mayor of Bloemfontein and the Native Advisory Board pointed out the alarming increase of tsotsism (street gangsterism) in Mangaung in 1945, 1946 and again in 1948. The fact that the Mayor reminded the local authorities in 1945 to attend to the problem of hooliganism sooner or later, implied that this was a problem dating back to the years before the Second World War, but not receiving the attention it deserved. Whereas the Mayor only called upon the local authorities to attend to this social problem, the Native Advisory Board was much more outspoken, drawing the attention of the City Council to the apparent inability of the Batho Police to put a stop to the crime problem.¹¹

It actually seemed to the Board as if the Batho Police was reluctant to take action when cases were reported to them because people complained that they had to wait for indefinite periods of time in the charge office for attention. The local magistrate to whom the board reported the issue chose not to comment on the unconcerned attitude of the police, nor to address the question of insufficient police control in Mangaung or its capabilities. The Batho Police, primarily a law enforcement agency, was standing in the front row whereas the City Council as primary supportive agent of the police was not to be absolved, especially in the face of the Mayor's reminder of the absence of compulsory education for black learners and insufficient municipal recreational facilities of sport and culture, which could go a long way to keep the loitering juveniles off the streets, at least during daytime.¹²

¹⁰ Graser, p. 10.

¹¹ FAB, MBL 3/1/36, Mayor's Minute, 31 March 1945, p. 22; FAB, MBL 3/1/37, Mayor's Minute, 31 March, 1946; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/41, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 17 January 1946, pp. 2, 5; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/40, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 18 October 1945, p. 3.

¹² FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/41, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 17 January 1946, pp. 2, 5; FAB, MBL 3/1/40, Mayor's Minute, 31 March 1948, p. 39.

The Batho Police, in an effort to divert attention from its inability to contain the spiraling crime rate, indicated the misuse of liquor and knife stabbing as the main reasons for the hooliganism. The police called upon the Native Advisory Board to inform the Mangaung residents to keep their children from the streets at night and to keep the police posted on potential situations that could give rise to disturbances. It was only as late as 1948, after the Board had called in writing upon the Union Government for help, and GJ Viljoen, Manager of the municipal Department of Native Administration, appointed a full-time municipal constable to assist the police in following up gangster operations, that the police at the Batho Station gained enough confidence to venture on a raid to confiscate dangerous weapons like clubs and knives. Such a raid proved to be a failure after Viljoen had appointed a subcommittee, consisting of five members from the Native Advisory Board, to report on the tsotsi menace in the absence of continuous police intervention and sustainable results in the critical crime situation. The five board members, reporting three months later in January 1952, recommended compulsory education, training camps for delinquents and subsidies for the municipal boys' clubs to involve the unemployed delinquents in training courses. These basically sound proposals stranded on excuses of financial constraints and were consequently postponed indefinitely by the Government and the Bloemfontein City Council respectively.¹³

Violence by the tsotsi gangs in Mangaung achieved such dangerous levels in 1955 that the English press felt obliged to comment on it. A local magistrate drew the attention of the press to the gangs who were spreading terror in the streets of the township. The Native Advisory Board and the black social welfare worker requested the Batho Police and the municipal Department of Native Administration to step up preventive steps against the tsotsis. As the Batho Police only took steps against offences reported to them, Viljoen took the initiative to appoint five additional municipal constables to act pro-actively in crime prevention with effect from 1 April 1953. His initiative to register all black unemployed juveniles aged 15 to 20 years at the municipal Labour Bureau was supported by the Union Department of Native Affairs and the Department of Labour.¹⁴

As far as could be determined only 18 juveniles were employed in Bloemfontein from 1956 to 1968. During these years about 120 000 black juveniles of school-

¹³ FAB, MBL 3/1/37, Mayor's Minute, 31 March 1946, p.22; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/43, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 21 May 1947, p. 3; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/45, Report Manager Department Native Administration, December 1948, p. 5; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/50, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 18 October 1951, p. 2 and 14 February 1952, p. 20; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/52, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 19 February 1953, p. 30.

¹⁴ FAB, BOV 1/167, File N1/15/6, Native Affairs Committee, Annual Report, 1952, p. 6; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/63, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 31 August 1959, p. 7; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/45, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 21 July 1949, p. 11; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/52, Report Manager Department of Native Administration, January 1953, pp. 5-6 and May 1953, pp. 5-6.

going age were idling their time away on the streets countrywide, being absent from school and unemployed. Article 29 of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1945 empowered local authorities to prosecute black juveniles between the ages of 15 and 19 years who were not at school, unemployed or undesired (migrants from outside the municipal frontiers without legal documents). However, the practical effect of this article was paralysed by the additional stipulation that such a juvenile was not to be apprehended if he could prove that he was in the custody of his parents. The parents aggravated the precarious situation of their delinquent children by neglecting to report their loitering, truant children to the Labour Bureau for possible employment, probably because the parents had relinquished any hope of control over their children, fearing also retaliation from the tsotsis. The loophole offered by Article 29 and the parents of delinquent children were of course exploited by the tsotsi gangs by drawing these delinquents into their ranks.¹⁵

The Children's Protection Act, No. 33 of 1960, again accentuated the question of parental responsibilities and the neglected crime preventive responsibilities of the Batho Police and the City Council. Whereas the 1937 Children's Protection Act, No. 31, made no provision to call parents to report their delinquent children to the police or the municipal social welfare worker for preventive arrangements before they degenerated into crime, the 1960 Act did call parents to heed. The courts and the Native Affairs Commissioner avoided as far as possible verdicts against young first offenders to avoid stigmatizing them for the rest of their lives.

4. WEAKNESSES OF THE BATHO POLICE

The Batho Police and the City Council, who were potentially able to play a preventive role in crime, failed to achieve this. The reports and discussions of the Native Advisory Board and the single social welfare worker revealed that the police, in the absence of explicit crime preventive arrangements with the other local authorities, foot-patrols and community crime information projects, had no knowledge of the personal circumstances of potential delinquents to act preventively and save them from crime. No evidence to confirm that any Batho police officer was experienced or academically qualified to perform such function has been found. The City Council ascribed the absence of sufficient municipal social welfare workers and recreation facilities to financial constraints; this does not convince because white Bloemfontein, consisting of 71 200 residents in 1976, disposed of at

¹⁵ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/72, Report Manager Department Non-European Administration, July 1963; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/55, Report Non-European Social Welfare Worker, December 1954; W Clifford, *An introduction to African criminology* (London, 1974), p. 62.

least six social welfare workers as against the single social welfare worker for Mangaung's 83 700 residents.¹⁶

The Native Affairs Commissioner, EM Warren, accentuated the unco-operative attitude of the City Council in crime prevention strategies. He proposed to the City Council to upgrade the municipal Boys Club and sport facilities and to accommodate the delinquents under the supervision of the social welfare worker. The City Council again refused on grounds of parsimony, which caused the Commissioner to report to the Union Department of Native Affairs that the Council was more inclined to spend money on non-essential services like recreational facilities for its white electors and their children, ignoring urgent expenditures on black social welfare services in the light of an alarming increase in black juvenile delinquency and crime rates.¹⁷ The City Council in this instance again clearly displayed a racial preference for its white electors and their interests at the cost of its voteless black residents to whose social well-being it had a legal responsibility.

The assurance of the City Council that it would do everything in its power to help combating crime in Mangaung was as unconvincing as the actions of the Batho Police, especially after the Riekert Commission had pointed out the inexperience and limited knowledge that junior white administrative officials had of policy and legislative conditions pertaining to black urban administration. The City Council too often fell back on the excuse of financial constraints when it came to the interests of its black residents. The English press also doubted the lofty intentions of the City Council, expressing its concern about the intrusion of party political interests in municipal affairs, affecting for the worse the interests of the voteless residents of Mangaung. Indeed, the Action Committee which ruled in the City Council by a majority of 12 out of 15 seats and had the chairmanship of all important committees including the Native Affairs Committee, was a body consisting of a group of individuals drawn from the ruling National Party, being depicted by the press as racially intolerant of the black community. The interests of the City Council's white electorates consequently received priority at the cost of the voteless black community at a time when black politics, as represented by the

¹⁶ FAB, BOV 1/67, File N1/15/6, Native Affairs Commissioner, Bloemfontein, Annual Report, 1952, pp. 6-8; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/50, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 18 October 1951, pp. 2, 5; FAB, PAE 98/Z111, Report Interdepartmental Commission on Juvenile Delinquency, Pretoria, August – October 1958, pp. 13-5; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/42, Report Non-European Social Welfare Worker, 25 November 1946, p. 13; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/76, Report Manager Department Non-European Administration, August 1965.

¹⁷ FAB, BOV 1/67, File N1/15/6, Native Affairs Commissioner, Bloemfontein, Annual Report, 1952, pp. 6-8; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/50, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 18 October 1951, p. 2.

African National Congress and the South African Communist Party, was based on racial equality.¹⁸

The delinquents and tsotsis exploited the leniency of the courts and the absence of a proper programme of action against crime by the Batho Police and the City Council by carrying on with their criminal activities, thus reflecting their alarming defiance of law and authority. The leniency of the courts encouraged the Batho Police to act reluctantly when parents or the municipal social welfare worker reported delinquent behaviour. Instances of such police reluctance were indeed reported by the Native Advisory Board.¹⁹

The rapid increase of serious theft and violent crimes among black juveniles countrywide in the early 1960s was reflected by the memorandum on tsotsi activities in Mangaung, drawn up by the Central Committee of the Native Advisory Board, commenting on the robberies and vicious attacks in the unlit streets and at the bus stops, especially over weekends, despite additional police patrols. The Advisory Board and the Press concluded that the juvenile delinquents and tsotsi gangs in Mangaung were out of control. The Batho Police was ostensibly not able to exercise effective control over them.²⁰

Countrywide crime figures for all juvenile race groups steadily increased in the 1960s. It is significant that Mangaung in 1965 experienced the highest percentage of black juvenile crime convictions: 83; Pretoria came second (78) and Johannesburg third (77). On the eve of the 1970s an alarming increase in cases of gangster murders, hold-ups, attacks in broad daylight and juvenile delinquency was reported. As before, knives were used in the majority of the murder and assault cases. Loitering in the streets was an everyday occurrence. The Mayor of Bloemfontein referred to the distressing increase in acts of violence committed in 1974. Despite repeated requests for years on end by the Native Advisory Board to strictly apply

¹⁸ **The Friend**, 20 March 1957, "Real issue today" (Leader); **The Friend**, 18 March 1957, "Choice for the voters" (Leader); **The Friend**, 29 March 1957, "Minority rights" (Leader); Republic of South Africa, **Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Legislation affecting the Utilization of Manpower** (RP 32-'79, Pretoria, 1979).

¹⁹ FAB, PAE 98/Z111, Report Interdepartmental Commission on Juvenile Delinquency, Pretoria, August-October 1958, pp. 18-9; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/53, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 9 February 1954, p. 11; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/50, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 18 October 1951, p. 2; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/41, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 17 January 1946, pp. 2, 5.

²⁰ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/59, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 15 August 1957, p. 2; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/63, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 31 August 1959; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/61, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 15 January 1959, p. 2 and Report Non-European Social Welfare Worker, January 1959; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/70, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 5 October 1962, p. 19; **The Friend**, 3 February 1958, "Restoring Order" (Leader).

the regulations of the Administrator's Notice of 1932, prohibiting loitering and the carrying of dangerous weapons, the Batho Police had to admit defeat.²¹

The Batho Police ascribed their defeat to contain crime in Mangaung to a shortage of manpower, patrol vehicles and communication devices. For the period under discussion Mangaung, with a population increasing from 35 600 residents in 1945 to 83 700 in 1976, disposed of only two patrol vehicles and one police station in the suburb of Batho, situated strategically ineffectively in the north-eastern corner of the township. These weaknesses incapacitated the following legislative measures aimed to update the crime prevention programme of the police: Article 29 of the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945, stipulating that police officers could arrest black loitering delinquents aged 15 to 19 years without a warrant, and the Bantu Laws Amendment Act, No. 42 of 1964, making it less difficult to obtain court orders for admission of juvenile offenders to farm colonies or similar institutions. These legislative measures indeed only served to accentuate the defects in the crime prevention programme of the Batho Police.²²

At a time when the delinquents and tsotsis of Mangaung were out of control, a spokesman for the Batho Police acknowledged that only about 25 of the 80 Bloemfontein police officers were on patrol duty in Mangaung, which was not sufficient to carry out the law prescriptions nor protecting the 63 800 residents of the township in 1964. Limited cell accommodation (only three cells in the 1960s, accommodating 50 prisoners) resulted for example in the release of 731 tsotsis (arrested with the help of municipal constables) in 1964. Over weekends up to 250 prisoners were locked up in these three cells. Many prisoners who were released on their own responsibility failed to appear in court at a later stage and were not arrested again due to a shortage of prison accommodation, police officers and vehicles.²³

The South African Police undoubtedly misjudged and underrated the urgency of the crime situation in Mangaung, taking into consideration the repeated requests by the Native Advisory Board for a second police station and more officers in the face of escalating crime and the fact that only about 48,7% of crimes were being reported to the police by black urban communities. It was incorrect of the South African Police to solely rely on an objective measure like the size of the township of

²¹ **The Friend**, 17 June 1968, "Disarming the gangsters" (Leader); **The Friend**, 17 July 1976, "Tension is still there" (Leader); FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/76, Report Manager Department Non-European Administration, August 1965 and Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 4 October 1965; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/72, Minutes Native Affairs Committee 6 September 1963, p. 2.

²² FAB, PAE 98/Z111, Report Interdepartmental Commission on Juvenile Delinquency, Pretoria, August-October 1958, pp. 19-20.

²³ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/73, Report Manager Department Non-European Administration, June 1964, p. 7; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/74, Minutes Bantu Advisory Board, 7 October 1964, p. 2.

Mangaung (2,5 square miles) to determine the number of police officers for service. It is indeed extremely difficult to determine the number of officers required for the effective execution of police functions in urban areas. The number of officers per department or police station is a most important policy question. To determine how many officers a community needed, quantifiable factors like reported crime statistics and calls for service by the community should also be taken into consideration. For the cities in the USA the number of officers consequently ranged from one to three officers per 1 000 citizens. Applied to Mangaung it boils down to only one officer for 2 600 residents in 1964 (25 officers for 65 800 residents), a ratio that fell short of the criterion set by police authorities in the USA for effective crime prevention.²⁴

The introduction of the Dangerous Weapons Act, No. 71 of 1968 and a second police vehicle for general patrol work in the late 1960s had no mitigating effect on the continuous incidents of crime in Mangaung. Police reports countrywide reflecting the overwhelming number of murder and assault cases in which knives were the murder weapon clearly indicated that the Dangerous Weapons Act failed to disarm the reign of terror in Mangaung and other centers in South Africa. The high crime rate also reflected the increasing population of Mangaung and the dire socio-economic circumstances like lack of employment, political rights, educational opportunities and resultant poverty. Crime incidents reflected frustrated people who lived below the breadline in overcrowded urban conditions, being frequently imprisoned for statutory crimes such as being without passes or breaking curfews which their white counterparts were not subjected to. They were labelled as offenders under the ruling National Party's ideology of apartheid and accompanying legislation like the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945. Such apartheid legislation, serving only white interests, presupposed a conflict situation in as far as the impartiality of the South African criminal justice system in its application of the law to all members of society was concerned. The politically deprived urban blacks consequently did not easily retain respect for the law or its officers.²⁵

The Manager of the municipal Department of Native Administration touched upon the main weakness of the Batho Police when he remarked that the police did not enjoy the co-operation of the residents of Mangaung. Authors on crime in South Africa and in the USA are unanimous that the police have to make personal contact

²⁴ JM Lötter et al, **Crime and its impact. A study in a black metropolitan area** (HSRC, Pretoria, 1990), p. 466; CM Naude and R Stevens (eds), **Misdaadvoorkomingsstrategieë** (Pretoria, 1988), p. 2.

²⁵ **Ibid.**, FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/79, Minutes Bantu Affairs Committee, 3 March 1967; Glanz, pp. 9, 26; **The Friend**, 19 February 1965, "Increase in Crime"; **The Friend**, 17 October 1963, "Robberies in Free State"; **The Friend**, 22 December 1964, "Gangsterism on Rand".

with its community if they want to combat crime successfully. The presence of the police officer on foot in a residential area is an effective crime prevention mechanism. Patrols on foot ensure that the police remain in constant and close contact with their community. The abolishment of foot-police in the early 1950s in South Africa, replacing them with vehicle patrols, caused the police to lose personal contact with their community. The police officer became an outsider with whom the residents only had contact when a child of the family committed a crime or when a gang member was apprehended. The consequence was a growing sense of ignorance about the functions and protective role the police were able to play in the community. Ignorance bred contempt and suspicion among the black families as they only met the police when they were in trouble.²⁶

Approximately 80% of police work is devoted to interpersonal services (like advice) to its community, and these services are in no way related to arrests and detentions. Investigating the activities of the police officers of the Batho Police Station, no clear picture materialized as to what they were doing to contain the escalating crime. Generally speaking the police could be mobilized proactively or reactively against crime. Proactive mobilization results from spontaneous decisions by individual patrol officers to stop individuals for investigative checks. These activities reflect administrative and supervisory decisions to pursue particular types of people like tsotsis and the trouble associated with them. Reactive mobilization results from spontaneous requests by individuals or a group of people for police assistance in handling their troubles. Such people demand a pattern of service or programme of action that will serve their interests. Neither the minutes of the Native Advisory Board, the monthly reports of the Manager of the municipal Department of Native Administration and its social welfare officer, nor the reports of the Commissioner for Native Affairs reveal any evidence of proactive mobilization by the Batho Police. The police sporadically mobilized one patrol vehicle containing no communication devices, after having been supplied with crime information by the municipal officials. The police officers were completely dependent on information supplied by these officials because they isolated and estranged themselves from the residents through their impersonal vehicle patrols. They forfeited the opportunity to enter into interaction at grassroots level with the residents to cultivate personal relationships and co-operation against crime.²⁷

The Batho Police, not performing proactively, acting reactively only on a limited scale, raised the question whether they indeed disposed of any programme of action

²⁶ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/54, Report Manager Department Native Administration, May 1954, p.2; Grazer, pp. 10-2.

²⁷ Lötter et al, p. 473; RV Ericson, **Reproducing order: A study of police control work** (Toronto, 1982), p. 73.

or policy with regard to crime prevention in Mangaung. Despite the serious crime situation in the township, the Batho Police came up with no explicit programme on how to uprate their irregular and unsuccessful vehicle patrols or to follow an alternative programme. They totally relied on the crime information fed to them at the meetings of the Native Advisory Board which was attended by a police officer once a month or quarterly. The Board members and the residents not supplying information to the police readily as they were losing faith in the crime prevention capabilities of the police, contributed to the worsening crime situation in Mangaung.

The Batho Police, and for this matter the South African Police as a whole, could not absolve themselves for not knowing the well-known and proven practices to involve the community in crime prevention. These practices included the informal social control of the community through vigilant groups. Using these groups, organized on a voluntary basis and sustained by the foot-police, mounted police or police on bicycles, was common practice since the Cape Colonial days, and also practiced in the USA, Britain and Canada. However, as JM Lötter remarked, the police knew about these measures, but ostensibly became the victims of indolence. Being the counterpart of indifference, officers found it much more convenient to stay with their vehicles and talk to other officers than to park, walk and talk to the members of the community they were supposed to serve.²⁸

The Manager of the municipal Department of Non-European Administration indeed complained to the Batho Chief of Police about the lax attitude of his police officers, sitting idle and letting the municipal constables exercise law and order in the township, such duty being first and foremost that of the police. The duty of the municipal constables was primarily to facilitate the obedience of municipal regulations by the residents. The manager secondly complained about the irregularity of those police officers who were supposed to do patrol work in the suburbs of Mangaung where the tsotsis were rampant, but who were deployed in white Bloemfontein, leaving Mangaung virtually without any protection. The Department of Justice, the local Commissioner of Native Affairs and the Native Advisory Board also felt obliged to add their concerned voices to that of the manager of the municipal Native Affairs Department about the safety situation in Mangaung.²⁹

²⁸ Lötter et al, pp. 464, 473-6.

²⁹ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/66, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 19 April 1961, p. 3.

The District Commandant of the South African Police in Bloemfontein met a subcommittee of the City Council a few months later, in November 1962, after the promise of the Batho Police Chief to discipline his unco-operative officers. The aim of the meeting was to enhance the police image of discipline and respectability and to quench fears about the rampant hooligans. However, the meeting only served to increase mistrust when the Board members referred to the many police officers not reacting when they were called to answer complaints of Board members or residents, followed by the subsequent refusal of the District Commandant to discuss these allegations. The dark clouds cast on the moral integrity and responsibility of the Batho Police darkened further when the Board revealed that some black officers entered into marriages to qualify for lodger's permits, only to desert their wives soon afterwards. More doubts were cast on the commitment of the police generally to prevent crime after reports about police officers who had been accused of contravening the law that they should be enforcing. The refusal by CR Swart, Minister of Justice, of the request by the political opposition in Parliament for a judicial commission of enquiry into the ever increasing number of criminal offences committed by members of the South African Police, just served to heighten the suspicions of the public about the ability and integrity of the police.³⁰

The subsequent mass meeting called by the Native Advisory Board to discuss the crime situation in Mangaung without calling upon the Batho Police to attend, was indicative of the complete loss of faith in the ability of the police to combat crime. Indeed, the decision of the meeting to propose to the courts heavier penalties for offenders and whistles for all men to summon men and women to assist at the crime spot, completely ignored the existence of the Batho Police as a condition in crime prevention.³¹

5. CRIME SOLVING INITIATIVES

Three initiatives from 1949 to 1961 to establish some kind of community council to coordinate the activities of all local authorities against crime in Mangaung failed for reasons deriving mostly from the disabilities of the local authorities. The first initiative by the manager of the municipal Department of Native Administration to establish a Juvenile Affairs Board in 1949 to act as a co-ordinating body for crime prevention failed due to the lack of public relationships by the Batho Police with public services like the courts of justice, the municipal social welfare and recreation services including the mission and government schools. Such supportive relation-

³⁰ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/70, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 5 October 1962, pp. 19-20 and 23 November 1962, p. 4; *The Friend*, 22 May 1957, "The roots of crime" (Leader).

³¹ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/74, Minutes Bantu Advisory Board, 9 December 1964, pp. 1-2 and Report Manager Department Non-European Administration, November 1964, p. 15; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/66, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 16 March 1961, p. 3.

ships did exist between the police and some schools in Pretoria. The public relations (or crime initiatives) of the Batho Police went no further than the sporadic monthly or quarterly visits of the police to the meetings of the Native Advisory Board to request information on the crime situation.³²

In the face of serious gangster riots in other urban areas like Port Elizabeth, East London and Kimberley, the local Native Affairs Commissioner, EW Warren, conducted the second initiative by proposing to the City Council of Bloemfontein at the end of 1953 a conference of all interested parties to discuss the tsotsi problem in Mangaung and finding solutions. Supported by Viljoen (Manager of the municipal Department of Native Administration), Commissioner Warren recommended 27 persons and bodies to attend such conference. These included representatives from their own departments, the South African Police, local welfare societies, the Native Education Department and the different church denominations in Mangaung. As was the case with the subcommittee appointed by Viljoen a year before, this conference would also strand on the parsimony of the City Council, who was more afraid of the envisaged financial costs of such a conference for whom it had to play host than the actions of the tsotsi gangs in Mangaung that were on the verge of getting out of control.³³

In the memorandum which was drawn up in reply to the stance of the City Council, Viljoen and Warren voiced their disappointment with the short-sightedness of the City Council by referring again to the serious proportions the tsotsi problem had assumed and that no determined effort had been made by the Council or the Batho Police to contain the problem, referring specifically to the question of street lighting. The question of sufficient street lighting for Mangaung to facilitate crime detection was an issue which had dragged on from before 1945. Thirty years later, in the 1970s, it was still unresolved. This is probably one of the best examples to illustrate the racial partiality of the City Council – saving money and staff on neglected projects in Mangaung like improper streets and street lighting, insufficient recreational facilities, school buildings and social welfare services – in order to amply finance and provide similar services to its white electorate. Council's answer not to be burdened by financial responsibilities when its responsible Native Affairs Committee requested more recreational facilities and social welfare services for Mangaung, clearly illustrated the City Council's unsympathetic and unconcerned attitude towards the well-being of its black inhabitants.³⁴

³² Glanz, p. 65; Eldefonso, pp. 132-6.

³³ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/53, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 22 June 1953, p. 2 and Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 12 January 1954, p. 4.

³⁴ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/53, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 9 February 1954, pp. 10-2; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/76, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 14 July 1965, p. 2; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/80, Manager Department Non-European Administration to City Treasurer, 11 October 1967; FAB,

The third initiative came from the Department of Bantu Administration and Development. The Department proposed a Bantu Administration Relations Committee that would convene once a month to find solutions for the crime problems of black urban centers in South Africa. Such committee would consist of the local Bantu Commissioner as chairman, the District Commandant of Police or his representative, and the Manager of the municipal Department of Bantu Administration or his Location Superintendent. Besides solving the crime problem, the Committee also had to check that junior officials and constables responsible for the administration of legislation pertaining to urban blacks, interpret and apply such legislation correctly but fairly, with due respect to the person and property of the people involved. Significantly the Committee also raised the question whether the local authorities were geared to check the rampant crime situation on a co-operative basis. This question not only revealed the lack of a practical plan of action or policy to fight crime in Mangaung on a mutual basis, but also implied the lack of such a plan in the case of the Batho Police, the local authority who was supposed to fight in the front line. The question secondly drew attention to the absence of a plan for mutual co-operation in respect of administrative regulations effecting urban blacks generally, being responsible for the disfunction of policy conditions and the resultant socio-economic problems in the black townships.³⁵

The proposed Bantu Relations Administration Committee soon proved to be a futile exercise because it never received official sanction from Government, probably due to a general spirit of indifference towards the socio-economic plight of the residents of the black townships. Whether it would have succeeded if sanctioned is also questionable because soon after such committee had been proposed, the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung complained about some blockmen not attending meetings of the Board, thus incapacitating the Board to act proactively in the interests of the residents of Mangaung. The recalcitrant attitude of these blockmen was probably due to the spirit of protest against black political subversion instigated by the violent reaction of the police during the Sharpsville shootings the previous year.³⁶

The Police Advisory Council, which had been created in 1960 to advise the Minister and the Commissioner of Police on police matters like discipline and

MBL 3/1/62, Mayor's Minute, 31 March 1970, p. 97; FAB, BOV 1/1/73, File N9/8/3, Minutes Urban Bantu Council, 12 November 1969, p. 3; **The Friend**, 2 October 1969, "Helping out the whites" (Leader); **The Friend**, 27 October 1970, "No pool yet" (Leader).

³⁵ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/66, Report Manager Department Native Administration, March 1961 and Minutes Native Advisory Board, 16 March 1961, p. 3.

³⁶ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/66, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 19 April 1961, p. 3 and Report Non-European Social Welfare Worker, April 1961; Davenport, pp. 358, 423, 532.

training, ostensibly failed to bring the Police Force to heel in the light of the ongoing crime rate and police offences. The Press suggested an overhaul of the police recruiting system. However, it seemed as if the police, strung along by the racial segregation (apartheid) legislation, missed the opportunity to improve on their bad reputation for crime prevention because more than 55% of prisoners, including juveniles, were in jail for minor offences those years. The Batho Police pinned its hope on the 200 black reservists to go on patrol in Mangaung as a last resort to bring down the escalating juvenile crime rate by the mid 1970s. The idea behind these reservists was to restore the confidence of the black residents in the police, convincing them that their grievances and fears would be thoroughly investigated by their own people whom they could trust.³⁷

The English press ascribed the laxity by the local authorities to give immediate attention to the increasing hooliganism in Mangaung and other urban centers after the riots in Vereeniging and Cape Town in March 1960 to the adamant refusal of the National Party government to recognize that the black people were in the urban areas to stay. It seemed as if the Government preferred to get over the socio-economic problems of the urban blacks by pretending that these problems would diminish when blacks, who were only visitors, returned to their so-called homelands. The fact remained however that these urban blacks were permanent inmates of these townships and therefore expected their socio-economic grievances to be dealt with sympathetically. The same view was expressed by the Fagan Commission in 1946 and the South African Institute of Race Relations, delivering evidence to the Johannesburg City Council's Commission of Inquiry into the Johannesburg riots in 1957.³⁸

6. CONCLUSION

The Batho Police as the primary crime preventive force in Mangaung not once convinced that they were in control of the crime situation in Mangaung from 1945 to 1976. They failed to comply with the primary material and spiritual conditions necessary to combat crime. Material conditions lacking were sufficient manpower, well-equipped patrol vehicles and strategically placed police stations including sufficient cell accommodation. Spiritual conditions included proper police training and experience in crime prevention generally and in juvenile delinquent issues and community involvement in particular. The lack of a specialized police service for juvenile delinquency is remarkable.

³⁷ **The Friend**, 12 May 1958, "The Police Force"; **The Friend**, 7 August 1960, "Changes in the Police" (Leader); **The Friend**, 26 November 1962, "Improving the Police"; **The Friend**, 27 July 1971, "New look at the laws"; **The Friend**, 14 April 1967, "Citizens on the beat"; **The Friend**, 4 November 1968, "Quiet by night".

³⁸ **Ibid.**; **The Friend**, 19 February 1958, "Root causes of trouble" (Leader).

The sole reliance of the Batho Police on the municipal Department of Native Administration, its Native Advisory Board, constables and single social welfare worker for information and assistance, indicated the absence of a self-reliant policy and programme of action in crime prevention. Indeed, the lenient policy of the Native Affairs Commissioner and the courts towards juvenile first offenders was exploited by the police to relax the prosecution of criminals generally, an attitude that accentuated the lack of police policy for crime prevention in Mangaung.

The City Council, obliged by law to render a support service to the police to curb crime, also failed to fulfil its obligations. The staff economizing policy, parsimony and racial partiality of the Council at the cost of proper social welfare services, recreation facilities and infrastructure like streets and street electric lighting in Mangaung, only served to benefit similar facilities in white Bloemfontein. For these reasons the admonitions of the local judicial authority (courts), the Native Affairs Commissioner and even the Manager of the municipal Department of Native Administration to the City Council to step up its crime preventive measures were of no avail.

The successive Native Affairs Commissioners and the able Managers of the municipal Department of Native Administration have to be lauded for their tireless endeavours to curb crime and juvenile delinquency in Mangaung. For the 31 years under discussion they kept up their support for black social welfare and justice, despite obstacles posed by the racially biased and unco-operative City Council and Batho Police. The inexperience and limited knowledge of junior white administrative officials of policy and legislative conditions pertaining to black urban administration further incapacitated the efforts of these managers to organize their respective local departments on a mutual basis for a co-operative plan of action to fight crime. It is indeed, like L Glanz said of the South African Police generally, that the Batho Police had a very poor image among the residents of Mangaung for its handling of juvenile crime and delinquency, with the City Council of Bloemfontein in supportive stance not very far behind.