GENDER BIAS? THE STRUGGLE TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT WOMEN POLICE PRESENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE UNION PERIOD: 1915-1960

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INTRODUCTION

The struggle to organise a permanent female presence in the South African Police (SAP) force was a long, drawn-out process, often beset by opposition and criticism from many quarters, but more often than not from the government's law and order fraternity. The process aimed at introducing women to the SAP began during the early period of the First World War and ended in January 1972 when the first two women officers, Lieutenant-Colonel D Botha and Major A Nel, joined the force.[2] A total of 102 white female recruits was accepted for training in that year, a distinct improvement on the first two accepted for service in Cape Town in July 1915.[3] Those women who passed the training course in 1972 were appointed on the same salary scales and under the same conditions of service as their male counterparts.[4] Although several books have been published on the SAP in recent years, very limited attention has been paid to the history of women in that force.[5] This article takes a small step towards remedying that current gap in our quest for a more representative historiography in South Africa.

The advent of women police and women patrols in South Africa is owed to the initiatives taken in England by women during the course of the First World War. The precedent which began with much enthusiasm among a particular

1 Department of History, Vista University, Port Elizabeth.
2 RP 23-1973, Annual Report of the Commissioner of the South African Police (SAP) for the year ended 30 June 1972, p. 3.
3 National Archives Repository (NAR), Pretoria, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, SAP Deputy Commissioner - SAP Secretary, 14 July 1915. The two women were initially described as detectives.
4 Republic of South Africa, House of Assembly Debates, No. 17, 1-4 June 1971, col. 8001.
5 See G Cawthra, **Policing South Africa: the South African Police and the transition from Apartheid** (Cape Town, 1994); JD Brewer, **Black and blue: Policing in South Africa** (Oxford, 1994).

group of concerned women in England soon reached the shores of Southern Africa, notably in the Cape Peninsula. In other parts of the world like America and Europe, women were recruited on a limited scale in the early twentieth century to undertake tasks associated solely with women and children. It seems that police authorities generally were rather short-sighted about the potentially advantageous contribution women could make to normal policing.[6]

THE ENGLISH PRECEDENT

With the development of a shortage of manpower in England as the First World War wore on, women came to the fore in categories of employment previously considered inappropriate for their feminine qualities.[7] Women volunteers, usually at the instigation of women's organisations like the National Council of Women (NCW), found in most major cities, provided the authorities with the necessary personnel to patrol munitions factories, and to maintain social and moral order in the garrison towns and harbours to which large numbers of young women and girls were attracted because of the presence of men in uniform.

These women did not have uniforms at first or any legal status to impose their will upon the wayward female members of the public. It was only when the Women Police Volunteers was established by a number of women's services that the concept of a permanent women police service took root. By November 1914 the initial opposition to the idea of women police was gradually overcome; it was accepted that women could relieve the overworked police force by taking over the lighter duties associated with general policing.[8]

It was after the Women Police Volunteers had become the Women Police Service (WPS) in early 1915 that dark blue uniforms were issued for the first time. Initially, funds for this service had been private, but once local authorities realised the value of the work being carried out, council funds were provided in 1916 and approved of by the Home Office. All volunteers for the WPS, married or unmarried, were given training in first aid, self-defence, court procedure, drill, and so on. At this stage, members of the WPS had no legal powers of arrest as they were never sworn in as constables; they were "armed" only with a police whistle. Their effectiveness was thus limited from the onset. Besides these

6 J Cramer, **The world's police** (London, 1964), p. 51.
7 MS Allen, **The pioneer policewoman** (London, 1925), p. 6.
8 Allen, p. 14.

limitations, they also endured the opposition of most policemen who believed that the WPS would need their protection when patrolling the streets of metropolitan areas.[9] It was for this reason that the WPS was given the task of primarily caring for women and children. It took over all duties associated with women prisoners and all police matters affecting children. In metropolitan areas, the WPS patrolled the parks, streets and recreation grounds, worked in charge offices and took control of women prisoners.[10]

At the end of the First World War, the munitions factories began closing down and most of the women police attached to these places were demobilised. In 1919 there were about 150 women police still serving in their particular communities despite the fact that the police service did little to promote the employment of women.[11] During the years 1919-1923 the British government seemed ambivalent about the future of women in the police force, but eventually allowed them to be sworn in as constables. By taking the oath, women were endowed with the same powers and status held by all male members of the police force.[12] Thus, by 1923, with the support of the Home Secretary, women police were firmly entrenched in the police services of Britain and their numbers began to increase, admittedly rather slowly at first, but as their reputation grew, so did their numbers.

Nevertheless, it was only at the end of the Second World War that the government and local authorities finally realised that women police were in fact a necessary and permanent feature of policing in Britain.[13] By 1964 there were 2 652 women serving in the regular police forces of the country. In contrast, South Africa's policing fraternity never fully supported the development of women police, with the result that this country took far longer to introduce women police as a necessary adjunct to men police.

THE EXPERIMENTAL STAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1915-1960

The establishment of volunteer women patrols in Cape Town came after the outbreak of the First World War. At a meeting in 1915 of the Cape Town branch of the National Council of Women (NCW) a resolution was taken to

9 Allen, p. 22.
10 Allen, p. 62.
11 PJ Stead, **The Police of Britain** (London, 1985), p. 89. In 1939 women police numbers were still very small, around 200.
12 J Cramer, p. 51.
13 J Cramer, p. 52.

establish women patrols in response to war-time circumstances.[14] A Board of Control was created to oversee the voluntary patrols and the approval of the Western Cape's Deputy Commissioner of Police, Colonel Gray, was obtained without difficulty as the latter favoured such an innovation. These 65 women patrol volunteers were not in any way considered to be approximating the role or duties of policewomen.[15] Their duties were mainly in the social work category, i.e. they patrolled the parks, stations and the harbour pier of Cape Town. Gray believed that conditions in Cape Town were ideal to conduct an experiment in the employment of women in a policing capacity as prostitution and contraventions of morality laws had increased progressively with the large number of troops in the city due to the war.[16]

It did not take long for the volunteer women patrols, who wore badges but not uniforms, to realize that to function more effectively, they would need official backing. Fortunately for them, Deputy Commissioner Gray responded positively and he was able to successfully solicit the support of the SAP Commissioner, TG Truter, to authorise payment of two female detectives, one of whom was placed in charge of the volunteer women patrols as organizing secretary. The first woman to be appointed in this official policing capacity was a Miss M Barr on 9 July 1915.[17] She was soon joined by Mrs E Schelpien whose task it was to follow up enquiries on the reports of the various patrols; both women earned £12 a month which came out of SAP coffers. With the resignation of Barr, the services of Margaret Sterling from England, a woman experienced in working with women patrols in both England and Ireland, were procured by Gray.[18] So the English experience in female policing was transferred directly to the Cape. These two women, Sterling and Schelpien, were placed under the authority of the district commandant of police in Cape Town and were given an office in the Wale Street police building.[19] As far as the SAP Commissioner was concerned, the work of these policewomen was solely to

14 SAP Museum, Miscellaneous photocopy of presidential address of Mrs JF Solley to the National Council of Women, December 1917.

15 **The Nongqai** (the illustrated monthly magazine of the South African Police), August 1915, p. 110.

16 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, SAP Deputy Commissioner - SAP Secretary, 16 March 1915.

17 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, SAP Deputy Commissioner, Western Division - SAP Secretary, 9 July 1915.

18 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, SAP Deputy Commissioner, Western Cape Division - SAP Secretary, 17 November 1915. Sterling was appointed as from 17 November 1915.

19 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, SAP Deputy Commissioner, Western Cape Division - SAP Secretary, 16 March 1915.

carry out the provisions of the children's protection act and to "minimise vice and immorality".[20] These women had no legal standing in terms of the SAP's mandate until such time as the Police Act of 1912 was modified to accommodate female members of the force.[21]

With the successful deployment of women to carry out limited policing duties in Cape Town, the call for women to police morality laws and the like was taken up in Johannesburg by the Women's Reform Club (WRC) in April 1916.[22] Attempts by the Club to interview Truter on this matter proved fruitless. Nevertheless, in correspondence with the Reform Club, Truter did suggest that he would consider the employment of women police once voluntary women patrols have proved themselves to be of practical use in Johannesburg, as was the case in Cape Town.[23] It would appear that the NCW, based in Johannesburg, was unable to organise volunteer women patrols in the city at this time and the proposal came to nought.

In Cape Town the increasing work load for the two women police there led to the appointment of a further two, one to assist with the administration of cases being brought by the volunteer patrols and the other to accompany the existing policewomen on night patrols in the more unsavoury areas of the city. In the opinion of Gray, the experiment to use women as police had proved a marked success, to the extent that patrols were called for in Simonstown.[24] These additional policewomen were employed in a temporary capacity and their services could be dispensed with at a day's notice. Their employment conditions were thus very tenuous with no long term prospects. Truter remained sceptical of these women police and kept a close watch on the exact nature of their work and hours of duty: he wondered if their employment served "any really useful purpose".[25] At the same time he expressed his unhappiness about calling these women "police women" as the Police Act of 1912 made no provision for female members of the force; both he and the Minister of Justice, Mr NJ de Wet, had no plans whatsoever of amending the Police Act to accommodate women police.

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20 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, SAP Commissioner - Minister of Justice, 13 March 1915.
21 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, SAP Commissioner - Deputy Commissioner, Western Cape, 7 November 1916.
22 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, President of WRC - Col. Douglas, National Service Fund, 2 April 1916.
23 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, SAP Commissioner - President of WRC, 19 July 1916.
24 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, SAP Deputy Commissioner, Western Cape - SAP Secretary, 14 June 1916.
25 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, SAP Commissioner - SAP Deputy Commissioner, Western Cape, 7 November 1916.

As far as Gray was concerned, the term "police women" had been used purely as a matter of convenience, and his description remained in vogue despite official opposition.

The issue of women police was raised in the House of Assembly during June 1916. A plea was made for extending the Cape Town experiment to the other major urban centres of the Union.[26] In reply to this suggestion, the Minister of Justice pronounced himself to be opposed to the employment of women police, preferring to leave the matter in the hands of the Police Department. In any case, he believed that the class of woman who had volunteered for patrol work would not now come forward as police women.[27] This view was supported by some serving policemen who argued that the very nature of police work would ensure that few of the better educated women would volunteer for police service. Recruits would most likely be drawn mainly from a pool of young, inexperienced girls or "fussy old maids" who would prove ill-equipped for dealing effectively with crime.[28] Even a plea from the Chief Justice of Cape Town, Sir James Rose Innes, that the Police Act be amended to allow the official employment of women as police, was rejected.[29] Thus, it would appear that a dichotomy in policy existed from an early date between the SAP Commissioner and one of his senior men (Deputy Commissioner Gray) concerning the deployment of women police in the metropolitan regions of South Africa. Not even the use of women in administrative positions or behind the counters of charge offices, thereby releasing more men for patrol work, was entertained. Enlightened views held by men like Colonel Gray of the Cape Town police were indeed the exception.

Colonel Gray remained consistently positive in his attitude towards the employment of women police in the Union during his tenure as deputy commissioner of the SAP in the Western Cape. He considered their work particularly valuable in police work dealing specifically with women and children. Although very much in favour of using women as police in large towns and cities, he still believed that their work was not to interfere or overlap with that of the men whom he considered the primary enforcers of the law.[30] The role of women police was mainly to supplement, not supersede, the work of the male members of the force. Even so, he admitted that the presence of woman

26 **The Cape Times**, 14 June 1916.
27 **The Cape Times**, 14 June 1916.
28 **The Nongqai**, December 1916, p. 446.
29 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, Minister of Justice - Chief Justice of Cape Town, 3 January 1917.
30 **The Nongqai**, September 1916, p. 247.

patrols in Cape Town was opposed by most of his senior officers for two reasons: they were prejudiced against women doing police work and they feared that women could, to some extent, supersede male members of the force in certain duties.[31]

The issue of women police was not summarily dismissed by the authorities of the day because in October 1917, the Secretary for Justice contacted the South African High Commission Office in London with instructions to ascertain the position of women police in England. It was established that women were not enrolled as constables in the normal sense of the word, that is, they did not have the same duties, powers and privileges as the men. This immediately limited their policing powers, but they nevertheless did useful work among women and children, and were paid partly by local authorities and partly by central government.[32] The response of the South African authorities was to allow the women police in Cape Town to continue in their limited role as protectors of women and children but not to actually recruit any women for proper police training or duty. By 1918 there were six women engaged in patrols in Cape Town, the government and the Cape Town City Council equally sharing the cost of paying their salaries. The possibility of further state involvement with women police came when there was a request that the women police or patrols of Cape Town be trained at the Maitland SAP training depot but this was turned down by De Wet, the Minister of Justice, who argued that the depot was already being fully utilised to train male recruits.[33] In other words, De Wet was making it palpably clear that the whole notion of employing women as police remained anathema to him.

After the resignation of Sterling as the organizing secretary of the voluntary women patrols at the end of July 1917, Gray's proposal that the six police women (three paid by the government and three by the Cape Town City Council) continue their work under the control of the SAP District Commandant was accepted by Truter.[34] The volunteer women's patrols movement was closed down upon the departure of Sterling who returned to England.

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31 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, Gray - Secretary SAP, 25 November 1916.
32 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, E Blackwell, Home Office, Whitehall - High Commission of Union, 6 October 1917.
33 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, Secretary for Justice - Mrs G Rogaly, National Council of Women Workers, 6 June 1918.
34 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, SAP Commissioner - SAP Deputy Commissioner, Western Cape, 12 July 1917.

After Gray's transfer to Johannesburg, the demise of Cape Town's women police was rapidly accomplished by his successor, HJ Trew, who became deputy commissioner for the SAP Western Cape Division in 1919. As far as he was concerned, these women were "useless as an adjunct to the Police Force".[35] He had carried out an inspection of their work and, in a scathing report, found that they had failed in their attempts to safeguard the morals of the female population, and that the work they had done was unsuitable for women police in his opinion. Any other work of note which they may have achieved he, of course, chose to ignore. The fact that these women had virtually no power in a legal sense certainly did not make their work any easier for them, and Trew was candid enough to admit this shortcoming in their mandate. The only way that women police could be a success, according to Trew, was for them to receive proper training, be provided with a uniform and legally appointed under an act of Parliament.[36] That this was never done goes a long way in explaining why women were never able to enter the policing profession until 1972; the government remained steadfastly opposed to changing the Police Act to accommodate women. Thus, the work of South Africa's first policewomen came to an abrupt end in December 1919.[37] Nevertheless, the struggle to incorporate women within the SAP continued.

Attempts were again made in 1919 to introduce women police in Johannesburg to perform detective work in the field of immorality. The idea came once again, not from official quarters, but from concerned members of the public in the form of women's clubs based in the Johannesburg region.[38] The feeling of the deputation to Gray, recently appointed deputy commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Department in Johannesburg, was that women would be better equipped to handle investigation into matters of general immorality, child prostitution and the like as they would most likely be more successful in eliciting evidence from the women involved in such criminal activity. Gray promised to put the matter before the SAP Commissioner in Pretoria.

Colonel Truter, the SAP Commissioner, responded to the request for

35 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 2, SAP Deputy Commissioner, Western Cape - SAP Secretary, 16 July 1919.
36 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/15, Deputation to Lieutenant-Colonel Gray concerning establishment of women detectives in Johannesburg, 12 March 1919.
37 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 2, Secretary for Justice - SAP Commissioner, 21 August 1919.
38 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, Deputation to Lieutenant-Colonel Gray concerning establishment of women detectives in Johannesburg, 12 March 1919.

women police in Johannesburg in a rather surprising manner, considering his previously negative attitude towards the use of women in the police force in the Union up to this stage. He now admitted that the matter merited serious attention, although his sincerity in this issue is open to question. South Africa, he argued, could no longer ignore the issue of women police particularly as they were being introduced in police forces around the world.[39] Truter decided to first establish the attitude of the Minister of Justice towards his plan to employ a limited number of police women by enquiring whether the minister would approve the necessary amendments to the Police Act to make his plan possible. De Wet opposed the idea of changing the Police Act to incorporate women and believed that the women police of the Cape had not been a marked success.[40]

Truter, seemingly undeterred, argued that the possibility of a change in the Police Act to allow for the amalgamation of the South African Mounted Rifles (SAMR) with the SAP in the near future, was an ideal opportunity to consider the employment of women in the SAP. He noted that women were already being employed in both temporary and permanent capacities as matrons attached to police lockups to deal specifically with female prisoners, and, significantly, were being paid out of the SAP budget. This being the case, he believed that other women could also be usefully employed as clerks, police women and for classifying finger prints.[41] This was surely an ideal way to alleviate the manpower shortage so prevalent in the SAP, yet neither Truter nor De Wet raised this point in any of their correspondence. De Wet finally decided that the whole matter of women being employed by the SAP would be considered when the Police Act came up for the amendment, but this never happened.

ON-GOING ATTEMPTS TO INCORPORATE WOMEN WITHIN THE SAP: 1920-1938

Unwilling to simply let the issue of women police fade into obscurity, the NCW passed a resolution at its annual conference in Port Elizabeth in June 1920 requesting that the Police Act be altered to permit the inclusion of women in the SAP; at the same time, it requested that they be appointed immediately to all major centres in the Union.[42] This request was promptly rejected by the

39 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, SAP Commissioner - Secretary for Justice, 20 March 1919.
40 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, Secretary for Justice - SAP Commissioner, 25 March 1919.
41 NAR, JUS 419, 1/57/16, SAP Commissioner - Secretary for Justice, 22 April 1919. Permanent matron Wynne of Port Elizabeth earned £60 per annum.
42 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 2, Margaret Ball - Minister of Justice, 17 June 1920.

Department of Justice.

Attempts by local women's organisations in Cape Town to resurrect the issue of women police during 1925 were also short-lived. The SAP Commissioner once again opposed the deployment of women as police. His opinion, which remained largely unchanged, was that the type of work which could be done by women police was being performed quite satisfactorily by the Children's Aid Society and other social welfare groups active in the country.[43] Even representation made to the 1925 Te Water Police Commission of Inquiry that women be employed by the SAP on an experimental basis was seemingly ignored by the government.[44]

In Port Elizabeth the first initiative to employ women police came from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in December 1916. It wanted the Port Elizabeth City Council (PECC) to persuade the government to consider deploying women police in the city.[45] The negative response by central government towards such policing initiatives at the time meant that the PECC remained indisposed towards the use of women in the policing of its city until the Port Elizabeth branch of the NCW sent a petition to the Council in June 1927.

Instead of calling for women police as such, which would have entailed immediate opposition from the Union government, the NCW preferred to call for the deployment of women patrols.[46] Their main argument in favour of women patrols, similar to that used by the Cape Town branch of the NCW in 1915, revolved around the issue of protecting women and children exposed to possible harassment in the open areas, parks and beaches of the city. Significantly, it was the support of two female councillors, Mrs Anderson and Mrs Gipson, that paved the way for the NCW to present its case to the PECC in July 1927.[47]

The PECC decided it could not make the decision to employ women without first consulting the central government, mainly due to the costs involved. It had to ascertain whether the Department of Justice would assist in the

43 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 1, SAP Commissioner - Secretary for Justice, 20 August 1925.
44 NAR, A78, Vol. 39, CT te Water, Annexure 39 of the 1925 Police Commission of Enquiry.
45 Cape Archives Repository (CAR), 3/PEZ, 1/1/1/28, Council Minutes, 20 December 1916.
46 CAR, 3/PEZ, 4/1/1/1514, Petition to PECC, 27 June 1927.
47 CAR, 3/PEZ, 1/1/1/39, Council Minutes, 27 July 1927.

payment of women patrols it might employ.[48] The Department of Justice remained unconvinced that women police patrols were essential to crime prevention and stated that the Commissioner of Police also remained opposed to them for the moment even though women police had been found "useful in a way" during the war years in Cape Town. The Secretary for Justice argued further that the government would also not be in a position to subsidise the PECC if it chose to go ahead with the patrols as the police budget had been reduced considerably for the next financial year.[49] The Port Elizabeth NCW was informed by the PECC that it was unable to see its way clear to bearing the total cost of the patrols were they to be implemented in the city.[50] Although averse to dipping into Council coffers to pay for the costs of women patrols in the city, the PECC nevertheless remained open to any further discussion with the NCW on the matter.

Notwithstanding the government's previous opposition to the appointment of police women, the PECC decided once again to approach the Department of Justice on the matter, stating that it was willing to make a grant towards the cost of such an appointment.[51] In July 1929, the Justice Department reiterated its previous stance: it did not consider that conditions in South Africa were suitable for the deployment of women police, and thus rejected the PECC's offer concerning the payment and employment of women in a policing capacity.[52] So ended Port Elizabeth's brief flirtation with women police. Like the rest of the country, the city had to wait until the decade of the 1970s to see the deployment of women police become a reality.

RENEWED HOPES THWARTED: 1939-1958

During the 1930s the idea of employing police women in the Union was seemingly forgotten. Renewed attempts by the NCW during 1941 and 1945 to reintroduce women police in the SAP were rejected by the police authorities for the usual reasons. South Africa's racial composition and the failure of the police women experiment in Cape Town during the First World War were cited as reasons for rejecting the proposals, besides the fact that the war in progress had

48 CAR, 3/PEZ, 4/1/1/1514, Minutes of Finance Committee, 5 August 1927.
49 Mayor's Minutes, 1927, p. 21. CAD, 3/PEZ, 4/1/1/1514, Secretary for Justice - Town Clerk, PE, 15 August 1927.
50 CAR, 3/PEZ, 4/1/1/1514, Town Clerk, PE - Secretary for PE NCW, 23 August 1927.
51 CAR, 3/PEZ, 4/1/1/1514, Minutes of Finance Committee, 30 May 1929.
52 CAR, 3/PEZ, 4/1/1/1514, Secretary for Justice - PE Town Clerk, 6 July 1929.

rendered a shortage in employable women.[53] Even the publication of the police women debate in the press towards the end of 1945 failed to move the government. **The Sunday Times**, **The Friend** in Bloemfontein and the **Natal Mercury** all ran articles on the debate between police authorities and welfare groups, women's movements, and the like, but to no avail.[54] The police commissioner, J Palmer, promised to fully investigate the matter, but other than merely contemplating the experimental use of 25 women carrying out clerical work in charge offices, he quashed the idea expeditiously.

The NCW of SA continued to pressure the government on the issue of women police into the late 1940s. In its cause, presented to the Public Service Commission of 1948, it was supported by the SA National Council for Child Welfare, amongst others. Once again, the call was for women police to be employed to patrol parks, investigate the maltreatment of women and children, take statements from female victims and female perpetrators of crime, and so on, rather than having these women and children being dealt with by male members of the SAP.[55]

Although willing to entertain the idea of employing women police, the Commission was not prepared to wholeheartedly support the scheme. Rather, it allowed itself to be swayed by the arguments of the SAP Commissioner, Brigadier Palmer, that the proposed women police would end up performing essentially social work, and that, in his opinion, was the domain of the Social Welfare Department. Palmer stated that he would, at most, consider using women trained for clerical work or for special investigations involving women and children in the larger centres only.[56]

In its conclusion on the issue of women police, the Commission noted that the SAP did in fact have women in its employ, namely 12 wardresses employed in a permanent capacity and 312 part-time special matrons and female searchers. Most of these women were the wives of policemen.[57] Because of this, they were probably familiar with police routine, but they nevertheless remained untrained for the work they performed. Central to the argument of the proponents of police women was the fact that trained female personnel were essential for taking statements and searching females in police lockups, and to

53 NAR, SAP 201, 33/2/30, Vol. 2, SAP Commissioner - Minister of Justice, 18 October 1941.
54 See **The Sunday Times**, 26.8.1945, **The Friend**, 18.8.1945 and the **Natal Mercury**, 15.9.1945.
55 UG 54-1948, Sixth Report of Public Service Commission of Inquiry, 1948, p. 84.
56 UG 54-1948, Sixth Report of Public Service Commission of Enquiry, 1948, p. 83.
57 UG 54-1948, Sixth Report of Public Service Commission, 1948, p. 83.

be in court when women and children had to appear. A body of professionally trained women serving as bona fide members of the SAP in carrying out these duties was surely preferable to the use of part-time, untrained matrons and male police employed at the time, yet the establishment of a professional body of women police remained a seemingly elusive goal. Meanwhile, in places like Britain, the recruitment drive to procure the services of more women in the police force continued unabated.[58]

Further representations to the SAP hierarchy continued until 1950, but were viewed unfavourably by Palmer and his deputy commissioners.[59] Through the instigation of Police Commissioner CI Rademeyer, women were employed in clerical positions by the SAP from 1957. According to Brewer, these women were seconded to the SAP from other sectors of the civil service.[60] Although these women were employed in a permanent capacity by the police department, they were never designated as "police women" as such.[61]

During his term of office, Rademeyer argued that women could not be appointed to the police force because it would be too difficult to acquire the right type of woman recruit at the salary offered by the police; this class of woman was lured into private enterprise because of higher wages. He also noted that to train and accommodate men and women police in separate facilities would be uneconomical and impracticable - this was something the police budget could not afford.[62] However, when circumstances permitted, he was sure women would be recruited by the SAP as police.

CONCLUSION

The negative attitude evinced by the government's law and order fraternity in the above discussion remained the state's stratagem concerning women police until as late as 1972. Even the possibility of employing women from outside the civil service for purely administrative work in police offices was rejected until 1960 when, for the first time, female personnel were employed on a full-time basis as clerical assistants. The rationale behind this decision was to relieve as

58 **The Nongqai**, November 1950, p. 1 319.
59 NAR, SAP 202, 33/2/30, Vol. 4, SAP Commissioner - SAP Deputy Commissioner, Pietermaritzburg, 6 September 1950.
60 Brewer, p. 241.
61 NAR, SAP 202, 33/2/30/1, SAP Commissioner - President, NCW, 6 December 1957.
62 NAR, SAP 202, 33/2/30/2, Minutes of interview between SAP Commissioner and NCW, 4 August 1958.

many physically fit men as possible from desk-bound work in order to carry out executive police tasks.[63] It had taken the SAP over four decades to accept the fact that women had a role to play, however minor, in the overall policing system of the country.

White women may have won the right to vote in 1931 but their right to serve in the SAP took a lot longer to achieve. Black women were only accepted into the police force in 1982, the same year that white women were allowed to serve as police reservists, so it took them much longer to gain the same status as their white counterparts.[64] Inherent South African conservatism or simple male chauvinism may explain to some extent why the purveyors of justice dragged their feet in appointing women police in the country. It is likely that the increasing demand for white manpower for the continued imposition and defence of the apartheid ideology was the catalyst for the employment of women in 1972 in a heretofore male-dominated state department.

63 RP 19-1961, Annual Report of the SAP Commissioner for the year ended 1960, p. 4.
64 Brewer, p. 278.