A HISTORY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE IN
PORT ELIZABETH: 1913-1956

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the policing activities of the South African Police (SAP) in Port Elizabeth from the formation of the SAP in 1913 to the creation of two separate police districts in the city in 1956. It begins with the recruitment and training of police personnel, outlining the difficulty in obtaining sufficient white recruits for most of the period while at the same time stressing the ease with which the Force was able to obtain black recruits. The preponderance of Afrikaner policemen serving in Port Elizabeth from the 1920s onwards is made clear, as is the para-military nature of the SAP, which was maintained and reinforced as a result of training methods and the process of socialisation. As state servants, police personnel were expected to serve loyally and obediently a state becoming increasingly repressive towards its black citizens. Generally inadequate conditions of service remained the norm throughout the period yet the SAP’s commitment to the state never wavered, bar one isolated, short-lived incidence.

The administration and functioning of policing in Port Elizabeth is explored by focussing on specific organisational features pertinent to the city and the changes wrought by the police hierarchy to deal with the city’s demographic and spatial expansion. The SAP tended to employ three different forms of policing in the city as a result of its apartheid-driven agenda which compelled it to differentiate between the various population groups in terms of maintaining law and order. The privileged white community experienced routine, civil policing whereas the black community was policed largely in a socially and politically oppressive manner; this was in line with government policy. On the whole, however, the more brutal and sinister nature of policing was yet to come to the fore although this thesis does point towards the increasingly repressive nature of policing in South Africa during the apartheid era.
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<td>African National Congress</td>
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<td>CAR</td>
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<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
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<td>CED</td>
<td>Cape Eastern District</td>
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<td>Criminal Investigation Department</td>
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Viewed from a vantage point in Lovemore Heights, a prestigious suburb situated on hills south west of the city centre, Port Elizabeth’s northern skyline comprises a number of tall buildings which include the Provincial Hospital, Green Acres Shopping Mall and Louis le Grange Square. The latter fortress-like edifice, built in 1985, if not the most prominent in terms of structure, was certainly viewed by many as an infamous symbol of oppression in the city in the years before 1994. Although built during the dying days of apartheid, the site it occupies on Mount Road has served as district headquarters for the South African Police (SAP) in Port Elizabeth since 1931. The original building, constructed in 1930 and outwardly more stately and ‘community-friendly’ in appearance than its successor, was completely demolished to make way for the present soulless monolith (see Illustration 1.1). The size of the existing complex testifies not only to the expansion of the city since the 1930s but also to the increasingly crucial role the SAP played in the defence of apartheid.

An ever-increasing black urban population, which became more militant in its demands for justice and equality from the early 1950s, necessitated a more powerful, more visible police presence in the city. It is the aim of this work to explore some of the more significant features of that ‘police presence’ in the city of Port Elizabeth from 1913 to 1956. The periodisation accords with two significant organisational events in the history of policing in the city, namely, the establishment of the SAP in April 1913 and the restructuring of police organisation in Port Elizabeth during 1956 which resulted in two distinct police districts being formed.

Another important historical milestone for the SAP in Port Elizabeth was the change wrought by the demise of the apartheid state in April 1994. A new government of national unity, led by Nelson Mandela, made it a priority to reconstitute the SAP. The new police body, essentially by name only, came into being officially on 1 April 1995 as the South African
Police Service (SAPS) under the leadership of Commissioner George Fivaz. The new SAPS retained the above-mentioned premises as its headquarters in Port Elizabeth. Fivaz, like the first commissioner of the SAP, Colonel T G Truter (1913-1928), who had to unite all pre-Union police forces from the four colonies (discussed in Chapter 3), also had the difficult task of amalgamating several different police forces into one, namely, ten homeland forces and the SAP.\(^1\) He had to ensure that this new police force was suitably transformed into providing ‘community-friendly’, civilian-style policing as opposed to the colonial style, repressive paramilitary approach of the past.

Within the time frame of this work, however, the more brutal and coldly calculating face of totalitarian-style policing had not yet become openly apparent. Only in the latter years of the 1950s, in line with the National Party’s attempt to legislate a new society, did the SAP and its counter-insurgency agencies adopt a more overt policy of crushing all opposition to the apartheid state.\(^2\) This thesis is limited, therefore, in time scale, to an examination of policing in Port Elizabeth during an era when the apparatus of police oppression had not become the well-oiled machine of the future - a form of policing more characteristic of a police state was yet to come. For law-abiding black people in the city, a more forceful intrusion of the SAP into their personal lives began only after 1953 when influx control measures were applied to the city. The changing nature and public image of policing over time in Port Elizabeth should become more apparent as this work unfolds.

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The SAP in Port Elizabeth between 1913 and 1956 functioned within an environment in many ways similar to other large urban centres of the Union yet there were certain social, political, economic and demographic trends which made its experience somewhat unique. For a clearer understanding of the significance of policing in Port Elizabeth’s history, the context in which policing took place needs to be discussed briefly. The most important features of

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the city’s political economy, namely, its economic development, political development and relations between the local state and the SAP, will therefore be outlined below.³

Port Elizabeth was established by the English government as a defensive node neighbouring the volatile eastern frontier of the Cape Colony in the early nineteenth century. Like other large urban centres in South Africa, it was founded as a colonial city where economically-inspired and racially-driven criteria led to the formation of segregated black pockets within its municipal boundaries. But Port Elizabeth was not, strictly speaking, an apartheid city during the first half of the twentieth century. Areas like South End and Korsten remained racially mixed until urban apartheid measures were strictly applied to the city after 1950.⁴

Port Elizabeth during the period under discussion was a city gradually undergoing an industrial metamorphosis. At the end of the nineteenth century it was still essentially a small town producing goods manufactured mainly from agricultural produce, such as wool and hides. But, within two decades, it had progressed to having a thriving footwear industry as a result of fortuitous circumstances caused by the outbreak of the First World War.⁵ Further industrial expansion occurred when both Ford and General Motors established motor assembly plants in the city during the late 1920s. Industries related to the manufacture of vehicle components soon followed with the arrival of Firestone and Shatterprufe Safety Glass in 1936 and 1937, respectively.


⁵ G Adler, ‘From the “Liverpool of the Cape” to the Detroit of South Africa’: the automobile industry and industrial development in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage region’, Kronos, 20 (1993), pp 17-43. See also R L Leigh (ed), Port Elizabeth: From a border garrison town to a modern commercial and industrial city (Johannesburg, 1966), p 378.
The majority of workers, male and female, working in factories from the 1920s onwards were initially Afrikaners drawn from the surrounding rural areas and small towns (the *platteland*). This class of Afrikaner, typically referred to as the *bywoner*-class in literature, also served as one of the major sources of recruitment for the SAP (see Chapter 2). The Pact government’s ‘civilised’ labour policy (affirmative action for disadvantaged whites known as ‘poor whites’) ensured that blacks and coloureds were second in line when searching for employment. After World War II fewer white workers were attracted to factory work, thus the previous pattern of employment began to change with blacks and coloureds moving into semi- and skilled positions vacated by whites in all sectors of industry. The main reason for this was increased employment opportunities for whites as a result of government policy to improve educational and technical training facilities for this population group only.⁶

Black people drawn to Port Elizabeth because of employment opportunities from the turn of the century were mainly Xhosa-speaking. Most of them came from the rural districts of Peddie, King William’s Town and the Transkei.⁷ Resistance to the implementation of influx controls by the Port Elizabeth City Council (PECC) until 1953 ensured that blacks had unhindered access to the city. But once within the confines of the municipal boundary, their freedom was severely circumscribed by the application of the ‘location strategy’ described below.

The outbreak of World War II boosted further the economic development of the city. An expanding industrial base was accompanied by a fast-growing population and suburban sprawl, all of which placed the generally understaffed SAP under increasing pressure, particularly as the law-abiding public living in either new or old, overcrowded areas demanded more policemen and police stations. The total population in Port Elizabeth in 1921 was 50 112; by 1951 it had grown to 149 796.⁸ At the same time, the central government continued with its parsimonious policy towards the policing needs of the country,

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remaining reluctant to increase it police budget, a trend identifiable throughout most of the period under discussion. Local police authorities were thus sandwiched between the demands of local citizens and the reluctance of the central government to increase the size of its ‘thin blue line’. The challenges and problems posed by these demands upon the resources of the SAP in Port Elizabeth are examined in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

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Relations between the local state (PECC) and the SAP were generally good, with liaison between the District Commandant and the Town Clerk efficiently maintained through a well-established correspondence network. The only real source of discord to recur during the period being studied was the SAP’s opposition to the PECC’s liberal stance towards two facets of social control: influx control and curfew regulations pertaining to black people.

The PECC had since the 1920s professed itself to be a liberal institution. It was also an institution which sought to advance the city’s material interests at every opportunity but this aspect of its ‘liberalism’ aimed to cater specifically for the needs of the white, capitalist sector of its constituency. The African population was allowed unrestricted access into the city because of the labour needed to develop the industrial infrastructure of the city, hence the PECC’s rejection of influx control measures enforceable through the Urban Areas Act. This ‘open door’ policy was constantly criticised by police authorities who complained of the difficulty they had in carrying out their duties; they argued that their hands were tied when it came to fulfilling their crime-fighting role and enforcing local government regulations. These ‘problems’ encountered by the Port Elizabeth police were integral features of spatial and functional policing (Chapter 5), of routine policing (Chapter 6) and socially oppressive policing (Chapter 7).

Yet the PECC’s ‘liberalism’ did not allow complete freedom of movement for Africans. Its adoption of the ‘location strategy’, as defined by Robinson⁹, limited their access to and from

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black townships. Their social lives within locations like New Brighton, were closely regulated by officials representing the local and central state; that is, the location superintendent and his staff representing local authorities and the SAP acting on behalf of the government. Disagreement between the local and central state over the implementation of influx control legislation continued until 1953 when the PECC eventually capitulated to the demands of the central government. The local SAP leadership finally won through in its persistent campaign to enforce influx regulations upon the everyday lives of black people. Totalitarian-like policing was now beginning to make inroads into a relatively ‘free’ city, a change made apparent in the policing-specific chapters of this study (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

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This study encompasses a number of selected themes, all of which focus on various aspects of policing pertinent to Port Elizabeth. The concerns of each theme will be delineated below. Because the SAP was an all-male institution until 1972, the date when the first policewomen were accepted into the force, this study will be necessarily male-orientated. The narrative which follows this introductory chapter will, in Jennifer Robinson’s words, ‘reflect a society which is strongly shaped by male images, masculinist language, and the more mundane dominance of men in public life’.

Nevertheless, some recent publications have gone some way in redressing the focus on the ‘maleness’ of policing by exploring early attempts at incorporating women within the SAP.

The related themes of recruitment and training of police personnel form the basis of the narrative in Chapter 2. The centralised training of all white police recruits in Pretoria West


was planned with uniformity in mind. Black policemen (Indian, coloured and African) never received formal training until after 1945 but were expected to receive on-the-job training from their station commanders at their respective stations. Policemen posted to Port Elizabeth were thus either well trained whites or totally untrained, often illiterate blacks. Although mainly English-speaking British expatriates until the 1920s, the white contingent in the city began to undergo a transformation from the 1920s onwards, a trend repeated across the country. By 1956 the ranks of the SAP, even at the highest levels, were dominated by Afrikaners. One of the most significant and enduring features of police recruitment made clear by Brewer in his seminal work on the SAP, is the dichotomy apparent in recruitment trends. Recruitment of whites, always the preferred option, was often a difficult exercise with aggressive recruitment and marketing ploys required to obtain the necessary number of men whereas the recruitment of blacks, specifically Africans, was done with reluctance, particularly when white recruits were in short supply.

Chapter 3 focusses on the conditions of service of the police in South Africa. Working conditions for police force members has always been a contentious issue, particularly matters affecting pay and career prospects. The police, as servants of the state, were prone to exploitation by the very nature of their chosen profession. Policemen were expected to carry out orders as a disciplined, para-military body without question, even when their conditions of service and public image were sometimes almost intolerable. That the apartheid state was heavily dependent for its survival upon the use of repressive force by its armed wing, the police and armed forces, is indisputable. The corollary also holds true; that the loyalty of the these armed state departments was just as vital to its continued existence. Yet, even though the working conditions of the SAP during the period under discussion were sometimes quite unsatisfactory, this symbiotic relationship remained largely intact throughout the 1913-1956 period, with only one strike ever occurring in protest against unsatisfactory working conditions. This study will show that policemen were generally acquiescent public servants. Those who found their conditions of service intolerable simply resigned hence the need for constant recruitment of new policemen to replace them.

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The organisation of policing in Port Elizabeth was based largely on demographic and spatial (locale) concerns. As one would expect, the first police station (established in the 1820s) was situated in the heart of the city. Thereafter, the demands of a growing population and expanding municipal boundary compelled the police authorities to build police stations further afield. The establishment of more white suburbs, and black and coloured townships, saw the creation of separate police districts in the city to cater for the specific needs of each police area. Although the city became increasingly segregated along racial lines over time, police organisation, through the medium of districts, did not initially follow this pattern. Some police districts had under their jurisdiction white and black areas but this was set to change after formal apartheid was implemented, a matter which receives due attention in Chapters 4 and 5.

The various forms of policing practised in Port Elizabeth form the subject of Chapters 6, 7 and 8. In many ways, policing in Port Elizabeth was policing in South Africa writ small, bar a few local peculiarities evident in this history. The mere fact that the nature of policing experienced by whites and blacks was largely different testifies to the colonial origins of policing in South Africa. Urbanised whites were policed in a liberal tradition of civil policing, based on the English metropolitan model (Chapter 6) whereas blacks, because of their inferior status in society, were policed in an socially and politically oppressive manner (Chapters 7 and 8), a form of policing in keeping with the colonial tradition. These different approaches to policing resulted in whites and blacks developing different perceptions of the same force serving in their city. This history of urban-based policing will strive to reveal to what extent repressive policing of this nature over a long period of time made policemen more unpopular, hated and feared in Port Elizabeth as the republican era approached. It should become clear as the thesis unfolds that the public image of the SAP was acutely affected by its repressive role. For the black public, policemen were the highly visible arm of an oppressive state, hence their poor public image.

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To date, this work stands alone in its singular focus on the history of policing in the city of Port Elizabeth. There is nothing remarkable about this declaration other than that it serves as an introductory remark leading to a more sanguine observation, namely, that this thesis will contribute in a meaningful way to a growing Port Elizabeth historiography. Recent works of note on the history of Port Elizabeth have concerned themselves with the history of the African population and, to a limited extent, the material here follows a similar pattern. The parameters of this work are wider, however, in the sense that the policing of Port Elizabeth encompasses the organisation, training and working conditions of the police besides their actual policing duties in various areas of the city.

Perhaps the most influential works to have helped shape this narrative have been those by Gary Baines and Jennifer Robinson. Both these writers have contributed immensely to our understanding of township administration, strategies of control implemented by both the local and central state, instances of passive and active resistance to authoritarian control, and something of the everyday struggle of New Brighton’s inhabitants in their fight against restrictions imposed upon them by the ‘location strategy’, a concept explored in detail by Robinson.

This concept brings into focus the nature of state power which existed in South Africa during the 1913 to 1956 period. In her study of Port Elizabeth, Robinson conceptualises the central state ‘as a (more or less effective) co-ordinating institution [which is] ... sensitive to competing and fragmenting tendencies within the institutional apparatus.’ For other writers of South African history, the state is essentially an instrument or tool to be used at will by a dominant group or class. Rob Davies, for one, has defined the state as ‘a captive instrument

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of national capital’.  

David Yudelman, on the other hand, has defined the state as a combination of the ‘executive, legislative (Parliament), the civil service, judiciary, police, army’, in other words, ‘the institutions that make and enforce public policy, symbolically and actually’. 

These state institutions (in our case, the police department) serve to protect and preserve the power of the state by ensuring that the existent political economy is carefully nurtured, and, as argued by Max Weber, retained by ‘a monopoly of the legitimate use of force’. Having ensured that it has given itself the sole right to the legitimate use of force, the state then has to legitimise the use of such force in the eyes of the ruling class (in the case of South Africa during the 1913-1956 period, the white minority). Thus, within the South African context, the apartheid state did not simply safeguard the capitalist-orientated economy but it also sought to preserve the pre-eminent position of whites in urban areas which was being increasingly threatened by the ever-increasing urban black population. It was in this arena (preserving white domination) that the SAP played a significant role in Port Elizabeth on behalf of the state. This thesis aims to illustrate the extent of that role throughout the period covered by this study.

The SAP, along with other state departments like the Native Affairs Department, was expected to play its role in controlling the burgeoning, increasingly politicised black proletariat of the major urban centres. The racial state of South Africa, during the period covered by this study, did not enjoy majority support due to a discriminatory political system and therefore had to ‘rely upon different methods to secure authoritative domination, often entailing violence and coercion.’

It is one of the aims of this case-study of policing in Port Elizabeth to show to what extent the police were used to safeguard the decades-long survival

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of white minority rule by employing coercive, and sometimes brutal, methods on behalf of the racial South African state.

The policing model most appropriate to understanding coercive policing is colonial policing. In this particular form of policing, used extensively in South Africa since the nineteenth century and almost to the end of the twentieth century, control of policing was highly centralised under state control to ensure that policemen fulfilled primarily the requirements of the government rather than that of the law. It also limited the autonomy of the police force, forcing them to carry out numerous duties (civil, judicial, political and military, to name a few) which were not strictly police-specific. The main purpose of colonial policing, as opposed to civil policing, was to maintain tight control over the indigenous population to ensure that the government’s authority could never be undermined. A service-orientated approach to the policing of the wider community, or the routine suppression of ordinary crime, was never the aim of colonial policing. Thus, for black people in South Africa during the 1913-1956 period, colonial policing was the order of the day, with all its trappings of excessive force and inherent brutality.

In terms of South African police historiography before 1994, literature on the police has been aptly described by Van der Spuy as a ‘motley collection, uneven in quality’. This literature is exemplified by the work of M W Dippenaar, himself a policeman. Dippenaar’s most notable publication is his commemorative work on the first 75 years of the SAP, described by Van der Spuy as flawed in its political analysis but nevertheless an ‘invaluable … chronological reference’. The strength of Dippenaar’s work lies in its chronological referencing of the SAP’s development between the years 1913-1988 and its development as

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an institution. Its weakness may be found in its lack of balance, that is, its perspective on important events in which the police were involved tends to be one-dimensional, focusing too rigidly on police-held views at the expense of opposing ones. Examples of such a narrow interpretation of events will be exemplified in Chapter 8.

The publication of John Brewer’s work and that of Gavin Cawthra in 1994, the year in which the first truly democratic elections took place in South Africa, seemed to herald a turning point with regard to police historiography. Brewer has produced by far the most comprehensive and incisive analysis of the SAP since its inception, ending it in 1992, with policing (and policemen) facing an uncertain future in the face of impending black majority rule. The essence of Brewer’s thesis is that the context of policing in South Africa must be viewed in terms of the state’s policies towards the majority of the people, that is, the black population. He argues that the policies of the racist state...

... constrained the SAP’s modernization into a civil police force, allowing the perpetuation of brute force as a first resort well after it was abandoned in police forces with similar colonial origins, determined that police work be defined primarily as the policing of race relations, encouraged the growth of various forces drawn entirely from the subject population, and made policing a manifestly political activity.  

Since its inception in 1913, the SAP was compelled to practice a form of political policing, a concept defined by Evans as the enforcement of government policy at the expense of a more neutral application of the law. Thus, for the SAP, law enforcement was never impartial.

The history to follow has been informed by Brewer and other recent works on the SAP. Although limited in terms of specific reference and applicability to the concerns of this thesis, these other works have also provided a valuable interpretive framework on the role of the SAP in the South African state: their concerns have been accurately described by Brewer in

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his Introduction.\textsuperscript{28} For example, Seeger’s publication on the changing characteristics of policing in South Africa since 1910 provided valuable insights into the changing nature of policing in the country; Van der Spuy’s literature survey provided some useful material applicable to nearly all the chapters which follow this introduction. For a brief but concise discussion focussing on the origins and militaristic nature of policing in South Africa, Brogden’s work is particularly pertinent.\textsuperscript{29} Besides the works referred to in Brewer’s sketch of policing historiography, there is only one other work at the present which has focussed specifically on policing in a large South African city, and that is Jack Jewell’s history of the Durban Police.\textsuperscript{30} It is more a focus on the metropolitan police of the city than the SAP proper and for that reason it has had little value as a model for this work.

Although comparing policing in Port Elizabeth with policing elsewhere in South Africa and in other parts of the British Empire (or Commonwealth) would have provided further insights into policing as a state-controlled activity, this was sacrificed in the interests of time and space.\textsuperscript{31} Certainly, such a comparative study would prove fertile ground for others who share a similar interest in the nature of policing as it has evolved over time. Nevertheless, this thesis does offer certain comparative insights into policing in other major urban centres in South Africa, most notably in Chapters 6 and 8.

Lastly, it must be made clear that this thesis has been written within a non-structuralist framework. Conspicuous, too, will be the absence of the "programmatic and analytical

\begin{footnotes}
\item[28] Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, pp 2-5.
\item[31] For a useful work on the British Empire, see D M Anderson and D Killingray (eds), \textit{Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830-1940} (Manchester, 1991); on Cape Town, sociological studies by K Albert, ‘The Police and their image: a comparative study of the American and Cape Town policeman’ (M Soc Sci, University of Cape Town, 1978) and B Kinkead-Weekes, ‘Africans in Cape Town: State Policy and Popular Resistance’ (PhD, University of Cape Town, 1992). Very little specific literature on policing South African cities exists at the present time hence the need for further research in this field.
\end{footnotes}
vigour of the postmodern critique with its emphasis on power, discourse and representation”’, 32 even though the SAP during the period under review was an integral part of the central state’s machinery of power. Like Jeff Peires, this writer has yet to move into the realm of history writing which takes more cognisance of “a history of the experience of consciousness” than of the history of experience.33 The emphasis here will be on narrating in detail the central role that human agency has played in the evolution of policing in Port Elizabeth. It is anticipated that the detailed, thematically-structured investigation of police work, police image and police-state relations which follows will, without recourse to extensive theorising, ‘retain a concern for ... state strategy which must impinge upon the smallest of communities in profound ways’.34

If this work must be categorised, then perhaps one could refer to it as a social history of men belonging to a state institution, namely, the South African police force. Should that be accepted as the premise for this thesis, it therefore stands to reason that the basic concerns of this narrative are the manifold experiences of policemen working for the South African state. The empirical base of this work will thus focus on the working conditions of policemen, their socialisation and training to fit a particular role as state workers within a specific urban environment, and their relations with the various local and central state political institutions with which they worked hand and glove (notwithstanding sometimes differing views) in order to enable the white minority government to retain political power. Because it also examines the work of a state department, this thesis could be classed as both a social and institutional history, although the limitations of labelling it a social history are recognised.

Although this study may be correctly described as a ‘local history’ it is certainly not a ‘history from below’. The emphasis of this work is on policemen, the organisational and urban milieu


in which they worked, and their unenviable role as oppressors. It is not a study of those being policed, although it is recognised that these two features of policing are inextricably linked. A vast amount of oral testimony is needed if a clearer picture of policing in Port Elizabeth is to be achieved. That in itself is acknowledged to be a methodological deficiency. Nevertheless, despite its flaws, the hope remains that this thesis will assist us, to use Tim Keegan’s words, ‘in deciphering the totality of past human experience’\textsuperscript{35} in Port Elizabeth.

\textbf{Illustration 1.1 The old and the new: Construction of Louis le Grange Square, 1985}

\textit{(Eastern Province Herald)}

CHAPTER 2

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE: 1913-1956

INTRODUCTION

Before the creation of a unified South African police force in 1913, training and recruitment of policemen was the responsibility of each province. Although the former Transvaal and Orange Free State, both Boer republics before the South African War of 1899-1902, had police forces moulded in the Dutch tradition, they nevertheless shared a considerable number of characteristics with the British colonial model of policing. During the Van Riebeeck era at the Cape, the appointment of a geweldiger, an official to deal with crime and relations between settlers and Khoikhoi, was indicative of the early nature of policing in South Africa: control of black-white relations was equated with the fight against ordinary crime.¹ So when the various police forces were amalgamated, the system of training was sufficiently similar to allow a fairly smooth transition from diversity to uniformity in training. Regional variation was replaced by centralised uniformity. By ensuring that recruits were trained at a centralised depot the process of creating a uniform and united police force was speeded up: all newly trained policemen after 1913 took their skills, policing ethos and the like, assimilated during training, to their respective posts throughout the Union.

The first part of this chapter therefore examines the type of training given to recruits, its militaristic nature and attempts to modify training methods from 1913 to 1956. The initial lack of training for black recruits, and the reasons for the continuance of such a state of affairs until 1945, is also discussed. The next section deals with the SAP’s almost constant shortage of white men throughout the period in question which made recruitment campaigns an integral feature of policing in South Africa - the need to have a police force comprising more whites than blacks was indicative of minority rule. Well trained and well armed white

policemen were the first line of defence in a society which, for the most part, lived in fear of being swamped by a black majority, and such a majority had to be kept under tight rein by a vast array of repressive laws imposed physically, in the main, by policemen.

The penultimate segment of this chapter deals with the criteria for the selection of prospective recruits. Factors such as age, educational level and bilingualism receive particular attention. Besides outlining these criteria, an attempt is also made to explain why official policy towards such criteria underwent constant change, usually necessitated by white manpower shortages and attempts to modernize the force in a rapidly changing world. Because of the reliance on a limited pool of human resources, the SAP, like the ZAR police of the late nineteenth century, was compelled to employ poorly educated, unsophisticated men of rural origins. These men were generally ill-equipped to carry out law enforcement in cities and towns whose populations were growing apace in response to the demands of a fast growing industrial economy. It was not surprising that the SAP struggled to obtain better educated men to join its ranks as education levels within the Afrikaner community, the main recruitment pool for white policemen, remained low throughout the period under discussion: in 1955, for example, only 16 percent of Afrikaners in Grade 8 (Standard 6) managed to obtain matric certificates at the end of their school careers.

The final section of this chapter outlines the social profile of police recruits, their background, the reasons why most white recruits were Afrikaners whilst English-speaking youths tended to stay away from the SAP, and why the vast majority of black policemen were African (as opposed to coloured and Indian) in origin. The lowly social status accorded policemen, a characteristic common in many countries throughout the world during the 1913-1956 period, contributed to the poor image of the SAP, and the attempts to attract better educated police.
personnel remained an uphill battle. The SAP was unable to escape this phenomenon: men with limited education and a lower class background formed the backbone of the force, contributing in a number of ways to the poor public image of the force.

TRAINING OF RECRUITS

In the years before the amalgamation of the various South African police forces, four training centres existed. They were situated in Pretoria (Transvaal, now Gauteng), Pietermaritzburg (Natal), Kroonstad (Orange Free State) and Maitland (Western Cape). For many policemen based at stations beyond the confines of the Western Cape, but within the Cape Province, no formal training was provided; recruits were given on-the-job training at their respective posts. After the establishment of the SAP in 1913, it was decided that the training of all new white recruits was to take place at the old Transvaal police training depot in Pretoria West which was considered to have sufficient, albeit rather primitive, facilities for both the South African Mounted Rifles (SAMR) and the SAP. Extensive building additions were planned, and within seven months of the formation of the new SAP, work was begun at the Pretoria training depot to accommodate the increase in numbers. Black, coloured and Indian recruits were, like many of the pre-1913 Cape police, given only rudimentary training at the police stations to which they were allocated.

Although the majority of recruits were trained in Pretoria, the training centre at Maitland in Cape Town remained open to cater for the needs of the Western Cape. The editor of the official police magazine, The Nongqai, visited the Maitland depot in 1915 and found it to be a ‘sloppy and cheerless’ place. Moreover, he discovered that the site had never been

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constructed for police training purposes, the existing accommodation having been built to house people inflicted by plague in years gone by.\textsuperscript{8} This depot was eventually closed down in 1925 and all training was centralised in Pretoria thus allowing for the total uniformity of training for all police recruits.\textsuperscript{9}

Upon signing up with the SAP, a recruit was expected to conform to the prevailing ethos of the force, ie, he had to be willing to become a loyal servant of the state, take no part in politics and be exemplary in his conduct.\textsuperscript{10} Training in the police depot from 1914 until well into the 1930s was extremely militaristic: good horsemanship, discipline, drill, accurate shooting and physical fitness were considered far more important attributes than in-depth knowledge of policing skills and the law.\textsuperscript{11} A properly defined law syllabus was only organised in 1934 but recruits did not have to pass this course until 1938. Important matters such as a sound understanding of civil policing methods, general knowledge, public relations and the like were virtually ignored until after the Second World War.

During this immediate post-1913 period, satisfaction was also expressed about the quality of newly-qualified policemen being transferred from the training depot to Port Elizabeth. Those involved with the training of recruits in Pretoria seemingly concurred with this assessment of newly trained policemen who underwent training for three months (increased to five months for foot police and six months for mounted police in time).\textsuperscript{12} On the other hand, East London police authorities considered that the recently trained recruits sent to them were poorly educated and generally lacking initiative.\textsuperscript{13} SAP leadership in Cape Town felt the same way, complaining that the recruits in their division were incompetent and unsuitable for carrying out police duties effectively. They also noted that the shortage of personnel was getting

\textsuperscript{8} Nongqai, Oct 1915, p 229.
\textsuperscript{9} NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 6 Nov 1925.
\textsuperscript{10} Nongqai, Aug 1915, p 59.
\textsuperscript{11} Dippenaar, History of the SAP, p 92.
\textsuperscript{12} Nongqai, Dec 1913, p 110.
worse with only nine recruits (there were usually 50) being trained at the Maitland depot at the time and too many of the these recruits were of the bywoner class.\textsuperscript{14} Most of these men were considered unsuitable for police service in an urban environment by the SAP hierarchy in the Western Cape due to their rural origins, poor education level and rather limited understanding of English.

During the immediate post-war period complaints were aired, mainly in the Cape Town area, about the attempts being made to militarize the SAP. The military-type training prevalent in the force was justified in official circles as policemen were considered the first line of defence should civil unrest occur. It was argued further that policemen being trained to use firearms effectively under strict military discipline was necessary lest the public accuse the SAP of being ineffectual during a period of social upheaval.\textsuperscript{15} The police had to be seen to be efficient crime fighters while at the same time being highly trained soldiers fighting for the protection of the public at large, a dual role sometimes fraught with difficulty. Even in patently civil police forces, such as those serving Britain, the need to train policemen in the use of force has been justified on the grounds that policemen are the only ones allowed to employ force legitimately in the face of civil unrest.\textsuperscript{16} To recruit and train men to fit this dual role of crime-fighter and civil protector was no doubt an unenviable task, particularly in South Africa where there was emphasis on the SAP upholding the often repressive laws of the state.

With the advent of the Pact government in 1924 under Hertzog, steps were taken to consolidate white power in South Africa, and the ascendancy of Afrikaners within all state departments was assured.\textsuperscript{17} Employment and training of whites in the private and public sectors increased considerably under the ‘civilized labour’ policy, to the detriment of other

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} NAR, JUS 419 1/57/16, Miss Rogaly, NCW to Minister of Defence, 27 May 1918. Extract from Select Committee on Cape Town police strike: Evidence by Colonel Gray and Colonel Douglas.
\item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Nongqai}, Aug 1919, p 352.
\item \textsuperscript{17} L Thompson, \textit{A History of South Africa} (Yale, 1990), p 160.
\end{itemize}
population groups in the country who were given only limited access to self-improvement and material well-being within a (artificially) segregated society. It was therefore not surprising that when a suggestion was made in 1929 that black and coloured police recruits be formally trained like their white counterparts in specially designated training depots it was rejected on the grounds of expense. Thus, SAP policy remained unchanged: the duty of training these men remained the responsibility of their station commanders. They were to be instructed in the carrying out of police duties while at the same time being given basic drill exercises, mainly to teach them how to salute and to march properly. Because black policemen were used mainly for the maintenance of social control in black areas, usually under the authority of white leadership, any knowledge of law or skills in public relations by the ‘foot soldiers’ of the apartheid state was deemed unnecessary.

Military-like exercises were also imposed upon white trainees but even more rigorously at the police depot after Commissioner I P de Villiers took over from T G Truter, the first SAP Commissioner, in December 1928. De Villiers was known as a strict disciplinarian but the discipline he imposed was highly militaristic with its emphasis on physical fitness, drill and musketry. The increased discipline, and particular focus on cavalry training and associated tactics, was most unpopular within all ranks. This caused many a policeman to resign from the force during De Villiers’s tenure, particularly between 1933 and 1936. At one stage, an incidence of mutiny against military training at the depot occurred, forcing De Villiers to intervene personally to settle matters. But there were other factors which caused men to resign from the SAP during the early 1930s, namely, poor pay, an uncomfortable uniform, and so on, but these issues are dealt with in more depth in the next chapter.

The Lansdown Commission of 1937 noted that recruits needed to acquire greater technical

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18 NAR, SAP 377 20/10/45, Vol 1, SAP Com to SAP Dep Com, Natal Div, 30 May 1929.


20 Brewer, Black and Blue, p 114. See Dippenaar, History of SAP, p 93, for more details on this incident.
skills which focussed primarily on policing duties: spending excessive time on honing their military prowess, which had little application to routine policing, was a waste of valuable time although not to be entirely discarded as it was useful for inculcating discipline. The Commission therefore recommended that recruits be taught how to deal with the public, including a more sensitive handling of the black public, how to carry out duties in police stations and court rooms, and lastly, how to carry out basic criminal investigation.\textsuperscript{21}

On-going skills training was a necessary facet of policing even after newly-trained recruits had been posted to their respective posts. In Port Elizabeth a suitable rifle range had to be obtained for shooting practice during the early 1930s and the PECC was approached to assist in this matter. Having no suitable site within the confines of the municipal boundaries, the PECC suggested that the police approach the district forest officer who could perhaps help them with a site within the Driftsands Reserve area.\textsuperscript{22} Although it is not immediately apparent that the police were granted a site in the Driftsands area during the 1930s, the fact that they utilise a rifle range just off Marine Drive on a monthly basis at the present suggests that the police, or the military, eventually obtained permission from the Council to build a shooting range. Practice with revolvers was made possible after the establishment of a miniature shooting range in the grounds of the Mount Road police station in September 1933.

The issue of training black policemen at a proper training depot was raised once again by the SAP Deputy Commissioner of the Transkei Division in October 1945. After a tour of inspection in his division, he perceived black policemen to be generally ill-trained, lacking in deportment and somewhat slovenly in appearance. Certainly their training was wholly inadequate but the latter observation was prejudicial; not all black policemen lacked pride in their outward appearance. The lack of training, besides being a institutional defect, could also be attributed to the fact that station commanders were generally overworked and


\textsuperscript{22} Cape Archives Repository, Cape Town (CAR), 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1171, Minutes of Finance Committee, 11 March 1932.
therefore lacked the time to instruct their black staff in drill, dress and general police duties. Station commanders in Port Elizabeth were no doubt faced with similar problems. The Deputy Commissioner of Transkei thus suggested to the SAP Commissioner that all black policemen attend a refresher course in Umtata for six weeks. By August 1946 these refresher courses had proved such a success that the SAP hierarchy decided that a black training facility should be established in Umtata. The plan was for all black and coloured recruits from around the country to be sent to this centre for in-depth police training, lasting around two and a half months. They were to be taught simple drill movements, lectured on conditions of service, powers of arrest, police regulations and horsemanship (the latter for mounted recruits only).

To facilitate the training of black policemen, a training depot was opened officially on 10 March 1947 in Umtata. By formalising their training, which had been done in a rather haphazard fashion in the past, it was hoped that black members of the SAP would receive training equivalent to that of whites thereby raising their standard of efficiency and discipline. In previous years blacks had been recruited even though illiterate, but with systematic training in place, all this changed and literacy became a necessary prerequisite. Instructors for this new training depot comprised both black and white elements of the force although all senior ranks were held by whites. Black recruits were given training over a period of two months. The training period was soon extended to three months during 1947 (whites received four months training at this time) and included instruction in law, police duties, drill, first aid and physical training. One hundred men were supposed to begin training each month. Riding, horse management and veterinary instruction was included for those who hoped to become members of the mounted branch.

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23 NAR, SAP 377 20/10/45, Vol 1, SAP Dep Com, Transkei Div to SAP Com, 22 Oct 1945.

24 NAR, SAP 377 20/10/45, Vol 1, SAP Com to SAP Dep Com, Transkei Div, 17 Aug 1946.

25 NAR, SAP 377 20/10/45, Vol 2, Statement by Minister of Justice, 4 March 1947.

26 NAR, SAPC 7 PC10/18, Establishent of Native Training Depot, SAP Com to Dep Com, Umtata, 3 Feb 1947.

The issue of race relations came up as a topic of discussion in 1948 at the SAP Deputy Commissioners’ conference held in Cape Town. It was felt that active measures should be taken by officers to improve relations between the police and members of the public, irrespective of race, colour or creed. The area needing most attention was that of relations between the police and the black and coloured community. The Deputy Commissioner in charge of the Police College explained that steps had been taken to educate recruits on the maintenance of good relations between the police and the black-coloured community. The change of name, from Police Training Depot to Police College, mentioned above, came in November 1947 when it was decided the word ‘depot’ was too reminiscent of military-type training while the word ‘college’ denoted a more civil approach to police training. Besides the change in nomenclature, there was also a change in emphasis, from military-based training to law and general education, but as Brewer observes, ‘drill and musketry remained significant features of the curriculum.’

The perennial problem of poor relations between urbanised blacks and many SAP members,

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28 NAR, SAPC 17 PC 63/1, Vol 1, Report on SAP Dep Coms conference, 6 April 1948, p 12.

29 Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 175.
and the need for requisite education in this area, was highlighted once again in Johannesburg in February 1950. This issue no doubt also existed in other towns and cities of the Union. It had been brought to attention of the chairman of the Johannesburg Joint Advisory Board that many constables enforcing statutory laws aimed specifically at black people were being ‘unnecessarily rude and overbearing in their conduct towards law-abiding Natives.’

In certain instances, it was alleged that verbal abuse was accompanied by physical ill-treatment. The object of this communication between the SAP Commissioner, R J Palmer, and the chairman of the Johannesburg advisory board was to establish whether white police recruits received adequate training in dealing with the black community as it seemed that it was mainly the younger policemen who were guilty of discriminatory conduct towards this sector of the population. Roux has suggested that the arrogance of poorly educated, ill-mannered policemen was the result of an inferiority complex: out of their depth within the urban environment, such policemen ‘obtained psychological compensation by lording it over the blacks.’

Conversely, the Quakers, a religious organisation based in Johannesburg, believed that police recruits did not receive adequate training when dealing with the issue of race relations. In their opinion, it was possible that those policemen convicted of harsh treatment of black people deserved more sympathy than blame as their training may have failed to instruct them on how to treat black people with impartiality and fairness.

Although the training syllabus at the Police College did provide for a few periods a week on race relations, it was felt that while being trained in law and other subjects like police duties, recruits received, albeit indirectly, instruction to be impartial and just public servants. The educational officer at the college had in fact attended a training course organised by the Institute of Race Relations in 1948 in an attempt to improve his understanding of race relations in urban areas. After a specialist in ‘native’ affairs to lecture at the College was

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30  NAR, SAPC 17 PC 62/1, Chairman of Joint Advisory Board, Johannesburg to SAP Com, 6 Feb 1950.
approved, an additional lecturer to specialise in African languages was also appointed to introduce native language classes.\textsuperscript{33} With the urgent need for white African language speakers in the SAP, and keeping in mind that African languages were not part of the curriculum at white schools during this period, it made sense for the College to introduce such classes, using the Pretoria Technical College as the body to control the standard of proficiency.\textsuperscript{34}

By August 1952, the Police College employed three full-time lecturers from the adult education section of the Union Department of Education to teach recruits about race relations and African social customs. Recruits were taught to guard against unnecessary aggression or the use of force unless they were defending themselves. Standing Orders were also in place to guide the police when it came to the arresting of people and in the treatment of prisoners. Besides all this, recruits were encouraged to learn an African language, the incentive being a special allowance paid to those proficient in an African language.\textsuperscript{35} It should be kept in mind, of course, that understanding and speaking the language of the oppressed in South Africa did not necessarily mean that the police would treat them any better than before - racial prejudice was too deeply ingrained in the psyche of many force members, and within white society as a whole. But it might have improved communications and even, on occasion, defused situations.

When it came to the training of members of the Mechanical Branch, Port Elizabeth often played host to experienced mechanics based at the Mechanical School in Benoni who were sent on refresher courses at the city’s motor companies. As the majority of the SAP’s vehicles came from Ford and General Motors, situated in Port Elizabeth, it was felt that such men would benefit greatly by keeping up to date with the latest methods of motor repair.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{33} NAR, SAPC 17 PC 62/1, Commanding Officer, Police College to SAP Com, 2 March 1950.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{34} NAR, SAPC 17 PC 62/1, Commanding Officer, Police College to SAP Com, 8 Nov 1949.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{35} NAR, SAPC 17 PC 62/1(d), Commanding Officer, Police College to SAP Com, 22 Aug 1952.}
They in turn were then better equipped to pass on those newly acquired skills to learner mechanics. These men were sent to Port Elizabeth by train and accommodated in police barracks in the city. The Police Department paid for all these expenses but the motor companies alleviated the financial burden somewhat by providing the tuition free of charge.

The number of black recruits continued to increase during the early 1950s, for Africans as a direct result of the ‘own areas’ policy (See Chapter 4), and for Indians and coloureds, because of the United Party government’s recruitment policy before it lost power in 1948. It had favoured the deployment of more coloured and Indian policemen because they were considered ‘superior’ to blacks and the National Party government naturally perpetuated this racial stratification. It soon became apparent that more police training centres were necessary. Temporary facilities to alleviate the pressure on the Umtata training centre were established in Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. In line with the government’s apartheid policy, these temporary centres paved the way for the separation of training for the black component of the SAP: Indians were all sent to Wentworth in Durban, coloureds to Woltemade in Cape Town and by 1955, all Africans went to New Modderfontein.

The decision to establish a black police training camp in New Brighton in January 1953 was probably a direct consequence of the 1952 October riots. A rapid response to any future outbreak of urban unrest in the Port Elizabeth area thus created the need for properly trained black policemen to be on hand to assist their white colleagues at the source of any potential unrest. About 70 recruits were accommodated at the training depot at any one time, and for drilling and physical exercise purposes, land adjacent to the police station was procured from the PECC at a nominal rent. With the centralisation of all training for black policemen at

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36 NAR, SAP 488 20/9/51, SAP Quartermaster to SAP Com, 4 April 1951.
39 Port Elizabeth Archives Repository, Port Elizabeth (PER), 25/110 No. 4, Report of TC, 4 March 1954.
New Modderfontein, this training facility was closed down at the end of 1954.

Table 2.1 Summary of Training Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mounted Section</th>
<th>Periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mounted drill and veld exercises</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Veterinary</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Sections</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Foot and ceremonial drill</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Weaponry</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. First aid/Health care</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Physical and recreational exercise</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Police regulations/Law and criminal procedure</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Adult education</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Training in official languages</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The training of recruits at the Police College in Pretoria came under the spotlight in April 1953 when the Commissioner Brink requested a committee to report on the training methods employed at the College (See Table 2.1 for an outline of the syllabus). The motto of the training college at the time was ‘n Gesonde gees in ‘n gesonde liggaam’ (a healthy mind in a healthy body) thus training centred on equipping each new recruit spiritually, mentally and physically for his future policing tasks. Brink wished to know exactly how recruits were being prepared for their future role as fully-fledged policemen in the service of the state.

Each of the periods shown in Table 2.1 lasted 50 minutes. Recruits being trained for the mounted section were kept busy for seven months while ordinary foot policemen took six months to complete their training. The allocation of training periods provides considerable insight into what the SAP considered as being important. Although the para-military element

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40 NAR, SAPC 17 PC 62/5, Acting Commanding Officer, Police College to SAP Com, 21 April 1953.

41 NAR, SAPC 17 PC 62/5, Acting Commanding Officer, Police College to SAP Com, 21 April 1953.
of training, namely, drill, weaponry and physical training adds up to fewer hours (350) than the non-para-military facet of training (410), namely health care, police regulations, law, adult education and language study, the military aspect still remained a large chunk (46 percent) of the overall time spent on training. Thus, the creation of a disciplined, military-like force remained a core feature of police training in the fifties. Training in public relations was either absent or glossed over.

In a nutshell, the socialisation aspect of police training comprised the following features. To assist recruits in spiritual and mental development, lectures were provided on sexual matters, family life (which included methods of good parenting), principles of good citizenship, and on how to deal with juvenile crime. The dangers and problems associated with sexual relations before marriage were strongly emphasised - recruits were constantly cautioned against indulging in immoral behaviour.\textsuperscript{42} Compulsory church parade on Sundays, and the attendant sermon, served to reinforce the moral and spiritual training given to them during the week. In an attempt to improve the public image of the SAP, and to improve relations between the force and the people it oppressed more than it assisted, classes were also provided on the customs and habits of the African community.

Brewer has pointed out that although learning more about the customs and culture of black people, the danger also existed that recruits could be taught somewhat distorted views on such matters to justify racial segregation and white supremacy.\textsuperscript{43} At the same time, young recruits were taught about ‘detribalised’ or urbanised blacks in order for them to understand better the crimes committed by this sector of the population, thus perpetuating the false notion that certain crimes were committed in the main by only black people. It would seem then that from an early stage, policemen were taught to stereotype black South Africans.

In fact, the better educated, more sophisticated urbanised black person was treated far worse than his less educated counterpart by young policemen who came from poor, rural

\textsuperscript{42} NAR, SAPC 17 PC 62/5, Acting Commanding Officer, Police College to SAP Com, 15 May 1953.

\textsuperscript{43} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 175.
backgrounds. It is possible that these policemen felt threatened by the former as such blacks had succeeded despite the constraints of second class citizenship; better educated blacks were their potential rivals in a competitive world.\textsuperscript{44} In Johannesburg during the 1930s, for example, the ignorance, lack of experience and brutality of newly recruited policemen caused them to be labelled as ‘“mental defectives ... dull-witted and prejudice-ridden inepts”’ by the local black press.\textsuperscript{45} The fact that Standard 6 (Grade 8) remained the minimum qualification for recruits did not help matters. It is not surprising therefore that the power conferred upon such men, by the mere wearing of a blue uniform, was abused in order to assert their dominance over those they perhaps consciously knew to be their superiors.

Academically, recruits were taught a certain amount of history to assist them ‘to understand the world around them better’ while their language and general knowledge was to be enriched by the provision of magazines, newspapers and books. Language instruction aimed at improving the second-language speaker’s spelling, vocabulary and overall ability in his second language. Because over 90 percent of recruits were Afrikaans-speaking by 1927, most organised language classes focussed on the teaching of English. The penultimate section of this chapter, entitled ‘Social Profile of Recruits’, attempts to explain why English-speakers preferred to reject policing as a career.

In the pre-television era, it is possible that more reading was done by the average recruit and therefore of benefit to him. Nevertheless, the film media was not neglected as film reels were used extensively to illustrate certain lectures and to increase the overall general knowledge of the trainees. This was particularly the case when practical policing was taught. Prospective mounted police were given training in riding and veterinary skills to enable them to both control and care for their horses. Special attention was also paid to learning about the laws of the land, criminal procedure, giving evidence in court, filling in registers and the

\textsuperscript{44} P H Frankel, ‘South Africa: The Politics of Police Control’, \textit{Comparative Politics}, 12 (July 1980), p 492.

\textsuperscript{45} D Goodhew, ‘Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Crime, Policing and the Western Areas of Johannesburg, c.1930-1962’, History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990, p 6. Surprisingly, it was the moderate \textit{Umteteli Wa Bantu} which described the younger members of the SAP in this manner.
like. Lessons on first aid and health care were also provided. All the above courses were examined at the end of the training period.

In the more physical sphere of their training, recruits underwent the obligatory military-style drill to teach them discipline and rapid obedience to all orders. Training in handling firearms was given ostensibly to protect life and property. Physical training included activities like boxing, wrestling, ju-jitsu, swimming and lifesaving. Time was also allocated for participation in sports like athletics, tennis, squash, rugby, et cetera, with the necessary facilities being provided. By the 1950s Afrikaners had taken to rugby with such enthusiasm that it became a major sport at the Police College. Because of the hard, physical nature of the game, and its emphasis on team work and conformity to authoritarian leadership, it suited the overall masculinity of police training methods. Thus, from an early stage in their police careers, recruits were socialised into a world view where manliness was closely associated with sport, particularly rugby, much as it had been during their school careers. This would seem to suggest that earlier patterns of socialisation were continued into adulthood. The mainly physical nature of police training therefore served to enhance male bonding, making it easier for police trainers to produce a conservative, conformist group of men ready to serve virtually without question the interests of the state which employed them.

**RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS**

Soon after the creation of the SAP in April 1913, it was considered necessary to increase the existing shortfall in manpower by way of recruitment. Commissioner Truter was concerned that with the loss of men to other avenues of employment, the police force would soon be faced with a serious lack of personnel. Although initially opposed to the costs of printing recruitment posters, the Minister of Justice eventually relented and Truter was able to go ahead with his recruitment drive. Recruitment posters and circulars were posted to all parts of the Union, notably to church leaders, local government officials and other influential

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47 NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, Sect for Justice to SAP Com, 18 April 1913.
people.\(^{48}\) Truter was unsuccessful in his attempts to get the South African Railways and Harbours (SAR&H) to advertise police recruitment at railway stations by using posters as it expected to be paid for the use of its advertising space.\(^{49}\) Co-operation between government departments could thus not be assumed to be a given, and in this case, the SAR considered that as a separate entity which was run on business lines, it could not simply accommodate the needs of the SAP which would result in expenses to itself.

In terms of Port Elizabeth’s policing needs, it seems that this recruitment drive was successful in that no shortages in personnel existed. By 1915 the number of policemen employed in No. 14 Police District (comprising the magisterial district of Port Elizabeth) had grown to 122, a figure considered more than adequate by the local magistrate who believed that this number was unduly high for the duties which had to be performed.\(^{50}\) But as the city’s population began to increase rapidly in the post-war years, a shortfall in the police establishment soon unleashed a demand for more recruits to be posted to the city during the 1920s (See Chapter 3).

Certainly one of the reasons for the paucity of good recruits throughout most of the country was the pressure imposed by the exigencies of war: the Union Defence Force required young men to fight for the British Empire in 1916 and this had a negative impact on SAP recruiting drives. Another factor causing the SAP to have a ‘disproportionate number of short service men in constable rank’ was, according to Truter, the poor pay being offered to policemen and the fact that better employment prospects existed outside the force.\(^{51}\) Thus, after a brief period of service, many left to find work which was more lucrative, less rigid in terms of working conditions, and without the military-type discipline prevalent in the SAP. As in

\(^{48}\) NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, White Labour Supt to SAP Com, 12 Dec 1913. The necessary forms and details were sent to ministers of both Afrikaans and English churches, to magistrates and assistant magistrates, to Justices of the Peace, to field cornets and to members of parliament.

\(^{49}\) NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 16 March 1915.


nineteenth century South Africa, the status of policemen and the work they performed was extremely low, often attracting a class of man considered inferior by the upper echelons of society.\(^{52}\) This was to remain a problem for police recruitment for most of the twentieth century. The state needed men of quality to serve its citizens (and its own ends) but it was never prepared to pay its crime-fighting workers a wage good enough to attract the best qualified personnel, and therefore was saddled with poor quality recruits.

Towards the middle of 1919 the SAP Commissioner, T G Truter, once again raised the issue of recruitment as the enrolment of recruits was not keeping up with population growth and the loss of personnel to the force.\(^{53}\) By March 1920 Truter complained further that the cities of the Union were being under-policed due to a shortage of men. Part of the problem identified by the SAP Commissioner lay in the fact that most prospective recruits were unwilling to become foot policemen; by far the majority of men wished to serve in the mounted branch of the force.\(^{54}\) Truter then decided that the only option left to him was to recruit for foot policemen in England as all avenues to obtain men in the Union had been tried and found wanting. The Minister of Justice opposed this plan, citing the Union’s level of unemployment as a mitigating factor against external recruitment of manpower. Commissioner Truter was forced to tow the line in this respect as the central state, by way of the Justice Department, held supreme authority in all matters pertaining to law and order.\(^{55}\) Policing could never be independent of political control in South Africa, or anywhere in the world for that matter: policing and state security have always been inseparable, in both democratic and non-democratic states.

It is possible that Truter, himself a married man, deliberately failed to take cognisance of his own reluctance to recruit married men as another option to boost his depleted force. Although police regulations allowed for the recruitment of married men, it remained Truter’s

\(^{52}\) Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 21.

\(^{53}\) NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 22 April 1919.

\(^{54}\) NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 9 March 1920.

\(^{55}\) Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 69.
belief that the percentage of married men in the force was already too high.\textsuperscript{56} Even before the amalgamation of the Union’s police forces, the general attitude towards the employment of married men was negative. Some men who had all the necessary language skills and appropriate credentials attempted to get help in joining the SAP by approaching the Prime Minister, Louis Botha, but they too were turned down.\textsuperscript{57}

One of the problems associated with married men was their unwillingness to serve in small centres or country posts due to limited educational and health facilities in such places. Accommodation in these rural posts was also geared mainly towards single men so accommodation would have proved a further problem should more married men have been recruited. Lastly, and this is where the para-military nature of the SAP is apparent, it was considered necessary to have a ‘considerable number of men [available] at short notice in order to prevent or suppress a breach of the peace’, and such a body of men could only be available in times of emergency if living in barracks.\textsuperscript{58} Given the low level of technology in terms of communication and transport at the time, it certainly would have been difficult to assemble a large group of men scattered in various suburbs around a large town or city quickly. Thus, although Truter’s attempt to recruit men from the United Kingdom for the larger urban centres of the Union was turned down by the government, we can understand why he would have preferred such an option: the extra expense and general logistics associated with recruiting married South Africans for the SAP were stumbling blocks he deemed too difficult to surmount. Although it would have been more cost effective to raise policemen’s salaries, the government’s reluctance to do so made Truter’s recruitment endeavours all the more difficult.

In August 1919 Truter noted that the shortfall in white policemen stood at 454 men, and with no prospect of obtaining any further men until conditions of service improved, he therefore proposed to make up this shortage by temporarily increasing the coloured, Indian and black

\textsuperscript{56} NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 20 May 1919.

\textsuperscript{57} NAR, PM 1/1/312 175/1/1914, Sect to the Prime Minister to J N Pike, 27 Jan 1913.

\textsuperscript{58} NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 20 May 1919.
police establishment.\textsuperscript{59} By employing these ‘non-white’ policemen in those areas inhabited mainly by their own people, Truter hoped to release white policemen previously serving in such areas for service in white areas. His plan was approved by the government which knew that the employment of coloured, Indian and black policemen was more cost effective than the employment of white policemen. In 1917 the unit cost per black policeman to the state was only £70 whereas the unit cost per white policeman was £173.50.\textsuperscript{60} This illustrates the extent to which the black component of the SAP was discriminated against - if whites were poorly paid state workers then blacks were virtual wage slaves by comparison. Yet despite such inadequate pay and generally unsatisfactory conditions of service, Grundy has noted the ease with which South Africa’s armed forces, including the SAP, were able to recruit blacks: limited opportunities in white-dominated civil society and the attractions of the armed forces.\textsuperscript{61} Although many of these recruits may have harboured feelings of hostility towards the regime they voluntarily chose to serve, the need to obtain work, and therefore an income, outweighed all other considerations.

The fact that policemen in 1919 earned less than the average motor mechanic, and that a career in the force was considered work suitable only for poor whites, did not assist the recruitment campaign.\textsuperscript{62} Truter was eventually forced to drop the standard of education in order to obtain more white recruits. He did this by appointing men with a standard five qualification as second-class constables; first-class constables were still expected to have a standard six qualification although the former could, after three years, write an examination to qualify as first-class constables.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{59} NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, Sect for Justice to Sect for Finance, 22 April 1919.

\textsuperscript{60} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 61.


\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Nongqai}, July 1919, p 318. Members of the SAP were themselves encouraged by this magazine to look out for possible recruits to fill the existing vacancies within the force; considering their conditions of service at the time, one wonders how enthusiastic they would have been to carry out such directives.

\textsuperscript{63} NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 9 July 1920.
Truter was concerned that the major cities of South Africa were still under-policed in terms of manpower allocated to them (Port Elizabeth had a shortfall of 11 foot policemen in November 1920), not only because of the negative impact on normal crime-fighting, but were a situation to arise where industrial or political unrest broke out suddenly, the SAP would be hard-pressed to cope adequately with such a situation (See Chapter 8). Truter made it clear that even though police pay had improved considerably since October 1919 it had made little difference to the recruitment drive. His plan to acquire men from Britain was once again turned down by the government which preferred the option of recruiting married men from within South Africa even though Truter pointed out that only a very small number of married men had come forward to join the force. Factors that inhibited the recruitment of married men were things like the poor pay during the training and early period of employment; the shortage of suitable accommodation for married men also limited the Commissioner’s options when the placement of men was considered. All too often, he felt, men were frequently placed in posts deemed unsuitable for their particular skills due to accommodation constraints. This did not improve the efficiency of the force in his opinion.

By the middle of 1921 the SAP still suffered from a dearth of foot policemen in the main cities of the Union as illustrated by Table 2.2. Although some cities like Port Elizabeth made use of special constables to make up for the shortfall in permanent personnel, this state of affairs was considered unsatisfactory by Truter. Too many special constables were either unsuited for police work or were too old for such activities. Special constables were civilians who volunteered for police duties and were sworn in as policemen when circumstances warranted it, usually when a shortage of policemen existed. According to Truter, these special constables were ‘by no means highly appreciated by the public, and certainly not by the Police themselves’. He would have preferred to have a fuller complement of men employed on a permanent basis, even if this meant recruiting men from the United Kingdom.

64 NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 9 March 1920.
65 NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 3 Dec 1920.
66 NAR, SAP 41 6/766/20/1, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 14 June 1921.
Truter’s attempts to increase the manpower of the SAP was stymied by the economic depression in the post-war years. He was compelled to enforce government policy which stipulated that SAP manpower levels had to be reduced as from 1 April 1922. The Deputy

Table 2.2 Shortage of foot policemen in the Principal Cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Shortage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kimberley</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Town</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East London</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johannesburg</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretoria</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bloemfontein</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>

Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division (CED) was instructed to close down his minor police posts as a cost-cutting measure. This was to be done in collaboration with local magistrates. Additional personnel could no longer be obtained as from the above date and that included all race groups who usually served in the SAP. The prohibition on recruitment was to be kept a secret from the general public. This secrecy was no doubt aimed at avoiding any hue and cry from the mainly white public which tended to demand more rather than less policemen for the policing of their particular areas. Any drastic reduction in the manpower of the SAP would, in the eyes of the public, result in an immediate increase in criminal activity to the detriment of law and order in white areas.

Towards the end of 1929, on the advice of magistrates, native commissioners and other state officials, the new SAP Commissioner, I P de Villiers, decided that the existing regulations concerning the recruitment age of black policemen had to be amended. It would seem that the advice he had received pointed towards allowing black men over the age of 35 to enrol with the SAP but only at his discretion as Commissioner. Older black policemen were

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67 NAR, SAP 41 6/766/20/1, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 14 June 1921.

68 NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Sect to SAP Dep Coms, 12 Nov 1921.

69 NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, Sect for Justice to SAP Com, 15 Nov 1921.

70 NAR, JUS 521 1/346/20, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 16 Nov 1929.
considered more dependable in certain categories of work.

After World War II, a drive to obtain more police recruits was set in motion. This was in response to the government’s decision to improve policing in the country.\textsuperscript{71} Initial recruitment attempts evinced little response from potential candidates until such time as the new salary scales were made available, as from 1 April 1946. Thereafter, a definite improvement in recruitment of police was noted.\textsuperscript{72} For many men who had served in the armed forces during the War, the prospect of further work in a military-type institution was anathema - such men went elsewhere in search of work. Others, of course, relished the idea of further military-type service and therefore joined the SAP.

In Port Elizabeth, the expanding motor manufacturing industry drew many white males into supervisory and technical jobs\textsuperscript{72}, allowing mainly Afrikaner working class males to enhance their standing (and income) within their social milieu. Those who lacked the appropriate qualifications to find skilled positions within the industrial and manufacturing sector joined the police force only after the salary scales had been improved; very few men became policemen to serve the community or state for purely idealistic reasons or out of a sense of duty. The need for income remained the deciding factor for the majority of men lacking either specific skills or a suitable education.

The shortage of white recruits forced the SAP to cast its net even wider to procure recruits. It openly courted the services of black, coloured and Indian men in 1946. Pamphlets advertising career prospects for these men set out the following preconditions to allow for their enrolment: they had to be between the ages of 20 and 35, sufficiently fit physically and mentally to cope with police work, and of good character. No educational qualifications

\begin{itemize}
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were mentioned in the pamphlet. Men who had served in the armed forces had the additional
privilege of having their military service (for pay and pension purposes) recognized by the
SAP; such recognition aimed at luring ex-soldiers into the police force. Indian and coloured
constables would, upon graduating as policemen as from 1 January 1946, receive £152 per
annum if single and £184 per annum if married. In comparison, black policemen would earn
£108 per annum while single and £132 per annum if married. ⁷⁴

All Deputy Commissioners and District Commandants were notified of the recruitment
campaign to be carried out within the white community via a circular from the SAP
Commissioner in January 1946. Members of the force were expected to advertise the need
for new recruits, and even ex-policemen were to be contacted and made aware of the
improved conditions of service and salary scales in a bid to regain their services. ⁷⁵

To encourage the young men of Port Elizabeth to join the SAP, a special drill and physical
training display was held at the Westbourne Oval by the SAP recruiting team towards the end
of 1947. Such a display formed part of the recruitment campaign which toured the Union
between April and December of that year. Besides such physical displays, films were shown
and talks on career prospects with the SAP were also undertaken. ⁷⁶ This recruiting drive is
not surprising as the shortfall in white policemen stood at just over a 1 000 at the end of
1947; by December 1948, that shortfall had increased to 3 156 men. ⁷⁷ To increase numbers,
the recruitment age for white members of the SAP was lowered to 18 years in 1948. ⁷⁸

Possibly the main cause of policemen leaving the force was financial. Prospects of better pay

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⁷⁵ NAR, SAPC 8 17/2, Recruiting/ General, Vol 2: SAP Com to All Dep Coms and District Cmdts, 3 Jan 1946.


outside the SAP were tempting to poorly paid constables; the majority of men who left the force did so within the first three years of service. The SAP Commissioner, R J Palmer, realized that in order to attract and keep men in the force, greatly improved salary scales would be necessary.\textsuperscript{79} Inadequate accommodation was also cited as a factor which contributed to the loss of men from the force during this period. He believed that until such time as the pay improved, a further recruitment campaign would be fruitless. Being given the opportunity to ‘do a man’s job in the service of your Country’ was a patently inadequate magnet to draw many of the youth of South Africa into the police force.\textsuperscript{80} Thus, the call to perform one’s duty in the interests of one’s country was to prove largely insufficient when one faced better pay prospects and more congenial working conditions in the private sector.

Due to the continuing shortage of men coming forward to join the SAP, it was decided in early 1951 that in order to increase the pace of recruitment, documentary-type films should be made to attract potential recruits, particularly in the smaller towns of the Union.\textsuperscript{81} Because of the demographic nature of white society, the films were made in both official languages although only the English version was used in the larger centres of the Union; the Afrikaans version was utilised both in the urban and rural areas of the country. Married men were once again not targeted by the recruitment campaign due to financial constraints. Any married man recruited to the SAP would have cost the government an extra £174 per annum.\textsuperscript{82}

At the SAP Deputy Commissioners’ conference of 1951, a suggestion was made that in order to stimulate recruiting while at the same time reducing the large number of resignations during the first few years of service, recruits should receive the same pay as the SAR&H


\textsuperscript{80} NAR, SAPC 15 PC 25/73, Recruitment pamphlet enclosed in letter, SAP Commanding Officer, SAP College to SAP Quartermaster, 26 July 1948.

\textsuperscript{81} NAR, SAPC 8 17/2, Vol 2, SAP Com to Commanding Officer, Police College, 22 Feb 1951.

\textsuperscript{82} NAR, SAPC 8 17/2, Vol 2, Assistant Com to Commanding Officer, Police College, 9 Oct 1951.
Police. They received approximately £240 per annum while SAP constables started on £200 per annum. It was decided that further representations be made to the government but these attempts at pressurising the Treasury were unsuccessful. Other means had to be found to increase police numbers, one of which was to reduce the age restriction of potential candidates.

With government approval, the SAP Commissioner was able to reduce the minimum age for recruits from 17 to 16 years as from 1 December 1952. Such recruits had to have a standard seven or higher school-leaving certificate. Those who did not have a standard eight certificate were compelled to write an IQ test before being enrolled. However, if their school results were considered normal for the standard six or seven level, the IQ test was waived. Called cadets, these youths were to be trained for about 9 to 12 months, and after turning 18 years old, they could become fully-fledged constables. One of the drawcards was that these youths, upon becoming constables, were given credit for their years of experience in exactly the same way as a man who joined the force at 18 or older. In other words, upon turning 18, they ended up earning more than a matriculated constable who may have elected to join the force at the this age. The official reason for trying to net youths to serve in the SAP at such a young age was to prevent them securing other employment upon leaving school. Once they had obtained work it was difficult to lure them into the force as the higher salaries offered in the private sector could not be matched by the SAP. Parents, who were aware of the dangerous and often unpleasant nature of police work, were often unwilling to allow their sons to become poorly paid state servants.

As with their junior police predecessors (those between 17 and 18 years), these youths also faced an extended period of training and upon completion of such training, they were given

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84 NAR, SAPC 7 PC 17/1/1, Recruits, IQ Tests, Circular: SAP Com to All Deputy Commissioners, 15 Dec 1952.
protected employment in mainly administrative posts.\textsuperscript{86} One year after adopting this policy of employing youths as young as 16 years, 112 such boys had enlisted with the SAP.\textsuperscript{87} It would seem that the idea of employing white women as police constables to make up for the shortfall in such posts remained non-negotiable, or simply unacceptable in government circles.\textsuperscript{88} The concept of women serving in an all-male organisation thus remained taboo. The other option, of course, was to increase the intake of black men as there was apparently no difficulty in obtaining recruits from this sector of the Union’s population. In fact, the large number of such men seeking a career with the SAP ensured that only the best educated applicants gained admission to SAP ranks. Those able to speak at least one of the official languages were given first preference.\textsuperscript{89}

Four recruitment tours were undertaken in 1953. As a rule, film shows were preceded by a short talk by the officer in charge on the advantages of joining the SAP as a career. Thereafter, pamphlets were handed out and prospective recruits identified.\textsuperscript{90} In some cases, where the recruitment teams planned to use school halls, school principals were at first unwilling to co-operate until the officer-in-charge made it clear that the boys would be encouraged to first finish their schooling before joining the force.\textsuperscript{91} Opposition to the recruitment campaign also came from within the SAP itself. At Upington the recruiting team


\textsuperscript{89} UG 39-1954, \textit{Annual Report of SAP Commissioner}, 1953, p 2. In 1953, 2 360 non-white recruits received training as opposed to 949 whites. Auxiliary training depots for non-whites were to be found at Woltemade, Benoni, New Brighton, Wentworth, Marabastad and Benoni.

\textsuperscript{90} NAR, SAPC 8 PC 17/2A, Circular: SAP Com to Dep Coms of Transvaal, Kimberley, East Cape and SAP College, 24 Jan 1953.

\textsuperscript{91} NAR, SAPC 8 PC 17/2A, Recruiting Officer to Commanding Officer, Police College, 2 March 1953.
was informed by an SAP member that he could not support them as police pensions and general working conditions were hopelessly inadequate. Similar sentiments were expressed at other police stations in the area.\textsuperscript{92} No police union existed at this time to take up such complaints on behalf of its members. The matter of a police union had been discussed the year before by Commissioner J A Brink and the Minister of Justice, and their decision was that the ‘time was not opportune for the bringing into being of a Police Union in the present unsettled times of the country.’\textsuperscript{93} They nevertheless agreed to institute an alternative channel, as opposed to the official one, to allow men to lodge a complaint against superior officers with their District Commandants.\textsuperscript{94} Thus, by not having the full support of its own members, the SAP made an already difficult task all the more exacting. It is not surprising therefore that this particular recruitment campaign was largely unsuccessful in alleviating the shortage of men in the force.\textsuperscript{95}

The on-going apathetic attitude of serving police members towards recruitment had not changed in the following year and was noted with concern by Commissioner Brink. He pointed out in 1954 that of the 363 recruits undergoing training at the Police College in October, only 18 percent of them had been approached and influenced by policemen in their respective areas to join the force.\textsuperscript{96} He considered this most unsatisfactory and appealed to policemen to make a thorough survey of their areas with a view to procuring more men for the force. Brink suggested that a suitable member of the force be found to undertake this task in each police district. His main objective was to reduce as far as possible the manpower shortage of the SAP at the time. One of the steps he took to reduce this shortfall was to allow for the recruitment of married white men under the age of 30 years; there was no

\textsuperscript{92} NAR, SAPC 8 17/2A, Recruiting Officer to Commanding Officer, Police College, 2 March 1953.

\textsuperscript{93} NAR, SAPC 18 PC 63/1, Vol 2, Report on Dep Coms conference, 9 Dec 1952, p 7.

\textsuperscript{94} NAR, SAP 373 2/187/45, Report on Dep Coms conference, 3 Oct 1951.

\textsuperscript{95} Dippenaar, \textit{History of SAP}, p 241.

\textsuperscript{96} Nongqai, Oct 1954, p 1 129.
shortage of ‘non-white’ recruits at this time.\textsuperscript{97}

In Port Elizabeth, most school principals expressed their support for the recruitment campaign when approached by the District Commandant of the SAP, Lieutenant-Colonel R van Heerden. Film shows could be held at Pearson, Grey High, Cillie and at the Technical College. In the opinion of Commandant van Heerden, all the above-mentioned schools would produce potential recruits but he singled out Grey High School as unlikely to do so being an English-medium school.\textsuperscript{98} When it came to obtaining English-speaking recruits, the SAP seemed to be admitting defeat even before it started. The expectation and reality, which had been in place for several decades by this time, thus continued: sons of the English-speaking community could be expected to find work in the private sector. Very few of them were in a social or economic position which would have forced them to consider the SAP an attractive or alternative career.

Due to adverse weather conditions, accompanied by rain, this recruitment drive in the Eastern Cape never reached Port Elizabeth. The recruiting team which intended visiting the city was forced to return to Pretoria after presenting its final programme in Somerset East.\textsuperscript{99} The lack of tarred roads obviously made travel extremely difficult for motor vehicles. Nevertheless, the captain in charge of this recruitment team considered the tour to have been a success even though bad weather kept large numbers of people away from certain centres. In some of the smaller towns, the venues were filled to capacity. It seems that this was mainly due to prospective recruits being accompanied by parents and other interested family members. In general, these recruitment tours were well supported by local government officials such as town councillors, magistrates, and so on, and also by the religious and educational fraternity.

\textsuperscript{97} UG 54-1955, \textit{Annual Report of SAP Commissioner}, 1954.

\textsuperscript{98} NAR, SAPC 8 PC 17/2A, District Cmdt to Commanding Officer, Police College, 13 June 1953.

\textsuperscript{99} NAR, SAPC 8 PC 17/2A, Recruitment Officer to Commanding Officer, Police College, 14 Nov 1953.
in the smaller towns of the country. Gauging the success of such recruitment campaigns remains a difficult task however. Of 10 small towns and villages visited in the Cape Province, only 2.2 percent of the people who attended recruitment meetings indicated their willingness to join the SAP. Such a low percentage means that few of those who attended the film shows were seriously interested in becoming policemen; it is possible most of them attended because of family pressure or purely for the entertainment value attached to seeing a film. In rural villages like Joubertina, Willowmore and Albertinia, a free film show would have probably constituted an important social event.

Despite the concerted recruitment effort of the 1950s the SAP’s official manpower quota was never filled - by 1960 it still had a shortage of 1 427 white and 956 black policemen. Although the recruitment of blacks was obviously part of the solution, it could never be the whole solution as black policemen were not allowed to police white areas. The best way to resolve this problem was a substantial increase in pay, allowances and other benefits, such as an improved pension scheme. When pensions for white policemen were improved during 1955, the number of applicants joining the force improved marginally, rising from 1 193 in 1956 to 1 277 in 1959. Ultimately, it was a system of racial quotas and a limited state budget which compelled the SAP to remain understaffed during most of the period covered by this study.

**RECRUITMENT CRITERIA**

To join the police force, recruits in 1913 had to have passed Standard 6 (Grade 8) before being allowed to write an entrance examination. They were tested in mathematical ability and in linguistic skills although some policemen felt that the whole emphasis of the examination was on bilingualism only. Due to a shortage of personnel in 1920 the SAP dropped the

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100 NAR, SAPC 8 PC 17/2A, Recruitment Officer to Commanding Officer, Police College, 28 Aug 1953.

101 NAR, SAPC 8 PC 17/2A, Aanhangsel A: Werwingstoer Nr. 6 van 1953.


103 Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 44.
educational level to Standard 5 for white recruits; potential black policemen did not have to be literate or have any particular level of education during this early period.\footnote{104}

Towards the end of 1925 the manpower position of the SAP had improved considerably, so much so that the Commissioner was able to recommend to his superiors that the educational qualification of potential police recruits be upgraded from standard six to standard seven.\footnote{105} This proposal was rejected by the Minister of Justice who believed that the existing level of education was adequate. Nevertheless, he gave Truter complete authority to use his discretion in acquiring the best-educated recruits.\footnote{106} In other words, the better educated applicant was to be favoured even though police regulations permitted men with a standard six level of education to apply for service with the force. The end result of this virtual over-supply of recruits at the end of 1925 meant that the SAP had, for the first and only time in its history, sufficient constables to fill its official manpower quota.\footnote{107} Potential recruits were placed on a waiting list. The SAP remained amply supplied with suitably qualified recruits well into the early 1930s, much to the satisfaction of the new SAP Commissioner, I P de Villiers.\footnote{108} His predecessor, Commissioner Truter, had been pleased to note that the number of white SAP members born outside South Africa’s borders had shrunk to a small minority by the end of 1926, resulting in a force more representative and therefore more bilingual than in previous years.\footnote{109} Although Truter had sought to recruit men from Britain, he had only done so because of the extreme difficulty in obtaining sufficient men in the Union in the decade before the twenties.

\footnote{104} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 80.

\footnote{105} NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 10 Sept 1925. The training depot in Pretoria now had a waiting list of men willing to train as policemen unlike the period immediately following the termination of the First World War.

\footnote{106} NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, Sect for Justice to SAP Com, 15 Sept 1925.


Notwithstanding the more than satisfactory manpower position, the SAP nevertheless still experienced a shortage of skilled African-language linguists, to the extent that potential recruits conversant in only one official language yet fluent in one of the local African languages were allowed to enlist with the force upon approval by the Minister of Justice.\footnote{NAR, SAP 41 6/766/20/1, SAP Com to All SAP Dep Coms, 29 Feb 1928.}

Thus, although the official policy was to employ fully bilingual, South African-born men, this condition was waived where special skills were in short supply. Applicants, on the waiting list to join the SAP, and who had good African language skills, thus received first preference when it came to filling vacancies in the force.\footnote{NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, Special Circular No. 11 of 1924: Suspension of Recruiting (European) for the SAP, 10 Nov 1924.} If employed in Port Elizabeth, such men had to be proficient in Xhosa. Although able to find employment with the SAP because of their bilingualism in one African and one official language, these men were nevertheless expected to become proficient in both official languages once enrolled as policemen.\footnote{NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 6 Nov 1925.} Thus bilingualism in one African language and one official language was deemed insufficient; these men therefore remained under constant pressure to acquire the necessary skills in either English or Afrikaans.

The quality of white recruits being posted to Port Elizabeth came under the spotlight when evidence was submitted to the Lansdown Commission in February 1937. While some members of the SAP believed that the standard of recruits being accepted by the force had degenerated,\footnote{NAR, K80, Lansdown Commission of Enquiry, Evidence, Port Elizabeth: District Cmdt, Major F J Verster, interviewed on 8 Feb 1937.} others considered them to be ‘absolutely good.’\footnote{NAR, K80, Evidence by Sgt W H Boshoff, 10 Feb 1937.} In the opinion of Major F J Verster, the District Commandant, the majority of new policemen sent to Port Elizabeth came from either a poor rural or poor urban background. Many of them had joined the SAR&H as common labourers before applying to the SAP for work in the hopes of
improving their status and income.\textsuperscript{115} While such men considered a career in the SAP as a step up the social ladder, others from a better educated background could expect to find better paid work in other areas of government service or in the private sector; for such men, joining the police force was more like a step down the social ladder. Verster believed that the only way to attract the better class of person was to improve the pay situation.

Others felt that one could not expect the better educated men to join the force as they knew that on the existing salary scales prevalent in the 1930s, they would be forced to live among the more impoverished members of the community.\textsuperscript{116} Such a scenario was hardly going to attract the better qualified individual to the force. Nevertheless, men like Sergeant W H Boshoff, stationed at the Baakens Street police station, considered that the \textit{bywoner}-type recruit made good policemen as they knew how to work hard and obeyed orders without question, unlike high school graduates. Yet at the same time, he believed that their knowledge of policing upon completion of their training was inadequate. Both Boshoff and Detective Sergeant C G Barnard, an English-speaking member of the Korsten CID, expected newly arrived recruits to be ill-prepared for police work. It was up to the local station commanders to teach the new men their duties.\textsuperscript{117} It would appear that the adage of people acquiring practical skills whilst on the job also applied to the SAP. Yet it was possible that the emphasis on para-military training undertaken at the training depot neglected training in day to day policing skills. Men who drilled smartly and shot accurately did not necessarily make the best policemen. In the opinion of ex-Sergeant H A Trimming, a British-born NCO in charge of the barracks at Mount Road police station before purchasing his discharge, the depot provided ‘purely military training’ with a smattering of law, first-aid and police duties.\textsuperscript{118}

In what could be construed as a rather desperate measure (although not without precedent)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{115} NAR, K80, Evidence by Major Verster, 8 Feb 1937.
\item \textsuperscript{116} NAR, K80, Evidence by ex-Sgt H A Trimming, 8 Feb 1937.
\item \textsuperscript{117} NAR, K80, Evidence by D/Sgt C G Barnard, 11 Feb 1937.
\item \textsuperscript{118} NAR, K80, Evidence by ex-Sgt Trimming, 9 Feb 1937.
\end{itemize}
to ensure an acceptable number of white policemen in the force, the approval of the Minister of Justice was obtained in 1946 to recruit white youths aged 17 and 18. These youths had to have passed Standard 8 (Grade 10) or any higher school examination. Males over the age of 19 with a Standard 6 school leavers’ certificate fell within the normal requirements laid out by the SAP. Station commanders were expected to contact local headmasters to obtain the names and addresses of possible candidates for what one could describe as the ‘youth division’ of the SAP. Parents were expected to give their consent in writing before their sons could be accepted by the SAP.\textsuperscript{119} It was made clear to all SAP Deputy Commissioners and District Commandants that the success of the scheme depended heavily on the support of all members of the force.

Only 200 were to be trained annually for a minimum period of six months, and thereafter be posted to various police divisions to undertake sheltered work such as being clerks in charge offices, court orderlies and the like. The first batch of junior recruits commenced training at the depot on 1 April 1946. The training of these junior recruits (later known as the Junior SAP) went according to plan and by the end of October the first 206 youths had successfully completed their police training.\textsuperscript{120} The fact that members of the Junior SAP were posted to the larger urban centres for practical experience whilst still in training meant that they obtained a better grounding in police work than their more senior counterparts.\textsuperscript{121} The infusion of these junior recruits into the police force had, in the view of the SAP Commissioner, a double advantage in that the force obtained better educated candidates and at the same time allowed more of the older constables to carry out practical police work while the juniors handled more administrative work.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{119} NAR, SAPC 8 17/2, Recruiting/ General, Vol 2: District Cmdt, Pretoria to All Deputy Coms and District Cmdts, 22 Feb 1946.

\textsuperscript{120} Nongqai, Nov 1946, p 1433. The passing out parade was attended by the Minister of Justice, H G Lawrence and the SAP Com, Brigadier R J Palmer, among others.

\textsuperscript{121} Nongqai, Sept 1946, p 1 144.

In May 1951 the Officer Commanding of the Police College strongly recommended to the SAP Commissioner that Standard 8 be regarded as the absolute minimum qualification needed to join the force. His reasons revolved around issues such as the problem of weak candidates holding up the progress of other members of their troop; such candidates were in his opinion so weak mentally that they were virtually ineducable and would therefore never fully grasp the elementary principles of Common Law, Criminal Procedure, Adult Education (which included subjects like political theory, race relations and physiology). Ultimately, he concluded, such weak candidates for police training would simply 'prove an embarrassment and cause irreparable damage to the prestige of the Force.' Because many young constables often treated black people with callous disdain, this would seem to corroborate the opinions of the commanding officer of the College: too many policemen lacked the mental capacity to absorb the skills taught them at the college in dealing with people who were other than white. Unfortunately for the commanding officer, Commissioner Brink rejected his suggestion, which had also received support from several other divisional commanders. Weak candidates had to be accepted to make up the shortfall in white manpower requirements.

In a post-war climate of industrial expansion, where jobs were easily available for white school leavers, particularly matriculants, the SAP was once again compelled to employ ingenious tactics to persuade the government to approve its methods of procuring recruits. Its proposal to employ youths and married men under the age of 30 years was approved, the latter being enrolled in 1954. White youths with a Standard 7 or higher qualification, and 16 years or older, were allowed to enrol for training from December 1952 and thereafter placed in the Junior SAP. Once they attained the age of 18, they were removed from a protected working environment and posted to police stations throughout the country. Thus, to obtain the required increase in white manpower in an age of minority rule, the SAP went to

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123 NAR, SAPC 17 PC 63/1, Vol 1, Commanding Officer, SA Police College to SAP Com, 8 May 1951.


sometimes extraordinary lengths to attract recruits. By enticing young men well below matric level to join its ranks, the SAP ‘also improved the chance of building lifelong ties to the organisation.’

The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) believed that improvements in the pay and training of both black and white policemen would improve the unsatisfactory state of relations between the black public and the SAP. As far as it was concerned, too many black policemen were virtually illiterate and therefore ‘objects of contempt and derision’. This in turn made them react with brutality towards members of the black public who demeaned them. The only way around this problem, according to the SAIRR, was to upgrade the entrance qualifications of black recruits seeking a career with the SAP from 1953.

**SOCIAL PROFILE OF RECRUITS**

The fact that the majority of white recruits (over 75 percent) pursuing a career in the recently formed SAP came from a farming background meant that the majority of them in 1914 were rural in origin and Afrikaans-speaking. In contrast, the officers of the SAP were mainly English-speaking and, not surprisingly, in the early years of the SAP, many Afrikaners felt somewhat marginalised, particularly as day to day communications were conducted in English. Many also came from the ranks of the ‘poor white’ community which could be found within the urban environs of the Union. The phenomenon of most white recruits being drawn from the farming community was not only restricted to South Africa; British, Canadian and Australian police forces all obtained the majority of their police recruits from

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127 University of the Witwatersrand, AD 843/RJ/Aa12.20.5, SAIRR Memo, 1953.

128 *Nongqai*, Nov 1920, p 545.

129 Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 45. Dippenaar, in his *History of the SAP* notes that in 1928, of 157 high ranking officers, only three were Afrikaners. See p 88.

130 *Cape Times*, 12 June 1917.
the agricultural or rural sector during the first few decades of the twentieth century.\footnote{131} Many policemen serving in South Africa also came from Britain although their numbers began to decline as the century wore on. If one looks at the figures for the Cape in terms of men recruited by that province between August 1915 and November 1917, of the 30 986 men obtained, 10 289 came from overseas.\footnote{132} Most of them originated in the British Isles hence the large number of British surnames held by policemen working in Port Elizabeth before the 1930s.\footnote{133} Nevertheless, by the early 1990s, the trend which began with the establishment of the SAP continued: the majority of white policemen still came almost solely from the Afrikaner community.\footnote{134} After 1927 just over 90 percent of the SAP’s white enrolment constituted Afrikaners and that trend continued unabated for the rest of the century. Thus, from the 1920s onwards, the above recruitment pattern ensured that the white sector of the SAP became increasingly homogenous in terms of ethnic makeup.\footnote{135}

In his 1926 annual report, Commissioner Truter reported that the police force was becoming increasingly bilingual, mainly because the Afrikaans-speaking segment of the SAP had grown considerably. The question of why the majority of new recruits posted to Port Elizabeth (as elsewhere in the Union) were Afrikaans-speaking, came up during the Lansdown Commission hearings. The District Commandant of Port Elizabeth, Chief Inspector F J Verster, responded to this question by saying that the main reason for this state of affairs rested squarely on the inadequate pay of policemen. For an Afrikaner youth of the landless,

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{131}{Nongqai, Oct 1917, p 215.}
\item \footnote{132}{Nongqai, March 1918, p 138.}
\item \footnote{133}{Police names mentioned in official lists and in Nongqai news items on Port Elizabeth prior to 1930 show the extent of British-born policemen serving with the SAP before Afrikaners began to dominate the force as the century wore on. It must be borne in mind, however, that British settlers had been in Port Elizabeth since the early nineteenth century so some Afrikaners could have held British surnames.}
\item \footnote{134}{G Cawthra, Policing South Africa: the South African Police and the transition from Apartheid (Cape Town, 1994), p 2.}
\item \footnote{135}{E van der Spuy, ‘Literature on the Police in South Africa, An Historical Perspective’, Acta Juridica, 1989, p 274.}
\end{itemize}
The possibility of English-speakers deliberately staying away from the SAP for reasons other than pay was also dealt with by the Lansdown Commission. Ex-Sergeant H A Trimming suggested that the lack of English-speakers in the force was due to the feeling that they were not wanted. Yet he stated further that he was unaware of any bias against English-speakers or racialism. Others believed that English-speakers were reluctant to join the SAP as they did not want to learn Afrikaans. Another reason for the absence of large numbers of English-speaking policemen in the force was the ‘fear of isolation’ in a predominantly Afrikaner institution. Perhaps the perception of a growing Afrikanerization of the force under Commissioner de Villiers was apparent to prospective English-speaking recruits, and this was sufficient to keep them away from the SAP. The possibility that writing

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136 NAR, K80, Evidence by Major Verster interviewed, 8 Feb 1937. Verster noted that English-speaking young men understood the true value of £120 per annum because their fathers were more often than not employed in trade and industry, unlike their Afrikaner counterparts.


138 NAR, K80, Evidence by Sgt Trimming, 8 Feb 1937. D/Sgt Barnard corroborated Trimming’s views on relations between English and Afrikaner policemen: he had never come across any ill-feeling between the two language groups. As far as he was concerned, everyone was ‘fairly treated’.

139 NAR, K80, Evidence by Sgt. Boshoff, 10 Feb 1937.

examinations in Afrikaans being a factor in this issue was rejected by Major Verster, the District Commandant of Port Elizabeth: he said that in the lower ranks, if a man passed all his other papers yet failed in those written in Afrikaans, his case received special attention and in most cases, the SAP Commissioner would allow such a person to pass. The same applied to Afrikaans-speaking recruits with regard to English papers.\textsuperscript{141}

During the 1930s a steady flow of black men enrolled with the SAP even though they faced a work situation which ensured their continued subordination to whites. They were under no illusions that the police force was in any way different to South African society at large yet they continued to enlist. Although doubtless conscious of the repressive role of the SAP, a career with the police nevertheless provided them with secure employment and a form of upward mobility in a land with few, real career opportunities for black people in the formal sector of the economy.\textsuperscript{142} It was only after the Second World War that black recruits began to face political pressure from resistance movements to reject a career in the SAP, yet even then, the economic benefits to be gained often outweighed political arguments when it came to choosing a policing career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>African</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>6 525</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>3 755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>6 603</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>3 711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>6 551</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>3 670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a country governed by people obsessed with ethnic and racial differences, a structural breakdown of the black component of the SAP yields some interesting results. Table 2.3 shows to what extent African men dominated the black sector of the force from 1927 to

\textsuperscript{141} NAR, K80, Evidence by Major Verster, 8 Feb 1937.

\textsuperscript{142} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 119.

\textsuperscript{143} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 120.
1945, reflecting the demographic nature of South Africa. Although there was a decline of 2.2 percent in the number of Africans employed between these years, they still comprised by far the largest component of the black police force. Brewer has noted that the number of coloured recruits began to increase steadily during the 1927 - 1945 period, and after 1948 this trend accelerated considerably. \(^{144}\) Coloured people, although enduring second class citizenship, were nevertheless seen as more ‘civilised’ than Africans; policemen from their ranks were thus deemed more acceptable and therefore better suited to police work than African policemen.

After 1948 the new National Party government sought to increase the number of white policemen and dropped the educational qualifications to Standard 7 and allowed 16 year old youths to join the force (see section on ‘Recruitment Criteria’) but made little or no effort to recruit English-speakers. By 1956 English-speaking members of the SAP constituted only five percent of all white recruits entering the force. This was in stark contrast to the position in 1913 when all Union forces were amalgamated: at that time the pre-Union police forces comprised mostly English-speakers drawn from British imperial forces. \(^{145}\) C I Rademeyer, the SAP Commissioner, did not believe that his department was in any way responsible for this state of affairs. In fact, Rademeyer argued, the SAP had gone out of its way to recruit English-speakers, ensuring that their use of English was not detrimental to their prospects in the force. He refuted strongly the allegation that fluency in Afrikaans was essential for promotion. Nevertheless, by 1956 the government had managed to achieve its goal of white policemen outnumbering black policemen even though the vast majority were Afrikaners (See Table 2.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4 Police Manpower, 1954-1957\(^{146}\)

\(^{144}\) Brewer, *Black and Blue*, pp 119-120.

\(^{145}\) NAR, SAP 230 2/67/33, Vol 2, SAP Com to Minister of Justice, 30 July 1956.

\(^{146}\) Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 208.
CONCLUSION

Although the SAP to some extent modelled its training programme on the British system, it adapted this system to local conditions. The centrality of race or ethnicity, and the juggling of police numbers to fit an overall plan to ensure white domination at both national and police level, meant that the police force in South Africa recruited and trained men to suit a particular strategy absent in Britain during the years covered by this study. A significant feature of the SAP’s recruitment programme was the ease in which it obtained black manpower while the recruitment of whites remained a constant battle, particularly during a period of economic expansion. Yet, it was quite successful in training these recruits to serve as a para-military arm of the state, ensuring that white domination was firmly entrenched by the time a republic was proclaimed in 1961. Nevertheless, policemen were more often than not dissatisfied with their lot in terms of pay, working conditions, and the like between 1913 and 1956. These matters will be the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE IN PORT ELIZABETH: 1913-1956

INTRODUCTION

Space constraints will limit this chapter to a restricted set of issues affecting the working lives of policemen during the 1913-1956 period. For greater detail on the themes which will be examined below, Brewer and Dippenaar offer by far the most comprehensive accounts of the conditions of service of South African policemen since 1913.¹ Policemen in South Africa have always been prone to exploitation, ironically by a state absolutely dependent upon them for maintaining law and order during the years of minority rule. Even after the advent of majority rule in 1994, their lot has hardly improved. Although deemed essential for crime-fighting and protecting law-abiding citizens, the ordinary policeman and policewoman has never been rewarded with conditions of service commensurate with their responsibilities.

This chapter will focus essentially on selected factors which affected the everyday lives of the majority of policemen during the period covered by this study. The first section examines the issue of pay, probably the most important factor in the lives of most policemen, as well as promotion and career prospects. Thereafter lesser issues such as clothing, medical care, accommodation, everyday working conditions, and other social activities, including problems associated with language usage in a multilingual society, will receive attention. Although the existence of a union is synonymous with workers’ rights, no police union or association was established until the 1990s. Although discussions about a police union took place during the early 1950s, nothing came of such talks, hence the decision to exclude any material on police unions in this chapter.

REMUNERATION AND CAREER PROSPECTS

One of the first challenges faced by the acting Police Commissioner, T G Truter, just prior to the formation of the South African Police force (SAP) in April 1913, was to allay any fears harboured by members of the various police forces of the Union awaiting amalgamation about their future prospects once the Police Bill of 1912 had been made into law. Besides a political union of the two British colonies and the two former Boer republics in 1910, a unification process for the disparate police forces serving South Africa was also required. Truter was expected to unite these police forces into one body with administrative control centred in Pretoria (see Chapter 4). Because many policemen were resigning from their respective forces (for example, the Cape Mounted Police and the South African Constabulary) as a result of uncertainty and misunderstanding in terms of their future within the new dispensation, he felt it was necessary to publish a memorandum to clarify any issues, such as remuneration rates, which may have been worrying them. At the same time he was concerned about the loss of manpower the new, united police force would encounter if too many men resigned.2

In the memorandum prepared for general distribution to all serving policemen, Truter pointed out that any policeman who faced a reduction in pay due to the amalgamation process would be compensated by a special allowance until such time as his pay, by way of increments or promotion, reached the same level of his pay at the date of incorporation into the SAP.3 Unmarried policemen based in Port Elizabeth stood to benefit nominally from the reorganisation process as their salaries were set to increase from £140 p.a. to £144 p.a. They were also entitled to free accommodation, or a lodging allowance if such quarters did not exist. The same conditions applied to the married members of the SAP.

Yet within three years of the amalgamation of the Union’s police forces, SAP elements based in Cape Town began complaining of inadequate pay and agitated for a local allowance to

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2 National Archives Repository, Pretoria (NAR), SAP 6 6/64/12, Vol 6, Acting Chief Com of SAP to Acting Sect for Justice, 12 April 1912.

3 NAR, SAP 6 6/64/12, Vol 6, Acting SAP Com to Acting Sect for Justice, 12 April 1912, enclosed memorandum on effect Police Bill will have on police.
supplement their basic income. The only way for the average policeman to increase his income was through promotion, but during the War years, such opportunities were severely limited due to financial constraints on the part of the government. Truter was understandably reluctant to grant the Cape Town police any special concession as this would have led to the same demands elsewhere in the Cape Province and throughout the rest of the country. As far as he was concerned, the rise in food prices and accommodation was purely temporary as living costs would probably return to normal once the war was over. He eventually decided to propose to the Public Service Commission that the lodging allowance to married men be increased from 1/6 to 2 shillings a day once he had been convinced by Gray, the Deputy Commissioner of the SAP in the Cape Peninsula, that living expenses in the region had increased by 20 percent since 1913.

The issue of increased costs of living faced by Cape Town police also arose in Parliament when the Minister of Justice was questioned on the matter. He said that the matter was receiving attention at the highest levels. Yet by 1917 no increase in pay had been granted to policemen and those based in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth bemoaned the fact that Transvaal policemen received better allowances than themselves. What angered Cape policemen was the fact that Transvaal policemen were paid higher allowances at a time when the cost of living was lower for them. The main complaints focussed on increased rents, increased food prices and the fact that policemen on the Witwatersrand (Gauteng) received two shillings per day local allowance and 40 percent more lodging allowance than those living in the Cape peninsula. In Port Elizabeth complaints centred on the same issues although high rentals (£4.10 for a three-roomed house as opposed to Cape Town where similar houses

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4 Dippenaar, *History of the SAP*, p 34.

5 NAR, SAP 33 6/427/16, SAP Com to Dep Com SAP, Cape Western Div, 2 May 1916.

6 NAR, SAP 33 6/427/16, Dep Com SAP, Cape Western Div to Sect for Justice, 13 May 1916.


cost £3.7 per month to rent) and food prices seemed to be the main problems. Since the outbreak of the First World War, the cost of living in coastal cities had increased the most in Durban, closely followed by Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London.

After receiving no response to numerous representations to the government, 101 unmarried constables (all Afrikaners bar one English-speaker) based in Cape Town held a meeting in early November 1917 and decided to strike even though they knew it was illegal for policemen to take such drastic public action in order to air their views. Besides the issue of poor pay, Nasson has pointed out that as a consequence of the war, the SAP Commissioner had forced policemen to renew their 24 month contracts - this was to make up for the loss of men to the war effort. In past years, policemen could buy their discharge from the force once their initial two-year contract was up but that facility was temporarily removed. As the majority of poor white Afrikaners saw service with the SAP as a stop-gap to greater things, being compelled to remain within it on inadequate pay was the last straw for those already struggling to make ends meet.

The strike of SAP members in Cape Town on 1 January 1918 was taken very seriously by the government which immediately instituted an inquiry into the causes of the strike after sending in the army to arrest the strikers. N J De Wet, the Minister of Justice, believed that the issue of pay and allowances should be dealt with by a public service commission. His recommendation to the House of Assembly was carried in that the Public Service Commission of Inquiry (Graham Commission) was set up to investigate conditions of service in the public service, of which the police formed an integral part. No strikers were dismissed from the force although most received suspended sentences and fines. At no stage were

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9 Nongqai, Feb 1917, p 116.
10 Nongqai, Dec 1918, p 578.
11 Dippenaar, History of the SAP, p 35.
13 Cape Times, 25 Jan 1918, Debates of the House of Assembly.
coloured constables serving in the Cape Town police district approached about their grievances - the strike was clearly limited to whites only.\(^{14}\) No other strikes occurred during the period being studied; the next strike by SAP members occurred in Kagiso in 1986 when black policemen struck for higher salaries, and this time, no whites were involved.\(^{15}\)

As a temporary measure, the government decided to grant a special martial law allowance to SAP members living within the bounds of the Cape peninsula as from 1 January 1918; police in Durban received the same allowance yet those in Port Elizabeth and East London, also coastal towns, were excluded.\(^{16}\) Policemen in Port Elizabeth did not begrudge their colleagues in Durban and Cape Town their additional allowance but they felt aggrieved that as coastal city dwellers, where the cost of living was just as high as the former cities, they received no recompense whatsoever.\(^{17}\) Local allowances for black policemen, whether at the coast or living inland, were considered unnecessary.\(^{18}\) Discriminatory practice of this nature was justified purely on racial grounds: black policemen, like their civilian counterparts, were expected to keep their social distance. One way of ensuring that this happened was to pay blacks a lower wage.

The Graham Commission reported in 1919 that the pay scales for white policemen were inadequate and unless they were quickly improved, the efficiency of the force would be seriously affected.\(^{19}\) It recommended that constables be paid £150 per annum in their first year of service, rising to a maximum of £282 per annum. Added to this would be local allowances where applicable. Indian and coloured policemen, in an equivalent position rank-wise to white SAP members, were to be paid £64 per annum and black policemen £50 per


\(^{15}\) Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 304.

\(^{16}\) *Nongqai*, Feb 1918, p 73. Married men received 2s and single men 1s a day.

\(^{17}\) *Nongqai*, Nov 1923, p 621.

\(^{18}\) NAR, JUS 521 1/346/20, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 27 Feb 1924.

\(^{19}\) UG 46-1919, Graham Commission, p 105.
year. As in all government departments, pay was commensurate with skin colour, that is, the lighter the skin, the higher the pay. In the end the striking policemen achieved their objectives: the salary scales recommended by the Graham Commission were implemented as from 1 October 1919 but their joy was short-lived. Because of the deteriorating economic climate in the post-war years, the government was forced to reduce the pay of all SAP personnel. In 1923 the Graham Commission pay scales were revised and actually decreased.

These SAP pay scales were still in force in 1926 when the PECC noticed that discrepancies existed in the scales of pay between certain members of the black location police in New Brighton. Those constables who had remained on when the location was taken over by the council from the government in August 1923 did not receive the same pay as those employed soon after the changeover. The PECC therefore decided to implement a uniform remuneration package for all location police in line with SAP salary scales. Soon after these changes had been made for the black location constables, Sergeant Stimpson, the NCO in charge of the location police, had his salary increased to £275 per annum as from 1 November 1926. A E Dickason, the beach constable employed by the PECC earned £150 per annum up to a maximum of £216 per annum with free accommodation. These two white policemen employed by the PECC earned much the same as their SAP counterparts, the only difference being the maximum they could attain after several incremental increases: a sergeant with the SAP could expect to earn a maximum of £305 while an SAP constable had a ceiling of £282 per annum. Black constables, as second class citizens, were expected to be satisfied with £66 per annum.

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20 UG 46-1919, Graham Commission, p 111.  
21 *Nongqai*, April 1938, p 420.  
22 Cape Archives Repository, Cape Town (CAR), 3/PEZ 1/1/1/37, Report of Finance, Town Lands and General Purposes Committee, 6 Sept 1926.  
24 Mayor’s Minute (MM), 1928, p 15.  
At the beginning of the 1930s, it soon became apparent that policemen were becoming more and more discontented with their conditions of service. The overbearing militaristic ethos under Commissioner de Villiers’s leadership, the unsuitable uniform, inadequate housing and insufficient pay soon came to the fore. Numerous policemen resigned from the force during these years, particularly after 1934 when the number of policemen purchasing their discharge increased dramatically, perhaps as a result of the worldwide economic depression beginning to ease by this stage.

By 1935 the income of policemen had hardly changed: a white sergeant in uniform could earn between £300-£350 while a constable earned around £150-£282 per annum. Constables in the CID earned more than their uniformed counterparts, being paid between £170-£302 per year. By way of comparison, a fireman appointed by the PEM in 1934 commenced duties at £180 per annum, including free accommodation. Indian and coloured constables in the uniformed branch could earn up to £88 per annum with black constables restricted to their 1926 pay scales. A coloured primary school teacher without a senior certificate could earn up to £90 per annum in 1937 so coloured and Indian policemen fell within the same income bracket as poorly qualified primary school teachers.

The seriousness of the complaints was underpinned by black members of the SAP who complained of similar problems besides those which only affected them, namely, inadequate medical benefits and leave privileges. The government was eventually compelled to take action and appointed a commission under Mr C Lansdown to investigate police conditions of service. This commission duly arrived in Port Elizabeth on 8 February 1936 and spent five days interviewing local policemen and other interested parties, including local businessmen and community leaders.

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27 UG 1-1934, Estimates of Expenditure to be defrayed from Revenue Accounts during the year ending 31 March 1935.


Virtually all Port Elizabeth policemen who participated in this commission of enquiry were in strong agreement that inadequate remuneration was their main complaint about existing service conditions. Mr A F Pendla, a member of the New Brighton Advisory Board believed that the poor pay contributed to the lack of suitably qualified blacks entering the policing profession.\(^{30}\) Such sentiments were echoed by the District Commandant of Port Elizabeth, Major F J Verster, who argued that inadequate pay scales prevented better qualified men from both language sectors of the white community from joining the force. As far as he was concerned, the SAP had been drawing its white recruits (predominantly Afrikaners) from the ‘labouring classes’.\(^{31}\) By paying low salaries to its law and order workers, the government was getting the quality of manpower it deserved.

As a result of the Lansdown Commission’s recommendations, the pay of SAP members was immediately increased with effect from 1 January 1937.\(^{32}\) White constables could earn a maximum of £335 per annum in 1938 (£282 in 1935) while black constables had their maximum increased to £84, an increase of £18 since 1935.\(^{33}\) African policemen had their salaries increased by the largest percentage but the gap between black and white earnings remained immense. The starting salary did not increase in any way but incremental increases ensured that the maximum pay scale was substantially increased; the new pay scales thus catered for those men who would stay with the SAP for a long period of time. The SAP hoped to entice young men who viewed their stay with the police force as a short-term expedient to remain for longer, thus retaining a larger core of experienced men.

Following the report of the Public Service Enquiry Commission, the salaries of SAP personnel were increased from 1 January 1946. The Commission considered essential that

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\(^{30}\) NAR, K80, Lansdown Commission of Enquiry, Evidence by A F Pendla, 9 February 1936.

\(^{31}\) NAR, K80, Evidence by Major Verster, 8 February 1936.

\(^{32}\) NAR, JUS 521 1/346/20, SAP Special Force Orders (General) No. 12A of 1937, 19 March 1937.

\(^{33}\) UG 1-1938, Estimates of Expenditure from Revenue Funds for the year ending 31 March 1939, p 32.
public servants like the SAP be better paid in order to attract a sufficient number of new employees while at the same time keeping experienced personnel.\(^\text{34}\) White constables were now paid £200 rising to £400 per annum as annual increments took effect. Those who had served for 18 years or more and were holders of the Police Good Service Medal gained an extra pensionable allowance of £20 per annum. Indian and Coloured constables were paid £120 rising to £240 per year, with the same allowance as for whites except that theirs was limited to £15 per annum. Black constables, as always, at the lowest rung of the ladder, earning a maximum of £132 per annum with a non-pensionable allowance of £12 per year.\(^\text{35}\) By way of comparison, warders working for the Prisons Department earned the same salary as constables in the SAP.\(^\text{36}\)

Only two promotion ranks were open to black policemen serving in Port Elizabeth during the period 1939 to 1956, namely, corporal and sergeant. The existing system of promotion depended on seniority, good conduct and merit as black policemen were viewed as being ill-equipped to cope with police and law subjects at this time.\(^\text{37}\) After 1946 only those black constables who could speak one of the official languages were eligible for promotion. This meant that those policemen who had given years of loyal service, displayed exceptional initiative and ability, were discriminated against due to their inability to speak either English or Afrikaans.\(^\text{38}\) On the other hand, promotion prospects for whites increased dramatically after 1945 due to Commissioner Palmer’s three-year plan to improve the career and income prospects of white policemen.\(^\text{39}\) Once the National Party assumed power in 1948 this trend of favouring the promotion of whites continued apace. By 1954 this policy resulted in 63.1


\(^{35}\) NAR, JUS 521 1/346/20, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 11 Jan 1946, Appendix C.


\(^{37}\) NAR, SAP 163 39/5/27, SAP Dep Com, Transkei Div to SAP Com, 8 Aug 1945.

\(^{38}\) NAR, SAP 163 39/5/27, SAP Dep Com, Natal Div to SAP Com, 8 April 1950.

\(^{39}\) Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 183.
percent of whites and 88.6 percent of blacks serving as constables\textsuperscript{40}; entrenched discrimination within South African society as a whole was once again transplanted into the SAP. Black policemen were still restricted to non-commissioned status in terms of promotion during the period under discussion. The main reason for this restriction lay in the belief that black policemen were basically untrustworthy and therefore unsuitable for promotion. It was only in 1970 that blacks could be promoted to officer status (lieutenant) although it took another two years for anyone to fill the post.\textsuperscript{41} The development of the ‘own area’ policing strategy (see Chapter 4) and the homeland concept made this possible, after nearly 60 years of the SAP’s existence.

**CLOTHING**

Complaints about the quality and comfort of police clothing arose at odd intervals during the early years of the SAP. The khaki drill uniform was considered much more comfortable than the blue serge clothing which was much heavier and thus inappropriate for South Africa’s hot summers; some policemen even considered that the clothing they termed ‘prehistoric raiment’ prevented many potential recruits from joining the force.\textsuperscript{42} Boots and raincoats were criticised for being uncomfortable or inadequate due to poor quality. Others complained that the blue helmet was too heavy and cumbersome. Even though clothing had been the subject of debate at every Deputy Commissioner’s conference since the establishment of the SAP, at the 1921 conference, it was unanimously decided that the existing uniform could not be improved upon.\textsuperscript{43} Those in favour of an open-necked collar, worn only by officers, were ignored.

Dissatisfaction with the blue uniform continued into the late 1920s. At a police ball held in the Feather Market Hall in Port Elizabeth to raise funds for the Police Orphans’ Fund, all ranks except for the officers, were requested to wear their blue uniforms by the District

\textsuperscript{40} Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 208.
\textsuperscript{41} Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 232.
\textsuperscript{42} *Nongqai*, June 1918, p 275.
\textsuperscript{43} *Nongqai*, Jan 1922, p 10.
Commandant, Captain Hart. The *Nongqai* correspondent for Port Elizabeth news noted the discomfort of men dancing in ‘tight-fitting, comfortless serge uniforms’ which made them exceptionally hot after a few hours of dancing.\(^{44}\) In his opinion, a more suitable uniform, much lighter and similar to that worn by officers, was needed for special occasions.

The 1937 Lansdown Commission of Inquiry found that the uniform remained a bone of contention among policemen in Port Elizabeth. Some found the uniform ‘absolutely unsuitable’ while others believed that the solution lay in having open-neck shirts during the summer months.\(^{45}\) As a result of the Commission’s recommendations, new and more comfortable uniforms were introduced by the SAP authorities in 1937.\(^{46}\) But these remained inappropriate for year round wear, an issue which became apparent during the course of the SAP Deputy Commissioners’ conference of 1948, where the Deputy Commissioner of police in Kimberley commented that the existing uniform was unsuitable for the hot summer months in his division, and for that matter, across the whole country. As far as he was concerned, it was ‘injurious to health and efficiency’ in his division for men to wear a regimental-type coat over their shirts in the intense summer heat.\(^{47}\) Although he presented a sound argument his suggestion was rejected out of hand. Dressing more for the sake of appearance rather than practicality once again won the day. The heavy blue uniform, designed for English conditions, not only symbolised the colonial heritage of the police but also the importance of deportment, bearing and professional self-confidence which policemen were supposed to display before the general public.\(^{48}\)

Adherence to tradition and conservatism ensured that the request for a lighter summer

\(^{44}\) *Nongqai*, Nov 1929, p 1 021.

\(^{45}\) NAR, K80, Evidence by Sgt Barrable, 9 Feb 1937.

\(^{46}\) NAR, JUS 1320 1/100/34, Report re Justice Department activities, SAP: progress during the years 1933-37.

\(^{47}\) NAR, SAPC 17 PC 63/1, Vol 1, Report on SAP Dep Coms conference, 6 April 1948, p 10.

\(^{48}\) Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 176.
uniform was once again turned down by the SAP hierarchy in 1952. The main reason given for negating this request was the shortage of uniform material and restrictions on imports.\textsuperscript{49} It was only in November 1954 that policemen, both white and black, were permitted to remove their jackets, and then only when hot weather warranted it. They could do this when carrying out routine office duties, patrols, raids, drill parades, investigations and enquiries provided the long-sleeve shirt remained buttoned and ties were kept on.\textsuperscript{50}

Besides being different, the khaki uniform of black policemen was inferior to that of their white colleagues as it was made of cheaper cloth. This led to more frequent replacements of uniform and therefore an on-going expense for black policemen whose uniform allowance was insufficient to cover these additional costs; such an expense could have been easily averted simply by providing them with better quality clothing. It would appear that after a survey of over 100 black policemen, most were in favour of paying more for the better article.\textsuperscript{51} Nonetheless, although this matter was raised at the Deputy Commissioners’ conference of 1951, it was decided that it was impracticable to change the status quo for the moment. At least the matter of poor quality helmets (they became disfigured when wet) for black policemen received a more positive response at the same conference - helmets of a better quality were about to be issued. Another improvement as regards black policemen was the replacing of khaki shorts with khaki longs by 1947; they were also issued with the same type of boot worn by whites at this time.\textsuperscript{52} Even so, black policemen were forced to endure not only differentiation in pay, medical care and shorter holidays (21 days per annum as opposed to a month for whites), but also the indignity of wearing a uniform considerably inferior and different to that of their white colleagues. Black constables had to wait until 1980 to wear the same blue uniform as whites; black officers had been awarded this right in

\textsuperscript{50} NAR, SAP 314 8/51/39, Vol 2, Special Force Order No. 22A of 1954, 2 Nov 1954. Jackets had to be worn on court duty at all times.
\textsuperscript{52} NAR, SAP 397 15/38/47, Memo, 21 June 1947.
WEAPONRY
The issue of arming the new police force first arose in July 1912 when an article about the shooting of a white male in Johannesburg by a police constable appeared in a Johannesburg newspaper. Acting Police Commissioner Truter, in response to the question of arming men while on night duty, made it clear to the Secretary for Justice that he opposed the arming of all policemen with revolvers. He believed that only those policemen patrolling dangerous areas at night required arms. The majority of South African policemen thus remained unarmed until November 1919. After this date all men on night duty were issued with revolvers prior to undertaking patrols; they were expected to return their arms upon completion of their duties. The argument in favour of arming foot police on beat duty in dangerous areas was to give such men a sense of confidence in the face of potential violence. Only mounted men and CID were allowed to be armed at all times at this stage in the SAP’s history. Indian, black and coloured policemen were not allowed to be armed except under particular circumstances (see below).

Between 1921 and 1926 incidents of serious crime rose by around 66 percent, compelling Truter to reconsider his earlier opposition to arming policemen undertaking routine patrols. He was able to justify the arming of policeman whilst on daytime beat duty from 1926 onwards due to an increased number of attacks on policemen in the 1921-1926 period. In the face of substantial public criticism from whites opposed to the arming of policemen, Truter argued that firearms were necessary for self-defence purposes only. He believed that policemen faced with potentially violent opposition had the right to protect themselves in a similarly violent manner. What Brewer has pointed out is that the number of assaults on policemen comprised a minuscule percentage of all serious crimes reported during 1926 (only

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53 NAR, JUS 10 1/391/10, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 14 Sept 1912.
54 NAR, JUS 10 1/391/10, Sect for Justice to SAP Com, 10 Nov 1919.
0.7 percent of such crimes in that year) in the country; most police deaths occurred during times of general public disorder, such as the 1922 strike, where policemen were issued with arms in any case.\footnote{Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 91.} Truter’s justification for arming the police was therefore based on rather superficial reasoning.

Once the policy of arming white policemen was well established, the need to arm black policemen on a temporary basis became easier to implement. For example, in Port Elizabeth during the late 1920s, it was common practice to arm such policemen when they undertook escort duties. When prisoners being held at the NBL police cells had to be taken by rail to the court in the city, the escorting black constable was issued a revolver and six cartridges for the excursion.\footnote{CAR, SAP 3/7/1, NBL Police Station Occurrence Book, 7 Dec 1928.} Training in the use of such firearms was carried out by the local station commander as black policemen received no formal police training at this stage.

When it was suggested in 1948 that African members of the force be armed with assegais when on duty, the response of the SAP leadership was that these policemen could only be armed with assegais when guarding prisoners. Thereafter, the weapons had to be returned to the local station commander.\footnote{NAR, SAPC 17 PC 63/1, Vol 1, Report on SAP Dep Coms conference, 6 April 1948, p 5.} Some years later it was decided that a black policeman could be armed with a traditional or cultural weapon such as an assegai or kierie, at the discretion of the local Deputy Commissioner.\footnote{NAR, SAP 163 39/5/27, Policy: Native Branch of SAP, 9 Dec 1952.} Firearms were not considered feasible for blacks at this stage. It is not clear whether Indian and coloured policemen also had to use such traditional weaponry in lieu of modern-day arms when undertaking similar such duties. It was only in the 1970s that black policemen were armed on a routine basis. The criticism that black policemen armed with batons only were treated with contempt by well-armed \textit{tsotsis} (See Chapter 6 for more detail on \textit{tsotsis}) appears to have been ignored by the SAP
hierarchy.\textsuperscript{61}

**MEDICAL CARE**

From the outset, policemen and their immediate families received free medical and dental care, usually from the local district surgeon and nearest state hospital. Commissioned officers received the normal medical care but were expected to pay for dental treatment for themselves and their families out of their own funds. This changed in 1934 after the government decided to extend the police medical aid scheme to all officers and their families. Once the agreement of dental societies had been obtained, the scheme was officially inaugurated - in Port Elizabeth, such agreement was reached in July 1934.\textsuperscript{62} Black members of the SAP were not given any medical aid for their families: all medical expenses for wives and children had to be paid out their own pockets unless special cases merited otherwise.\textsuperscript{63}

Such discriminatory practice was to remain in vogue for years to come. In 1948, and again in 1952, this matter was raised with police authorities but with little success. The main reason for barring free medical care to families of black policemen was apparently the practice of polygamy still prevalent in the black community.\textsuperscript{64} Until such time as this practice stopped, black policemen could not receive the same medical benefits as white policemen. It appears that police authorities never bothered to change police regulations on this matter - they never imposed a stipulation that only one spouse and her children would receive free medical care. Racial discrimination within the force thus sanctioned inferior medical care for policemen treated as second-class citizens.

**ACCOMMODATION**


\textsuperscript{62} NAR, SAP 234 11/26/33/13, SAP Com to SAP Dep Com, CED, 28 July 1934.

\textsuperscript{63} NAR, SAP 316 11/3/39, Vol 1, SAP Paymaster to District Cmdt, Paarl, 25 June 1934.

\textsuperscript{64} NAR, SAPC 18 PC 63/1, Vol 2, Report on SAP Dep Coms conference, 9 Dec 1952, p 1.
Being in essence a para-military institution like the police forces it replaced, the newly formed SAP catered for the accommodation of its single men quite adequately by housing them in barrack-like quarters at most police stations. Baakens Street, being the headquarters of the SAP in Port Elizabeth after 1913, fulfilled this role for unmarried members of the force, but married men and officers had to organise their own accommodation elsewhere in the city. This arrangement probably caused a considerable number of young policemen to leave the force when contemplating marriage: high rentals, extra transport costs to and from work, coupled with an inadequate salary, made employment with the SAP an unattractive proposition.

In 1921 Truter focussed on the problem of accommodation for married policemen of all ranks. As a result of the shortage of official accommodation at most police stations in the country, many married men undertook to build or buy their own homes. But problems arose when such men were transferred; they were usually forced to sell their properties before they had time to accrue in value. For this reason, Truter implored the Secretary of Justice to request from the Minister that the necessary funds be made available as soon as the financial position of the state allowed it. Due to the economic position of the time, Truter’s request was refused.

Whilst accommodation for married members of the SAP was a widespread problem, at Walmer, by contrast, there was a lack of accommodation for single men in 1922. These policemen had to hire rooms elsewhere in the area, leaving only the station commander, an NCO, at the police premises throughout the night. This may not have been a drawback for some single policemen as they enjoyed far more freedom living in private accommodation; living in police barracks generally meant a loss of privacy and a certain number of constraints to their personal freedom, something which did not effect married men living in private quarters. One of these constraints was having to obtain special permission to absent

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65 NAR, JUS 617 1/645/21, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 2 Sept 1921. See also NAR, SAP 423 12/45/48, Vol 1, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 2 Sept 1921.

66 Port Elizabeth Archives Repository, Port Elizabeth (PER), Walmer Town Council Minutes, 1 Nov 1922.
themselves from the barracks between midnight and 6 am; this prohibition also applied to policemen on a rest day.\(^67\) Men were excused from this rule only if on duty, on holiday or on sick leave. Entertainment in such barracks was usually very limited, billiards being one of the more popular activities during periods of relaxation.

In 1927 Truter once again brought to the attention of the government the shortage of married quarters for the SAP. A total of 924 houses was required for the SAP nationwide. In Port Elizabeth it was calculated that 32 houses were needed, excluding the Walmer and Korsten police districts, which each needed two.\(^68\) One of Truter’s main motivations for acquiring more official married quarters was to have married policemen living in close proximity to the police stations they served. Due to the dearth of official married quarters, too many married men lived a considerable distance away which necessitated far too much travelling time and this, in Truter’s opinion, was not conducive to a rapid response to emergencies.\(^69\)

His other motivation for calling for official accommodation for married men was the high rental costs borne by married personnel who sought to live closer to police stations in the larger centres like Port Elizabeth. He believed also that the provision of good housing would create a more contented force, no doubt of greater benefit to the country as a whole. The government promised to provide more funds for police buildings in the following financial year but, as Truter knew, the massive shortage of official housing for the SAP would remain.\(^70\) In this he was proved correct as in the annual SAP report at the end of 1929 De Villiers, the new Commissioner, reported that members of the SAP had to sometimes ‘work, eat and sleep under conditions vastly inferior to those afforded long-service convicts.’\(^71\) Such

\(^{67}\) *Nongqai*, Nov 1931, Force Order No. 41, p xli.

\(^{68}\) NAR, JUS 617 1/645/21, Annexure to Notes of Conference on Housing Members of Police Force, 5 Oct 1927.

\(^{69}\) NAR, JUS 617 1/645/21 SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 15 July 1927. To a lesser extent, Truter was concerned that some married men had to live in disreputable areas due to high rents.

\(^{70}\) NAR, JUS 617 1/645/21, Sect for Justice to SAP Com, 2 Dec 1927.

imperfect working and living conditions was not the lot of policemen based in Port Elizabeth; it was more the rural areas and small villages of the country which had to tolerate such an inadequate policing infrastructure. Nevertheless, the old police barracks at the Baakens Street station were considered ‘cramped, ill-planned and unhealthy’, even the charge office was seen as poorly lit and lacking proper ventilation. The state’s reluctance to house policemen in greater comfort is indicative of state-police relations: although crucial to the security and well-being of the state and its people, it is ironic that policemen, as poorly paid and poorly housed state workers, were generally open to abuse and exploitation by their employer.

After the SAP resumed full policing duties in NBL in September 1927, the police contingent there was accommodated in the old Periodical Court building. It comprised mainly wood and iron, and although he considered this building unsuitable for white policemen, the District Commandant, Inspector Strickland, expressed his indebtedness to the PEM that it was at least rent free until the end of 1927. Wood and iron buildings tend to be extremely hot in summer so any policemen accommodated in such a building, black or white, would have suffered a certain amount of discomfort. The married sergeant in charge of the NBL police station was given a separate cottage, previously occupied by the Sanitary Foreman, as temporary accommodation so he lived in relative comfort compared to the single men. These arrangements were purely temporary until new police quarters were built by the PEM. Upon completion in February 1929, the new police station complex consisted of a separate house for the married station commander, two dormitories for the single men, messing facilities, charge office and the obligatory separate quarters for the black policemen. It took until 1944 to have a hot water geyser installed for the single men’s quarters so in the preceding years, the unmarried men lived in relatively crude conditions.

72 Nongqai, Aug 1931, p 583.
73 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, District Cmdt to TC, PE, 30 Aug 1927.
75 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, Minutes of NAC, 9 Sept 1927.
With the completion of the new police headquarters in Port Elizabeth in 1930, the accommodation prospects for policemen had improved considerably, so much so that two-thirds of it stood empty, obviously to cater for long-term growth. Sufficient accommodation also meant that young, poorly paid constables did not have to suffer the ‘indignity’ of living in mainly coloured areas where board was cheap - white policemen had to be kept away from the ‘contaminating’ influences of racially inferior people. The one drawback of the much-admired Mount Road police station was that it catered only for unmarried policemen; once again, the married component of the force was expected rent property elsewhere in the city. Calls for a state-sponsored housing scheme for married men were echoed yet again by members of the Port Elizabeth SAP. Single black policemen stationed at Mount Road, New Law Courts and Baakens Street, and who could not be accommodated at these stations, lived mostly in Korsten. They had to provide their own transport to work each day, and because of the distance travelled, paid far more for it than their white colleagues who lived closer to the centre of town.

After many years of leasing its quarters in Walmer from the local municipality, the SAP was eventually forced to consider erecting its own premises after the Walmer Municipality decided it needed the existing SAP quarters for its own purposes as from December 1948. The SAP lease on the property was set to expire on 30 November 1948. After a series of negotiations, the Walmer Council allowed the SAP to hire the existing premises until 31 August 1952. Being mainly a residential area, Walmer lacked any other suitable accommodation for a police station and the Department of Public Works (PWD) was able to persuade the Council to extend the lease. As it was not in the interests of the local residents to be without a police station until such time as the new quarters were built, the

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76 D M Anderson and D Killingray (eds), Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830-1940 (Manchester, 1991), p 247.
77 Nongqai, July 1931, p 505.
78 NAR, SAP 421 12/42/48, Vol 1, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 29 Oct 1928.
79 NAR, PWD 3168 2/9869, Sect for Public Works to SAP Com, 2 May 1946.
Council was easily persuaded to renew the contract. The new state-owned police station in Main Road, Walmer, was occupied by the SAP on 1 September 1952 (at the time of writing, it was still serving the Walmer community).

In his annual report of 1945, the SAP Commissioner still bemoaned the fact that accommodation for married men remained a perennial problem. In many instances married policemen had to live in cramped quarters originally designed for single men only. It was his belief that this state of affairs caused men to leave the force and, conversely, it prevented new recruits from enlisting. This did not seem to be the case in Port Elizabeth where accommodation for married men appeared to be sufficient at most stations. The availability of accommodation for married staff in Port Elizabeth allowed the SAP to convert the married quarters at Korsten into offices; this station could now become the Northern Areas headquarters in the place of Mount Road police station in 1950 (see Chapter 3).

**MARITAL RESTRICTIONS**

Keeping in mind the moral outlook of the period in which the SAP was established (it followed quite closely on the Victorian era), matters of sex were supposedly confined to the marriage situation. As the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, has noted in connection with the pre-Christian classical era in western Europe, ‘Aphrodite and Eros must be present in marriage and nowhere else.’ This view (reinforced by the Church) was very much in vogue in South Africa when the first SAP regulations were drawn up in 1912. For many a young policeman, forced to wait two years before being allowed to marry after completion of his training, the prospect of applying for permission from police authorities to marry was a

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80 NAR, PWD 3168 2/9869, District Representative, PWD to TC, Walmer, 7 Nov 1947.


83 *Nongqai*, July 1950, p 853.

drawback in relation to conditions of service. Pregnancy before marriage was naturally frowned upon, to the extent that policemen still waiting for the obligatory two years to pass, were forced to leave the SAP if they planned to marry the woman they were responsible for impregnating. Any hopes of being allowed to rejoin the force after leaving it to get married were apparently negligible. Only commissioned officers were entitled to get married without permission from the SAP Commissioner.

Before getting married after the two years were up, the character and suitability of the policeman’s future wife had to be approved by the relevant authorities. The official reasoning behind this was not so much interfering with the choice of a bride of good character but to prevent young men from making poor decisions by marrying an undesirable woman in the eyes of the police force. The question of morals and colour had to also be considered. Prospective bridegrooms had to produce a certificate to the effect that the intended wife was of pure European extraction before permission to marry could be granted. It would appear that the reputation and public image of the SAP was more important than the personal happiness of its individual members. A more acceptable reason for imposing a marriage policy was the recognition that a young policeman’s income was too limited to support himself and a wife, let alone children. Thus it is apparent that police officials sought to regulate and control not only the training and working conditions of ordinary policemen, but also their private lives. Young policemen especially had to be socialised into a world view consistent with mores and habits conceived by their superiors: non-conformity could not be tolerated.

By 1917 the SAP hierarchy made it even more difficult for men to marry - SAP regulations (Section 98 (d)) were changed to force men to wait three years instead of two before they

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85 NAR, SAP 423 12/45/48, Vol 1, SAP Sect to SAP Dep Com, Cape Western Div and Cmmdt, Training Depot, 4 April 1916.
86 Nongqai, Aug 1915, p 70.
87 NAR, SAP 423 12/45/48, Vol 1, Special Circular No. 25 of 1921, 19 Sept 1921.
88 NAR, SAP 423 12/45/48, Vol 1, Circular to all SAP units, 17 June 1916.
could marry without the written consent of the Commissioner. The Minister of Justice believed that this regulation was for the protection of the men themselves and that such practice existed in most police forces around the world. The Graham Commission of 1919 recommended, on the other hand, that men wait even longer - it proposed a five year wait so official policy was stacked up against aspirant grooms. For those in the Prison Service, it recommended a three-year wait. This proposal was accepted by the SAP and implemented in early 1920. Such restrictions would seem to be counter-productive to the recruitment of men as it made working conditions for policemen appear even less attractive. Being committed to a para-military tradition of policing, police authorities obviously preferred having single men housed in barracks, ready to be called out at a moment’s notice. The tradition of civil policing, where policemen could be just as effective in crime-fighting when married, was as yet unacceptable in a colonial-like society where the ruling class still felt threatened by a much larger indigenous population which it sought to control politically and socially.

As far as Commissioner Truter was concerned, it was better to have married policemen because they were generally more settled and contented, and that in itself was ‘a great step towards efficiency’. In this sense, he was seemingly out of step with the rest of the police hierarchy. Truter, as a loyal state servant, was nevertheless obliged to enforce the rules laid down in police regulations, sometimes having to intervene personally in the private affairs of his policemen. For instance, it was still up to him as Commissioner to satisfy himself as to the ‘character, conduct, and suitability of the woman’ a policeman proposed to marry. Only

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89 Nongqai, Jan 1917, p 29.

90 Cape Times, 7 June 1917, Debates of the House of Assembly.

91 UG 46-1919, Graham Commission, p 114.

92 NAR, SAP 423 12/45/48, Vol 1, Circular: Permission to members of the Force to marry, 10 Feb 1920.

One of the reasons for getting married during the 1930s was to escape the cramped living quarters set aside for single men in police barracks, according to at least one Port Elizabeth policeman.\(^{95}\) No doubt there were other attractions, one of which was living in one’s own quarters away from the continual eye of authority prevalent at the barracks. It had been one of Commissioner Truter’s aims whilst still in office to prevent the misconduct of individual policemen bringing discredit to the force by insisting on ‘constant supervision’ on the part of senior officers. This constant surveillance of the everyday lives of policemen allowed the police hierarchy to maintain strict discipline and control over its subordinates. Surveillance of personnel at the local level corresponds with Foucault’s understanding of social and spatial controls: by having policemen live in barracks, an easily effected ‘inspecting gaze’ enabled police authorities to exercise a form of ceaseless power with little cost or physical effort. If one takes Foucault’s analysis somewhat further, police barracks, in architectural design, were


\(^{95}\) NAR, K80, Evidence by Sgt Barrable, 9 Feb 1937.
akin to a castle keep, surrounded by walls, thus allowing a group of men to be closely monitored with comparative ease, even by one man.\textsuperscript{96} The implication here is that police authorities were able to control the bodies of policemen and spaces inhabited by them.

After considerable discussion and communication between members of the SAP hierarchy, notably the Commissioner and his Deputy Commissioners, it was decided to reduce the period white policemen had to wait before being allowed to marry: once their training had been completed, it was reduced from five to four years in July 1948. This was done as too many men were resigning from the force to get married; salaries had also increased thus making it possible for more men to afford marriage.\textsuperscript{97} Unlike single men, married men were also more unlikely to resign from the SAP due to their added family responsibilities. In less than a year, this regulation was reduced even further to a three-year wait. Policemen over the age of 21 in a good financial position could get married once approval was given by their respective Divisional Commissioners.\textsuperscript{98} Once again, the wife-to-be had to be white, of good character and generally suitable before such permission could be granted. Eventually all restrictions on marriage were lifted by the Minister of Justice in December 1954 when it was finally realized that such restrictions served only to limit the number of new policemen entering the force. It had also been noted that no other state department restricted its staff in this way.\textsuperscript{99}

**RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Recreational and sporting facilities were always on offer when one joined the SAP. Sport within the SAP was first encountered by recruits during their training stint at the Police Training Depot in Pretoria, and for those who enjoyed playing sport, such activities could be pursued at the larger urban police districts throughout the country. In Port Elizabeth, tennis,

\textsuperscript{96} M Foucault, *Power/ Knowledge* (Brighton, 1980), pp 154-5.

\textsuperscript{97} NAR, SAP 423 12/45/48, Vol 1, SAP Com to Sect, Public Service Commission, 27 April 1948.

\textsuperscript{98} NAR, SAP 423 12/45/48, Vol 1, Draft amendment to Standing Orders, 18 March 1949.

cricket and rugby were the most popular sports among policemen even though the SAP in this district did not have its own sports facilities in the early years. But this is sport writ small. Perhaps there existed a more complex dimension to the official approval of sport within a force representing, in the words of Bill Nasson, ‘blue serge masculinity’.  

It is possible that sport within the SAP served a dual role even though direct evidence is not available to corroborate this theory, that is, sport simultaneously honed physical prowess, fitness and stamina of its members while at the same time being a vehicle for social conditioning. Such conditioning may have sought to reinforce the notion of masculine dominance. South African society was certainly male-dominated in the period under discussion, whether in the white or black communities, and male chauvinism was firmly entrenched. Women could never be equal to men, and for them to aspire to being policewomen was even more ludicrous: policing in South Africa was undoubtedly for males only. Physically fit young men, well disciplined, neatly attired both on and off the field, and working together as a purposeful team, was an image of policing that the authorities carefully cultivated for assimilation by the general public.

A similar picture could be painted of boys only secondary schools where top sportsmen, usually rugby players, were elected or appointed to leadership positions and received the adulation and admiration of their peers - the prominence of sport, particularly rugby, began in the elite English language schools of South Africa. It was believed that rugby provided a solid foundation for the development of self-discipline and mental toughness in adolescent males. The SAP appears to have adopted this line of thinking. The emphasis on drill, gymnastics, shooting, physical training and sport at the police training college manifests the imbalance in training: insufficient time was spent on teaching law, public relations,
investigative skills, administrative work, and so on (see Chapter 3). It was only after 1947

**Illustration 3.2 Examples of police humour and obsession with rugby, 1946**

*(The Nongqai)*
Illustration 3.2 Examples of police humour and obsession with rugby, 1946
(The Nongqai)

"Try to keep your mind off Rugby, Constable Swartz."

"Remind me to put in a word for Smithies at the next selection meeting."
that training became more balanced, with greater emphasis on police work proper but physical training and drill were never discarded, remaining prominent cornerstones of the curriculum.\(^{103}\) Active participation in rugby (particularly when discipline, team work and aggression were paramount if success was to be achieved in this game) was viewed by some as essential training for military-type work. General Magnus Malan, chief of the South African Defence Force in the 1980s, believed that rugby players could be made soldiers more quickly than non-rugby players,\(^{104}\) a sentiment which would have been quite easily shared by all the police commissioners serving in the 1913-1956 period.

It is not surprising therefore that in early 1924 the highest ranking officer in Port Elizabeth, Inspector Strickland, the District Commandant, presided over a meeting which had as its express purpose the establishment of a police rugby club. Although older members (mainly English) of the force would have preferred to create a soccer club, the younger men (mainly Afrikaners) who made up the majority, opted for a rugby team to compete in the local Port Elizabeth junior league. With the support of the local SAP hierarchy, a rugby team was soon participating in second league matches, although without much success. From the outset it is apparent that rugby was the favoured sport (see Illustration 3.2 above), receiving far more support from police leadership in the city compared to other sports like tennis and cricket which remained perennially popular with policemen. Indicative of this was the fact that rugby players encountered few problems in securing time off from regular duties.\(^{105}\)

**THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE**

As early as 1912 it was stressed by Truter, the acting SAP Commissioner, that all members of the Union police force, the future SAP, should endeavour to acquire a working knowledge

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\(^{103}\) Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 175.

\(^{104}\) Grundlingh, *et al.*, *Beyond the Tryline*, p 103.

\(^{105}\) *Nongqai*, July 1924, p 400.
of both English and Afrikaans.\textsuperscript{106} In 1917, Truter, after complaints had been received from the white public about the inability of some members of the police force to communicate in both official languages, issued a circular to enforce the principle of bilingualism within the force. It stated that ‘... it has now become incumbent upon all members of the Force to become acquainted with both the English and Dutch languages in order to properly and efficiently attend to their official duties.’\textsuperscript{107} He also made it clear that promotion for all ranks was in future dependent upon bilingualism.

It soon became apparent to many British-born SAP members that their future prospects in the force would be limited unless they learnt the Dutch or Afrikaans language. Many British-born policemen argued that in urban centres like Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, it was largely unnecessary to learn Afrikaans as most whites were English-speaking. Port Elizabeth was, for the first 100 years of its existence, distinctly British in character, described by some jingoists as ‘‘the most English town in South Africa’’\textsuperscript{108}. On the other hand, those English-speakers based in the rural towns and villages out of necessity soon learnt to speak and read Afrikaans (as opposed to the more formal High Dutch) quite adequately.\textsuperscript{109} Ultimately it was recognised by some policemen that it was to the advantage of the individual to be bilingual in both official languages for the sake of a more efficient service.\textsuperscript{110}

After the formation of the SAP in 1913 the special allowance granted to those policemen who were fluent speakers of a native African language was discontinued. This upset some members of the force who felt that such people should be given recognition for their linguistic

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item \textit{Nongqai,} Aug 1917, p 75.
  \item \textit{Nongqai,} Aug 1917, p 101.
  \item \textit{Nongqai,} Sept 1917, p 150.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The view of the SAP Commissioner was that those with better qualifications stood a greater chance of promotion hence no special allowances were necessary for African language speakers. Dissenting voices considered that the ability to speak an African language was a distinct advantage: to foment such a skill by way of financial inducement was therefore essential.

For many of the younger, Afrikaner policemen the policy of bilingualism was not reflected in day to day policing - they complained during the 1920s that their officers expected them to write all reports in English while at the same time many English-speaking officers could not speak Afrikaans. Such complaints reflect something of the tension that existed between English-speakers and Afrikaners in the force, a situation set to continue throughout the period under discussion.

In the period before World War II the business language of the police force was mainly English; it was only after De Villiers became Commissioner that this policy changed. Being an Afrikaner, he openly encouraged policemen to fill in office registers, and the like, in Afrikaans. Dippenaar, the official SAP historian, has noted the influence of nationalistic fervour upon Afrikaner policemen after the Voortrekker centenary celebrations of 1938, arguing that Afrikaans within the force had finally made a breakthrough under De Villiers’s leadership. The upsurge of Afrikaner patriotism engendered by these celebrations led to open rebellion against accepted SAP practice - more and more Afrikaner policemen began to utilise Afrikaans in the place of English, much to the annoyance, no doubt, of English officers. De Villiers took the lead by always speaking Afrikaans to his subordinates, paving the way for the eventual ascendancy of the language within the SAP.

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111 Nongqai, June 1915, p 350.
112 Nongqai, Aug 1915, p 70.
113 Brewer, Black and Blue, p 72.
114 Dippenaar, History of SAP, p 135.
115 Brewer, Black and Blue, p 114.
Although there had been a failed attempt in 1924 to pay policemen a special allowance for their skills in a local native language, it was decided to grant men extra marks in promotion examinations for their knowledge of such a language in 1930.\textsuperscript{116} The main objective was to encourage the study of African languages among SAP personnel. Men fluent in African languages were employed where their language skills could be fully utilised. However, it bothered certain policemen, like Detective Sergeant C G Barnard of the Korsten CID, that skilled linguists carrying out clerical duties within the force were being under-utilised. He felt that such men should be redeployed, that is, placed in policing roles which made full use of their skills. Barnard considered that those in clerical positions got very little opportunity to use their African language skills and such skills were, in a sense, lost to the SAP unless such men were brought into regular contact with Xhosa-speakers living within the municipal boundaries of the city.\textsuperscript{117}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & English & Afrikaans & Afrikaans \\
 & (%) & (%) & (%) \\
\hline
1936 & 4.1 & 65.3 & 30.6 \\
1946 & 1.8 & 59.5 & 38.7 \\
1951 & 2.3 & 56.3 & 41.4 \\
1960 & 2.1 & 55.6 & 42.3 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Home Languages spoken by whites in Port Elizabeth\textsuperscript{118}}
\end{table}

In 1936 it was established that the number of bilingual people in the white community over the age of seven in Port Elizabeth numbered 33 090 or 62 percent of the population. Of the 33 090 bilingual people, 30 percent could speak English only while four percent were limited

\textsuperscript{116} NAR, JUS 1 241 1/240/30/1, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 7 Aug 1930.

\textsuperscript{117} NAR, K80, Evidence by D/Sgt C G Barnard, 11 Feb 1937.

solely to Afrikaans.\textsuperscript{119} The total white population of the city (in 1936) has been estimated at 56 265 of which 20 500 (36.4 percent) were Afrikaans-speaking.\textsuperscript{120} What is significant in terms of policing is that a greater proportion of people had English as a home language, i.e. 79 percent, while only 15 percent spoke Afrikaans at home. This meant that the predominantly Afrikaans police force had to quickly acquire English language skills once posted to Port Elizabeth during these years as members of the public in the larger cities of the Union often complained about young Afrikaner policemen being poorly equipped linguistically.\textsuperscript{121} Port Elizabeth could be characterised as an English-speaking city well into the 1950s (see Table 3.1) but thereafter Afrikaners began to make their presence felt, not only in numbers but particularly in matters of local government, where National Party (NP) supporters began to oust the more liberal, United Party-supporting elements of the English-speaking community.\textsuperscript{122}

Throughout the 1940s an increasing number of Afrikaners were applying for positions in the public service to the extent that a preponderance of Afrikaans-speaking candidates, as opposed to English-speakers, wrote the Public Service Examinations necessary to acquire appointments each year\textsuperscript{123} A similar state of affairs was mirrored in the SAP. Results of the Public Service entrance examinations in 1949 revealed that only 21.8 percent of public service candidates could be considered reasonably bilingual.\textsuperscript{124} Yet the NP government continued apace with its Afrikanerization programme by appointing more and more Afrikaners to senior and junior positions in all facets of government administration, law enforcement, defence and

\textsuperscript{119} UG 44-1938, Sixth Census of Population of the Union of South Africa, enumerated on 5 May 1936, p viii.


\textsuperscript{121} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 72.

\textsuperscript{122} Robinson, \textit{Power of Apartheid}, p 152.

\textsuperscript{123} UG 32-1947, 35\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of the Public Service Commission, 1946, p 10.

\textsuperscript{124} UG 23-1951, 39\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of the Public Service Commission, 1950, p 20.
various state-run corporations.125

In September 1954 Major-General C I Rademeyer succeeded Commissioner Brink as the new SAP Commissioner. Under his leadership, Afrikaans was to rapidly supersede English as the language of the force, particularly in official documents and communications at the highest level. A standing order formulated by Commissioner Rademeyer gave all white policemen the inalienable right to write up any document of an official nature in his home language.126 No officer could in future request a document to be rewritten in the language of his choice: English and Afrikaans were both acceptable. Of course, native languages like Xhosa or Zulu were not recognised as official languages, so black policemen were still compelled to use either English or Afrikaans when preparing written work.

As the NP government steadily increased its Afrikanerization programme during the 1950s, it received the enthusiastic support of Commissioner Rademeyer. He gave his blessing to the formation of the Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniging van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie (AKPOL) in 1955, a cultural organisation which aimed to promote Afrikaans and Afrikaner culture within the SAP. The influence and impact of AKPOL ensured that the ‘occupational culture’ of the SAP became distinctly Afrikaans, alienating English-speakers even further.127 Articles in the increasingly partisan police magazine, The Nongqai, encouraged policemen to use their language with pride, to ‘Praat suiwer. Praat u eie taal.’ during this period.128 By 1956 AKPOL was making its presence felt in Port Elizabeth with a show being organised in Walmer during June of that year.129 Similar shows were held in other parts of the country where the emphasis was on Afrikaans folk music, the work of Afrikaner poets and writers, and various cultural competitions to highlight Afrikaner culture. That English-speaking policemen felt further marginalised by all this pro-Afrikaner activity would be difficult to

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125 L Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (Yale, 1990), p 188.
127 Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 211.
129 *Nongqai*, June 1956, p 69.
dispute.

DAY-TO-DAY WORKING CONDITIONS

Besides being paid inadequately for their services for most of the period covered by this study, policemen were also expected to work long hours in often trying conditions. In terms of day-to-day working conditions, policemen on beat duty during 1918 in larger urban areas like Port Elizabeth, were effectively working a 48 hour week, each session of duty lasting eight hours. A complete rest day was granted every 14 days whilst only four hours of duty was expected on Sundays.\(^{130}\) The official feeling was that this rest system was working effectively and was in no way detrimental to effective policing.\(^{131}\) The principle of a 48 hour work week for rural policemen was rejected as unworkable by Truter due to the nature of policing in such areas: it was virtually impossible to check on ordinary patrolling and the flexibility inherent in the system allowed men on horseback to rest at appropriate intervals.\(^{132}\)

Although Truter approved of the principle of granting policemen a full rest day every seven days, he stated that this was impossible to implement because of the shortage of recruits at the time.\(^{133}\) It was only in 1921 that Truter permitted policemen on beat or point duty in the larger centres the luxury of one day off in seven to rest their weary legs. He made it quite clear that the one day’s rest had to come after six full days of work.\(^{134}\) Black policemen in Port Elizabeth carrying out regular beat duty had to wait until 1928 before being given the same privilege. It was only in East London and Port Elizabeth that this privilege was granted as it was considered unnecessary in the smaller towns of the Cape Eastern Police Division.\(^{135}\)

Besides working a full day, policemen were also expected to be on call 24 hours a day, every

\(^{130}\) NAR, JUS 502 1/68/20, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 29 Oct 1919.

\(^{131}\) Nongqai, April 1918, p 188.

\(^{132}\) NAR, JUS 502 1/68/20, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 29 Oct 1919.

\(^{133}\) Nongqai, June 1920, p 291.

\(^{134}\) NAR, SAP 421 12/42/48, Vol 1, Circular No. 29 of 1921, 10 Nov 1921.

\(^{135}\) NAR, SAP 421 12/42/48, Vol 1, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 29 Oct 1928.
day of the week, ready to meet any emergency should it arise. So men on a rest day had to be available for duty at the drop of a hat; any abuse of the system, or a lowering of policing efficiency, would have led to a withdrawal of this privilege.  

Should such a day have fallen on a Saturday, it would have meant that these resting policemen would not have been able to get to the CBD to carry out any business as the rest period only ended at 2 pm. For some policemen in Port Elizabeth, this was a rather tiresome restriction.  

Truter argued unsympathetically that the police received very generous holiday and sick leave which made up for their long working hours during the week. As a virtual front-line arm of the state, these state servants were on call virtually 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As stated by Commissioner Palmer in 1948, the ‘public demand for constant police protection’ meant that the SAP could expect no reduction to their hours of work.

One of the hazards faced by state servants such as the police was exposing themselves to public hazards, very often not linked to crime or public disorder, such as the Spanish ‘flu of 1918. The ‘flu arrived in Port Elizabeth in October and left 1 123 people dead in its wake. While assisting those infected by the virus, many policemen had the misfortune of contracting the ‘flu in the line of duty, sometimes with fatal consequences. The number of children left fatherless by the impact of this ‘flu on the SAP led to the establishment of the Police Orphan’s Fund. Countrywide, the SAP lost 160 to this epidemic, thereby exacerbating the shortage of manpower being experienced at the time.

At the SAP Deputy Commissioners’ conference held in February 1948, a recommendation

137 NAR, K80, Evidence by Sgt Barrable, 9 Feb 1937.
140 Nongqai, April 1938, p 334.
was made that all members of the force be given at least one rest day in every seven. The argument was that men employed in administrative work enjoyed one and a half days off a week (Saturday afternoon and Sunday) whereas men on beat duty, both black and white, only one rest day in seven; those on cycle patrol, inquiries and charge office duties had the unenviable position of getting only one rest day off every fortnight. The commissioners agreed to amend the standing orders accordingly for men working in urban areas. The long hours worked per week by policemen was at last receiving the necessary attention. Unfortunately not all policemen were granted this privilege. In the smaller towns and villages the granting of this rest day depended upon the nature of a policeman’s work and the discretion of the local Deputy Commissioner.

By 1952 black policemen were still being treated paternalistically in that they carried out their policing duties, whether in the uniformed or CID branch, under the supervision of white policemen. Their apparent lack of knowledge in law, police procedures and their lack of confidence to make correct decisions within a racist environment, all mitigated against them being allowed to work unattended for some time to come. Insufficient training only added to the black policeman’s sense of inferiority and assumed lack of ability. On their part, black policemen resented their conditions of work, mainly because of the intimidatory treatment they received at the hands of their white colleagues, a lack of free time and a uniform they considered degrading until it was changed in 1947 (when short pants were replaced by long trousers).

PUBLIC IMAGE

Working mainly with the criminal, anti-social, anti-establishment elements of society, while at the same time being criticised by members of the law-abiding sector for a variety of reasons

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142 NAR, SAPC 17 PC 63/1, Vol 1, Report on Dep Coms conference, 6 April 1948, p 3.


(such as ineffectuality, brutality, lack of tact and bilingualism), policemen struggled to maintain a positive public relations image. It is highly unlikely, though, that public image was on the forefront of the ordinary policeman’s mind - his mind was understandably fixed upon more immediate matters, such as improving his working conditions. Yet the importance of public relations and public image cannot be ignored by public servants, particularly those with a high profile in society.

In Port Elizabeth, police authorities struggled to maintain a positive image in the eyes of the white public (scant regard was paid to black views of the police), particularly when the resignation of better educated men working in offices necessitated their replacement by ‘the more intelligent class of men’ on street duty. This left the more poorly educated policemen, those with rural or working class backgrounds, with the highest public profile - it was the conduct of these men by which the public judged the force as a whole, a fact bemoaned by District Commandant Verster during the late 1930s.145 Nevertheless, it would appear that the law-abiding sector of the white public generally maintained cordial relations with the police.

Studies have shown that policemen from around the world share similar opinions about their image within the communities they have to police.146 They generally believe that their official status and legal powers have alienated them from the very people they serve, that the hostility they perceive varies only in degrees, that is, certain elements of society dislike them intensely while others are mildly antagonistic, but ultimately nobody really likes them. Even British bobbies, often portrayed as the most approachable and polite of policemen, apparently sense this dislike unequivocally. Albert notes further that the sense of isolation felt by policemen is caused by their authoritative role in society, which in turn alienates them from the very people they are trying to serve.147

145 NAR, K80, Evidence by Major F J Verster, 8 Feb 1937.
In the South African context, enforcement of oppressive laws, even if done with a certain amount of sensitivity and tact (and this is doubtful), served to widen the gap between policemen and the black community, thus contributing to a more pronounced sense of isolation felt by both black and white policemen. The brutality of policemen towards people of colour certainly did very little to endear them to this section of South Africa’s racial strata. Since the establishment of the SAP, and well into the 1990s, policemen have complained about their working conditions and poor public image, and some of the factors which have remained high on the agenda during these years have been their lowly image in the eyes of whites, and the obvious resentment of black people.148

Changes in the mode of policing in Port Elizabeth, from walking beats and carrying out patrols on horseback during the early years of the SAP, to the extensive use of vehicles by the 1930s also contributed to the deterioration in relations between the police and the public. The use of radio communication between patrol cars and police stations from 1936 onwards reflected the positive side of motorised policing as it allowed the police to respond to crime far more quickly, but it did little to improve police-public relations. Those critical of this form of policing have noted that, besides reducing contact between the police and the community they served, it also had a detrimental effect on crime detection because the most basic link between the police and the public, the beat, was forfeited.149 In the post-war period, the rapid growth of Port Elizabeth’s population, caused by an amalgam of factors (growth of secondary industry during the War, overcrowding of reserves and the expansion of commercial farming, which forced many bywoners and black peasants into towns),150 compelled an understaffed police force to rely even more heavily on mechanisation to fulfil its basic policing functions. Thus, innovations made possible by technology ensured that the human face of policing dwindled even further.

149 Brewer, Black and Blue, p 174.
It was unforeseen that mechanisation would distance policemen from the community they served, making them impersonal figures who appeared rapidly when needed, but then left the scene of a crime just as quickly.\textsuperscript{151} This lack of personal touch with the law-abiding public did little to enhance the public image of the police, and more than likely added to the perception held by policemen that people disliked or distrusted them. In some quarters the use of vehicles for patrols, particularly in black townships, was criticised for being too fast moving and therefore ineffective in combatting crime.\textsuperscript{152} With limited manpower at its disposal the SAP understandably, or perhaps too readily, succumbed to the temptation of ‘flying squad’ type policing.

Members of the SAP were not, nor could they ever be expected to be, without their shortcomings as public servants and were sometimes lax in carrying out their duties as servants of both the state and the public. A focus on Port Elizabeth between 1938 and 1939 reveals some of the most common shortcomings prevalent in the force were failing to parade for duty, sleeping on duty, making a false entry in note book, failing to work beat in proper manner and neglect or improper performance of duty.\textsuperscript{153} Most of these minor infringements were punished by fines and reprimands. More serious cases went to court and often resulted in dismissal from the force or imprisonment, as the following occurrence illustrates.

The SAP suffered a somewhat serious setback to its public image on 7 February 1940 when eight members of the SAP stationed at Baakens Street, and one municipal employee, were arrested on charges of house-breaking and theft.\textsuperscript{154} The men accused of theft had stolen mainly car tyres, electrical appliances, fishing tackle, clothing and liquor. Head Constable J J Strydom, the station commander, was surprised to hear that some members of his station were involved in theft. He already suspected that Sergeant Nienaber was allegedly seeing

\textsuperscript{151} Dippenaar, \textit{History of the SAP}, p 192.

\textsuperscript{152} SAIRR, \textit{A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa} (Oct 1950-Sept 1951), 22\textsuperscript{nd} Annual Report, p 63.

\textsuperscript{153} NAR, SAP 323 1/40/40, List of Charges and Punishment for 1938-9.

\textsuperscript{154} NAR, SAP 323 1/40/40, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 9 March 1940.
women at the station when on night duty but expressed surprise that theft had been committed by him and other men on evening beat duty over the previous two and a half years.\(^{155}\)

After being tried by the Circuit Court, Sergeant Nienaber was sentenced to three years hard labour and Constable Schoeman to 18 months hard labour. Both men were immediately dismissed from the SAP once sentence was passed.\(^{156}\) Parkin, the principal suspect, faced a similar fate after being imprisoned for four years with hard labour. Three other constables acquitted of all charges decided to join the Police Brigade rather than endure the ignominy of being suspected of crime by their fellow policemen, and the public at large. Their wish was granted by the SAP Commissioner in September 1940.

After an internal investigation of the whole matter had been conducted, a general ‘shake-up’ of the Baakens Street police station followed. The lack of supervision and control displayed by the senior men led to their transfer to other stations in the Union, for example, Sub-Inspector Milford was sent to Pretoria. Lesser ranks were mostly dispatched to other stations within the Port Elizabeth district. New NCOs appointed to Baakens Street had to display qualities such as intelligence, energy and strict discipline in order to ensure greater efficiency at the disgraced station.\(^{157}\) Editorial opinion in the *Eastern Province Herald* noted that the police crimes emanating from the Baakens Street police station adversely affected public attitudes towards the police, particularly their efficiency and integrity.\(^{158}\) All in all, this isolated incident cast something of a shadow over the SAP’s image in Port Elizabeth: some policemen revealed themselves to be no more trustworthy than the criminals they sought to apprehend.

For black policemen, being refused the right to arrest white people for committing crimes

\(^{155}\) NAR, SAP 323 1/40/40, Statement by Head Const J J Fourie, 20 Feb 1940.

\(^{156}\) NAR, SAP 323 1/40/40, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 27 Aug 1940.

\(^{157}\) NAR, SAP 323 1/40/40, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 6 Aug 1940.

\(^{158}\) *EPH*, ‘Our Note Book’, 31 Aug 1940.
Besides enduring such restrictions to their formal powers as officers of the law, black policemen were also expected to walk a few paces behind white policemen whilst on street patrol, thus affirming their inferior status within the force and South African society as a whole. Joe Slovo, a senior member of the South African Communist Party until his recent death, described succinctly the black policeman’s status within the SAP as follows:

A black policeman’s feelings about his role as an instrument of race rule must of necessity be ambivalent. Inside the police force he occupies an inferior position by virtue of his colour and he experiences continual humiliations from the white boss.\(^\text{160}\)

But the problems, complaints and status of black policemen were largely ignored. Police authorities, firm in their belief that black people were inferior in every way to whites, persisted with the notion that the ability of black policemen to organise and carry out administrative tasks was not yet fully developed.\(^\text{161}\) This notion persisted for decades to come, and by the late 1990s, it remained apparent that many white policemen still maintained this belief, even though many of their superior officers were in fact black.

**CONCLUSION**

Although aware of the generally inadequate conditions of service faced by policemen in the country, the South African government largely paid lip service to necessary improvements. Police and Public Service Commissions did attempt to improve the lot of ordinary policemen but the constant battle to obtain sufficient recruits, and the regular resignations of younger policemen, provide clear signs of an institution falling short in providing adequate and attractive working conditions. A sufficient supply of black recruits, even in the face of unsatisfactory service conditions, could never make up for the shortage of whites who remained the elite group within the SAP. The irony remained: a state totally reliant on its police force to maintain a system of repression, with the support of related government


\(^{161}\) NAR, SAP 163 39/5/27, Policy: Native Branch of the SAP, 9 Dec 1952.
departments, was unable to provide adequately for its first line of defence.

The inherent nature of policing has always accorded the police a high public profile in society. Their image in Port Elizabeth, as shown above, was not always very satisfactory, particularly when some policemen were guilty of committing crime and not fighting it. Despite the fact that policemen sometimes assisted the public in humanitarian ways, often placing their own lives at risk, it nevertheless remained true that relations between the SAP and the public they served were not always particularly harmonious. In the words of the mayor of Port Elizabeth, Cllr J S Young, speaking at a parade to award policemen good conduct medals in June 1926, ‘a policeman’s lot was not a happy one’.\textsuperscript{162} Cllr Young omitted to note that policemen were often their own worst enemies when it came to projecting a positive image: their aggressive attitude to generally law-abiding black people found guilty of breaking one of the innumerable petty and oppressive racist laws certainly did little to improve an already tarnished public image. Their lack of skills in the domain of public relations, aggravated by a lack of bilingualism, did very little to endear them to the public they were trained to serve.

The remaining chapters of this thesis will reveal further how policemen were exploited and misused in their fight against crime, social unrest and political turmoil. It will become more apparent, particularly in Chapters 7 and 8, how some policemen were more than willing to exploit their state-given powers, contributing even further to their poor public image.

\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Nongqai}, July 1926, p 539.
CHAPTER 4

GENERAL ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF POLICING IN PORT ELIZABETH: 1913-1956

INTRODUCTION
At the time of Union in 1910, Port Elizabeth fell within the ambit of the Cape Province in terms of general administration and policing. Thus, the city and its outer limits was policed by a variety of police forces which were also found elsewhere in the province. It was only after the creation of the South African Police (SAP) in April 1913 that a single police force was employed in the city. The newly created SAP fell under the authority of the Minister of Justice, the supreme head of the police sub-department, with the Commissioner of Police answerable to him. This political mechanism allowed the central state to maintain direct control over the police department, ensuring that the interests of the state always superseded those of the police.

The only real autonomy enjoyed by the SAP Commissioner was similar to that which existed in the British system well into the 1980s: the police heads of South Africa and Britain directed and controlled recruitment, training, promotion and the deployment of police resources as they saw fit. This form of restricted autonomy was, of course, watered down even further by central government’s control of the police department’s purse strings; in Britain, local authorities which contributed to police coffers, also subjected the police to financial controls. In South Africa, with the exception of Natal until 1936, the local state did not contribute to the police budget and therefore had no say over police policy. Natal had decided at the time of the SAP’s formation to retain the decentralised British model of

1 UG 35-1911, Department of Justice, Annual Report of 1910, p 7. The Cape Mounted Police, the Urban Police, the Transkeian Police and the Cape Mounted Riflemen, all had to be amalgamated to form the new South African Police force of the Cape Province.


policing by having borough or municipal police in major urban areas like Durban and Pietermaritzburg. It was therefore excluded as a separate SAP division. Natal’s smaller towns and rural areas were policed by the South African Mounted Rifles (SAMR), which, like the SAP, fell under direct central government control. In the Union as a whole, there were initially five SAP divisions, namely, Transvaal, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Orange Free State and Kimberley. The sixth police division, namely, Natal, was incorporated in 1936 after the Durban and Pietermaritzburg city councils relinquished all control over their borough police in favour of Pretoria.

The first commissioner of the SAP was Colonel T G Truter, previously the Transvaal provincial secretary. He was based at Police Headquarters in Pretoria. Although lacking a policing background, he nevertheless succeeded in asserting his authority over the police department by implementing firm leadership from the beginning. He lost little time in expanding his influence over the previously disparate police forces within the Union, and displayed a full commitment to the government's policy of centralising the management and control of the country's police force. The standardisation of police training, discipline and dress for the whole country was facilitated by the establishment of the SAP training depot in Pretoria in 1914 (See Chapter 2).

This chapter will attempt to trace some of the more significant organisational and administrative changes undergone by the SAP in Port Elizabeth during the period under discussion. Beginning with the pre-1913 period, the evolution of policing in the city will be traced briefly from the time the British chose to make the mouth of the Baakens river a military outpost to serve the defensive needs of the eastern frontier until the various provinces of South Africa united to form a union in 1910. Thereafter general organisational developments pertaining to the policing of Port Elizabeth will be dealt with, ending with the creation of two separate police districts serving the city by the end of 1956.

4 National Archives Repository, Pretoria (NAR), JUS 160 1/269/12, Memo: Reorganisation of SAP, 25 March 1913.

5 Brewer, Black and Blue, p 32.
ORGANISATION OF POLICING PRE-1913

Xhosa resistance to white expansionism on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony during 1799 led to the British establishing a rudimentary blockhouse at the mouth of the Baakens river in August of that year. After a brief return of Dutch control over the Cape between 1803-6, the British returned and in time the military post on Algoa Bay gradually developed into an important harbour connecting the hinterland of the Eastern Cape with the outside world. Thus British colonial policy in southern Africa was a direct cause of Port Elizabeth’s establishment, and in time the British tradition of urban policing was introduced to the settlement.

With the arrival of British settlers in 1820 the coastal outpost soon developed into a thriving village. The maintenance of law and order in the early days of Port Elizabeth was under the control of the local veldcornet whose superior was based in nearby Uitenhage, the seat of the local magistrate’s office. As the settlement grew in size, it became necessary to appoint a constable to serve the local community, which most likely perceived the growth of crime to be a potential threat to its well-being and safety, and therefore took appropriate action.

The first constable to carry out police duties within the confines of the village was Thomas Sterley; although appointed in 1825, his position only became official in 1828 after it was gazetted.\(^6\) He was paid £48 per annum and notwithstanding the fact that he had served for 26 years, he never once received a pay increase or promotion. Sterley wore a uniform of sorts in that his top coat was blue; he carried a stick which served as his only armament. It did not take long before he complained of being overworked with the result that in 1832 he was given three white constables and two Mfengu assistants to ease his policing duties. According to Van Onselen, these policemen, both black and white, were considered ‘inefficient, brutal and tactless’ by most law-abiding citizens in Port Elizabeth.\(^7\) Such an indictment is not surprising considering that they received no police training and were poorly paid. Citizens of Cape Town during the nineteenth century shared much the same disrespect

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\(^7\) Van Onselen, *Rhapsody in Blue*, p 17.
for their policemen yet the local authorities refused to increase police pay to attract better candidates to the force. Ratepayers, not surprisingly, complained when suggestions were made to increase rates in order to pay policemen better wages so policemen continued to be drawn from the lower echelons of society. By paying low wages linked to often unpleasant working conditions, both local and central government faced persistent problems with the recruitment and retention of suitable men. In Britain, and in many parts of Europe, similar problems were encountered during the nineteenth century (and these continued into the twentieth).

Port Elizabeth eventually became a separate magistracy in April 1828 with Captain Evatt as Government Resident. The first resident magistrate had only been appointed in January 1828. Harradine suggests that Port Elizabeth had become more like a ‘functional village rather than a temporary settlement’ by this time because its population had increased quite quickly to 302 people. Nevertheless, as the village grew in size and population, municipal government became better organised in December 1847 when a Board of Commissioners was elected to oversee municipal tasks, one of which was to maintain the poorly paid police force. Its number varied between 6-8 men and it only operated during the hours of daylight. A lack of funds to employ more policemen, and to some extent, the absence of street lighting, precluded the operation of these policemen after dark. An attempt to increase the size of the force several years later, in 1854, came to nought due to ratepayers continued parsimony about increasing rates to fund extra policemen.

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With an increase in population, crime and anti-social behaviour became more prevalent, particularly in the area known as ‘Irish Town’ in Strand Street, notorious for drunken brawls, prostitution and the like. It would appear that the police steered clear of this area during their hours of duty, contributing to their poor public image so often referred to in the local press during the mid-1800s. It was only in 1862 that the police were compelled to carry out night duties, due mainly to persistent complaints by the public of increased burglaries and disturbance of the peace.

In May 1866 a new, much larger police force was formed with the aid of the Cape government which paid 50 percent of all costs involved. Act 15 of 1857 allowed municipalities to arrange for the employment of extra policemen provided ratepayers were willing to contribute towards their upkeep. The result was that the police force in Port Elizabeth, operating from an office situated in the Court House in Baakens Street, increased to 27 men. By 1901 the city had 52 policemen at its service, two of whom were mounted; two others were employed as detectives. Local and central government was not averse to employing black policemen who were, of course, paid less than their white colleagues. Walmer, an adjacent township with its own town council since 1898, applied successfully to the government in 1901 for a policeman, and duly appointed one two years later. By 1899 the Court House had been renovated and enlarged; the new police station and barracks built alongside the Court House were occupied by the police from November of that year.

Thus, by the time of Union in 1910, Port Elizabeth was being policed by a fairly well organised body of men (known officially as Town Police) under the authority of the local magistrate who was answerable to Cape Town. This particular system of policing underwent a considerable metamorphosis, however, once the new, unified South African police force was established. These changes will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

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14 Harradine, Chronicle, p 57.
GENERAL ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: 1913 - 1956

Immediate Post-1913 Changes

Before looking more closely at the organisation and administration of policing in Port Elizabeth, a brief introduction to immediate post-1913 developments in policing of the city is necessary. The impact of increasing industrialisation not only saw an influx of people into the city but it also entailed on-going changes in policing strategy. Such changes are in fact an integral part of policing and reflect something of the dynamic inherent in policing: it is never a static activity, and undergoes constant adaptation to changing conditions. An example of this was the imposition of laws imposing segregation and apartheid upon the inhabitants of Port Elizabeth which meant that the SAP had to carry out tasks other than routine crime-fighting. Black opposition to such oppressive legislation sometimes required a drastic revision and modification of existing policing methods, making reorganisation imperative, particularly after 1950.

In the new police dispensation which began officially on 1 April 1913, Port Elizabeth, falling within the boundaries of the Cape Eastern Police Division, was placed under the authority of an SAP Deputy Commissioner based in Grahamstown. Each police division in the country was divided into districts under the command of a District Commandant. Police stations making up a police district were placed under the leadership of a station commander who could be either an officer or a non-commissioned officer, such as a sergeant, depending on the size of the station. The magisterial districts of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage were combined to form a new police district known as No. 14 Police District. It comprised eleven police stations, four of which fell within the metropolitan boundaries of the city, namely, Korsten, Baakens Street, Walmer and Swartkops. Inspector R F Neale-Shutte was appointed District Commandant of this police district with his headquarters situated at the Baakens Street police station in the heart of Port Elizabeth’s CBD.

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16 NAR, SAP 8 6/121/13, Sect SAP to Magt PE, 11 March 1913. The remaining seven police stations comprising No. 14 Police District were Uitenhage, Bayville, Bulkriver, Kleinpoort, Thornhill, Selborne and Glenconner.
In terms of leadership and administration, Neale-Shutte was assisted by three sub-inspectors, two head constables and 20 non-commissioned officers. The bulk of the force under his command in No. 14 Police District comprised 49 foot and 26 mounted constables, and three detectives. The total manpower requirements of the SAP in the Port Elizabeth district was set at 104 as from 1 April 1913 by the police hierarchy based in Pretoria. Such a figure was usually established by working out an acceptable ratio of policemen to population although the availability of funds was often a restrictive factor faced by governments worldwide. The ratio of police to population stood at 1.44 per thousand of the total Union population in 1910, a figure similar to democratic states in Europe and North America. The number of police personnel, white and black, serving the whole Union by the end of 1913 stood at 5563, thus the Port Elizabeth region accounted for a very small fraction of the whole.

**Impact of World War I on SAP Organisation**

The outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 came just 16 months after the SAP had been officially established. The police did not form a unit to fight in the war although several men with artillery experience, including four from the Port Elizabeth police district, volunteered to serve with the Union Defence Force. When General Louis Botha, prime minister of the Union, decided personally to lead an invasion force into German-held South West Africa in 1915 on behalf of the British government, a contingent of 100 men from the SAP formed his bodyguard. A unit of mounted police volunteers led by Lieutenant-Colonel M Hartigan, known as ‘Hartigan’s Horse’, also participated in the campaign. Policemen who were refused permission to serve in the European field of the war deserted from the force while others were allowed to resign or to buy their discharge in order to participate in the fighting.

Police strength in Port Elizabeth during the war remained unaffected - it was noted that in

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17 NAR, JUS 160 1/269/12, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 26 March 1913.
20 NAR, SAP 15 6/245/14/40/4, Memo of SAP members with artillery experience, 1 October 1914.
1916 there were 124 policemen of all ranks serving the city. This number was deemed more than adequate to cope with day-to-day policing duties.²¹ There appeared to be no shortage of recruits as a result of the war, no doubt because most recruits were of Afrikaner rural stock who harboured little or no loyalty towards Britain, and therefore had no inclination to fight for the English in distant Flanders. Nevertheless, the majority of policemen who remained at home were faced with an Afrikaner rebellion and anti-German riots in the larger centres of the country (see Chapter 8) during the early stages of the war. Perhaps only policemen stationed in the smaller towns and rural districts of the Union remained largely untouched by the outbreak of the Great War.

By the middle of 1918, with the war showing no signs of abating, the Union government was forced to contemplate a reduction in its expenditure on public utilities to cut costs, and the SAP was expected to tow the line.²² The economic pressures imposed by the war were beginning to gnaw away at the country’s financial reserves and measures had to be taken to reduce the budget of the public service. Truter quickly pointed out that he could easily reduce costs by stopping all recruiting and by not filling any vacancies when they arose. But, he argued, the police establishment had already been reduced in November 1917 when the government cut the SAP’s authorised strength by 290 white and 120 black policemen. This, he felt, had had a negative impact on virtually every police district in the Union.²³ Thus, although outwardly willing to tow the line, he remained conscious of the negative effect that such policies had on the efficacy of his police force.

Truter argued further that the use of policemen by virtually every government department constantly limited the number of men at his disposal. The number of policemen in the Union was already at a bare minimum and to lose men to the performance of extraneous duties in


²² NAR, SAP 38 6/611/18, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 10 June 1918.

²³ NAR, SAP 38 6/611/18, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 10 June 1918.
other departments was unacceptable.\textsuperscript{24} For example, in the area of child welfare, the SAP of Port Elizabeth proved invaluable in making inquiries into complaints of non-support, the financial circumstances of people applying for grants under Act 25 of 1913, the suitability of prospective adoptive parents, and so on. The amount of work in this field of social welfare obliged the local SAP District Commandant, Inspector L Strickland, to appoint a constable full-time for this duty, much to the appreciation of the local magistrate.\textsuperscript{25} Nevertheless, if the government was to go ahead with a reduction of white SAP members while at the same time neglecting to eliminate the problem of extraneous duties being imposed on policemen, then Truter foresaw a proportionate increase in black police numbers to compensate for this loss of manpower. At the same time, however, he recognised that the white public at large would probably refuse to accept this state of affairs even though it would have proved cost-effective. In 1919 the average cost per white policeman (single and unmounted) in the Union was £198. Black policemen in the same category cost the state £61 per annum whereas Coloured and Indian policemen cost £70 per annum.\textsuperscript{26} Given the fact that white policemen were more expensive to maintain, the increased employment of black policemen should have been the solution to the manpower and financial shortcomings, but taking into account the conservatism of the period, this solution was always going to be problematic.

Commissioner Truter, understandably, remained strongly opposed to any curtailment of police manpower, particularly in the larger urban centres of the Union, where the increasing general population was beginning to put pressure on existing police-population ratios. He therefore proposed to recruit and train only the best qualified candidates for the Force, thus hoping to reduce police numbers by sacrificing quantity for quality. The Minister of Justice accepted this proposal and entrusted the matter of maintaining the minimum strength of the SAP to his discretion.\textsuperscript{27} Nevertheless, Truter made it quite clear to his superiors that even

\textsuperscript{24} NAR, JUS 119 1/475/11, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 10 June 1918.

\textsuperscript{25} Port Elizabeth Archives Repository, Port Elizabeth (PER), 25/28, Vol 1, PE Magt to Sect for Justice, 12 Jan 1926.


\textsuperscript{27} NAR, SAP 38 6/611/18, Sect for Justice to SAP Com, 18 June 1918.
though he could reduce SAP numbers without ‘inflicting any hardship to any individual member’, he considered the proposal inadvisable as he foresaw problems with the public which was always clamouring for more policemen.\footnote{28}

Truter planned to revise the distribution of police districts laid down at union by enlarging them, through a process of amalgamation, so that administrative work could be centralised (releasing more men for purely police work), and transport expenses reduced.\footnote{29} The Ministry of Justice approved this plan, particularly as it seemed to guarantee a reduction in the costs of policing the Union. The Deputy Commissioner of the SAP, Cape Eastern Division, was opposed to the reduction of police districts in his area due to the extensive nature of the province but, like Truter, he was forced to follow orders and reluctantly went about reorganising the police districts within his division.\footnote{30}

In the police district of Port Elizabeth, the previous 11 police stations serving as headquarters for their particular areas of jurisdiction were now reduced to five, namely, Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Humansdorp, Willowmore and Steytlerville. Baakens Street police station, which served as the SAP’s headquarters in the city, including Walmer, was responsible for the administration of five SAP posts. The SAP personnel of the whole Port Elizabeth district in 1918 numbered 217, as opposed to 104 in 1913. Of that number, 153 white and 22 black policemen were allocated to the magisterial regions of Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth.\footnote{31} In 1919, the Port Elizabeth magistrate reported that the total strength of the SAP in his district, including all ranks and also 16 black policemen who fell under the control of the Native Affairs Department (NAD) in New Brighton, numbered 122. This number, the same as in 1915, and considered sufficient at that time, was now regarded as inadequate for policing the municipal areas of Port Elizabeth and Walmer effectively.\footnote{32} The number of men in the

\footnote{28} NAR, SAP 38 6/611/18, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 21 June 1918.

\footnote{29} NAR, JUS 482 1/149/19, SAP Com to Sect for Justice, 9 July 1919.

\footnote{30} NAR, JUS 482 1/149/19, Dep Com to Sect SAP, 19 June 1919.

\footnote{31} NAR, JUS 482 1/149/19, Ratio of police to population.

\footnote{32} UG 35-1920, Annual Report of the Department of Justice, 1919, p 62.
CID was not included in the above figure as they were not affected by the redistribution scheme. Being a separate, and specialised, subdepartment within the SAP, the CID usually underwent restructuring when conditions peculiar to its organisation demanded it.

**PECC Attempts to Increase SAP Garrison in Post-War Years**

In the middle of 1919 the PECC discussed the issue of a police shortage in Port Elizabeth at one of its meetings which resulted in the Secretary of Justice being consulted about the matter. The outcome of this contact with the SAP hierarchy in Pretoria proved fruitless. In the opinion of Commissioner Truter, Port Elizabeth was no worse off than any other city in the Union, and until such time as the general shortage in police manpower was overcome, the SAP contingent in Port Elizabeth could not be augmented in any way. Attempts by the Walmer Town Council to procure more policemen to deal with petty crime in the area during 1924 also proved unsuccessful. Nevertheless, it was decided that the Council should continue pressing for more police patrols in the hope that its persistent requests would eventually bear fruit.

In December 1921 the estimated total population of the Port Elizabeth magisterial district stood at 56 136. The number of police, inclusive of the 14 NAD constables in New Brighton, was 133 and considered adequate for normal requirements. This worked out to a ratio of 422 people to each policeman. In 1910 the Union had a ratio of one policeman for every 693 people, a figure considered quite acceptable in European countries, so the ratio for Port Elizabeth in 1921 was in fact most satisfactory. In terms of these statistics, the PECC had virtually no chance of changing the policing status quo of the city.

By 1925 there were 109 white and 31 black policemen serving the Port Elizabeth magisterial

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33 Cape Archives Repository, Cape Town (CAR), 3/PEZ 1/1/1/32, Council Minutes, 16 July 1919.

34 PER, Walmer Town Council Minutes, No. 8, Sept 1924.


district (see Table 3.1). They had 31 horses at their disposal which meant mounted patrols still formed an integral part of policing in Port Elizabeth during that period even though vehicles were being utilised on an ever-increasing scale by the SAP in mainly urban areas.\textsuperscript{37} Two BSA motorbikes were issued to the Port Elizabeth CID during 1921 to improve their mobility whilst on investigative work.\textsuperscript{38} In 1920 the SAP had a total of 53 cars at its disposal throughout the Union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police Station</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baakens Street</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korsten</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North End</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walmer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swartkops</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.1 Number of Policemen at PE Police Stations in 1925\textsuperscript{39}**

**Developments in Mechanisation and Technology**

Although motor vehicles were available in South Africa even before the SAP was created in 1913, very few were in general use, and in police circles by 1915, only 12 vehicles were in use. Until 1915 even district commandants had to conduct inspections of various police stations under their command by horse cart; the use of vehicles was considered a luxury even though their usefulness was clearly evident.\textsuperscript{40} Motorcycles, being cheaper, were used more extensively, particularly by the CID. Nevertheless, by 1920 the SAP had 53 cars and 117

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\textsuperscript{37} Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 84

\textsuperscript{38} *The Nongqai Illustrated Monthly Magazine of the South African Police*, July 1921, p 383.

\textsuperscript{39} NAR, A78, Vol 39, C T te Water, Annexure 10 of the Police Commission of Enquiry, 1925.

\textsuperscript{40} Dippenaar, *History of SAP*, p 39.
motorcycles at its disposal together with innumerable bicycles for patrolling beats in the cities and towns of the Union.

With the growing importance of mechanical transport for modern-day policing, the SAP decided in 1937 to create a separate garage and mechanical transport section. A garage staff, headed by non-commissioned officers, was appointed at all major centres, including Port Elizabeth, to service police vehicles and motorcycles.\(^{41}\) Port Elizabeth was allocated three sergeants, three constables and two black constable labourers for its garaging needs. These men were responsible for servicing 28 vehicles and 80 motorcycles. Being skilled artisans, the mechanics attached to the SAP were often tempted to leave the force in search of higher wages in the private sector. This happened so regularly that the SAP Commissioner, Major-General I P de Villiers, was forced to propose an increase in this direction in order to retain their services. His suggestion that constables attached to the garage division be promoted to second class sergeants was approved - these constables thus moved from a minimum of £150 to a minimum of £280 per annum as from 1 January 1945.\(^{42}\)

By the end of 1942 most of the police stations in Port Elizabeth had been supplied with vehicles to assist in the fight against crime. Seven police vans were now operating in and around the suburbs of the city.\(^{43}\) Although more vehicles assisted the short-staffed police establishment of Port Elizabeth immensely in their fight against crime, a shortfall still existed in the number of men considered necessary to police the city effectively. The persistent lack of adequate manpower compelled the police to rely more and more on motorised transport for patrolling purposes, the result being the gradual demise of foot patrols. A consequence of this change in policing method was the disappearance of a more intimate type of policing within the community being policed: South Africans rarely saw or came into contact with policemen on foot after 1950.

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\(^{41}\) NAR, SAP 285 9/22/37, Office of the Quartermaster to SAP Com, 13 Aug 1937.

\(^{42}\) NAR, SAP 285 9/22/37, Sect, Public Service Commission to SAP Com, 4 Jan 1945.

\(^{43}\) Nongqai, Nov 1942, p 1 194.
Besides the expense of manpower the SAP had to also budget for an increasingly important aspect of modern policing which was the provision of motorised transport for its members. One of the drawbacks associated with such transport was the expense involved, mainly fuel and maintenance. In an effort to economise in this area, particularly during the war years, inspections by district officers of all police stations falling within their jurisdiction had to be curtailed in the Eastern Cape police division. Administration and control was cut down to one parade inspection and two surprise inspections per station per year.\textsuperscript{44} This applied to mainly outlying police stations; those in cities like Port Elizabeth and East London were inspected more frequently, being closer to administrative headquarters.

After 1951 the number of animals used by the police had decreased considerably due to ongoing mechanisation. The SAP was eventually compelled to establish a Mechanical Training Centre for training police personnel as motor mechanics and technicians as a result of increasing modernisation.\textsuperscript{45} Light motor vehicles soon replaced motorcycles as the former provided better service over a long period of time. By 1960 only 51 motorcycles were still owned by the SAP as the ubiquitous patrol van, the scourge of the oppressed, became the most common form of police vehicle on South African roads.

With access to greater funds, the SAP was able to improve its technological capabilities. In 1956 the use of two-way radio cars had increased considerably, to the extent that 170 cars had access to such equipment. Besides using improved technology for fighting routine crimes, the SAP purchased two water-cannon vehicles in the same year for suppressing riot action; by 1959 the SAP had 47 Saracen armoured cars at its disposable.\textsuperscript{46} The iron-fist approach to quelling opposition to apartheid was plainly evident even before the republican era had begun, and the SAP was, and remained, the first line of defence against revolutionary elements suspected of seeking to overthrow the state.

\textsuperscript{44} NAR, SAP 368 36/16/44/2, Annual Report for 1944, Cape Eastern Division (CED), 15 Jan 1945.
\textsuperscript{45} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 173.
\textsuperscript{46} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 210.
PECC Resistance to Part-Financing of SAP

Although reliant on the SAP for the maintenance of law and order the local state never envisaged a development where it would have to subsidise policing as in the pre-1913 era. Thus, the spectre of further expenses to be incurred by local authorities in the Union in the form of policing expenses had the Port Elizabeth City Council (PECC) up in arms halfway through 1926. The PECC had been warned by its counterpart in Cape Town in June 1926 about discussions in the House of Assembly which seemed to favour partial financing of policing by local authorities. The Minister of Justice supported this motion which foresaw the larger urban centres of the Union being requested to pay for any increased ratio of police should they seek it. The PECC and the Walmer Council were both quick to decide that members of parliament representing Port Elizabeth constituencies be informed of their opposition to the idea; the Minister of Justice was also contacted to make him aware of the PECC’s strong objection to any proposals that would burden local authorities with policing expenses. In the end nothing came of the central government’s plans to share its financial burden in relation to policing with local authorities.

Unwilling to pay extra for more policemen, the PECC nevertheless had no qualms about complaining to the central state that the number of policemen allocated to the city was inadequate. The mayor approached the Minister of Justice on this matter in October 1927, citing increased burglaries, a growing industrial sector and residential expansion as reasons for increasing the local SAP establishment. The Justice Department turned down the request, asserting that the maximum number of men had already been allocated to Port Elizabeth, and that a reduction in expenditure on police services in recent years by the government was a further prejudicial factor.

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48 PER, Walmer Council Minutes, No. 9, 29 June 1926.

49 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, TC, PE to Minister of Justice, 18 June 1926.


51 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, Sect for Justice to TC, PE, 18 Nov 1927.
Impact of World War II on Police Organisation

With increased tensions affecting relations between Germany and other states in Europe during 1939, the PECC and the SAP decided to collaborate in safeguarding some of the more vital features of the municipal infrastructure during April of the same year. Although initial precautions were relaxed they were revived again in late August. The power station, water supply reservoirs, filtration plant and the airport beacon were given special attention: these places had fences built around them and were then patrolled by police guards. Chief Inspector H Peard, the District Commandant, also guaranteed the rapid deployment of at least a 100 hundred extra policemen from neighbouring areas in the city should the necessity arise.

By October 1939 the Essential Services Protection Corps had taken over the guarding of the above-mentioned installations. This Corps was established nationwide to assist the army and police which faced a decrease in personnel due to active service obligations upon the outbreak of the Second World War. It consisted mainly of World War I veterans and other male volunteers over the age of 45, all of whom were considered too old for active service. In khaki uniform and armed, these men never carried out patrols as such as their activities were restricted to guarding vital installations whereas the National Volunteer Brigade (NVB) worked more closely with the SAP. They carried out routine police patrols, day and night, to assist the police in maintaining normal law and order.

After the outbreak of the War in September 1939, the SAP under the leadership of Commissioner I P de Villiers, was invited by the Chief of the General Staff to form a battalion of volunteers to serve with the SA Defence Force. This prevented the desertion of

52 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1262, TC, PE to TC, Kimberley, 9 July 1941.
53 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1172, Minutes of Special Committee, 1 Sept 1939.
55 C J Wilken, ‘Port Elizabeth during the Second World War, 1939-1945’ (PhD, University of Port Elizabeth, 1997), p 303.
56 Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 150.
policemen to the army which had been a problem during the First World War. The ease with which policemen could adapt to military life and training was indicative of the SAP’s paramilitary nature, illustrating that little had changed since members of the force had marched into Namibia during World War I. Besides moving into the military domain, SAP members who remained in the country were expected to quell incidents of pro-German activity by right-wing Afrikaners, control an increasingly militant black work force and maintain general law and order.

In Port Elizabeth, members of the uniform branch who chose not to volunteer for active service continued to carry out their routine policing duties (see Chapter 6) while CID men became involved in rounding up suspected Nazi sympathisers (see Chapter 8). Although the Port Elizabeth SAP lost a number of men to the war effort, policing in the city was not as adversely affected as Durban where manpower was depleted by nearly 50 percent, no doubt due largely to a greater number of English-speakers in the force who were more committed to serving the Allied cause than many of their Afrikaner counterparts. Blacks who served with the armed forces were strictly non-combatants (as were American blacks). For example, the Police Brigade in June 1941 comprised 3 783 whites and 1 072 blacks, the latter being part of the service corps which was never formally recognised as an integral part of the Brigade by military authorities. Many of these black servicemen retained bitter memories of being exploited and denigrated as cleaners, cooks and batmen in the service of white privates.\footnote{K W Grundy, \textit{Soldiers without Politics: Blacks in the South African Armed Forces} (Berkeley, 1983), p 81.}

In February 1941 the SAP Commissioner, Major-General I P de Villiers, approved of the plan to obtain the services of men who had volunteered to act as special constables for the Civilian Protective Services (CPS) to assist the SAP in crime-fighting for the duration of the war.\footnote{NAR, SAP 341 1/22/41/5, SAP Com to Dep Coms, Union, 20 Feb 1941.} These men were expected to carry out night patrols in their respective suburbs throughout the major towns and cities of the Union. While on duty each man was expected to wear an armlet, and to carry a baton, whistle and handcuffs. The carrying of firearms when patrolling...
certain areas was left to the discretion of the local district commandant. No uniforms were supposed to be provided.

The deployment of CPS volunteers took some time to get off the ground in Port Elizabeth due mainly to the dearth of volunteers. Eventually, however, 150 volunteers were enrolled as special constables by the Area Commander of the CPS, Major F Perridge, in August 1941. With greater publicity, Perridge expected this force to increase considerably over the next few months. After the organisation of patrols had been approved by the district commandant, Major P J Jordaan, the first group of CPS men, now apparently provided with uniforms, went on duty on the evening of 1 September 1941. Known as Civilian Guards, these special constables operated in their own residential areas, and were under the command of Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors appointed by the CPS. Port Elizabeth was divided into 14 areas which were patrolled every evening between 8pm and midnight. As regular members of the SAP were never armed while on night duty, except when patrolling the Korsten area or in night vans, it was considered unnecessary to arm the Civilian Guards who were not required to do duty in Korsten.

As the war progressed, more ships began calling at harbours throughout the Union. Allied troops sometimes deserted their ships once in ports like Port Elizabeth and the SAP, together with military police, had to track down these deserters. The SAP also worked closely with the South African Railway and Harbour police in safeguarding port security. All civilians working within the harbour area during the war had to obtain clearance certificates from the SAP. This entailed a great deal of administrative work on the part of the police who had to investigate the bona fides of such people.

The formation of the Police Brigade to fight in North Africa depleted the ranks of the SAP in Port Elizabeth, as it did elsewhere in the country, leaving the force ill-equipped to deal with

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59 NAR, SAP 341 1/22/41/5, Chief Inspector, Civilian Guard to Director, CPS, 20 Aug 1941.

60 NAR, SAP 341 1/22/41/5, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 14 Aug 1941.

61 NAR, SAP 391 2/4/47, District Cmndt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 11 June 1947.
routine criminal activity. According to Major Jordaan the police in Port Elizabeth were able to uphold a high standard of efficiency by sheer hard work and loyalty. He admitted nevertheless that, barring a few exceptions, there were no grounds on which those seen as ‘politically unreliable’ could be accused of not pulling their weight when it came to carrying out normal police duties in the city.\textsuperscript{62} To some extent, the increased demand for labour due to the war effort, and a related rise in living standards, seemingly reduced the number of cases of petty crime, such as burglaries, thus making the shortage of police virtually inconsequential in this domain of crime-fighting. But crime continued to exist in the poorer areas of the city where the war had little impact on the lives of ordinary people.

In South End during the war years, a police constable carried out routine street patrol duty on week days while over the weekend, a black or special constable accompanied the white policeman on duty. During the evening shift for every night of the week, one police NCO and four members of the CPS carried out patrols from 8:00 pm to midnight.\textsuperscript{63}

Following a conference in Pretoria on the deployment of the CPS, Port Elizabeth was divided into 14 areas (in August 1940) where members of the CPS were to carry out patrols, instruct people on fire-fighting, first aid and rescue operations in the event of an air raid. But it soon dawned on the PECC that such a corps was an unnecessary expense and it was disbanded in January 1941.\textsuperscript{64} Although the majority of the city’s white inhabitants viewed the work of the CPS as a necessary wartime measure, certain segments of the Afrikaner community considered them to be merely tools of the United Party, out to suppress any opposition to its commitment to the war effort.\textsuperscript{65}

However, after a meeting was held in the city hall in March 1942, it was decided by the Council to re-establish the CPS in Port Elizabeth. The Civilian Guard, an adjunct to the CPS,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{62} NAR, SAP 391 2/4/47, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 11 June 1947.
\item \textsuperscript{63} NAR, SAP 341 1/22/41/5, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 16 June 1942.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Harradine, \textit{Chronicle}, p 221.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Wilken, ‘Port Elizabeth during the Second World War’, p 345.
\end{itemize}
was to co-operate closely with the depleted SAP. Its members, many of whom were ex-servicemen who had served during World War I, were sworn in as special constables. With the imposition of a black-out in the city, including Walmer and the northern area townships, from 1 August 1942, the work of the SAP was made doubly difficult during the hours of darkness, and the assistance of the Civilian Guard no doubt proved invaluable. It would appear that the patrols carried out by these men were sometimes quite informal with some men allowing their young children to accompany them whilst checking for improperly blacked-out windows.

A suggestion was made in a letter to the editor of the Eastern Province Herald that, in the more affluent areas like Mill Park, a curfew be imposed from 9 pm in the interests of public safety as too many ‘wandering and idle natives were enjoying the black-out’. The writer of this letter believed that the police and the Civilian Guard would have welcomed such a measure. Fortunately for everybody, except perhaps for the criminal class, the black-out was lifted on 23 August 1943. This was done once the government was satisfied that shipping off the coast of South Africa was secure, thereafter all ports were able to return to normality in terms of lighting and security arrangements.

With the War entering its final stage in Europe, a decision was made to terminate the services of the CPS in June 1944 while the Civilian Guard continued its work in support of the SAP. The Civilian Guard in Walmer was disbanded at the end of August 1945 after a spate of resignations from this body and the lack of volunteers to replace them.

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71 EPH, ‘C.P.S. is still necessary’, 20 Feb 1943.
72 NAR, SAP 341 1/22/41/5, Chief Area Cmdt, CPS to Director of CPS, 5 June 1945.
Organisational Developments during Post-War 1945

As from 1 August 1945, the police district of Port Elizabeth was reduced in size to include only eight police stations which fell within the municipal perimeters of Port Elizabeth and Walmer; beyond these limits, only Swartkops and Loerie were retained within this police district. Serving a more rural community, with a widely dispersed population, these two police stations were not open throughout the night, although Swartkops was soon to provide such a facility. The other six police stations serving No. 14 police district were Baakens Street, Korsten, Mount Road, New Brighton, New Law Courts and Walmer. These were all 24 hour police stations. A new police district, Number 21, was created with its headquarters in Uitenhage. All other police stations formally within the boundaries of police district Number 14 (Port Elizabeth) now fell under the authority of Uitenhage. Soon after the reorganisation of police districts had been effected, the new commissioner of the SAP, Brigadier R J Palmer (appointed 1 August 1945), paid the area a visit in September 1945 and expressed his satisfaction with the newly restructured police districts. Police commissioners rarely visited Port Elizabeth during the 1913-1956 period, and when they did, it was for special occasions or during times of emergency. The reasons for this lack of close contact with the various police divisions around the country remain largely unknown. Perhaps they had considerable confidence in their deputy commissioners to oversee the functional aspects of police districts on their behalf, or they preferred to remain at headquarters where they could keep contact with all divisions more easily whilst at the same time seeing to their considerable administrative workload.

Restructuring of No. 14 Police District: 1948

Not long after down-sizing No. 14 Police District, a decision to split the Port Elizabeth police district into two police areas or sub-districts, namely, Central Area and Northern Area, was taken by the police hierarchy in early 1947. There were a number of reasons why it was

73 Nongqai, Aug 1945, p 978.

74 Nongqai, Sept 1945, p 1 122.
considered necessary to change the administrative and organisational structure of policing in No. 14 Police District. Firstly, the population growth of the city was increasing at a faster rate than in previous years. It was found that the 1936 population of Port Elizabeth, including Walmer, had grown from about 112,000 to around 192,000 by 1946. From 1921 to 1936 the white population increased by 123 percent and that of the black population by 151 percent. Factors like drought, economic depression and limited access to arable land propelled more and more people into South Africa’s cities during the 1920s and 1930s. The urban African population in particular increased tremendously throughout the country: from 587,000 in 1921 to approximately 1.8 million in 1946; for the SAP, this meant greater numbers requiring policing, not only because of criminal behaviour but also for breaking the multifarious regulations governing segregation. Many were drawn to Port Elizabeth where industrial employment in the textile, footwear and motor industry was possible, particularly after World War II ended. The growth in industry, the increasing volume of shipping passing through the harbour, the subdivision of formerly large farms bordering on the city into small holdings, the development of new townships and so on, convinced the police authorities that a new administrative structure was required to combat the corresponding increase of all classes of crime in the district.

After the approval of the Minister of Justice was obtained, No. 14 Police District was divided into two sections, effective from 1 March 1948 (see Figure 4.1). The Central Area, approximately 48 square kilometres, comprised Baakens Street, Walmer and New Law Courts with area headquarters at Baakens Street. The total population of this police area was estimated at 81,000. Manpower available to police this new section comprised 234 white policemen and 46 black and coloured policemen. The Northern Area, about 1,090 square kilometres, consisted of the following police stations: Mount Road, Korsten, New Brighton, Swartkops and Loerie (Loerie was beyond the city limits and therefore classed as a rural

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75 NAR, SAP 395 9/11/47, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 24 April 1947.
station). The headquarters of this new police area was initially Mount Road but due to the shortage of office accommodation at this station, Korsten ultimately became the Northern

**Figure 4.1 Division of No. 14 Police District into two areas in 1948**

(Graphic Services Unit, Rhodes University)
Figure 4.1 Division of No. 14 Police District into two areas in 1948
(Graphic Services Unit, Rhodes University)
Area headquarters. Mount Road police station, which had replaced Baakens Street as the district headquarters in 1930 (see Chapter 5), nevertheless remained the overall headquarters of the SAP in the Port Elizabeth magisterial district.

The married quarters at Korsten police station were converted into offices and the two men who had previously occupied them were compelled to move into houses they already owned in the city. They were given six months to arrange for their tenants to move out. The CID offices for the area were housed in the old police quarters. Korsten police station was considered a more satisfactory location for the Northern Area headquarters as it was situated at the heart of the industrial area and was also closer to NBL. The population of this area was approximately 111 500. Manpower available to police the Northern Area stood at 102 whites and 78 black and coloured policemen in May 1947.

The decision to divide the Port Elizabeth police district into two sections also entailed changes to the administrative structure at the highest level: the District Commandant was given a senior Inspector to act as his deputy for a number of reasons. This deputy was authorized to act and convey instructions on the Commandant’s behalf whenever he happened to be absent. He was expected to carry out supervision of police work proper, such as the inspection of police stations, while the district commandant was dealing with public deputations, attending meetings, presiding over departmental trials, routine office correspondence, and so on. Sub-Inspectors, known as Area Officers, were appointed to take charge of the two police areas thus relieving the District Commandant and his deputy even further from some of the more mundane administrative duties involved in everyday policing. Each Area Officer was provided with a motor car, bought directly from the General Motors factory in Port Elizabeth, thus allowing them to maintain effective administrative control over each police station falling within their respective areas.

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78 NAR, SAP 395 9/11/47, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 12 March 1948.
A further repercussion of the No. 14 Police District split was the allocation of nine coloured policemen to the New Law Courts police station. This allocation was in some senses a direct result of the ‘own areas’ policing policy envisaged by the SAP (see Chapter 5) and finally implemented in October 1951; the first police station to be placed under the command of a black sergeant was in Zwelitsha, a township bordering on King William’s Town in the Eastern Cape. By 1952, police authorities in Port Elizabeth, aware of a fairly large number of coloured people living in the back streets and lanes of North End, decided to employ coloured policemen to police these people. Yet the system of ‘own areas’ policing remained largely fictitious as whites retained control over black policemen operating in their ‘own’ areas. The hope that public-police relations would improve under this system, as erroneously envisaged by Dippenaar, was negated by the arrogance and often brutal conduct of black and coloured policemen towards their ‘own’ people. In this sense, then, the ‘own areas’ policing strategy failed rather dismally in improving police-public relations.

Also, as a direct result of the reorganisation process, the Walmer coloured police establishment of three constables was increased by one second class sergeant and four constables. The mixed areas of Salisbury Park and Fairview apparently warranted this increase. Korsten, a heavily populated, ethnically mixed area, was policed by 25 coloured policemen (three NCOs and 22 constables) but due to the restructuring of the city’s police districts, the Korsten police contingent was increased to a total of 38 coloured policemen.

The PECC brought the matter of providing a police station in Schauderville to the attention of Lieutenant-Colonel J L Drummond, the District Commandant, in 1954. Overcrowding, damage to municipal property and anti-social behaviour were used as a ploy to foster the idea of establishing a police sub-station in the area. As on previous occasions, Drummond turned down this request for a number of reasons. Firstly, the majority of people resident in the area were law-abiding with serious crime being rare. Secondly, he believed that anti-social

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82 NAR, SAP 508 9/2/53, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 17 March 1953.
behaviour and hooliganism occurred mostly over weekends, and the police from Korsten had this sort of crime well under control. Thirdly, coloured constables patrolled Schauderville, and with access to motorised transport, they could easily attend to any emergencies in that area. The presence of a regular bus service between Schauderville and Korsten police station allowed for easy communication with the SAP as far as Drummond was concerned.

Impact of Political Unrest on Police Organisation after 1952
When increased political disorder became widespread throughout the country, notably in the wake of the ANC-inspired Defiance Campaign, the SAP hierarchy reacted by introducing a revised command structure in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town during 1953. The post of District Commandant, with the incumbent usually holding the rank of major, was now upgraded to that of a Lieutenant-Colonel in all the aforementioned cities. The rationale behind these changes in organisational structure at the divisional level was ostensibly to free district commandants from the more routine facets of management (inspecting police stations, etc) thus allowing them to concentrate more fully on matters of policy. In other words, they were expected to focus their full attention on combatting crime, dealing with the public, organising the effective distribution of manpower, enforcing petty apartheid laws, and so on. The central state also made changes to its legislation dealing with public (dis)order, and in 1953 passed the Public Safety Act and Criminal Law Amendment Act, thus providing the SAP with increased legal powers to combat any political unrest.

Further Restructuring of No. 14 Police District: 1955
Further reorganisation of policing structures took place when, in an attempt to spread the policing load more equitably between the Central Area and the Northern Area of the Port Elizabeth police district, the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division

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83 PER, 25/110, No. 5, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 28 Aug 1954.
84 CAR, PPE 1, 1/6/50, SAP Div Com, PE, Force Orders (Officers), No. 1 of 1953, 14 Jan 1953.
proposed in May 1954 that Mount Road police station be joined to the Central Area in exchange for the New Law Courts station which would be attached to the Northern Area.\textsuperscript{86}

At the same time, the New Law Courts police station was to replace Korsten as the headquarters of the Northern Area, but only after sufficient accommodation had been made available. The latter arrangement, ie the transference of headquarters, came into force on 1 April 1955.\textsuperscript{87}

There were a number of reasons why the change in police station allocation took place in the Port Elizabeth police district. Firstly, Central Area was carrying out twice the amount of work in terms of administration and crime control when compared to Northern Area. Baakens Street and New Law Courts were two of the busiest stations in the police district, and both fell within Central Area whereas Mount Road, a station regarded as being quiet, and Korsten, seen as fairly busy, formed part of Northern Area. The intention was to create a more balanced distribution of police stations by substituting a less busy one with a quieter one. Secondly, by making New Law Courts the headquarters of the Northern Area, closer liaison between the police and the legal fraternity, specifically magistrates and prosecutors, would be assured. Lastly, another reason why New Law Courts was preferred as the new headquarters over Korsten was that the latter station, while still serving as the Northern Areas headquarters, was situated in a less savoury area of Port Elizabeth, thus forcing white people living in more upmarket areas to go to Korsten if they needed to interview the Area officer.\textsuperscript{88} In other words, the SAP was ensuring that the white population was accorded the best service possible at the expense of other population groups.

**Creation of two police districts in Port Elizabeth: 1956**

The final reorganisation of policing which took place within the time frame of this study occurred when the SAP Commissioner, C I Rademeyer, suggested in January 1956 that the existing police district of Port Elizabeth be divided into two completely separate entities. He

\textsuperscript{86} NAR, SAP 395 9/11/47, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 22 May 1954.

\textsuperscript{87} NAR, SAP 395 9/11/47, Director of Public Works to Sect for Justice, 5 March 1955.

\textsuperscript{88} NAR, SAP 395 9/11/47, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 22 May 1954.
envisaged that Northern Area (to become No. 81 Police District) and Central Area (almost the

**Figure 4.2 Division of Port Elizabeth into two police districts in 1956:**

*No. 14 & No. 81*

(Graphics Services Unit, Rhodes University)
Figure 4.2 Division of Port Elizabeth into two police districts in 1956:
No. 14 & No. 81
(Graphic Services Unit, Rhodes University)
whole of No. 14 District) would remain virtually intact except that the area under the control of the New Law Courts police station would be retained by the existing Police District No. 14. The remainder of old Northern Area would go to the new Police District No. 81 (see Figure 4.2). The Deputy Commissioner in Grahamstown accepted this proposal even though he had no space available at the Korsten police station, the proposed headquarters, to accommodate the administrative staff of this new district. To overcome this obstacle, he suggested that the existing married quarters at Korsten be converted into offices. This was duly done with the approval of the SAP Commissioner and Korsten police station became the headquarters of the newly formed No. 81 Police District as from 1 April 1956, under the command of Captain J Joubert. Two officers, Lieutenants Jordaan and Slabbert, were appointed to assist him with the administration of this police district. Thus, the initial division of the Port Elizabeth police district into two areas in 1948, Central Area and Northern Area, paved the way for the complete separation of the afore-mentioned police areas into two distinct police districts by 1956, each with its own district commandant. The organisational structure of policing in Port Elizabeth had thus undergone considerable modification since 1913.

**CONCLUSION**

Since the organisation and administration of policing is a non-static, dynamic activity, further developments in this field obviously occurred after 1956. The role of the police became decidedly more important in safeguarding white domination as the 1960s ushered in a period of greater militancy by the opponents of apartheid. At the same time, the state dug in its heels, convinced of the necessity to preserve white minority rule at all costs and sure of the loyalty of its armed forces, namely, the Police Department and the South African Defence

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89 NAR, SAP 514 9/19/54, Telegram: SAP Com to Dep Com, CED, 10 Jan 1956.

90 NAR, SAP 514 9/19/54, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 12 Jan 1956.

91 *Nongqai*, Oct 1956, p 85. See also PER, No. 5, 25/110, District Cmdt to TC, PE, 23 March 1956 for a description of the exact dividing line between the two districts.
Greater involvement in the armed struggle against forces opposed to minority rule compelled the police authorities to review constantly their organisational structures. The organisation of policing since the inception of the SAP in 1913 had undergone constant evolution, and in urban areas like Port Elizabeth, reorganisation of police districts became increasingly influenced by segregationist thinking: policing focussed more on enforcing government policy rather than ordinary crime. The following chapter outlines the spatial organisation of policing in Port Elizabeth, and, in particular, the concordance of police districts with the racially separated townships and suburbs of the city.
CHAPTER 5

SPATIAL AND FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF POLICING IN PORT ELIZABETH’S POLICE DISTRICTS: 1913-1956

INTRODUCTION

The demarcation of police areas in Port Elizabeth was, from early on, based largely on existing magisterial districts which had been created during the colonial period for the express purpose of administering justice and collecting tax.\(^1\) When it became the norm to establish black locations on the periphery of South African cities during the early twentieth century, to physically separate black living areas from that of whites, the organisation of policing tended to follow this pattern. Thus, from the beginning of its existence in 1913, the SAP’s administrative network in Port Elizabeth was structured in such a way that police districts, wherever possible, complied with the prevailing political system of the day. There was virtually no alternative to this approach: the only police district which remained unaffected by the implementation of the Group Areas Act before the advent of democratic rule in 1994 was Walmer. The inhabitants of the adjacent township were never forced to vacate their homes even though the threat of forced removals hung over their heads for several decades. Those living in other ethnically mixed areas adjoining Walmer, like South End, Salisbury Park and Fairview, were not that fortunate. Had this Act been fully implemented, all police districts in the city would have dove-tailed neatly with racially exclusive areas.

Robinson has noted that Foucault’s analysis of the use of spatial strategies derives from his observation that in modern society, one of the keys to power over human beings is control over the territory or space in which they reside.\(^2\) For our purposes, this form of control over

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territory relies on the resources available to the state, and in the peripheral townships and suburbs of Port Elizabeth (See Figure 5.1), the police were central to this strategy during the

Figure 5.1 Port Elizabeth’s police stations, suburbs and townships, 1956
(Graphic Services Unit, Rhodes University)
Figure 5.1 Port Elizabeth’s police stations, suburbs and townships, 1956
(Graphic Services Unit, Rhodes University)
period under discussion. Whether or not the policies of segregation and apartheid were part of a grand design to be implemented by a highly organised state, or whether these policies were more like haphazard and un-coordinated responses to a fearful, minority white electorate, the SAP would have in any case been expected to enforce the laws of the land. For the ordinary policeman, fighting crime and enforcing white domination were synonymous.

Once a career with the SAP was embarked upon, both rural and urban spaces had to be patrolled with these two aspects in mind. This chapter thus aims to highlight some of the organisational problems facing the SAP within the various police districts of Port Elizabeth, such as manpower shortages, budget constraints and relations with the local state and the public at large. Structurally, the chapter will follow the division of Port Elizabeth into two main police areas, Central and Northern, as outlined in Chapter 4.

ORGANISATION OF POLICING IN CENTRAL AREA

Baakens Street Police District

Baakens Street police station (see Illustration 5.1), the oldest in Port Elizabeth and situated in the heart of the CBD, was responsible for policing centrally situated suburbs such as Humewood, South End, Central, Park Drive and Mill Park. After 1927, the newly established suburb of Summerstrand, just south of Humewood, also fell within this police district. An analysis of the social profile of this police district reveals considerable socio-economic diversity, ranging from the generally poor, mixed suburb of South End to the wealthy white suburbs of Mill Park and Summerstrand. Port Elizabeth’s industrialists, merchants and professional people made their homes in the latter upper income areas. Central, containing some of the oldest houses in the city, comprised the CBD and adjoining suburban areas which housed mainly working and middle class whites.

Since its inception in the latter years of the nineteenth century, South End was inhabited by a cross-section of peoples, namely, Europeans, Malays, Chinese, Xhosa, Greeks, to name but a few. A diversity of languages, cultures and religions made South End cosmopolitan in character from early days. This amalgam of diverse peoples evolved slowly over the course

of time; it was the forceful implementation of the Group Areas Act during the 1960s and 1970s which ended the unique character of South End, which was in many ways similar to District Six in Cape Town. As the twentieth century wore on, the suburb became more crowded and congested with narrow, dark streets making it difficult for police to patrol the area effectively at night. The prevalence of poverty led to the dilapidation of many properties and an increase in crime although the high level of crime and hooliganism, seen as synonymous with South End by whites at the time, has been disputed by Agherdien, et al.⁴ Although crime and anti-social behaviour did exist, Agherdien argues that it was manageable and generally under control.

As the area under its control was considered too large for one section sergeant to supervise effectively, it was proposed under the reorganization scheme of 1945-6 that the Baakens Street police district be divided into two sections, with each section falling under a sergeant. According to the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division, the steep slopes of Central and South End made it difficult for a single sergeant to supervise all beats properly on foot; public transport or the use of a bicycle was considered impractical, hence the need for two section sergeants.⁵ Additional constables were also allocated to this police district because of the rapidly increasing population, mainly due to the expansion of Humewood and Summerstrand along the southern shoreline. Once the SAP began to use motorised patrols during the 1950s the problems of district size and topography became secondary, but at a cost: ‘distance’ policing (from a motor vehicle) severed the close links between police and community, although it could be argued that the relationship between the oppressed and law enforcement officers was in any case never that co-operative or intimate (See Chapter 7).

Because South End was inhabited by mainly coloured people, the SAP remained true to its stated mission of policing communities with policemen of their own population group by calling for more coloured policemen to patrol this area. Apparently many of the coloured people living in their allotted areas of Port Elizabeth were generally opposed to the policing

⁴ Agherdien, South End, p 84.

⁵ National Archives Repository, Pretoria (NAR), SAP 374 9/22/45, SAP Dep Com, Cape Eastern Division (CED) to SAP Com, 11 June 1946.
of their areas by black policemen. The Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern Division thus argued that the number of black policemen in the city was sufficient for at least several more years but the need to increase the coloured police contingent was far more pressing. Because the Lansdown Commission of 1937 had recommended that those areas with predominantly coloured people be policed by their own kind, Commissioner de Villiers had applied this policy with diligence but, significantly, he believed that the SAP was not yet ready to appoint policemen of colour to command police stations within such areas.

In terms of administration during the late 1940s, the Baakens Street police station was described by the SAP Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division as a ‘difficult station’. He ascribed the difficulty to the presence of ‘rowdy Coloured elements [mostly resident in South End] and trouble making sailors from visiting ships’ which often called for intensive police action in the area. It would also appear that the supervision of senior police officers over the lower ranked policemen was not quite up to standard. This in turn had a seemingly negative effect on the general efficiency of the Baakens Street police contingent. Without sufficient resources at their disposal, it is not surprising that the SAP in this police district struggled to carry out their tasks efficiently.

It comes as no surprise that in August 1955 the SAP Commissioner, C I Rademeyer, was asked to increase police numbers at Baakens Street police station by an extra 21 men. Besides having to patrol the southern suburbs, the harbour and railways area also required a police presence. Having St George’s Park in Park Drive under its control also meant that the SAP were responsible for providing extra manpower whenever major sporting and cultural events took place. The existing manpower resources were considered insufficient. Besides a general shortage of men, it was also apparent to the local police authorities that Baakens Street needed a captain to be stationed permanently in this police area to deal with shipping and airport matters, and also to handle any queries linked to the holiday season as

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6 NAR, SAP 374 9/22/45, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 11 June 1946.
8 NAR, SAP 410 9/12/48, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 28 Sept 1949.
the beachfront fell under this station’s authority. Because South End remained a troublesome area for the police well into the 1950s, an officer with a higher rank than that of lieutenant was considered necessary to deal with both crime and increasing political unrest. Thus, instead of a policeman holding this rank remaining at district headquarters in Mount Road, it was argued that such a person be permanently based at the Baakens Street police station but this never happened.

Walmer Police District
Throughout the 1913-1956 period Walmer remained a separate village from Port Elizabeth, with its own town council and municipality. Walmer, as a separate municipality, ceased to exist at the end of 1966 when it was amalgamated with Port Elizabeth. During the earlier part of the twentieth century, Walmer comprised medium-sized and large suburban dwellings, some of which had large grounds owned by the wealthy. On the outskirts of the town, adjacent to the Baakens River valley and bordering on present-day Charlo in the west, small holdings existed where dairy herds were kept; livestock was allowed to graze on the commonage. As the township expanded over the years, a number of black and coloured locations sprang up on its outskirts, notably Walmer location, Salisbury Park, Fairview and Willowdene. These peripheral areas were all placed under the jurisdiction of the Walmer police station, and, until the advent of motorised patrols, they were policed by men on horseback. Of the above-mentioned places, only Walmer Location was a literal stone’s throw away from suburban Walmer.

At the beginning of 1913 the SAP in Walmer were housed in three separate localities, ie, foot policemen, mounted men and the stables for horses were all on different properties. This arrangement was considered most unsatisfactory by the District Commandant of Port Elizabeth, Inspector R F Neale-Shute, and in collaboration with the mayor of Walmer who was more than willing to assist the police in finding more suitable accommodation, a site was identified on Buffelsfontein Road not far from the Walmer Location. The new police

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9 NAR, SAP 514 9/19/54, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 5 May 1956.
10 F A Longworth, Walmer (Port Elizabeth, 1997), pp 76 and 85.
quarters were on the Walmer Location side of Buffelsfontein Road, facing Eighth Avenue. Hartigan, the acting Deputy Commissioner of the Eastern Cape police division, made it clear that the SAP would pay no extra for the new accommodation.\textsuperscript{11} The plan was approved provided the SAP could obtain a five year lease at £8 per month payable to the Walmer Municipality which owned the property.\textsuperscript{12} It was the responsibility of the Public Works Department to pay the necessary rental on all property hired by the SAP.

The new police premises, built and completed by August 1914 at the expense of the Walmer Municipality, comprised a charge office, accommodation for the policeman in charge of the station (a corporal) and stabling for horses. Although the NCO and the horses were now housed in one central venue, the lack of space still left unmarried constables scattered around the suburb in private accommodation. This state of affairs often resulted in the policeman on night duty having to go some distance to find assistance when emergencies arose. The seemingly short-sighted and inadequate accommodation planning by the SAP was in fact caused by a lapse of the existing lease on the Walmer property housing the foot policemen at the end of April 1913.

Before long, these new barracks were considered inadequate and by 1918 additions were proposed by the new Port Elizabeth District Commandant, Inspector H Halse, who replaced Neale-Shute in 1917. Prior to committing itself to the implementation of any alterations, the Walmer Town Council proposed that the issue of inadequate policing be raised as crime in the area, mainly domestic robberies, seemed to have escalated.\textsuperscript{13} Five white and one black policeman was considered inadequate for a population of approximately 1 700 people; the mayor believed that the Council should request at least another four men for the Walmer area. It would appear that the Walmer Council hoped to pressurise the SAP into providing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} NAR, PWD 3168 2/9869 (1), Acting SAP Dep Com, CED to Sect SAP, 21 Jan 1914.
\item \textsuperscript{12} NAR, PWD 3168 2/9869 (1), Sect for Public Works to District Engineer, Public Works, 10 Feb 1914.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Port Elizabeth Archives Repository, Port Elizabeth (PER), Minutes of Walmer Town Council, 9 Jan 1918, p 414.
\end{itemize}
more men in return for improved accommodation. This plan failed, leaving the police force with inadequate accommodation for its men and the Walmer Town Council without its extra policemen. Attempts by the SAP to buy the existing police quarters in Buffelsfontein were rejected by the Walmer Town Council, thus thwarting any forward-planning envisaged by the SAP’s administrative sector. If anything, the whole episode served only to make the local District Commandant even more frustrated with the representatives of the local state.\(^{14}\)

The Walmer Town Council eventually achieved its goal of enlarging the existing police establishment in late 1925 when it persuaded the police authorities to agree in principle to increasing the number of personnel but the stumbling block remained the lack of suitable accommodation.\(^{15}\) The existing police quarters were by January 1923 already proving inadequate and it was decided by the SAP authorities to accept the Walmer Council’s offer of building an additional two rooms to house two white constables and two black constables. The white constables were to get a bathroom - no such amenity was provided for black policemen.\(^{16}\) Part of the increased costs for rental payable to the Council by the PWD upon completion of the additions was to be offset by charging the two constables a rent of £9 each per annum.\(^{17}\) All single constables serving with the SAP were compelled to live in quarters provided by the state at their respective police posts. Only when such accommodation was non-existent were they allowed to live in privately arranged quarters.\(^{18}\)

It took another two years before the government approved of the plan to house extra personnel at the Walmer police station. By this time, besides the building of an extra

\(^{14}\) PER, Walmer Town Council Minutes, No. 8, 5 May 1920.

\(^{15}\) The Walmer Council had sent two representatives to the sitting of the Te Water Commission in Port Elizabeth in December 1925, and they had given evidence to the effect that Walmer was ‘insufficiently policed’. See PER, Walmer Council Minutes, No. 9, Mayor’s Minute, 8 Sept 1926.

\(^{16}\) PER, Walmer Town Council Minutes, No. 9, 14 Jan 1925.

\(^{17}\) NAR, PWD 3168 2/9869 (1), Acting SAP Com to Sect for Public Works, 22 Jan 1923.

\(^{18}\) NAR, JUS 162, 1/269/12, Supplement to the Government Gazette, SAP Regulations, para 109.
dormitory to house at least three white constables, an additional room was to be built for four black policemen. The attendant ‘native quarters’ had to be erected at the rear of the main building, nearer the stables than the main building, thus appropriately out of sight and in keeping with the prevailing racial attitude of the period. Police authorities believed firmly that the police in Walmer had to be housed in one centralised point as this would improve their efficiency in policing the town.

Once building plans had been approved and after police headquarters had authorised the revamping of the existing police quarters, the Walmer Town Council agreed to fund the necessary structural changes. Improvements like the installation of electric lights to replace the old paraffin method of lighting the place were also made. In time a mess facility was provided for the police staff at this police station. Capital expenditure and other costs incurred were to be recouped by charging the central state an appropriate rental, hence the need for police headquarters to approve the renovations. The SAP eventually took occupation of the revamped barracks at the end of November 1926. The Walmer Council expressed its approval of the enlarged police quarters as the police strength in Walmer was duly increased, permitting the municipal area to be better patrolled. Sergeant Fourie was the station commander at this time and was apparently well respected by Walmer Town Councillors due to his hard work and reliability as an officer of the law.

Although the Walmer police contingent had been marginally increased in the late 1920s, the

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19 NAR, PWD 3168 2/9869 (1), SAP Com to Sect for Public Works, 22 Sept 1925. The original plan of the alterations showed the ‘native’ quarters to be too close to the married quarters, and upon the insistence of Bredell, the acting SAP Commissioner, they were moved closer to the stables.

20 NAR, PWD 3168, 2/9869 (1), Acting SAP Com to Sect for Public Works, 24 Jan 1925.

21 PER, Walmer Council Minutes, No. 9, Minutes of Finance, Board of Works and General Purposes Committee, 23 Feb 1926.

22 PER, Walmer Council Minutes, No. 9, Mayor’s Minute, 14 Sept 1927.

23 PER, Walmer Council Minutes, No. 9, 5 May 1926.
size of the police district, and the rapidly expanding population in the village itself and its peripheral areas like Willowdene and Fairview, made it almost inevitable that the ‘thin blue line’ would be stretched to breaking point. The shortage of policemen in Walmer was highlighted by Cllr Wild in February 1934 who found that, upon requiring the services of a policeman at the Walmer police station, no help could be provided as only one policeman was on duty at the time. He suggested that the District Commandant be informed of this shortfall in personnel. Upon hearing from Chief Inspector G Lloyd Lister that arrangements could be made with police headquarters in Port Elizabeth for extra men when required, Wild professed his satisfaction with this system. Nevertheless, having only one man at the station when others were out on patrol does seem to suggest that police numbers in Walmer were hardly adequate for a growing suburb and an adjacent black township.

After the end of the Second World War, the continually expanding boundaries of Walmer, Lorraine, Mount Pleasant (white areas) and Salisbury Park, Fairview and the Walmer Location (coloured and black areas) meant that an increased police presence was required. Walmer police station was expected to patrol these all areas so any additional policemen posted to the station were welcomed with open arms by the station commander. For this reason constant requests were also made to Pretoria to increase the police establishment at Walmer police station. Besides Walmer itself needing more men to patrol it properly, the growing townships of Fairview, Mount Pleasant and Salisbury Park also required greater police attention which the existing contingent was unable to provide. Only one member of the CID was attached to this station, a detective sergeant, and it was felt that he needed a detective constable to assist him in criminal investigation work. Due to the growth of the population being policed by the Walmer station, the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern Police Division proposed in 1947 that Walmer be given a head constable, as opposed to a sergeant, to take charge of the police station. To strengthen his case, the Deputy Commissioner pointed out that the elite of Port Elizabeth dwelt in Walmer hence the need to upgrade its status.

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24 PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, No. 14, 14 March 1934.
After the SAP had identified and purchased a suitable site for its new, state-owned quarters in Main Road, building went ahead and by 1 September 1952, the police station was officially occupied by the Walmer police contingent. In the meantime, the growth of Walmer and surrounding areas also saw the local police authorities requesting more men to deal with ordinary crime in this police area during 1955. Walmer, like the various police districts of Port Elizabeth, bemoaned the shortage of policemen, a constant refrain which came from the general public and the local police authorities themselves throughout the 1913-1956 period.

**Mount Road Police District**

One of the highlights of the 1930s for the SAP in Port Elizabeth was the building of the new two-storey police barracks in Mount Road. Work on the project was completed in January 1931 and the impressive new buildings were officially opened by the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern Police District, Lieutenant-Colonel M Jackson, with the Port Elizabeth mayor, Cllr H J Millard, and other local government dignitaries as guests (see Illustration 5.1 below). The move to Mount Road had been contemplated in late 1924 when the SAP had to begin making plans to vacate the Baakens Street quarters to make way for other government departments and to increase Court accommodation. The government bought the land from the PECC in 1927 for £500.

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26 PER, Walmer Council Minutes, No. 31, 22 Dec 1952.

27 NAR, SAP 514 9/19/54, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 22 Aug 1955.

28 *The Nongqai Illustrated Monthly Magazine of the South African Police*, Feb 1931, p 116. These attractive new buildings were demolished in 1985 and replaced by monolithic high rise buildings, surrounded by high security walls - the SAP was obviously gearing up for an increased assault on its properties countrywide as the armed struggle against minority rule intensified.

29 NAR, PWD 3131 3/9616, SAP Com to Sect for Public Works, 6 Aug 1924.

30 NAR, PWD 3131 3/9616, SAP Com to Sect for Public Works, 7 Feb 1927.
Illustration 5.1 Official opening of Mount Road Police Station, 1930
(The Nongqal)

AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW POLICE BARRACKS AT FORT ELIZABETH.

The location of the new barracks, about three kilometres from the centre of town, was considered to be more central due to the growth of Port Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{31} It was also within close proximity to Cape Road, one of the main arterial routes of the city served by trams. The new headquarters had sufficient space for the building of recreational facilities such as fields and tennis courts which the previous site lacked. This new building became the district headquarters of the SAP in place of the Baakens Street station. Only the CID retained its main administrative quarters at the latter station. The charge office at Baakens Street also remained open together with lock-up facilities.\textsuperscript{32}

The new Mount Road headquarters housed 60 single white policemen in the new building. Each policeman was provided with his own cubicle considered ‘roomy and well appointed’ while bathroom facilities remained communal.\textsuperscript{33} No accommodation was provided for married staff. Other facilities included garages for police vehicles (four cars), cells, stables and a workshop for repairing and servicing police vehicles used in the local police district. Accommodation for 22 black police constables was provided at the back of the main building, in separate quarters suitably segregated from the white police fraternity. This was consistent with black police accommodation at the Walmer police station where black policemen were also housed out of site of the general public and their white colleagues.

The whole Port Elizabeth police district was formally administered from Mount Road where all officers were stationed, except for one Sub-Inspector based at Baakens Street. By dividing the Baakens Street police district into two areas, a more even distribution of officers was attained which allowed for better control. This particular system of administration had proved successful on the Witwatersrand and in Durban before being inaugurated in Port Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{34} Although divided into two police sub-districts, the main overall headquarters

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{31} NAR, PWD 3131 3/9616, District Engineer, PE to Sect for Public Works, 13 May 1925.
  \item \textsuperscript{32} Nongqai, May 1930, p 367.
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Nongqai, Feb 1931, p 115.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} NAR, SAP 395 9/11/47, SAP Com to Minister of Justice, 2 May 1947.
\end{itemize}
remained at Mount Road. The Divisional Police Garage also retained its offices at this station. As nearly all new vehicles required by the SAP for the Union as a whole came from the Port Elizabeth motor manufacturers, most of the clerical work associated with the distribution of these vehicles was done at Mount Road. The majority of police vehicles needing a service or repairs in use in the Eastern Province were also sent to this venue. Mount Road police station serviced a large and growing white suburban population during the late 1940s. The fairly new suburbs of Newton Park, Westview, Cotswold and Perridgevale, and the imminent development of the upmarket suburb of Glendinningvale, adjoining the Mount Road police station, were all fast-growing and the local police authorities had already experienced public agitation for the building of a new police station in Newton Park in previous years, and for this reason, they wanted the number of constables allocated to Mount Road considerably increased to patrol these suburbs. In this way public demand for a new police station could be averted. If the extra men were allocated to Mount Road, argued the SAP Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern Police Division in his annual request for an increased establishment, it would also mean that the extra men required for a new police station would already be on hand. The Deputy Commissioner was in a way always caught, on the one hand, between the demands of the public and the local authorities for more policemen, and on the other, the intransigence of either the SAP Commissioner or the Justice Department who, for the most part, remained unwilling to spend any extra money on increasing the police force numerically. In other words, it was a case of national budget constraints being pitted against the public’s demand for more law and order personnel.

Mount Road police district required 24 additional men to maintain effective policing over an area comprising 10 suburbs besides a large rural area comprising 86 farms. The Cape Eastern police hierarchy believed that the increase in burglaries and general theft in this area during the 1950s required far more men to keep this sort of crime under control. Once again,

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37 NAR, SAP 514 9/19/54, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 22 Aug 1955.
public pressure compelled the local police to canvass for more men, and with the increase in political unrest in the black townships, the call by whites for more police protection became increasingly vocal. Being the headquarters of the SAP in Port Elizabeth, Mount Road police station was expected to react favourably to such calls. With a mainly English-speaking area under its control, even in the newer middle income suburbs like Newton Park where Afrikaners were beginning to make inroads, and a press which was quick to publish any complaints aired by this sector of the city’s population, Mount Road police were bombarded by constant public pressure.

ORGANISATION OF POLICING IN NORTHERN AREA

New Brighton Police District

The establishment of New Brighton in 1903 as a location exclusively for blacks on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth, about eight kilometres north of the CBD, arose as a result of the removal of a number of location sites within the municipal boundaries of the city. The administration of this new township was placed in the hands of the Cape government. Although urban black locations such as NBL were created to provide housing for growing black populations within or near municipal limits, they also served as ‘sites for manipulation, domination and control’. The eviction and forced removal of location dwellers residing within the municipal boundary to NBL was handled by the city’s police force under the direct orders of the local Civil Commissioner and Magistrate. From very early on, then, the inhabitants of NBL encountered an aggressive, coercive form of policing although they may have been familiar with this form of policing even before moving to the township. The use of force was to be expected as most inner city location dwellers were opposed to the move, many in fact chose to live in squalor in Korsten where they had greater freedom of movement and closer access to places of work. Residents of Ndabeni location in Cape Town endured

38 Interview with Mrs J Blignaut, Port Elizabeth, 5 March 1999. Mrs Blignaut remembers that while growing up in Newton Park during the late 1940s and early 1950s, Afrikaner families were far and few between, and easily recognisable because their children were always barefoot.


similar experiences between 1927 and 1936 when they were expected to relocate to Langa township: they preferred the older, more rundown township to the new one which was situated much further away from the CBD and would therefore entail increased transportation costs.\textsuperscript{41}

The NBL population, since its inception, comprised an ethnic and linguistic mix, although heavily weighted in favour of the Xhosa-speaking community (59.8 percent). The rest were Mfengu (28 percent), Basuto (4.6 percent), coloured (6 percent) and others, which included a few whites (1.6 percent). The population as a whole in 1938 had less than 19 percent classified as ‘single’ which indicates that the location had the family as its basic social unit, making it a comparatively stable urban community in the pre-war years.\textsuperscript{42} For the SAP, a stable, homogeneous group of people living in a confined, highly controlled area meant less crime and social disorder with which to contend. Linked to this was the highly developed sense of community which ensured that those experiencing financial difficulties during periods of economic depression were provided for by family, friends and neighbours.\textsuperscript{43} In the years before the outbreak of political unrest during the 1950s, it is not surprising that NBL police district was never considered a ‘difficult’ area by police authorities, unlike Korsten and South End. Nevertheless, as time passed, NBL became more crowded, environmentally unhealthy and saddled with aging buildings and a deteriorating infra- and social structure, crime and violence increased at a comparable rate.

The maintenance of law and order within NBL was, from the outset, essentially the responsibility of the Location Superintendent and his black constables. The SAP and their colonial predecessors in Port Elizabeth had to restrict their activities in NBL to purely criminal investigation work; the only other time they entered the location was when specifically requested to do so by the Superintendent. NBL residents were therefore policed more closely by the Superintendent and his black policemen, who implemented innumerable

\textsuperscript{41} M Musemwa, ‘Aspects of the Social and Political History of Langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948’ (MA, University of Cape Town, 1993), p 44.

\textsuperscript{42} Baines, ‘History of New Brighton’, p 152.

\textsuperscript{43} Baines, ‘History of New Brighton’, p 154.
laws which governed their everyday lives, than by the SAP. But problems relating to a dual system of policing did exist, and such problems often led to tension between the SAP leadership and the Superintendent.

The complaints of white traders based in NBL about the loss of income to unlicensed black hawkers in December 1918 brought the whole issue of dual policing in the township to the fore. The Superintendent of NBL, E Grattan, expressed his concern that the principle of single control of the NAD over the administration of the location was being undermined. The reason for his reaction was the by-passing of his office by the SAP, specifically the CID, in its search for the names of the unlicensed hawkers. What really seemed to rile him was the fact that the detective instructed to follow up the matter had planned to get the names of the offenders from the white traders in NBL and not from him.\(^\text{44}\) It rankled that after 10 years, his office had seemingly been ignored even though the principle of single control had been approved by the Native Affairs Department. It appeared to Grattan that the SAP was attempting to assert its rights to interfere in purely location matters when its mandate was limited to investigating purely criminal activities. This friction between the SAP and Grattan seems to have been caused by the attestation of the location constables to the SAP in 1918. It also caused a certain amount of dissatisfaction within the ranks of NBL inhabitants.\(^\text{45}\)

As far as Inspector H Halse, the District Commandant, was concerned, the SAP were not in any way attempting to interfere with the maintenance of normal law and order in the township which was the responsibility of the Superintendent. In his view, the SAP definitely had no ulterior motive, as implied by Grattan, in carrying out the illegal hawking investigation.\(^\text{46}\) What concerned the local magistrate was that unauthorised SAP activities in NBL could have certain negative repercussions on the administration of the township. Dual police control would only serve to complicate and weaken the existing, well-managed system of control prevailing in the township. G A Godley, the acting Under Secretary for Native Affairs,

\(^{44}\) NAR, NTS 293 968/18/F756, Supt of NBL to Magt, PE, 7 Jan 1919.


\(^{46}\) NAR, NTS 293 968/18/F756, SAP District Cmdt, PE to Magt, PE, 24 Jan 1919.
believed that the system of attested black constables of the SAP being seconded to the Department of Native Affairs to police the townships of the country was functioning satisfactorily and should remain in force.\footnote{NAR, NTS 293 968/18/F756, Acting Under Sect for Native Affairs to Magt, PE, 19 Feb 1919.} Thus it would appear that the latter expected the single system of police control in NBL to continue, as elsewhere in the Union, with the Superintendent retaining administrative control over the location police. These black policemen nevertheless came under the control of the local district commandant for the purposes of pay, clothing and discipline in terms of the Police Act.

This is exactly what Grattan, the Superintendent, had hoped to achieve. He was totally opposed to the prospect of dual police control in NBL where the SAP and municipal officials like himself would have to co-operate in all policing matters. He reasoned that policing in white areas was different in nature from that of black townships: the latter area involved policing of a more intimate nature where location police were in a better position to gather information and gossip than the SAP.\footnote{Cape Archives Repository, Cape Town (CAR), 3/PEZ 1/1276, Memo by Supt, NBL, 18 Sept 1922.} Such useful information, often gleaned surreptitiously, was of considerable use to any Superintendent and would not otherwise come to his notice if only the SAP policed the township. Certainly a valid point if one wishes to have maximum control over a particular group of people in an oppressive society; the argument also holds water when one considers the overall negative public image of the SAP in the black community at the time.

His final contention against a system of dual police management in NBL revolved around the matter of control. What would the dividing line be between the Superintendent and the most senior police official in the township? If recurrent complaints about the SAP were brought to the Superintendent’s attention, what would that person do? He could either ignore the complaints and thus forfeit the confidence of the township residents or he could investigate the complaints and end up facing a conflict situation with the police. Either way, the authority of the municipal officials could be undermined by an outside body like the SAP, and
this Grattan could not accept. Because he foresaw problems in a system of dual control, and because he believed that the Superintendent should have virtually total power over his charges, i.e. the township residents, Grattan maintained that administrative and police work in a township could not be separated.\textsuperscript{49}

After the PEM assumed responsibility for the administration of New Brighton Location on 1 August 1923, due to the central government’s decision to hand over control of urban blacks to local authorities, it also took over the policing of the township. The task of criminal investigation remained in the hands of the SAP but headmen were expected to continue maintaining ‘discipline and good order’ in the location.\textsuperscript{50} Headmen, usually traditional chiefs or councillors elected by those residing in colonially-inspired rural locations during the nineteenth century, had been used as ‘political communicators’ and for the maintenance of law and order by white administrators, such as magistrates, from very early on in their history.\textsuperscript{51} This system was, therefore, easily transplanted into urban locations such as NBL during the twentieth century.

Mr A Bain, the local magistrate, believed it was up to the Council to ensure that relations between the SAP and municipal officials remained cordial at all times when it came to policing NBL.\textsuperscript{52} Government-owned police equipment (handcuffs, lanterns, whistles, etc) and clothing were supposed to be withdrawn from these headmen, previously employed by the NAD, in August 1923 but due to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary equipment at short notice, the PEM was able to purchase the items still being used by the NBL police from the SAP.\textsuperscript{53} Thereafter it was up to the PEM to pay, equip and clothe them. The Superintendent of NBL was placed in charge of these location police.

\textsuperscript{49} CAR, 3/PEZ 1/1276, Memo by NBL Supt, 18 Sept 1922.
\textsuperscript{50} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/674, Sect for Native Affairs to TC, PE, 20 Jan 1923.
\textsuperscript{52} CAR, 3/PEZ 1/1276, Magt, PE to TC, PE, 18 Sept 1922.
\textsuperscript{53} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/725, TC, PE to District Cmdt, 21 March 1924.
Thus, the local state, by taking over policing responsibilities in NBL, also assumed all the expenses which accompanied such an enterprise. It did this in order to have ‘undivided control over all persons operating in the Location which ... would not have been possible had the Police been under an independent authority.’ Unfortunately for the PEM, it did not ensure that all fines, bail fees, etc obtainable from policing operations were paid into location funds: these sources of revenue were forfeited to central government. It thus forfeited to the central government all these sources of revenue. It was this factor which was to later make the Council reconsider its role in policing NBL, ultimately leading to the SAP resuming full police control of the township in 1927.

At the beginning of 1923 there were 13 black constables and one black sergeant serving as location police in NBL. Six constables served as headmen, their main duty being administrative, that is, ensuring that all residents under their particular authority paid their rent expeditiously, ensuring that their respective wards were kept clean, that all residents living within their wards had identification cards, etc. The remaining seven, together with the sergeant, carried out work which was more police-orientated in nature. Once the PECC took over the running of the township, however, the SAP Commissioner made it quite clear that his complement of black policemen in Port Elizabeth was complete, and that he no longer required the services of any of the location police. Should the services of the SAP be required at any time in NBL, then all the Superintendent had to do was to call upon it when required.

The PECC recruited W Stimpson to take charge of the NBL police as a sergeant from 1 February 1924. Stimpson had served with the SAP for 12 years, of which the last few had

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54 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, Memo by TC, PE for NAC, 2 April 1927.
55 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/1276, Memo by NBL Supt, 5 Sept 1922.
56 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/674, Supt, NBL to TC, PE, 25 Feb 1923.
57 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/674, SAP Com to Sect for Native Affairs, 10 April 1923.
been spent in Standerton as a station commander so his past experience made him the ideal candidate for the job.\textsuperscript{59} The black policemen formerly employed by the Department of Native Affairs retained their existing conditions and terms of employment after the Port Elizabeth municipality took over the administration of NBL. Their pay, equivalent to that paid to SAP members, ranged from £50 during the first year and increased to £75 per annum after 10 years service.\textsuperscript{60} Besides having to pay for wages, uniforms, equipment and the like for its location police, the PEM had to also bear the costs of feeding any prisoners held by its police force until such time that they were placed in SAP custody. Any female searchers needed to check on female prisoners also had to be paid for by the local authority, thus a further financial burden was passed on to local authorities by the central state.\textsuperscript{61}

A general shortage of policemen in the SAP as a whole existed during the late twenties. There was also a shortfall being experienced in the policing staff of NBL; the Superintendent, W G Bellairs, who had replaced Grattan, believed that three more black location policemen were needed to assist the existing 12 men in policing the township. In August 1925 he requested that Sergeant Stimpson, who remained the only white policeman, be given a black corporal to take charge of the black constables serving in NBL.\textsuperscript{62} His request was acceded to.

Besides paying for and having the responsibility of controlling the location police, the PEM also had to cater for any prisoners held in the township lockup until they were transferred into SAP custody. The Superintendent of NBL raised this issue in September 1926 when he questioned the government’s right to all bail monies and fines procured on its behalf by the local authorities. He argued that such monies should be added to the coffers of the local

\textsuperscript{59} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/702, Stimpson to TC, PE, 30 July 1923.

\textsuperscript{60} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/674, Supt of NBL to Magt, PE, 24 April 1923.

\textsuperscript{61} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/725, SAP District Cmdt to Magt, PE, 21 March 1924.

\textsuperscript{62} CAR, 3/PEZ 1/2/1/30, Minutes of Finance, Town Lands and General Purposes Committee, 25 Aug 1925.
municipality as it carried out all the work which secured this revenue. The Native Affairs Committee of the PECC resolved that the Town Clerk contact the Justice Ministry to remedy this problem.

In time the Council became more and more nettled that it was bearing all the costs of maintaining law and order in NBL and it soon began seeking legal ways of either recouping lost revenue or getting the government to assume total responsibility for policing the township. When the Council assumed control of NBL in 1923, it was with the understanding that the police would carry out normal civil policing in the area, but in cooperation with the location authorities to ensure that relations between the two remained harmonious. Within three years, although relations between the SAP and the PECC remained cordial, the same could not be said about relations with the central government when it came to the issue of expenditure in the arena of law and order in NBL.

Early in 1927, once it had established that it was under no legal obligation to police NBL, the PECC claimed a £4 971 refund from the Department of Justice for policing the township since 1923. Not surprisingly, the government refused to reimburse the PEM for these expenses. The matter of the SAP policing NBL was taken further by the chairman of the NAC, Cllr T C White, who promised to interview the Minister of Native Affairs on his next visit to Cape Town. What the PECC wanted was the same arrangement apparently in vogue in all other black locations throughout the Union: the SAP was to carry out all policing functions and not the local municipal authorities.

In Cape Town, Cllr White met with the Secretaries for Justice and Native Affairs. They confirmed that the responsibility for policing NBL rested firmly with the SAP. Still
concerned about latent problems associated with dual control of black townships, White met with the Superintendent of the Cape Town location, Mr Cook. The latter assured him that no friction existed between the SAP and himself as their respective duties did not clash. Cook said he dealt with administrative matters such as the payment of rent, while the police confined themselves to the prevention of crime, the control and implementation of laws pertaining to traditional African beer, and so on.  

On the strength of Cllr White’s findings, the PECC duly informed the Department of Justice, via the local magistrate, that it planned to cease municipal policing of NBL as from 31 August 1927. The headmen who carried out non-police work were retained on the payroll of the PEM. Once this arrangement had been ratified the eight existing location police, excluding Sergeant Stimpson, were informed in June 1927 that their services were to be terminated on 31 August. These municipal police were all advised in June of their impending discharge but the services of Corporal S Njokweni were retained: it was his task to continue the detection of illegal beer-brewing in NBL. Sergeant Stimpson, whose tenure as municipal policeman came to an end with these developments, was offered the position of Town Ranger at £20 per month. The black location police appealed, through the auspices of the NBL Superintendent, to the Town Clerk to request that the SAP absorb them into its ranks as policemen. Even though the Town Clerk passed on their appeal to the local magistrate, the SAP did not assimilate them.

The SAP duly resumed the policing of NBL officially on 1 September 1927. Although the

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68 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, TC White to TC, PE, 23 April 1927.
69 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/2/1/33, Minutes of NAC, 6 May 1927.
70 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/2/1/34, Minutes of Finance, Town Lands and General Purposes Committee, 30 Sept 1927. The City Engineer suggested that the main duties of the town ranger encompass the following: keeping a check on the removal of sand and gravel from pits controlled by the council, controlling indiscriminate dumping of refuse and dealing with stray animals and the like.
71 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, TC, PE to Magt, PE, 5 July 1927.
72 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/2/1/33, Minutes of NAC, 9 Sept 1927.
PECC was able to save money by relinquishing control of law and order in NBL, it sacrificed a certain amount of autonomy in its overall control of location residents by allowing the SAP to move in - the Superintendent could no longer manage police affairs to his own satisfaction.\(^{73}\) The police detachment sent to the township consisted of one white sergeant, two white and six black constables.\(^{74}\) It was allowed to use the Council’s police quarters in NBL until such time that the Department of Justice approved the erection of more permanent quarters for the police. The PECC was expected to take responsibility for the building of these quarters. The erection of these buildings was only to take place once the government had undertaken to lease the premises for a minimum of 10 years.\(^{75}\) Agreement in this regard was reached by February 1928.

Soon after the SAP had ensconced themselves in NBL, the Superintendent noted that the promotion of the sergeant-in-charge could lead to his transfer. This he felt would come as a particular blow to the location inhabitants as Sergeant Strydom evinced a good relationship with them. Strydom and two of his constables spoke fluent Xhosa which made communication between them and the black community much easier although not necessarily more humane.\(^{76}\) The Superintendent suggested that to retain him, the PECC should lobby with the SAP to upgrade the NBL police station from its present position. Attempts in 1927 to upgrade this police station by having more than one sergeant on the premises, specifically to grant bail when necessary (only NCOs could grant bail), had proved a failure.\(^{77}\) By 1928 the Justice Department remained unconvinced that any change in grade was necessary.

A meeting of the Native Advisory Board of NBL in August 1928 raised the question of whether regular patrol beats were carried out by the SAP in the township. The NCO in charge of the NBL police station informed the NAB that patrols were carried out but due to

\(^{73}\) Baines, ‘History of New Brighton’, p 87.

\(^{74}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1276, Report of NBL Supt, 8 Sept 1927.

\(^{75}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 1/1/1/40, Report of Native Affairs Committee, 23 Feb 1928.

\(^{76}\) CAR, SAP 3/7/2, New Brighton Police Station Occurrence Book, 24 July 1929.

\(^{77}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, TC, PE to Sect for Justice, 27 April 1928.
insufficient men, these patrols were limited in number and therefore inadequate in terms of crime-fighting. The location was divided into three beats which were covered by the six black constables who patrolled on foot. It seems that the two white constables serving in the township did not have to participate in this rather arduous, foot-slogging duty. Belonging to the privileged white community certainly had its merits if one served in a black area: white constables working in white areas were never that fortunate as they were liable for ‘walking the beat’ until motorised patrols became the vogue.

Cllr Pendla of the NBL Advisory Board noted with concern that when a black constable based in the township was transferred elsewhere by the SAP in 1930, he was not replaced. Considering that the population of NBL was growing, he suggested that the district commandant be asked to increase the white SAP establishment to four men. It was his belief that crime in NBL was down due to sufficient foot patrols being carried out. To maintain this low level of crime, the number of police attached to NBL had to be kept constant, if not increased. The District Commandant, Chief Inspector M J Hart, did not accede to this request as he believed the low crime rate in NBL did not warrant additional men. It appears that even during the December holiday period for most of the 1930s, serious or petty crime was virtually non-existent. Nevertheless, Hart gave the assurance that if a situation arose where more men were needed, the policeman recalled would be returned to the township.

A further request by the NBL Advisory Board that the police charge office in the township remain open throughout the night was also turned down by Hart’s replacement, Chief Inspector G Lloyd Lister, in November 1933. Once again, the low level of crime was one reason why he opposed the request, the other being the extra expense such a move would entail. He argued that the NCO and his two white constables all resided at the police station

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78 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/2, Minutes of NAB, 13 Sept 1928.
79 CAR, SAP 3/7/1, New Brighton Police Station Occurrence Book, 11 Jan 1929.
80 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1278, Minutes of NAB, 13 May 1930.
in NBL and were therefore on call during any emergency.\textsuperscript{81}

By the middle of June 1935 the NBL police station was manned by three white and seven black policemen. The population of NBL at around this time was approximately 8 000, administered by Superintendent J P McNamee who was assisted by six headmen.\textsuperscript{82} Relations between the police and the Superintendent’s department were good, according to McNamee, exhibiting co-operation of the highest order. The station commander was Sergeant Strydom and the two white constables, Raubenheimer and Rossouw, were responsible for the charge office. Apparently Constable Raubenheimer, in NBL for six years, was nicknamed ‘Baas Rosy Cheeks’ by the NBL residents due to his outwardly healthy complexion.\textsuperscript{83} The use of this nickname would suggest that black people in the township narrowed the class or social gap foisted on them by white domination by name-calling: this was done either in a contemptuous or playful manner. In Raubenheimer’s case, it would appear to be more sporting than contemptuous. McNamee had a high estimation of these two Afrikaans-speaking constables, both fluent in Xhosa, mainly because they treated the residents of the township humanely, encouraging them to bring any complaints directly to them. The fact that the NAB wished to retain their services in the township if they got married, by supporting the move to build more married quarters in NBL, suggests that these white constables were indeed an asset to the location.\textsuperscript{84}

By the end of 1935 only the NCO in charge of NBL police station and one white constable were accommodated in married quarters. This meant that once a constable married, he could no longer be based in NBL. What concerned the NBL Superintendent, and members of the NAB, was the loss of experienced men familiar with the workings of this particular township

\textsuperscript{81} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Minutes of NAC, 10 Nov 1933. The District Cmdt pointed out that over the past 12 months, only 10 complaints had been received by the police between 10 pm and 6 am.

\textsuperscript{82} NAR, K80, Lansdown Commission of Enquiry, Evidence by J P McNamee, 8 Feb 1937.

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Nongqai}, June 1935, p 528.

\textsuperscript{84} NAR, K80, Evidence by J P McNamee, 8 Feb 1937.
who were then replaced with younger, less experienced men. To circumvent this problem, a proposal was made to the District Commandant that additional married quarters be built at the station. The incumbent, Chief Inspector Beresford-Wood, approached Commissioner I P de Villiers with this proposal but, although in favour of the plan, De Villiers was not prepared to pay the rent which the PECC planned to charge once it had built the additional married quarters so the planned renovations came to nought.

Within a short time of his appointment, the new District Commandant, Chief Inspector H Peard, had to oversee the policing aspect of the transfer of black people from Korsten to NBL’s new sub-economic housing scheme. He had to ensure that while police numbers in NBL were increased to deal with this organized influx, the police contingent in Korsten had to be maintained at existing levels as more coloured and black people moved in to replace those moving out. In this matter Peard had the ear of the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division who managed to get the Commissioner de Villiers to approve the transfer of at least one additional black constable to NBL during 1939. The black constable transferred from Snowden in the Eastern Cape was forced to become a foot policeman, no doubt a move which he probably resented as mounted men mostly preferred horseback to tedious and often wearisome foot patrols when carrying out their beat duties.

Generally unpopular with the black population of South Africa due to their enforcement of the laws of segregation and apartheid, the SAP did at odd times produce men who gained the respect of black people. One such person was Sergeant Strydom, the station commander of the NBL police station. According to Cllr Pendla of the Native Advisory Board, Strydom had treated the residents of NBL with ‘tact, kindness and sympathy’ during all his years of service in the township. Thus, when the Advisory Board heard in 1938 that Strydom was to be transferred to the Baakens Street station due to a recent promotion to Head Constable, it expressed disappointment at losing his services, particularly at a time when large numbers

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85 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, NBL Supt to TC, PE, 10 Jan 1936.
86 NAR, SAP 315 9/4/39, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 30 March 1939.
87 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Minutes of Native Advisory Board, 30 June 1938.
of ex-Korsten residents were being moved into NBL. The only way that Strydom could have been kept at NBL was for the police contingent based in the township to be increased in accordance with his status as Head Constable. Attempts by McNamee, the NBL Superintendent, and the NAB to prevent his transfer nevertheless came to nought as the head of the Cape Eastern Police Division refused to upgrade the NBL police station to accommodate a Head Constable.

By 1949 the NBL police force comprised the usual white leadership in the form of a warrant officer who was assisted by four white constables and 31 black policemen. Although the population of NBL had grown to approximately 35 800 by 1949, the ratio of police to population was 1.34 per thousand of the population whereas in 1949 it had stood at 1.25 per thousand, an improvement of small proportions but nevertheless an improvement. Thus, although overall police numbers appeared satisfactory this was not the case some years later when it came to specialised criminal investigation.

In December 1952 SAP policy stipulated that black policemen were to serve their own communities as far as possible (see Chapter 4 for further elucidation on ‘own areas’ policing). This principle, known as ‘own areas’ policy, had been suggested by the Lansdown Commission of 1937 but never implemented. The principle envisaged more black policemen being posted to the townships of urban areas for three main reasons: a) to allow black policemen to ‘develop and show their ability and responsibility and increase their field of promotion’, b) to release more white policemen for duty in white areas and c) the necessity for white policemen to reside or work in black locations would be removed. The total absence of white policemen in black areas never occurred during the period under review as white supervisory staff remained in control, their importance in keeping an eye on anti-government sentiment in townships increased as political protest action during the 1950s and 1960s became progressively radicalised. The hope that police stations being manned by more

88 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/12, Report of NBL Supt to NAC, 19 July 1938.
89 Mayor’s Minutes (MM), Annual Report of the NBL Manager, 31 Dec 1949.
and more black policemen would improve the image of the police never materialised\textsuperscript{91}. Oppressive laws needed to enforce apartheid affected equally both the law-abiding and criminal elements of black society, making both generally ardent police detractors. South Africa had to become a truly democratic society before the image of the police could even begin to improve as such a transformation could not happen overnight. Yet even after 1994 this negative public perception of the police has persisted. The conversion of the SAP (now known as the South African Police Service) to civil policing remains incomplete.

Increased black political activity throughout South Africa during the early 1950s engendered greater SAP vigilance, particularly by those in leadership positions, to enable them to respond quickly to any emergency. Added to this, policemen in senior positions were expected to ensure that the control and supervision of black townships, in terms of policing, was under their direct command.\textsuperscript{92} To attain better control in New Brighton, for example, the status of the police station in that township was upgraded and placed under the authority of an officer holding the rank of a captain, with two subordinate officers to assist him, for the first time since its establishment. That these officers were white came as no surprise as the highest rank that any black, coloured or Indian policeman could aspire to during the 1950s was that of Senior Sergeant.\textsuperscript{93} By December 1953, there was a total of 16 white and 83 black policemen serving the New Brighton police area.\textsuperscript{94}

The increased establishment at NBL police station necessitated an enlarged administrative block. In order to do this, the existing married quarters were converted into offices once the permission of the PECC had been obtained in March 1954.\textsuperscript{95} The cost-conscious Council only gave its consent once the SAP agreed to fund the costs of the renovations. The married policeman who had occupied the house before it was converted into offices was expected to

\textsuperscript{91} Dippenaar, \textit{History of SAP}, p 240.
\textsuperscript{93} UG 52-1956, \textit{Annual Report of SAP Commissioner}, 1955, p 1.
\textsuperscript{94} MM, Report of Manager, Native Affairs, 31 Dec 1953.
\textsuperscript{95} PER, 25/110, No. 4, Minutes of NAC, 4 March 1954.
find alternative accommodation elsewhere in the city.

The black CID strength in the township consisted of 12 men (two NCOs and 10 constables) and was considered insufficient in December 1956 to deal properly with the increase in population due to the relocation of black people from Korsten. According to the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern Division, the shortage of black detectives was exacerbated by the inability of most of these men to handle more than 25 cases per month; they also had to work under the supervision of the two white detectives as they were ill-equipped to cope on their own due to their lack of education and experience. An further factor to influence the call for more detectives was the shortage of men caused by personnel taking holiday and sick leave.

To complete this section on NBL, it is necessary to add that the small police contingent based in Redhouse fell under the NBL police district for administrative purposes. Swartkops had, until 1953, served as a base for police activities in the north-east sector of Port Elizabeth’s magisterial district. After its lease came to an end in Swartkops the SAP decided to move its men, under the leadership of Sergeant A R Quirk, to Redhouse, a nearby residential township. The Coega Farmers’ Association bemoaned this move; it considered that the Swartkops bridge was an important inlet into the city and could be easily used to waylay stock thieves en route to NBL thus a police station located near the main road going over the bridge would be ideally situated to prevent the easy movement of criminal elements. Unfortunately for the Association, the police authorities refused to consider this proposal.

The SAP contingent based at Redhouse was already in 1955 seen as inadequate to deal with the crime situation in the area. One of the problems faced by the police patrolling this area was the widespread, sprawling nature of the black and white areas, making it difficult for the short-staffed station to carry out its duties effectively. Unless the police establishment was

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96 NAR, SAP 538 9/4/56, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 5 Dec 1956.
97 Nongqai, Oct 1953, p 1083.
98 PER, 25/110, No. 4, Sect, Coega Farmers’ Association to TC, PE, 20 Oct 1953.
increased in size, it was feared that the criminal element would take advantage of the situation. In the meantime, the never-ending struggle to procure more men for the policing of the Port Elizabeth region continued, and in March 1956 a request was made by the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division for the boosting of police numbers at Redhouse.

He argued that with the prohibition of political meetings in NBL, the ANC was holding its meetings in Veeplaas which fell within the bounds of the Redhouse police station. He wanted more men to combat such political activity while at the same time cracking down hard on lawless elements within the district. He was also under pressure to increase police patrols from the Coega Farmers’ Association and residents of Swartkops who remained unhappy with the removal of the police station from Swartkops to Redhouse. In this case, the request for more men was met by a positive response and 10 black constables were allocated to the Cape Eastern Division. Three of these men ended up at Redhouse, now a part of Police District No. 81, while the remainder went to Uitenhage and Queenstown. Nationally, the shortage of policemen continued; over 1 000 whites and 450 blacks were still needed to fill all available SAP posts. In this respect, police districts like Redhouse in the Cape Eastern Division were quite fortunate in obtaining extra men. It would appear that the demands of political policing were blatantly beginning to supersede those of civil policing by the 1950s, even more so than in previous years, hence the willingness of SAP headquarters to grant extra men to Redhouse. Policing of apartheid laws, particularly in urban areas, became systematically more repressive and inhumane as the 1960s approached. The consolidation of National Party rule was accompanied by a form of policing increasingly unfettered by earlier political and legal constraints; the SAP was moving ominously towards imposing a type of policing characteristic of a police state where police conduct was

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99 NAR, SAP 514 9/19/54, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 22 Aug 1955.

100 NAR, SAP 538 9/4/56, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 24 March 1956.

101 NAR, SAP 538 9/4/56, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 19 April 1956.


seemingly above the law.

**Korsten Police District**

Korsten, an overcrowded township situated outside the municipal boundaries of Port Elizabeth until 1931, was inhabited by a variety of racial groups, many of whom lived in slum-like conditions as a result of their extreme poverty. Some people lived in proper, well built brick structures in relative comfort. But for the majority of Korsten residents, life was an endless struggle for survival due to the prevalence of disease, the lack of piped water, street lighting and water-borne sewage. Overcrowded urban areas served by inadequate amenities, a lack of property rights and plagued by unemployment, is widely believed to reflect an insecure lifestyle which in turn breeds criminal behaviour: Korsten during the 1913-56 period was no exception. It was in many ways the exact opposite of McNamee Village, established in NBL in 1937 as a model black township, where stringent modes of control could be applied more easily by the local state on residents.

To police this area, the local police station comprised one white sergeant, five white constables and four black constables in 1920. These men were expected to patrol an area of approximately 11 square kilometres populated by about 6 000 people, mainly black. When Sergeant Fearick, the station commander, was away on four months leave in England at this time, Constable de Lange took over the mantle of leadership; no replacement was provided for the missing man. Thus, any extra duties that accumulated due to the temporary shortage

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107 *Nongqai*, Oct 1920, p 518.
in staff had to be distributed among those remaining. Neglected by the local state in terms of municipal services, it is not surprising that policing was also neglected: the voice of the poor struggled to make itself heard in the local press, and in the corridors of power.

Commissioner de Villiers complained in his annual report of 1930 that police quarters as a whole were in a ‘bad state’ generally in most of the Union.\textsuperscript{108} Such a statement was eminently applicable to the police station in Korsten, which functioned without electricity and an adequate water supply until early 1932. Being based in a poor area of Port Elizabeth, the seven men under the leadership of Sergeant J Burger had to endure dusty, wind-swept conditions besides trying to police an estimated population of 24 000 people.\textsuperscript{109} Working and living conditions for these policemen was thus in many ways no better than that endured by the very people they policed. With the eventual provision of electricity and water, conditions improved considerably at the station, making it a relatively comfortable place in which to work, but the fact remains that the state treated members of its first line of defence with little regard, considering the SAP’s role in maintaining white political domination.

Crime in Korsten showed little signs of abating during the early 1930s and various attempts were made to curb the worst excesses of criminal behaviour in the area. Bicycle patrols were introduced by Sergeant Burger, the station commander of the Korsten SAP in July 1933, but it seems to little avail.\textsuperscript{110} Residents called for an increase in police numbers, particularly over weekends, when assaults and the like reached their highest levels but Chief Inspector Lloyd Lister, the District Commandant, disagreed with this suggestion. He was adamant that the SAP Commissioner would not allocate more policemen to him for Korsten as practically every town in the country was calling for more men. In any case, he held the belief that overcrowding was a major cause of crime in the township, as in most areas of a similar nature in other towns, so flooding the area with more policemen was not the solution. Not for the first time, Lloyd Lister suggested that the PECC reinstate a curfew and impose regulations


\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Nongqai}, March 1932, p 219.

\textsuperscript{110} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, Notes of Interview between SAP, NAC and Electors’ Association of Korsten, 13 Feb 1934.
prohibiting the carrying of *kieries* by residents of Korsten. Once again, the PECC rejected these proposals. To his credit, Lloyd Lister did attempt to alleviate unlawful behaviour in the worst affected areas by providing extra police patrols over weekends; he did this by redistributing duties among policemen thus burdening policemen to an even greater extent. The shortage of police personnel thus affected not only the law-abiding residents of Port Elizabeth in a negative manner, but also the very people sent out to protect them. Fortunately for the law-abiding residents of Korsten and for the reputation of the SAP, the redistribution of duties brought about some improvement in the crime situation of the area. Even though the SAP was doing all in its power to curb crime, Lloyd Lister still seemed to feel that the NAC was blaming the SAP for the unacceptable crime levels in Korsten. He maintained his belief that the real cause of crime in the area was overcrowding, insanitary conditions, and the lack of effective control measures such as curfew regulations, restrictions on the carrying of *kieries*, and so on.

In the process of normal crime-fighting, the SAP sometimes felt that the Native Affairs Committee (NAC) of the PECC was impeding its task in Korsten. Chief Inspector Lloyd Lister was unhappy with the fact that the NAC seemed to be holding the police responsible for the unacceptable crime levels existing in Korsten during 1934. At the same time, it did not uphold the recommendations of the Commandant to impose a curfew or ban the carrying of sticks, thus placing him in a catch 22 situation which he found extremely frustrating. Nevertheless, by reorganising the duties of the police in Korsten, he had been able to cut down on some of the crime prevalent in the township. In the eyes of the police, Korsten was deemed one of the prime sanctuaries of crime in Port Elizabeth. Lloyd Lister noted that during the period 1 April 1934 to 20 June 1934, 124 cases of housebreaking and theft had occurred in the city; 57 persons had been convicted of such crimes with the majority of these people residing in or retreating to Korsten after committing these crimes.

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111 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/8, District Cmdt, PE to NAC, PE, 6 July 1934.
112 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1635, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 6 July 1934.
113 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1635, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 6 July 1934.
Unlike the rapid changes in command at the highest level of the SAP in Port Elizabeth, the station commander at Korsten, Sergeant J A Burger, had been in his post for seven years by 1937. The total number of men serving under him, including five CID men, was 25. Of that total, nine were black. Burger felt that to patrol the area under his jurisdiction effectively, he needed more men. To increase police presence in areas like Durban Road where criminal activity was more prevalent, he had to resort to bicycle patrols as a temporary measure until his limited manpower resources were suitably redressed.\textsuperscript{114} Even though a patrol van did its rounds through Korsten, and had proved to be useful, he still believed that additional men were necessary for more effective policing. The growth of the larger towns of the Eastern Cape, like East London and Port Elizabeth, forced the Deputy Commissioner of the division to increase the police establishment at these centres at the expense of smaller police districts like Queenstown and Cradock.\textsuperscript{115} Assaults caused by an excessive consumption of cheap ‘European liquor’, such as sherry and wine, were the main source of concern for the SAP.

Korsten police station, under the control of a warrant officer (in this instance a Head Constable), was expected to police the residential and industrial areas within its jurisdiction, and with industrial expansion and population increase during the 1940s, more policemen were required. The growth of Schauder township and the need for frequent raids in this poor coloured working class area, according to police authorities, meant that the existing police contingent was inadequate. The Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division hoped that the necessary policemen would be provided by the reorganisation scheme of 1946.\textsuperscript{116}

The growth in population in the Korsten police perimeter was not matched by that of the SAP during the 1940s, leading to constant demands for more effective policing by the local

\textsuperscript{114} NAR, K80, Evidence by Sgt J A Burger, 10 Feb 1937.

\textsuperscript{115} NAR, SAP 269 9/9/36, Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 20 Aug 1936.

\textsuperscript{116} NAR, SAP 374 9/22/45, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 11 June 1946.
As far as the police were concerned, Korsten had the worst slums in the Port Elizabeth district, and this was considered an extra burden when it came to carrying out policing duties in the area. The Deputy Commissioner, and the local District Commandant, Chief Inspector W J Swart, were not unsympathetic to these requests, and were consistent in their endeavours to procure more policemen for the area. The Korsten CID had only three men carrying out investigations and the Deputy Commissioner believed that at least double this number was required if any impact was to be made on crime-fighting in the area.

During the 1950s Korsten police station, like Baakens Street’s reputation with regard to policing South End during the 1940s, was described as a ‘moeilike stasie’ (difficult station) by the local police authorities. The coloured inhabitants of this area were regarded by the SAP as being prone to riotous behaviour and of a distinctly inferior class when compared to their compatriots in other areas. According to police statistics, the majority of ‘non-white’ murders committed in Port Elizabeth occurred in this locality, and in order to maintain effective control, the SAP were compelled to carry out regular raids in the area. All these factors, besides the prevalence of strikes because of the numerous industries in based in Korsten, warranted a captain to be placed in charge of the Korsten police station. This eventually happened when Korsten became a separate police district in 1956, with Captain C H Gibson as the first District Commandant of No. 81 Police District.

**New Law Courts Police District**

The area policed by this police station was comprised mainly of poor white Afrikaners, who had begun entering the city in growing numbers during the 1920s and 1930s, and coloured people. Many of these poor whites had resided in racially-mixed slum areas before the PECC provided housing for them in places like Kensington, Holland Park, Sidwell and Southdene. Kensington was, in fact, the first municipal housing estate established specifically for working population.

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118 NAR, SAP 410 9/12/48, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 28 Sept 1949.
119 NAR, SAP 514 9/19/54, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 22 Aug 1955.
class whites during the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{121} Prior to the development of organised segregation, the North End area had a mixed population of mainly whites and coloureds, their approximate numbers in 1921 were respectively 6 300 and 2 400.\textsuperscript{122} The rest comprised Indian, Chinese and African people.

The enforcement of segregation ensured that people living in specifically demarcated areas shared generally similar characteristics: those living within the New Law Courts police district were mainly factory workers or skilled artisans, who shared similar religious views, language, sports and other community activities.\textsuperscript{123} Many policemen in South Africa came from such working class homes, a characteristic restricted not only to this country but also prevalent in most western democracies during the 1913-1956 period (see Chapter 2). Sydenham, also falling within the North End police district, housed a class of worker with specialised training (opticians, jewellers) or who were employed as bank clerks, civil servants or in other white collar positions.

Once the New Law Courts had been completed, it was decided that the CID’s new home in Port Elizabeth would be located in this building. They were to move out of the old Baakens Street quarters. With superior accommodation coupled with new equipment it was hoped that the CID would produce even better results. By December 1937 the headquarters of the CID, previously based at the Baakens Street station, had been moved to the New Law Courts. The Mount Road police barracks were just over three kilometres away so the CID were now in close proximity to SAP district headquarters. The new officer commanding of the CID was Lieutenant Milford, recently transferred from the Witwatersrand police division.\textsuperscript{124}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{123} P A Gibbs, ‘Social History of White Working Class Women’, p 91.
\item\textsuperscript{124} Nongqai, Dec 1937, p 1 213.
\end{itemize}
The majority of Port Elizabeth’s CID members were stationed at the New Law Courts. The main reason for this was the lack of space at other stations within the police district as a whole. Unable to distribute members of the CID to other stations on a pro rata basis because of this accommodation shortage, it was decided to retain the status quo until suitable accommodation could be arranged.\textsuperscript{125} The New Law Courts as a whole was a busy police station, mainly because the magistrate’s court and jail for the Port Elizabeth district were situated there. Virtually all the cases investigated by the CID were registered at this police centre and all awaiting trial prisoners were concentrated at this venue.\textsuperscript{126}

With the on-going industrial growth and development of Port Elizabeth during the 1950s it became apparent, not only to the uniformed branch but also to the CID, that a distinct shortage of personnel existed to carry out investigative duties in the city.\textsuperscript{127} The deployment of five uniformed policemen to assist the CID in a temporary capacity had done little to alleviate this manpower shortage, mainly because these men lacked investigative experience.\textsuperscript{128} There were barely sufficient men to carry out CID work effectively and the lack of manpower meant that no reserves existed for when men went on vacation leave, were injured or on sick leave. According to the Deputy Commissioner based in Grahamstown, it was also necessary for black detectives to work more closely under the supervision of whites in order to ensure that better results were obtained, thus even more men were needed by the CID establishment in Port Elizabeth than heretofore.\textsuperscript{129}

CONCLUSION

The spatial organisation of policing in Port Elizabeth during the nineteenth century was a simple affair, with policemen based in the town centre, and expected to patrol a very small locale in which whites and blacks lived in fairly close proximity to one another, even though

\textsuperscript{125} NAR, SAP 395 9/11/47, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 24 April 1947.

\textsuperscript{126} NAR, SAP 410 9/12/48, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 28 Sept 1949.

\textsuperscript{127} NAR, SAP 478 9/12/50, SAP Com to SAP Dep Com, CED, 10 Aug 1950.

\textsuperscript{128} NAR, SAP 482 9/3/5, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 29 March 1951.

\textsuperscript{129} NAR, SAP 482 9/3/5, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 29 March 1951.
a certain degree of segregation did exist. In time, as the town grew in geographical size and population, police manpower was allocated specific areas which housed people sharing the same ethnic background, except for the mixed areas of South End, Korsten and Fairview. The nature of policing differed in these segregated areas because of the political system: white areas were policed essentially in a traditional civil policing manner (see Chapter 6) while black and mixed areas were policed in a socially oppressive way (see Chapter 7).

Police organisation in the city underwent continual metamorphosis during the 1913-56 period, and by the 1950s the city was split into two separate police districts. The creation of two police districts in Port Elizabeth in 1956 was in complete uniformity with the policy of apartheid, introduced by the National Party government after 1948. It meant that the black and coloured townships of New Brighton, Korsten and Schauderville fell under the control of No. 81 Police District while the rest of the city, comprising of essentially white areas, remained under the jurisdiction of No. 14 Police District. It is therefore quite clear that the policing strategy developed in Port Elizabeth followed a particular spatial form which was closely synchronised with the political order of the day. The remaining chapters of this thesis will in turn examine the civil, socially oppressive and political-industrial styles of policing employed by the SAP in the city between 1913 and 1956.
CHAPTER 6

ROUTINE CIVIL POLICING IN PORT ELIZABETH, 1913 - 1956

INTRODUCTION

Civil policing encapsulates the essence of police work, namely, the maintenance of public order, and the prevention and detection of crime by the enforcement of state laws. The evolution of policing over hundreds of years has made policemen seemingly indispensable in modern society, particularly in urban settings. The state is now expected to provide men and women on a continuous basis to safeguard the environment of ordinary people living within its borders. In virtually all countries around the world, the vast majority of police force members serve in the uniform branch. The uniform makes them visible on the streets when they are carrying out routine patrols; these patrols are considered by many, including the general public, as crucial to law enforcement mainly because their presence supposedly discourages would-be criminals.¹ Yet the lot of policemen has never been simple as routine civil policing has been, and is, subject to political interference, particularly in countries where democratic principles are either ignored or non-existent.

In South African history, the police have been manipulated and exploited for political and ideological ends. Once they had signed up as policemen, they automatically became state servants, pawns at the beck at call of their political masters. They have had the infamous distinction of being at the forefront of imposing social injustice (see Chapter 7), they have been seen as essential tools for suppressing political and industrial unrest (see Chapter 8) while at the same time attempting to carry out ‘normal’ or routine policing. This chapter outlines the work of the SAP in Port Elizabeth in terms of its mandate to police the city in a civil tradition even though the various forms of policing examined in this thesis (civil, socially oppressive and political-industrial) were prone to overlap within the period under consideration. The policing of common crime and traffic matters, the regulation and control of ‘nuisances’ (livestock, beggars, hawkers, vagrants and anti-social behaviour) along with

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attempts to keep recalcitrant youths and other forms of anti-social behaviour in check, are the main themes discussed in this chapter.

POLICING COMMON CRIME

Common crime (theft, assault, murder, and so on) has certainly existed in Port Elizabeth since its inception but it was only with the advent of industrialisation, and the related population increase, that such crime increased to any great extent. Not everybody found work in manufacturing, commerce or in service-orientated work; many were forced into a life of crime by unfavourable social and economic circumstances. The paucity of material in written sources about common crime during these early years would seem to suggest that ordinary or petty crime was at tolerable levels in mainly white areas. In overcrowded Korsten the opposite was true. Unfortunately for NBL residents, who had enjoyed a relatively low crime rate until the 1940s, the forced removal of Korsten’s black population after 1939 saw an increase in crime levels in their township. During a five year period, from 1928 to 1934, for example, Baines has shown that prosecutions for all manner of crimes were less than 50 per 1000 persons in NBL. 3 There were also no prosecutions for murder during the restricted period mentioned above.

When Port Elizabeth crime statistics for 1951 are compared with other large centres, the city was generally in a similar position to those cities indicated in Table 6.1 below, Johannesburg being the only, and perhaps predictable, exception. Port Elizabeth is shown to have had the lowest number of criminal cases reported in that year, but by a minuscule margin when compared to Bloemfontein and East London. Of this group of cities, only Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth could be accurately described as industrialised, thus Port Elizabeth’s crime levels may be considered tolerable when compared to these centres. Of course, the question of what constitutes an acceptable or tolerable crime rate is open to question.


The population figures for the different cities was taken from UG 42-1958, Population census for 1951, Vol 5. Unfortunately, population figures for coloured people were inexplicably missing for Cape Town, Durban and Kimberley, thus eliminating these major centres from this comparative exercise. The number of criminal cases was obtained from UG 40-1952, Department of Justice, Annual Report for 1951.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Population in 1951</th>
<th>Criminal Cases Reported in 1951</th>
<th>% Criminal Cases per Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloemfontein</td>
<td>130 483</td>
<td>14 646</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East London</td>
<td>133 102</td>
<td>16 105</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannesburg</td>
<td>915 147</td>
<td>291 212</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>215 819</td>
<td>23 848</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretoria</td>
<td>390 526</td>
<td>57 745</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When petty crime was seen to be getting out of hand, it was not unusual for members of a community or suburb to hand a petition to the city council. Such a case is recorded in early 1932 when the white inhabitants of Kensington, a small suburb not far from Korsten, presented such a petition to the mayor of Port Elizabeth. The petitioners requested better police protection due to a spate of burglaries, attempted burglaries and theft of delivered milk. They expressed their disappointment with the SAP which they believed had not taken any serious steps to alleviate their plight. A policeman spending no more than five minutes doing his rounds in the area was insufficient; they demanded a higher level of policing, arguing that they were entitled to such protection. The mayor promised the petitioners that he would take up the matter with the SAP District Commandant, Chief Inspector M J Hart.

For others, direct communication with the police authorities was the preferred option when crime levels became intolerable. In Korsten, the African People’s Organisation (APO) sent a deputation to see the station commander of Korsten, Sergeant J Burgher, in early April.

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4 The population figures for the different cities was taken from UG 42-1958, Population census for 1951, Vol 5. Unfortunately, population figures for coloured people were inexplicably missing for Cape Town, Durban and Kimberley, thus eliminating these major centres from this comparative exercise. The number of criminal cases was obtained from UG 40-1952, Department of Justice, Annual Report for 1951.

5 Cape Archives Repository, Cape Town (CAR), 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, TC, PE to C C Wyatt, 29 Jan 1932.
1932. It was agreed by both the APO deputation and Sergeant Burger that the lack of adequate lighting in the township was an advantage to the criminal element but detrimental to police efficiency. According to Burger, the chief cause of crime in Korsten was the brewing and selling of traditional African beer. Other possible causes of crime, such as poverty and unemployment were seemingly ignored. Police statistics revealed that common assault, stone throwing, damage to property, the lethal use of knives, etc arose from drunkenness associated with beer drinking. Profits accrued from this trade were apparently so good that being fined or sentenced to jail did nothing to diminish it. Confronted with all these details, the NAC decided that the solution to crime in Korsten was twofold: the PECC had to erect street lights along the main streets running through the township and the sale of malted grain had to be prohibited in the area. Street lights in Highfield Road and Durban Road were eventually installed in the 1930s and although restrictions were placed on the selling of malted grain, illegal beer brewing in Korsten continued among black people despite police raids.

In contrast to the more violent crime of the northern areas of Port Elizabeth, usually as a result of the tsotsi or gangster element, crime in the southern suburbs like Humewood and South End was restricted mainly to burglaries and petty theft. It seems that most of the other white areas of Port Elizabeth also suffered from an increase in burglaries during 1933. In the following year, when faced with complaints from residents of these areas, the District Commandant, Chief Inspector G Lloyd Lister, chose to blame the Council for the prevalence of such crimes, stating that it had turned down his application to reintroduce curfew regulations in the city. Nevertheless, he promised to arrange additional patrols in the area as a temporary measure.

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6 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Station Commander, Korsten to TC, PE, 5 April 1932.
7 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, TC, PE to Acting District Cmdt, 27 April 1932.
8 Interview with Mr W N Prince, Port Elizabeth, 11 June 1999.
9 National Archives Repository, Pretoria (NAR), SAP 323 1/40/40, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Com, 21 Oct 1938.
10 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, Minutes of NAC, 23 Feb 1934.
Under pressure from the Walmer Ratepayer’s Association in 1937, the Walmer Council was compelled to request that more white policemen patrol the streets of this township. Assistance to the police by the headman in keeping order and reporting illegal beer brewing and the like was deemed insufficient.\textsuperscript{11} District Commandant F J Verster agreed that the growing population of Walmer merited an increase in police numbers and promised to give the matter serious attention.\textsuperscript{12} The issue of more policemen for Walmer remained in abeyance until certain councillors expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that the Walmer charge office closed at night. Even though the station commander had the telephone switched through to his bedroom at night in case of any emergency calls, Cllr Moore remained unconvinced of the efficacy of this system. As far as Moore was concerned, the District Commandant did not seem to appreciate the disturbances caused by coloured males passing through Walmer on their way to settlements which existed on the fringes of the township.\textsuperscript{13} This constant pressure on the SAP eventually led to the Walmer police station being given an extra constable at the end of 1937 to enable the charge office to remain open throughout the night.

The increasing use of mechanised transport saw the gradual demise of the horse as an essential component of routine civil policing by the late 1930s. Nevertheless, the switch to motorised transport did not always take place smoothly.\textsuperscript{14} The majority of station commanders did not have driver’s licences in the early days of mechanised transport and were thus reliant on authorised drivers for carrying out inspections and the like in their areas, thus using up valuable manpower. Besides arranging for these station commanders to qualify as drivers, more men were encouraged to obtain motorcycle licenses. The move towards

\textsuperscript{11} Port Elizabeth Archives Repository, Port Elizabeth (PER), Minutes of Walmer Town Council, No. 17, Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health, 11 Aug 1937.

\textsuperscript{12} PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, 14 July 1937.

\textsuperscript{13} PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, 10 Nov 1937.

\textsuperscript{14} After the introduction of patrol vans in the early 1930s, commonly known as ‘pick-up vans’, the use of motorised patrols soon became feared and detested by blacks. See J Rheinnallt-Jones, ‘Race Relations in 1935’, \textit{Race Relations}, 3, 1, (1936), p 3.
‘faster’ policing led to pedal cycles being used for short patrols, much to the amusement of some adolescents. When a lone policemen was seen cycling along Walmer streets during the 1920s, Tony Longworth remembers an oft-repeated refrain from among his schoolboy friends being ‘There’s the Walmer police force out on parade!’

It would seem that the SAP in the Eastern Cape embraced the transport revolution with great enthusiasm, so much so that the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern Police Division (CED) recommended in 1939 that horses be withdrawn altogether from the streets of Port Elizabeth. But the enthusiasm for motorised patrols was obviously not shared by the NBL Superintendent. Although the SAP in Port Elizabeth were using patrol vans by 1937, they did not patrol NBL with them unless an emergency arose. This was due to a request by the NBL Superintendent who felt that motorised patrols were unnecessary in the township where incidents of common crime were negligible.

By November 1938 the Walmer Ratepayers’ Association was again pressurising the Walmer Council to press for more policemen, black or white, due to an increase in loiterers in the area. This time the SAP District Commandant stated directly that any increase in the Walmer police establishment was out of the question. Nevertheless, the ratepayers continued their demands for more policemen, complaining of burglaries and house-breaking during 1939, even going so far as to suggest that the Walmer Council employ special staff to assist the

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15 Interview with Mr F A Longworth, Port Elizabeth, 4 July 1999.

16 NAR, SAP 315 9/4/39, SAP Dep Com, Cape Eastern Division (CED) to SAP Com, 30 March 1939. East London and Grahamstown also had their horses withdrawn.

17 NAR, K80, Lansdown Commission of Enquiry, Evidence by J P McNamee, 8 Feb 1937. Patrols in peripheral areas like Bethelsdorp during the late 1930s found that crime levels were negligible. Complaints centred around rowdy and noisy behaviour but evidence of violent crimes was virtually non-existent. See A Appel, *Bethelsdorp, 1828-1945: Van Sendenstasie tot Stadsperiferie* (University of Port Elizabeth, 1994), p 225.

18 PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, No. 18, 25 Jan 1939.
police. This suggestion was ignored by the Council although it did bring the matter of an increased police presence to the attention of Chief Inspector H Peard, the District Commandant.

Many cases of house-breaking in Port Elizabeth were of such a petty nature, according to the police, that virtually no clues were left behind for the investigating staff. In the majority of such cases only food and cash were stolen. Unless the police received a tip-off from an informer, it was virtually impossible for them to effect an arrest successfully. Businesses in the city also made it difficult for the police as they did little to protect their premises against burglary, with very few employing watchmen (about eight in the whole city in 1938) for night duty.

In an attempt to explain the increase in housebreaking and burglaries during 1938, Commandant Peard cited the existing economic depression, the unsatisfactory citrus season, the increase in Port Elizabeth’s population and the resultant unemployment as aggravating factors causing this increase in petty crime. In June 1937 the city’s total population stood at approximately 100,716; by October 1938 it was estimated to have grown to 113,796, showing an increase of 13,080. To combat the increase in housebreaking and burglaries more effectively, a conference of station commanders and NCOs was held in July 1937. It was impressed upon these men that their subordinates be more vigilant in their duties and that beat details be kept under constant supervision. One of the main problems facing the SAP in dealing with theft from property was, of course, the shortage of CID staff to investigate all the cases on hand. The CID establishment was seldom at full strength, having to spread its resources to cope with men on sick or vacation leave.

The inadequate patrolling of the northern, mainly black areas of Port Elizabeth during 1939, stands in stark contrast to the style and quality of policing provided to the mainly white
southern areas like Humewood. When residents of the latter area complained about thieving by vagrants from the bungalows situated in the beach front area, it transpired that theft levels in this suburb were, in the District Commandant’s view, quite normal and no cause for alarm. Besides this apparent low level of criminal activity when compared to the northern areas, where gang activity, theft, incidents of mugging and anti-social activities were the norm, the other noteworthy difference between white and black areas in relation to the nature of policing was the regular, two-hour patrolling of the white area throughout the day and night by the SAP. The quality of policing was always superior in white suburbs as the SAP ensured that greater policing resources were allocated to the privileged minority.

During the period of the Second World War (1939-1945), routine civil policing in Port Elizabeth continued in its normal fashion even though some minor adaptations were necessary due to exceptional conditions caused by the war (see Chapter 4 for organisational adaptations). For example, the growth of the NBL population during the 1940s, caused largely by an increased demand for labour in the manufacturing sector as a result of the war effort, was partly responsible for inducing something of a manpower shortage in the township for the SAP. Unable to increase the police establishment in NBL due to the war, the District Commandant, Chief Inspector H Peard, called upon the PECC to provide black municipal policemen to assist the police in crime prevention in the location. The NBL Superintendent opposed this suggestion, believing that the headmen in his employ, armed with the power to make arrests ( accorded to them by Section 390 of Act No. 31 of 1917 which defined them as ‘peace officers’) were sufficient to assist the SAP in maintaining law and order while at the same time ensuring that municipal regulations were observed. He believed it would be both wrong and unnecessary for the Council to provide municipal policemen in NBL. The PECC agreed with this view and accordingly informed Peard that it was not its responsibility to police the location.

Virtually throughout the war, the SAP based in Korsten carried out vehicle patrols in

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22 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, District Cmndt, PE to TC, PE, 30 May 1939.
23 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/15, District Cmndt to NAC, 27 Aug 1941.
24 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/15, NBL Supt to NAC, 9 Sept 1941.
Schauderville day and night, while coloured members of the Civilian Protective Services (CPS) undertook foot patrols limited to the hours of darkness. The only difference with South End, also a predominantly coloured area but falling within Central Area in terms of policing, was that on Friday and Saturday nights the Schauderville CPS comprised 16 men whereas in South End only four CPS men, accompanied by an SAP NCO, carried out patrols. This would appear to be indicative of the level of crime prevalent in Schauderville over weekends as opposed to South End.

When it came to the imposition of black-out regulations, residents of NBL co-operated readily but there were a number of negative side effects. One of these was the difficulty experienced by headmen and the SAP in controlling the trade in illegal non-African liquor in the township. The other was the increase in crime, specifically assaults and disorderly behaviour. Those being assaulted were unable to report their experiences to the police as the lack of light precluded positive identification of their attackers thus prohibiting prosecution. The local military commander displayed little sympathy for the Superintendent’s problems. Although admitting that abnormal conditions imposed by the war were causing such problems, he nevertheless argued that more serious problems could arise if military requirements were not fully met. He suggested that part-time special policemen be appointed to deal with NBL’s problems. In areas like Korsten, where members of the public feared an increase in crime under black-out conditions, the call went out for members of the Civilian Guard to patrol the district.

The policing of the coloured area of Schauderville had apparently gone well since the introduction of the Civilian Guard section of the CPS which worked in collaboration with the

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25 NAR, SAP 341 1/22/41/5, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 16 June 1942.


27 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/16, Fortress Commander PE, Dept of Defence to NAC, 26 September 1942.

28 Port Elizabeth Advertiser, ‘The Black-Out and Hooliganism’, 28 July 1942. An aerial survey of Port Elizabeth showed that the poorer sections of the city, including McNamee Village, Korsten and Schauder had blacked out their homes most effectively even though their means were more limited (See EPH 14 August 1942).
SAP during the war years. After this body was disbanded on 1 June 1944, crime did not suddenly increase in the area as expected by local authorities. Nevertheless, the PECC decided to be on the safe side, and it appointed in a temporary capacity six men as special constables who had been caretakers in the council’s housing schemes on 30 August 1945. These men had all served with the CPS and had the necessary experience to assist in the maintenance of law and order in Schauderville.\(^\text{29}\) Premises previously utilised by the CPS in Searle Road were used as an orderly room where complaints could be made by tenants and where arrested persons were held until taken into custody by the SAP. The police were expected to pay the rent for these premises. If the SAP refused to do so, then the PECC proposed to demand the establishment of a police sub-station in Schauderville.

Upon hearing of this proposal, Chief Inspector P J Jordaan, the SAP District Commandant, immediately refused to take responsibility for paying the rent while at the same time stating that it was not the responsibility of the SAP to police Schauderville - it remained the responsibility of the PECC. The SAP would only investigate complaints emanating from the area.\(^\text{30}\) The PECC immediately resolved to rescind and review its resolution of 28 February 1945 concerning the policing of Schauderville by special constables appointed by itself. Furthermore, it refused to police the area after 1 July and made contact with local parliamentarians to take up the matter with the Department of Justice.\(^\text{31}\)

The outcome of this course of action led to a meeting between the SAP Commissioner, Brigadier R J Palmer, and members of the PECC, including the mayor, in Port Elizabeth on 10 August 1945. Palmer confirmed that it was the responsibility of the SAP to police Schauderville but the PECC could not expect a depleted SAP (due to the war) to carry out its duties as effectively as it would have liked until such time that more recruits had been obtained.\(^\text{32}\) Palmer also made it clear that a sub-station at Schauderville could not be entertained until such time that conditions were more favourable. He wholeheartedly

\(^{29}\) PER, 25/110, No. 3, Minutes of Council, 28 Feb 1945.

\(^{30}\) PER, 25/110, No. 3, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 7 March 1945.


\(^{32}\) PER, 25/110, No. 3, SAP Com to TC, PE, 23 Aug 1945.
sanctioned the employment of the six caretakers as special constables by the PECC to assist the SAP in the area as a temporary measure. This was accepted by the PECC and the necessary steps were taken in August 1945.

There were a spate of requests by the white citizens of Port Elizabeth during 1945 for the establishment of more police stations in the suburbs to combat criminal activity. Besides the coloured area of Schauderville, white suburbs like Newton Park and Mill Park also demanded greater police protection. Residents of Newton Park blamed the movement of coloured and black residents between Fairview and Schauderville for the increase in burglaries in their suburb. As far as the police were concerned, the lack of transport facilities between the two areas, and the fact that many houses were unoccupied during the day as both husband and wife worked, exacerbated the problem. The SAP also blamed the PECC for not implementing restrictions inherent in the 1923 Urban Areas Act to the city, specifically influx control.\(^{33}\) Although the SAP were not in a position to establish a police station in Newton Park, the Commissioner of Police promised that he would in future take measures to ensure adequate police protection for this suburb.

The ratepayer’s association representing Mill Park complained in late 1945 that policemen were a rare sight in the suburb, particularly at night, and that increased police protection was needed to reduce the number of burglaries taking place.\(^ {34}\) As far as the ratepayers were concerned, Mill Park, as one of the leading suburbs of the city, deserved better protection. The SAP responded to these complaints by saying that both cycle and van patrols were used regularly to patrol the area day and night. Knowing that the demand by the ratepayer’s association for more policemen to be allocated to Port Elizabeth would meet with rejection, the NAC suggested that the public install burglar-proofing to forestall petty crime.\(^ {35}\) Whether or not the ratepayers accepted this suggestion is unknown. What it does suggest is that petty crime in Port Elizabeth, as elsewhere in the world, could not be contained solely by the

\(^{33}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/19, SAP Com to J McLean, MP, 17 February 1945.

\(^{34}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/19, Sect, Ward 3 Ratepayers Association to TC, PE, 8 Sept 1945.

\(^{35}\) PER, 25/110, No. 3, Minutes of Native Affairs Committee, 9 Oct 1945.
police: the local community also had a role to play in combatting crime.

Soon after the visit of SAP Commissioner in August 1945, the Minister of Justice, C F Steyn, arrived in Port Elizabeth for a brief visit in October. He expressed his thanks to the local authorities for the good work carried out by the CPS during the war years, noting that the depleted police force had in particular received a great deal of assistance from this body. The CPS terminated its activities nationally at the end of June 1946. Cllr Schauder quickly seized on this topic of a police manpower shortage to suggest to the Minister of Justice that in order to police the coloured areas like Schauderville more effectively, coloured men serving in the armed forces should be recruited by the SAP. Although in agreement with this proposal, the Minister of Justice reiterated the point made by Commissioner Palmer that, until the remuneration of policemen was improved, he doubted whether sufficient men could be acquired to police more effectively the coloured areas of Port Elizabeth.

The meeting with the Minister of Justice and the SAP Commissioner had a favourable outcome for the PECC in that three additional coloured constables were sent to Korsten police station in 1946. This meant that coloured areas like Schauderville received more effective policing than in previous years and the PECC was quick to express its appreciation for this development. According to the Medical Officer of Health, the appointment of these coloured policemen was by September already having a noticeable impact on curbing the anti-social behaviour of certain residents prone to ‘brawling, drunkenness [and] rowdy behaviour’. Because the police were unable to enter private houses in the area without search warrants, this limit to their powers was overcome by retaining the services of the six caretakers who were appointed as special constables in 1945. Thus, by exploiting a legal loophole, local authorities could use these men, by virtue of the powers conferred on them by Section 30 of the Criminal Procedure and Offences Act No. 31 of 1917, to enter at will

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37 PER, 25/110, No. 3, Interview between PECC and Minister of Justice, 22 Oct 1945.
38 PER, 25/110, No. 3, TC, PE to SAP District Cmdt, 9 Aug 1946.
any property where misconduct or damage to municipal property was suspected. Although their powers of arrest were limited to the protection of municipal property they nevertheless provided the police with invaluable assistance.

In 1947 there were unsuccessful calls to establish a police station in Schauderville, inhabited by approximately 20 000 people. Complaints that the township was being inadequately patrolled, even though more coloured policemen had been appointed to the area, were denied by the SAP leadership in Port Elizabeth. As far as the District Commandant was concerned, around 10 men were detailed to patrol the area; these men were also constantly under the supervision of a white constable and a coloured sergeant. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to improve the crime situation in Schauderville, the largest coloured township in Port Elizabeth, when the coloured CPS unit, disbanded in 1946, was resurrected in 1951. It was composed purely of volunteers, numbering 57 in August 1951, and its express aim was to keep law and order, curtail hooliganism and reduce the murder rate in the area. Lieutenant Craucamp of the Korsten police was closely involved in setting up this service, and together with the Chief Housing Supervisor, was to act as an advisor to this unit. Although considered to be largely successful in carrying out its mandate, several members of the public had complained of ill-treatment by some of these men. After being informed of their specific duties at a meeting with the SAP District Commandant, Major P S Fourie, and the area commander, Captain Joubert, the men serving in the coloured CPS began carrying out their work more effectively and without criticism from the public.

In keeping with the evolving apartheid policy of the National Party during the early 1950s, the Deputy Commissioner of the CED requested additional coloured policemen for Port Elizabeth, in line with the discussions he had held recently with Commissioner Brink during the latter’s visit to the city. Apartheid policing envisaged white policemen policing whites,

40 PER, 25/110, No. 3, Council Minutes, 26 Sept 1946.
41 PER, 25/110, No. 3, TC, PE to SAP District Cmdt, 25 April 1947.
42 PER, 25/110, No. 3, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 14 June 1949.
43 PER, 25/110, No. 4, Report of Medical Officer of Health, 12 Sept 1951.
44 NAR, SAP 508 9/2/53, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 17 March 1953.
coloured policemen policing their own community, and so on. Thus, more coloured policemen were needed to patrol the coloured and mixed black-coloured areas of the city where the population had grown considerably over the years but without the parallel growth of the number of coloured policemen. Their number at Baakens Street stood at six (one second class sergeant and five constables); an additional 10 constables and three NCOs were sought. Patrolling South End was the responsibility of these men based at Baakens Street, and, because of the overcrowded and dangerous conditions there, two-man patrols were necessary to counter the possibility of attacks on the police.

An increase in burglaries throughout NBL was brought to the attention of the NAC in July 1953 by the NAB. The Board seemed to think that most of the burglaries, committed mainly during the early hours of the morning, were the work of outsiders. The PECC discussed the matter and decided to ask the police for comments on the matter and to also keep an eye out on vehicles entering the township after midnight in an effort to curb the number of burglaries. The District Commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel R van Heerden, confirmed the increase in burglary cases but doubted whether all such cases were committed by those living outside NBL; he had evidence of New Brighton residents being charged with housebreaking and theft in the township. With the population of the township increasing by around 400 per month (see Table 6.2 below), he stated that crime would automatically increase unless the Council took drastic steps to curb this influx.\footnote{PER, 25/110, No. 4, District Cmdt, PE to TC, PE, 29 July 1953.} The unrealistic expectation that the limited number of police in NBL could check the movement of vehicles and people at a variety of entrances to the township was quickly quashed by Commandant van Heerden. Nevertheless, steps were taken by the NBL police to keep an eye on the nocturnal movement of cars and people. It was agreed that close co-operation between New Brighton residents and the SAP was required if a significant reduction in the crime rate was to be achieved.

\begin{table}
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\caption{African population increases in selected towns, 1951-1960} \label{tab:6.2}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Population Increase (\%)} \\
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\end{table}

Even though the PECC had decided in January 1953 to implement influx control measures in the city (see Chapter 7), the police were hamstrung by the Council’s tardiness in organising a sufficiently large and efficient labour bureau to police this legislation. Enforcement of Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act only began in June after the first urban areas permits had been printed. One of the reasons for the delay in enforcing influx control was the PECC’s reluctance to appoint a large and expensive staff to man the labour bureau in North End. Another reason was the reluctance on the part of the PECC to police the legislation thus making influx control measures in Port Elizabeth largely ineffective, at least until the 1960s.

**TRAFFIC CONTROL**

The shortage of police personnel was not only a factor in routine crime-fighting and patrol work, it was also felt in the matter of traffic control. These mundane traffic control duties tended to exacerbate the problem of insufficient manpower being experienced by the police force. An increase in the use of motor vehicles after the end of the First World War meant that the SAP, as purveyors of law and order, were also expected to enforce all laws and regulations pertaining to motorised transport. In time they also took over traffic control and point duty in the city. Duties of this nature brought the SAP into direct contact with the PECC’s traffic and omnibus committee and close co-operation was needed between these

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Robinson, *Power of Apartheid*, p 188.
two official bodies for the smooth functioning of traffic matters in Port Elizabeth.

Yet such developments implied a broader dispersal of limited SAP resources within the city, so when the PECC pointed out to Inspector L Strickland, the District Commandant, that policemen were absent from carrying out point duty at some of the major intersections of the city at peak traffic periods, he pointed out that there were insufficient men for the regular performance of such duties. He had in the meantime applied to police headquarters for an additional eight men for Port Elizabeth. In this he proved unsuccessful. The Town Clerk for Port Elizabeth eventually found out, from his counterpart in Cape Town, that the only way to maintain any additional traffic points in future would be for the Council to pay extra for such services provided by the SAP. This did not seem to be a viable alternative for the PECC which generally avoided incurring any extra costs wherever and whenever possible.

Major sporting occasions, such as the playing of international cricket and rugby matches in Port Elizabeth at St George’s Park, entailed the deployment of large numbers of policemen on traffic duty. When the touring Australian ‘Wallabies’ arrived in the winter of 1933, for example, the District Commandant, Major Lloyd Lister, had to release around 55 men for traffic control duties on consecutive Saturdays to assist parking attendants provided by the PECC. Preliminary meetings held between the PECC and the SAP before the arrival of the touring party, with Major Lloyd Lister representing the latter body in person, suggests one of two things: either the importance of organising good traffic control, or the Commandant’s personal interest in rugby when it came to the big occasion, required his personal presence at such meetings. Given the high status of rugby within SAP circles (noted in Chapter 3), voluntary and active police involvement during special sporting events should come as no surprise, particularly when policemen received free access to games where their services were required.

By the early 1930s central government concluded that the increasing volume of traffic in

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49 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1137, TC, Cape Town to TC, PE, 7 Sept 1927.
50 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1098, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 10 Aug 1933.
urban areas required direct municipal control and decided to relinquish its responsibilities heretofore carried out by the SAP. The meeting of the PECC’s Taxi and Omnibus Committee was attended by the SAP representative, Constable J W Coombs, on 13 November 1934 for the last time; the SAP quit virtually all involvement in traffic management on 14 November, thereafter dealing only with criminal and legal aspects of traffic control. Henceforth the Council had to provide its own personnel to police and administer traffic matters. Only two men, appointed by the PECC, still remained on traffic duty after the SAP had relinquished its traffic commitments, and they had to be supplemented with an additional four temporary traffic constables over the coming summer season.\(^{51}\) Thus the withdrawal of SAP personnel left a void which local government had to fill at its own expense. The Deputy Commissioner of the CED was quick to enforce the new arrangement, insisting that the two constables still fully employed in traffic control duties in Port Elizabeth, be reassigned to their more legitimate police duties in the city.\(^{52}\) Major Lloyd Lister did promise, however, that the SAP would continue to keep an eye on any traffic offences committed, thereby co-operating with the Council’s traffic control endeavours. Commissioner de Villiers had complained for years about the folly of having his highly trained men directing traffic at a time when urban crime was on the increase: he was only too glad to rid the SAP of such extraneous duties.\(^{53}\)

### POLICING THE ‘NUISANCE’ FACTOR

The local state in Port Elizabeth, like many others in the western world, envisaged a crime free and attractive ‘city beautiful’, with the result that such a view or ideology clashed with the activities of informal traders, urban stock owners and beggars.\(^{54}\) Because such activities were contrary to the accepted image of a modern city, at least in the eyes of whites, those existing on the very edge of the breadline were constantly exposed to persecution by local government authorities. Policemen, as law enforcers, were expected to ensure that the concept of a ‘city beautiful’ remained intact by prosecuting the ‘nuisances’ of society.

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\(^{52}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, SAP Dep Com to TC, PE, 2 Nov 1934.


\(^{54}\) D M Smith, (ed), *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1992), p 163.
Another kind of on-going ‘nuisance’ which the SAP had to attend to was the problem of anti-social behaviour where the peace and quiet of law-abiding citizens was disturbed by drunkenness, shouting and swearing in public.

**Stray Livestock**

The perennial problem of livestock straying across main roads and into the streets of Walmer (few other white suburbs seemed to experience this problem) led to complaints from the public soon after the formation of the SAP in 1913. This forced the local council to request that the SAP attend to the matter.\(^{55}\) It seems that the livestock owned by the inhabitants of Walmer Location (and also by white stock owners who owned small holdings within the municipal area of Walmer) have caused problems throughout the twentieth century and no solution could be found which was satisfactory to all parties concerned. One of the solutions proposed in 1914 was that the municipal ranger patrol the suburb at night and impound any livestock found straying within the area.\(^{56}\)

The police in Port Elizabeth were requested to assist the PECC in dealing with this problem throughout the 1913-1956 period. In order to eliminate, or at least reduce the incidence of stray animals, the PECC sought to prosecute people who were habitually guilty of breaking the law.\(^{57}\) Privately owned property in Walmer was often invaded by goats and cattle in search of grazing with the result that policemen, instead of dealing with common crime, were frequently asked by local residents to remove livestock from their gardens. Yet the irony is that the SAP was just as guilty as the people it sought to prosecute for stray animals. On more than one occasion, while the Walmer police station was still on Buffelsfontein Road, police horses were seen ‘careering along the public thoroughfares’ posing a hazard to motor vehicles, horse-drawn carts and pedestrians in the area.\(^{58}\) After being warned by the Walmer Council in 1929 that the District Commandant would be informed about this problem, the sergeant in charge of Walmer police station ensured that police horses were more carefully

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\(^{55}\) PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, 3 June 1914, p 48.

\(^{56}\) PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, 2 Dec 1914, p 120.

\(^{57}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 1/2/1/26, Report of Health and Licences Committee, 21 April 1921.

\(^{58}\) PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, 28 November 1929.
monitored thereafter. But, by the end of the century, nothing much had changed with stray animals still posing a hazard or ‘nuisance’ in the vicinity of Walmer.

**Beggars**

As Port Elizabeth grew in size and population the number of homeless, unemployed people expanded until by the twentieth century the police were being constantly bombarded with requests from the local state to remove these ‘nuisances’ from the streets. In 1925, for example, members of the public complained to the Town Clerk about the presence of beggars in the CBD; he in turn contacted the District Commandant about the matter, requesting that the SAP deal with this issue. Inspector Strickland responded by saying that his hands were tied in dealing with such people until the Council promulgated the necessary regulations. Only then could this ‘nuisance’ be properly controlled in Port Elizabeth. Strickland followed up on this matter, only to be told at the end of October 1925 that the PECC had put the matter of framing regulations dealing with the control of beggars to the vote but the motion had been defeated. This, in effect, meant that the Council preferred the status quo to remain as it probably considered the limited extent of begging in the city unworthy of legislation.

Under pressure from continual complaints by the local public, and also visitors to the city, Inspector Strickland once again urged the PECC in April 1926 to review the regulations pertaining to beggars who frequented the principal streets of Port Elizabeth. Whites Road, in the vicinity of the Opera House, and Main Street, seemed to be the areas most affected by beggars. Having obtained copies of regulations applied to beggars in Cape Town and Durban, Strickland suggested that the Council consider applying regulations similar to that in force in Durban. At the same time, he recommended that the Council reserve the right to authorise legal begging by disabled ex-servicemen and other similar cases.

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59 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, SAP District Cmdt, PE to TC, PE, 16 April 1925.

60 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, Acting TC, PE to SAP District Cmdt, PE, 28 Oct 1925.

61 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, TC, PE to SAP District Cmdt, PE, 4 July 1928.

62 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, SAP District Cmdt, PE to TC, PE, 7 April 1926.
After due consideration, the PECC approved of new regulations, quoted below, to govern begging in the city:

No persons shall within the City solicit alms in public thoroughfares, or from door to door, nor endeavour by the exposure of wounds, deformities or begging letters to obtain or gather alms, without permission of the City Council in writing.\(^{63}\)

This regulation was approved by the Provincial Secretary in Cape Town and appeared in Provincial Gazette No. 1 054 of 15 October 1926. To ensure full control over potential beggars, Strickland requested that the Council refer all applicants to the SAP for screening, ostensibly to prevent those beggars (known to the police) who begged in an offensive or annoying manner from being on the streets.\(^{64}\) The PECC acceded to his request, knowing full well that the object of this screening was to remove persistent beggars who harassed or irritated less tolerant members of the public on the city’s main streets. It did, nevertheless, acknowledge that begging was one of the more minor manifestations of the larger question of poverty prevalent in Port Elizabeth at the time.\(^{65}\)

Although municipal regulations to control begging in the city had been passed several years earlier, by February 1929 the PECC, under the instigation of councillor White, considered it necessary to remind the SAP to enforce such regulations.\(^{66}\) For the SAP, checking on and regulating the behaviour of beggars in the city centre was no doubt a minor consideration when compared to other policing work of a more serious nature. For councillor T R White the presence of beggars in the central business district probably detracted from the appearance and image of the city and they had to be closely monitored.

Main and Jetty Streets remained the most popular areas for beggars to congregate and by

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\(^{63}\) *Port Elizabeth Advertiser*, Municipal Notice No. 78, 1926, 8 May 1926.

\(^{64}\) PER, 25/28, Vol 1, SAP District Cmdt, PE to TC, PE, 20 Oct 1926.

\(^{65}\) PER, 25/28, TC, PE to W Asher, 25 Oct 1926. Asher, a business man in Graaff-Reinet, had read about the prohibition on begging in Port Elizabeth in the *Herald* and wished to know how the PECC had managed to achieve this form of social control. Occasional police raids on beggars in Graaff-Reinet were rarely successful. It seemed to him that the PECC had found a way to deal successfully with general poverty and begging - the Town Clerk of PE pointed out to him that no solution had yet been found to eliminate entirely the problem of poverty in PE.

\(^{66}\) PER, 25/28, Vol 1, Minutes of Native Affairs Committee, 22 Feb 1929.
September 1935 the District Commandant, Chief Inspector Beresford-Wood, appeared to be tiring of the constant reminders of the PECC to deal with these beggars. As far as he was concerned, they were perpetrating petty municipal offences, and policemen were there to fight crime of a more serious nature. He suggested that municipal officials, like traffic inspectors, could point out the offenders to the police who would then take the necessary action. This was done and the position regarding beggars in the city centre was greatly improved as far as the PECC was concerned. This could only mean that the ranks of the beggars had been thinned to a more reasonable number so that the city centre was no longer inundated with the poorest of the poor, thus giving the city an outwardly ‘tidy’ appearance which no doubt kept the white community happy.

Soon after his arrival in Port Elizabeth in December 1936, the new District Commandant, Major F J Verster, noticed the prevalence of beggars in the city centre and quickly ordered his men to prosecute these people. Such action brought him into conflict with one of the local magistrates who criticised this high-handed approach to beggars. The result was that the SAP simply stopped taking action against them, much to the annoyance, it would seem, of the PECC. Neither the Council nor Verster were happy with this situation, so Verster eventually arranged to meet with the magistrate concerned with the result that the prosecution of beggars was renewed. In what would appear to be an attempt to assuage the concerns of the PECC, which wanted municipal regulations applicable to beggars to be more rigorously enforced, Verster assigned a man in plain clothes to deal with beggars on a full-time basis.

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67 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, Minutes of Joint Meeting of Traffic Control and Licences Committees, 3 Sept 1935.
68 PE Municipality, Mayor’s Minutes (MM), 1935, p 18.
69 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Interview with SAP District Cmdt, 18 June 1937.
70 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 15 July 1937.
One of the problems, in the eyes of the police, was that the moment a beggar was accosted by a policeman, he invariably produced some article or other which he was supposedly trying to sell. By doing this, the beggar could thwart any attempt by the law to accuse him of begging. The article for sale implied that he was a hawker and for that reason he could not be prosecuted. On explaining this matter to the PECC, the District Commandant was pleased to hear that all persons licensed to hawk goods had to wear special badges. Should any person be hawking goods illegally, he could be prosecuted under Government Notice No. 415 of 1933 which stipulated that hawkers without such badges would be formally prosecuted.71

**Hawkers**

Hawkers (selling mainly fruit, vegetables and eggs) in Port Elizabeth came into contact with the SAP at odd intervals during the 1913-1956 period. A fairly recent study by Appel has noted that hawkers were barely noticeable on the socio-economic landscape of the city before 1914 but soon thereafter hawking, as a source of income, increased appreciably.72 By 1928 the number of Indian and coloured hawkers outnumbered their white and black competitors by far, with whites the subject of the least criticism for plying their trade.73 Police action against hawkers usually occurred when disputes arose between hawkers themselves, or when illegal hawking took place. All hawkers needed permits from the Municipality before being allowed to trade. The police were expected to check for such permits during routine patrols.

**Vagrants**

Like beggars, who were also usually homeless and unemployed, vagrants lived on the lowest social level in Port Elizabeth. Beggars and vagrants were generally the same people even though the terminology used to describe their condition may differ. In any case, the police were still expected to keep their visible presence within the city’s boundaries at an acceptable level. White society preferred to keep these ‘nuisances’ out of its sight. For example,

71 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Interview with SAP District Cmrdt, 18 June 1937.
vagrants or homeless people whose disagreeable outward appearance gave offence to residents visiting the CBD, were classified as a ‘nuisance’ by the PECC and therefore had to be ‘policed’ out of the area.\textsuperscript{74}

After about a lapse of three weeks, during which time little appeared to have been done by the SAP on this matter, the Town Clerk on 20 June 1931 once again contacted Chief Inspector M J Hart, the District Commandant. This time he requested that the police employ more ‘rigorous methods’ as still too many of these people were seen loitering in the main thoroughfares of the city.\textsuperscript{75} Hart duly promised to deal with the matter.

The only District Commandant who decided to do some detailed research into the presence of vagrants living in and around Port Elizabeth was Chief Inspector Verster. He concluded that three types of vagrants existed. The first tended to erect rudimentary shelters in the bush where they lived over an extended period, the second did not erect temporary shelter but ‘simply cuddle[d] under a dense bush’ and slept there, rarely spending more than two nights in the same spot. The third type of vagrant generally found a drain or uninhabited premises somewhere in the built-up areas of the city.\textsuperscript{76} The problem for the police was that no law existed with which to deal effectively with this urban malady: their hands were effectively tied until such time that appropriate laws or regulations were passed by the local authorities.

The only possibility of prosecuting these homeless wanderers during the late 1930s was to apply Act 23 of 1879, section 2, which stated that any person ‘wandering abroad’ without sufficient means of support was a vagrant.\textsuperscript{77} To obtain a conviction under this law was difficult. It had to be proved that the arrested vagrant had been ‘wandering abroad’, and sleeping under a bush or in a backyard was not considered ‘wandering abroad’. Proving that the person had no or insufficient means of support was also a problem as any type of employment, or cash in hand, meant that such persons could not be prosecuted. So for the

\textsuperscript{74} PER, 25/28, Vol 1, TC, PE to SAP District Cmdt, 23 May 1931.

\textsuperscript{75} PER, 25/28, Vol 1, TC, PE to SAP District Cmdt, 20 June 1931.

\textsuperscript{76} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, District Cmdt to TC, PE, 15 July 1937.

\textsuperscript{77} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, District Cmdt to TC, PE, 15 July 1937.
police, eliminating the social scourge of vagrancy (in the eyes of the PECC and probably most well-to-do citizens) remained something of an insoluble dilemma.

When the police did apprehend vagrants squatting on municipal land March 1937, these vagrants were released as the public prosecutor declined to take the case further. As far as he was concerned, such people had to be first warned to leave the land upon which they were trespassing. Only if they refused to heed such warning could they be liable for prosecution. The SAP had in fact found that the vast majority of trespassers, when warned to leave an area where they were staying illegally, co-operated without a fuss. Being apparently eager to assist the Council in this matter, the new District Commandant, Major Peard, promised to send regular police patrols into areas where squatting was prevalent during the winter of 1938. He hoped that by making things as unpleasant as possible for these homeless people, the problem would be kept to an absolute minimum. He also requested that the PECC’s rangers take the necessary action to apprehend or warn vagrants found squatting illegally in the bush within the municipal boundary; for them to first inform the police of their presence was invariably a worthless exercise as the vagrants, upon seeing the rangers, made off before the police could apprehend them. What Peard wanted was for the PECC to pass suitable regulations under which the offenders could be adequately dealt with. Vagrants found in the bush outside municipal control could be prosecuted and convicted under the Forest Act while those within municipal areas could only be prosecuted for having illegal liquor in their possession.

Co-operation between municipal constables, appointed by the Council, and the SAP usually occurred when beggars or vagrants were overstepping local government regulations. In the case of the Baakens River Nature Reserve, the park constable at various times organised raids

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78 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 23 June 1938.
79 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 23 June 1938.
80 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 25 Nov 1938.
81 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, District Forest Officer to TC, PE, 21 July 1937. As far as this officer was concerned, more vagrants were squatting on municipal than on the Drift Sands Reserve. He resented the mayor’s suggestion that most squatters were to be found on the aforementioned reserve.
into the reserve to arrest vagrants found camping in the area.\textsuperscript{82} The Walmer police from across the Baakens valley also carried out periodic raids into the reserve of their own accord. This type of policing continued throughout the period being studied with no real solution being found by either the local state or the police. On-going repressive policing, increasing urbanisation, unemployment and the lack of proper housing for the poorest of the poor would continue to bedevil attempts to eradicate the existence of vagrants.

**Anti-Social Behaviour**

The SAP in Port Elizabeth had its fair share of anti-social behaviour to deal with during the years 1913-1956. It was their duty to maintain public order by ensuring that certain standards of behaviour were adhered to the general public. This kind of behaviour was usually not criminal in nature but because it irritated, angered or upset members of the public, action by the police had to be taken. Anti-social behaviour was not restricted to certain population groups: the police had to deal with it in all areas of the city.

It is not surprising therefore that at the end of 1928 the Griqua Manufacturing Company complained to the PECC about the loud, sometimes drunken behaviour of bus and taxi commuters at a bus stand opposite their premises in Fishery Road, South End. As far as the Town Clerk was concerned this problem was a police matter, but the manager of the factory believed that unless the SAP had a policeman on constant patrol, the problem would continue.\textsuperscript{83} The SAP could not, of course, station a constable in the vicinity of the bus stand on a continuous basis even though the District Commandant sympathised with the complainants. It was eventually decided that the only solution to the problem was to remove the bus stand higher up Walmer Road, as suggested by the SAP.\textsuperscript{84}

Overcrowding and poverty had for several decades made Korsten a prime area for anti-social behaviour and petty crime. Besides crime on the streets, any open land or sports fields were

\textsuperscript{82} PER, 25/28, Vol 1, Supt of Parks to TC, PE, 15 March 1950.

\textsuperscript{83} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1138, Manager, Griqua Manufacturing Company to TC, PE, 11 Jan 1929.

\textsuperscript{84} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1138, Minutes of Board of Works, 14 Feb 1929.
ideal places for youths to indulge in criminal-like behaviour. The recreation ground for coloured people in Korsten, just off Haupt Street, was a popular venue for such youths. It comprised several tennis courts, a cricket field, two ‘football grounds of a sort’ and a corrugated iron building to serve as a dressing room besides a few toilets. When the Sidwell and Korsten Coloured Recreation Board of Control complained in July 1938 about damage to the toilets and changing room, the police based in Korsten declared that they were doing all they could to stop such damage to these grounds. Dagga smokers frequenting the grounds had been arrested and night patrols were also carried out. Yet in the opinion of the Sidwell and Korsten Board of Control, the SAP were not doing enough to stop vagrancy and anti-social behaviour prevalent at the grounds. From the police point of view, they could do no more than they had been as it was impossible for them to detail a constable to patrol the grounds on a permanent basis. Major Peard, the SAP District Commandant, argued that the police had in any case other more serious crime issues to contend with in the area.

Taxi drivers and taxi ranks shared a common characteristic in Port Elizabeth: neither was very popular with the public not using their facilities. The locality of taxi ranks, particularly those serving the black and coloured community, was one cause of complaint by the white public: they resented the language usage, noise level and drunkenness sometimes prevalent at these ranks. A taxi rank in Walmer Road during 1930 was considered a ‘menace to the health and morals of respectable citizens’ and, according to the complainant, should have been placed at the bottom of Walmer Road. One of the police constable assigned to traffic duties agreed with this proposal as the proposed rank would have better lighting and could be more easily policed.

Besides causing problems in the suburbs, taxi ranks were also a bone of contention in the CBD during the early 1930s. The owner of the Palmerston Hotel in the city centre

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85 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, Sect, Sidwell & Korsten Coloured Board of Control to TC, PE, 15 July 1938.
86 PER, 25/28, Vol 1, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 22 July 1938.
87 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1091, Griqua Manufacturing Co to PECC, 20 May 1930.
complained of excessive noise coming from the Jetty Street taxi rank during the early hours of the morning. The sound of hooters and the loud revving of engines was prejudicial to his business as many of his guests were woken up by this noise. During this period of Port Elizabeth’s history, the CBD was the ideal location for hotels situated near the railway station and harbour because they were in walking distance for rail and sea travellers. After observing the rank over a period of a few nights, the police agreed that the noise was a problem but they could do nothing about it as the public prosecutor refused to prosecute taxi drivers in this matter. The police also accepted the fact that a certain amount of noise was unavoidable at taxi ranks and the only solution to the above problem was to move the rank to a non-residential part of the CBD. This suggestion was never implemented during the period being studied.

Complaints from the public about the use of bad language, noise levels and hooting by taxi and bus drivers was not limited only to the white community. Some members of the NBL Advisory Board felt the same way about noise levels at bus stops within the township during July 1933. Others complained of the obscene language passengers had to listen to on buses en route to and from the city centre. It was decided that the police be requested to deal with the relevant offenders in this regard. How the SAP, with limited resources, was supposed to deal effectively with such petty public disturbances seems to have been disregarded.

Residents of the newly established McNamee Village soon complained to the NAB about inadequate policing in the village. As far as Cllr Pendla knew, no police patrols were being sent into the new village, only headmen afforded the residents some sort of protection. In Walmer Location, for example, headmen, in the absence of police patrols, often arrested men guilty of fighting and unruly drunkenness. It was decided by the NAB in January 1939 that the NAC be requested to approach District Commandant H Peard about the matter of an

89 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1100, SAP District Cmdt to TC, PE, 14 May 1934.

90 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1280, Minutes of NAB, 13 July 1933.

91 PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, No. 18, Location Supt to Health, Sanitary and Location Committee, 4 Oct, 1938.
increased police presence in NBL. The potential threat posed by the ‘loitering of hooligans’ on NBL streets on Friday and Saturday evenings was something the NAB decided needed pro-active policing. The Board considered that as large numbers of people were being brought over from Korsten to NBL, the police establishment in the township needed to be increased in tandem with this process. Although this increase in numbers was blamed for an increase in crime, the NBL Superintendent pointed out, however, that although the population of NBL had increased by over 25 percent between 1937 and 1938, the level of serious crime had only increased by 4.5 percent. Nevertheless, Cllr Jantjies suggested that if no extra policemen could be found, then Korsten police should follow Korsten people. It was eventually deemed best to consult with Chief Inspector Peard on this issue. This duly happened on 8 August 1939.

During the course of the meeting, the NBL Superintendent made it clear that the NAB was opposed to pick-up vans (kwela kwelas) being sent into the township as the majority of residents were totally against this form of patrolling even though they were not averse to the deployment of more policemen as such. Pick-up vans were associated with the very worst aspects of oppressive policing endured by urbanised blacks (see Chapter 7). Commandant Peard stated that the need for more policemen in NBL had been discussed with the Deputy Commissioner of the CED. He was still awaiting a departmental decision on this issue and was unable to provide extra policemen for NBL without the necessary authorisation. If it had been feasible, he would have willingly transferred men from Korsten to NBL but conditions at Korsten did not warrant such a move. Notwithstanding the current manpower situation, he had arranged for the station commander of the NBL police to carry out patrols of McNamee Village with the few men at his disposal. Yet outsiders who visited the Village during the 1940s found the place virtually free of unruly behaviour, with the inhabitants evincing a friendly attitude during daylight hours; it is possible that Friday and Saturday

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92 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Minutes of NAB, 31 Jan 1939.
93 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Minutes of NAB, 15 June 1939.
95 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Notes of Interview with District Cmdt, 8 Aug 1939.
evenings may have told a different story, hence the need for more police patrols. In corroboration of this seemingly tranquil environment during the 1940s, whites who grew up in NBL remember being able to walk to shops after nightfall without any fear of molestation. One of the reasons suggested for this sense of security was that blacks were expected to show respect to whites, no matter what age the latter were. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s the Superintendent’s annual reports constantly reaffirmed that crime and unruly behaviour was rare in the township, suggesting that the majority of its inhabitants were either extremely law-abiding or under strict, repressive supervision.

POLICING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND GANGSTERISM

This section of the chapter will focus on the policing of youth gangs, formed for mainly anti-establishment activities (very rarely for political purposes), and their unacceptable behaviour usually within their own residential areas. Gangs of this type exist the world over wherever urbanisation has occurred on a large scale, and they share similar characteristics, such as living in a lower income area, common dislike for law and order, misguided leadership without adult supervision, a penchant for loitering around, an immoral code of behaviour and the carrying out of anti-social activities.

Youths in NBL, for example, without the advantages bestowed by family stability, adequate education and the prospect of employment, either joined gangs willingly or unwillingly, and soon adopted a subversive lifestyle.

The causes of delinquent behaviour and gang formation are many, and cannot be entered into here. The primary focus will be on police dealings with such elements within Port Elizabeth’s dismally poor areas where housing, security, social organisation, permanent employment and

97 Interview with Mr D de Lange, Port Elizabeth, 13 March 1999. Mr de Lange’s father worked for the PEM as an administrative clerk in NBL during the 1940s. Their living quarters were situated near the old New Brighton railway station.


the semblance of ‘normal’ life were virtually non-existent. That crime flourishes within these conditions is hardly surprising, and because the SAP were in no position to eradicate the prime causes of such deviant behaviour, they were compelled to police the criminal manifestations of such behaviour within these areas in the only way they knew how: by arresting the perpetrators of crime and violence. Such police action, often brutal in execution, served to aggravate rather than ameliorate crime levels in these poverty-stricken areas of the city.

The problem of juvenile delinquency among the youth of NBL, particularly the gathering together of teenagers near shops and street corners for the ‘sole object of doing evil’, was of concern to members of the NBL Advisory Board from the late 1920s onwards. After the termination of the Second World War, gang-related crime and violence increased considerably in Port Elizabeth although never reaching the same levels prevalent in Johannesburg. The behaviour of youths in the Red Location, where fewer stable family units were to be found in the late 1930s, was considered to be a social problem, as opposed to a police one, which had to be dealt with by parents, teachers and church ministers. The police would have no doubt agreed with these sentiments as they did not consider themselves to be social workers. But by confining themselves to the outcomes of such behaviour, the police were simply reacting to the problem instead of trying to find a solution by working more closely with parents and social workers. Research has shown that youths without a father figure in the home were the most prone to rejecting outside authority, and by obtaining their ‘education’ on the streets of poverty-stricken townships, they soon developed antisocial, criminally-inclined characteristics and succumbed more easily to juvenile delinquency.

The problems posed by the existence of gangs had become so bad by the early 1930s that the SAP was prompted into improving its training in baton usage - in some cities it became fashionable for gang members to attack isolated policemen in order to mark them for life with

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the slash of a knife.\textsuperscript{102} In an attempt to reduce the growing number of knife attacks on policemen, legislation was passed limiting the length of blades which black youths could carry; coloured or white youths faced no such restrictions. Yet local authorities did little to assist policemen in their fight against crime. Adequate lighting, for example, could have made police patrols far easier, and probably safer, in black and coloured townships.

Notwithstanding the findings of Cllr E M Holland that crime and juvenile delinquency had been steadily decreasing since the clearing of slum areas in Korsten, violent criminal activity, mainly assaults, continued to exist in the coloured townships of Port Elizabeth at the beginning of the 1940s.\textsuperscript{103} This unchanging pattern, so prevalent in economically depressed areas, compelled the PECC to request that the SAP increase its surveillance and patrols of these areas. In comparison to Korsten, serious crime remained at a low level in NBL during the early 1940s, despite the existence of youth gangs.\textsuperscript{104} Unlike Korsten, the influx of people into NBL was strictly controlled and overcrowding and lawlessness could be more easily controlled. On average, over the previous 15 years, it was established that around five to six murders occurred each weekend in coloured townships.\textsuperscript{105} The perception of the local authorities was that crime had grown worse in recent years and they laid the blame for this on insufficient police patrols in coloured townships. In Schauderville, those identified as being responsible for an increase in violent crime in this area were youths, often working together in gangs, from neighbouring slum areas who preyed upon Schauderville residents on their way home from work.\textsuperscript{106}

One of the solutions mooted to deal with this perennial problem was the improvement of lighting in the more minor streets linking Durban and Highfield Roads, both arterial routes

\textsuperscript{102} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 133.


\textsuperscript{104} MM, Annual Reports of NBL Supt, 31 Aug 1941, 1942, 1943.

\textsuperscript{105} PER, 25/110, No. 3, Minutes of Housing & Slum Elimination Committee, 12 March 1940.

\textsuperscript{106} PER, 25/110, No. 3, Medical Officer of Health to TC, PE, 1 Sept 1941.
into the township.\(^{107}\) Another idea came about as a result of the Second World War and the concomitant shortage of manpower in the SAP. The swearing in of coloured men to serve as special constables under the auspices of the CPS was found to be the best solution to combat crime in the coloured townships. In places like Johannesburg, Goodhew has found that the contribution of the CPS towards a reduction in crime in black townships was considerable during the 1940s.\(^{108}\) The CPS for the coloured areas of Port Elizabeth was duly established in November 1941 after the approval of the SAP Commissioner had been obtained to swear in 50 coloured men as special police constables (see sub-section ‘Policing Common Crime’ above).\(^{109}\)

The age-old problem of juvenile crime had to also be dealt with by the SAP in Port Elizabeth. According to the District Commandant, Chief Inspector W J Swartz, one of the more negative features of increased employment in the city due to the war was the increase of juvenile crime. This he attributed to the absence of many fathers on active duty and mothers finding work in the factories.\(^{110}\) One of the drawbacks for the police was that they were often accused of abusing their power when dealing with teenage criminals. If the juvenile perpetrators of crime were either black or coloured, then they faced further accusations of misusing their power against an under-privileged class which lacked the ability to defend itself.\(^{111}\) In the arrest of a 14 year old youth by the name of Archie Rensburg for theft and house-breaking in February 1941 in Schauderville, the police were not accused of physical

\(^{107}\) PER, 25/110, No. 3, Minutes of Housing & Slum Elimination Committee, 7 Oct 1941.


\(^{109}\) PER, 25/110, No. 3, Minutes of Housing & Slum Elimination Committee, 18 Nov 1941.

\(^{110}\) NAR, SAP 391 2/4/47, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 11 June 1947.

\(^{111}\) CAR, SWP 6 24/1, Miss D J Mackenzie, St Mark’s Mission House to Sect, Juvenile Affairs Board, PE, 26 March 1941.
maltreatment but rather of holding Rensburg for over 48 hours in police cells. His six accomplices were held for about 26 hours after being arrested. These children should have been held only briefly by the police before being sent to a place of safety.

Reports of hooligan-like behaviour by gangs of youths in NBL surfaced once again during March 1944. A meeting of residents was held in the TC White Hall after the NAB decided that such behaviour was not to be tolerated, and some plan of action had to be instituted to eliminate this social menace. Residents proposed that committees be set up in each ward of the township to monitor the youths, that a civilian guard be established with each member being granted the powers of special constables and, finally, that the NAB interview the Chief Magistrate. Both the Chief Magistrate and District Commandant, Major Jordaan, supported creation of a civilian guard, working in conjunction with the SAP, to patrol NBL. These civilian guards were to be provided only with arms bands bearing the letters NBHG (New Brighton Home Guard) as no clothing was to be issued to them. Unfortunately for the proponents of the New Brighton Home Guard, the PECC’s Finance Committee turned down the proposed civilian guard due to the expense it would incur. The NAC then approached the SAP in an effort to replace the failed New Brighton Home Guard concept with paid special constables but due to the NBL police establishment being at full strength, the District Commandant was unable to comply with this request. Once again, the interests of the white community of Port Elizabeth received preferential security treatment while the black population was neglected.

Yet hooliganism in NBL persisted despite strict municipal regulations and the presence of police patrols. By 1947 some township dwellers resorted to vigilantism in an effort to combat intimidation by gangs of youths, and police were accused of either fomenting the violent clashes that ensued or remaining conspicuously absent when needed. The breakdown

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112 CAR, SWP 6 24/1, Detective Const McDonald to Officer Commanding, CID, PE, 17 April 1941.

113 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/19, Minutes of NAB, 23 March 1944.


115 CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/19, SAP District Cmdt to NAC, 20 June 1944.
of parental control, and respect for one’s elders in traditional Xhosa society, contributed to this clash between juveniles and adults.\footnote{116} The SAP, trained to implement the laws of the white man, found it increasingly difficult to enforce such laws in the face of a blatant disregard for authority.

Although crime levels in NBL were described as acceptable by the local authorities during 1949, the problem of juvenile delinquency remained. Much the same conditions existed in Walmer Location at this time where parents were warned to control their children seen loitering in the streets - it was feared they would get up to mischief unless some kind of employment or activity was found for them.\footnote{117} The Walmer NAB also requested that the police patrol the location at night; failing this, it recommended that additional temporary headmen be employed by the Walmer Council but this latter request was rejected. The Council preferred to leave the matter of patrols to the police who promised to make every attempt to patrol the location on a more regular basis.\footnote{118} No doubt patrols of Walmer proper (inhabited by whites) were carried out in a more regular fashion.

Increasing anti-social and criminal activity in NBL during 1950 by gangs of youths called tsotsis, comprising both male and female, often led to assaults on local residents, a social phenomenon no longer confined to the coloured areas of Port Elizabeth. By operating in gangs, these youths found it easy to rob law-abiding citizens of their money and possessions, particularly at night. Incidents of rape were also reported. Statistics indicate that violent crime such as assault had increased considerably during the post-war years: in 1945 there were 222 prosecutions for assault while in 1949 there were 596, rising to 840 in 1953.\footnote{119} But not all residents were affected by tsotsi activities; for many, their experience of gangs was limited to the kind who dressed extravagantly in American-style clothes and were considered generally harmless.\footnote{120} The attire, structure and code of behaviour of these gangs was heavily

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{116}{Baines, ‘History of New Brighton’, p 211.}
\footnote{117}{PER, 23/11/2, Minutes of NAB, Walmer, 8 Feb 1949.}
\footnote{118}{PER, 23/11/2, Minutes of Health and Location Committee, Walmer, 18 July 1949.}
\footnote{119}{Baines, ‘History of New Brighton’, p 210.}
\footnote{120}{Interview with Mr W N Prince, KwaZakele, 11 June 1999.}
\end{footnotes}
influenced by American films.

The SAP were able to curb some of their criminal activities by deploying police vans in the worst-hit areas but it was acknowledged by the NBL Superintendent that the problem went far deeper.\textsuperscript{121} A breakdown in tribal customs, massive poverty, unemployment and restricted movement caused by oppressive laws in urban areas were probably some of the root causes of crime in the township. To eliminate or constrain this problem of gangsterism or anti-social behaviour, reform or improvement of social conditions in the townships was required rather than more police action; the SAP was in any case ill-equipped and ill-trained to deal successfully with the symptoms of this social malady. The NBL Superintendent recommended that youth clubs be established, youth boards be set up to find employment for recalcitrant youths until they were old enough to look after themselves. He at least recognised that constant police action was not the long-term solution to the problem.

Hooligan-like behaviour in Korsten during 1950 led to the local ANC branch approaching the PECC about setting up a CPS to oppose this criminal element in the area. Although gangsterism never reached the same level as that in Cape Town during the 1950s, where gang wars in District Six were fairly common\textsuperscript{122}, levels of anti-social behaviour and crime in Port Elizabeth’s northern areas caused considerable concern. Those closely involved with this sort of behaviour arranged the formation of a CPS unit which began its duties immediately (see ‘Policing Common crime’ above).\textsuperscript{123}

In an effort to find solutions to the tsotsi problem in NBL, the NAB discussed the matter in April 1953. Cllr Molefe noted that these tsotsis were feared by virtually all residents in the township, including headmen and unarmed policemen. He noted that only the CPS established in NBL had any success in curtailing their activities; attempts to set up boxing

\textsuperscript{121} PER, 25/65, No. 11, Report of NBL Supt, 10 Feb 1950.

\textsuperscript{122} See D Pinnock, ‘From Argie boys to skolly gangsters: the lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900-1951’, Studies in the History of Cape Town, 3 (1984), 131-165, for greater detail on the evolution of gangs in District Six.

\textsuperscript{123} PER, 25/110, No. 4, Report of Medical Officer of Health, 19 March 1951.
clubs and the like had been a failure. The general consensus was that the police had failed to stop the *tsotsi* menace and other means had to be found. The realization that legislation and the SAP could not eliminate the gang element in black and coloured townships on their own was a realistic appraisal of the situation. Causes of gangsterism remained complex and the artificial structure of society caused by segregation and apartheid only served to aggravate problems of this nature. All the NAC could recommend to reduce the threat of crime caused by gangs was an increase in street lighting, provision of employment through the Labour Bureau, greater parental control and an intensification of police action.

Complaints and petitions from law-abiding inhabitants of Schauderville concerning the presence of ‘undesirable’ elements in their township continued for the remainder of the 1950s. Going out at night, particularly over weekends, was becoming increasingly dangerous for the average citizen due to youths or unemployed males, described as ‘loafers’, who loitered on street corners and near shops, waiting for an opportunity to rob and assault them. Linked to this was the complaint that the SAP were not policing the area effectively.

By September 1956 officials in local government were referring to these groups of loiterers as gangs who often came to blows with each other, using mainly stones as weapons of aggression. In time more lethal weaponry, such as guns and knives, became increasingly popular in these intra-gang wars. Innocent passers-by had to steer clear of such clashes to avert any harm to themselves. Violence of this nature, found in large, industrialised cities throughout most of the world after 1945, has been described by some writers as a consequence of endemic poverty, working class frustrations and related social ills.

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124 PER, 25/65, No. 12, Minutes of NAB, 28 April 1953.
125 PER, 25/65, No. 12, Minutes of NAC, 6 July 1954.
126 PER, 25/110, No. 5, Petition to TC, PE, 18 Sept 1955.
127 PER, 25/110, No. 6, TC, PE to Korsten station commander, 26 Sept 1956. One of the gangs of Schauder called itself the ‘Apaches’. Dagga and liquor became synonymous with these gangs.
CONCLUSION

Although the main principle of civil policing rests upon the notion of policemen being first and foremost the servants of the public, and not the state, this ideal was never quite attained in South Africa from 1913 to 1956. The Lansdown Commission of 1937 fully endorsed this view of civil policing but its recommendations were never implemented by the state in this respect. The para-military and colonial nature (see Introduction for an explanation of the term ‘colonial policing’) of policing remained the preferred option in a country where government policy was influenced overwhelmingly by racial concerns.129

The SAP carried out its civil policing mandate to some degree in Port Elizabeth by fighting ordinary crime in all the city’s residential areas, but in black and coloured townships, its approach was restricted to ‘low policing’ (a minimal allocation of police resources for routine crime-fighting). In contrast to this form of low-level policing in such townships, a ‘high policing’ model (a more concentrated allocation of police resources) was reserved for civil disorder brought about by industrial and political unrest.130 Quelling ordinary crime in black areas was not a priority for the SAP; white suburbs and the CBD always received preferential treatment. What this chapter has attempted to show is that the SAP in Port Elizabeth were more concerned about maintaining social control over the black population than in fighting crime of a more routine nature. Nevertheless, there were times when the SAP responded to the call of civic and political organisations like the NAB and ANC respectively to police crime more effectively in black areas. Thus, although expected to enforce racially discriminatory legislation more vigorously, the police in Port Elizabeth did not neglect their responsibility towards the black and coloured population altogether.

This chapter reveals that in order for civil policing to work effectively, the SAP needed to work closely with the people on whose behalf it was maintaining law and order - in the South African context, where policing was more oppressive than civil, this rarely happened. Where it did happen more routinely was within the areas inhabited by whites. Ratepayers living in these areas were quick to complain to the SAP when petty crime, vagrancy, begging and

129 Brewer, Black and Blue, p 146.
130 Brewer, Black and Blue, p 195.
illegal hawking was seen to be on the increase. Although the police usually responded to these calls (coming from the white sector of the population) with a certain alacrity, it would appear that the SAP during the entire period being studied failed to eliminate totally these on-going manifestations of urban poverty and crime.
CHAPTER 7

SOCIALLY OPPRESSIVE POLICING IN PORT ELIZABETH: 1913-1956

INTRODUCTION

Socially oppressive policing, as opposed to routine civil policing, was concerned with the control and oppression of the black peoples of South Africa, to ensure the dominant role of the white or so-called ‘civilised’ minority in Africa. Blacks living in urban areas had to constantly endure the impact of repressive legislation such as pass laws, location regulations, poll tax, restrictions on alcohol consumption, and so on. As state employees, the police were expected to implement these laws without question, thus placing them in an invidious position: far from being seen as a benevolent, protective force, policing of this nature ensured that the police in South Africa were regarded as a hostile force by the vast majority of black people. But the behaviour of SAP members did little to enhance their public image. Many a policeman chose to enforce discriminatory legislation in a harsh, arrogant and often brutal manner, incurring the dislike and hatred of the black population, a tendency which will be made apparent as this chapter unfolds. Police enforcement of discriminatory and unjust laws thus created something of an anomaly in South Africa: one sector of the population (white) usually approached policemen for safety whereas the other (black) avoided policemen for safety. Conversely, police enforcement of discriminatory laws made them ‘both victim and perpetrator of a system of racial inequality’, that is, they could never truly fulfill their civil policing roles because the political context within which they worked was undemocratic and oppressive.

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2 For a brief synopsis of police brutality and attempts to define it, see G T Du Preez’s inaugural lecture, Police-Community Relationships: Crisis in our Times (Fort Hare, 1985).

Local government authorities in Port Elizabeth prided themselves on their ‘fair and reasonable’ treatment of black people in the city, something which councillors like Adolf Schauder attributed to the city’s progressive housing policy and rejection of pass laws.\(^4\) Yet the Port Elizabeth City Council’s (PECC) support of the location strategy, as outlined by Robinson, meant that it could maintain, in tandem with the SAP, tight control over its black and coloured population by housing them in separate residential areas.\(^5\) The grouping together of black people in specifically demarcated areas allowed the local state and police to impose an effective means of surveillance over people whose dark skins made them stand out in white areas. The PECC had therefore very little need to implement the influx control provisions of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 which created an all-encompassing legislative framework to control and administer black urbanisation across the country.\(^6\)

Unlike most other local authorities at the time, the PECC chose not to introduce influx control measures even though the Act made this possible.\(^7\) The absence of influx control measures meant that fewer blacks were jailed for criminal offences in Port Elizabeth when compared to other centres. As a result of this, the PECC came to believe its own propaganda, that the inhabitants of NBL were extremely law-abiding.\(^8\) Nevertheless, like the central state, the local state represented by the PECC in this instance, never forgot one of its prime duties, which was to safeguard the rights of its white citizens. Increasing urbanisation by blacks in particular ‘seemed to threaten outbreaks of disease, crime and civil disorder from


which even the more exclusive suburbs would not be immune.\footnote{9}

**LOCATION, LABOUR AND INFUX CONTROL REGULATIONS**

Besides the reliance of the central state on its bureaucratic arm to administer its laws and regulations, it also depended heavily on local state administrators and the SAP to enforce its policies. For some writers, the pass system employed in South Africa was in fact ‘inextricably entwined’ with policing from the nineteenth century onwards\footnote{10}, yet in Port Elizabeth, before the 1950s, the PECC was able to resist successfully government attempts to force it to implement influx control measures. Instead, if preferred to utilise its Location Regulations as a control mechanism. This mechanism allowed it to control the entry and residence of all New Brighton’s permanent inhabitants, while visitors were expected to report their presence to the Superintendent immediately upon entry.\footnote{11} Thus, the PECC’s location strategy meant that central government influx regulations were unnecessary in Port Elizabeth. But the provision by the state of policemen to assist the Council in its location strategy was certainly necessary. Their physical presence in urban black locations affirms Robinson’s argument that these locations were not simply housing schemes but ‘places of manipulation, domination and control.’\footnote{12}

Having taken over the overall policing of NBL in September 1927, the SAP were soon


\footnote{12} See J Robinson’s chapter, ‘Power, space and the city: historical reflections on apartheid and post-apartheid urban orders.’, in D Smith, (ed), *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1992), p 297.
involved in implementing some of the more petty regulations related to black township administration. Policemen trained to maintain law and order were arresting people for minor, non-criminal offences. For instance, a woman desirous of visiting her parents could be arrested for entering NBL illegally if she did not report immediately her intention to the Superintendent. The enforcement of such petty regulations was roundly condemned by members of the New Brighton Advisory Board.\textsuperscript{13} If it is true that incidents of serious crime were infrequent, despite the lack of lighting (only installed in 1929) and adequate police patrols, it explains why the police had more time and energy for prosecuting ordinary, law-abiding residents in NBL for petty violations of oppressive legislation.\textsuperscript{14} But this is not surprising given that the police were less concerned about fighting ordinary crime in the African townships of South Africa than enforcing socially restrictive regulations. Thus, a shortage of policemen in townships like New Brighton was never a major concern for police authorities - their main concern was to keep the white public happy and secure in the knowledge that their suburbs were afforded first-rate police protection.

Perhaps the most negative drawback foisted on the SAP by its crucial role in enforcing oppressive legislation was the effect such duties had on relations between itself and the black public. The District Commandant of the Port Elizabeth SAP during the 1936-1938 period, Chief Inspector F J Verster, admitted to the Lansdown Commission that the policing of such laws made the police most unpopular with black people; he was also candid in admitting that the ‘relationship between the perfectly law-abiding native and the Police [left] some room for improvement’. Part of the blame, he believed, lay with the employment of poorly educated, bywoner class Afrikaners who abused their position of authority by lauding it over black people they considered inferior to themselves.\textsuperscript{15} Verster was not surprised at this type of behaviour from policemen he considered to have a lower class background: their relatively subservient position in society impelled them to disparage those forced to accept an inferior status within a repressive milieu.

\textsuperscript{13} Cape Archives Repository, Cape Town (CAR), 3/PEZ 1/1277, Minutes of Native Affairs Committee, 18 May 1928.

\textsuperscript{14} Mayor’s Minute (MM), Annual Report of NBL Supt, 1928.

\textsuperscript{15} National Archives Repository, Pretoria (NAR), K80, Lansdown Commission, Evidence by Major Verster, 8 February 1937.
The Superintendent of NBL, J P McNamee, believed that relations between the police and the residents of NBL were certainly not strained, unlike the situation in the rest of the city. He had heard of no complaints of rough handling by the police of black people in the area under his jurisdiction, and argued further that nobody had complained to him of abusive behaviour by the police.\footnote{NAR, K80, Evidence by J P McNamee, 8 February 1937.} Although this seems highly improbable, J H Spilkin, a lawyer highly experienced in defending the rights of black people, though more pragmatic than genuinely liberal, corroborated this statement by McNamee in his evidence to the Commission. He stated that he had never heard any allegations of police brutality or man-handling of people in NBL although he could not say the same for Korsten where even whites had been badly man-handled by SAP members.\footnote{NAR, K80, Evidence by J H Spilkin, 8 February 1937.}

Mr A F Pendla, a long-standing member of the New Brighton Advisory Board, was in full agreement with the views expressed above, stating that relations between NBL residents and the SAP were ‘perfectly cordial’, due mainly to good co-operation and adherence to all laws and regulations in force in the township. He argued further that in Korsten and Veeplaas, police brutality and a lack of trust and co-operation was the cause of ill-feeling between the SAP and the people, and not simply the existence of more criminal-like elements in these areas. The only time that he could remember a clash between police and NBL residents was when a group of detectives from elsewhere in Port Elizabeth conducted a raid for illegal liquor - their rough handling of residents caused stone throwing as a means of retaliation. Such incidents never occurred between the local New Brighton police detachment and residents as far as he knew.\footnote{NAR, K80, Evidence by A F Pendla, 8 February 1937.}

The forced removal of Africans from Korsten to NBL from 1938 to 1939 on the pretext of an outbreak of plague due to unhygienic slum conditions required the services of the police in a number of different ways. Because the removals were obligatory, policemen had to be deployed in the area to ensure that the people relocating to New Brighton vacated their homes in accordance with the Council’s instructions. The absence of organised resistance
to the move made their task considerably easier. Others had to assist male nurses in the washing of African men, and as one informant remembered, the police were ‘’... working all right, because people were not willing to be dipped!’’ 19 It was quite obvious to the people that the outbreak of plague was far too coincidental, occurring at much the same time that removals to McNamee Village were about to begin. 20

In a move reminiscent of the aftermath of the 1920 riots (see Chapter 8), the SAP District Commandant, Chief Inspector H Peard, successfully lobbied the PECC to pass a regulation in October 1939 to impose greater control over the carrying of dangerous weapons (firearms, sticks, knives, etc) and implements (axes, hammers, crowbars, etc) by black people. 21 The fact that some implements, such as axes, hammers and crowbars were often used on a daily basis for legitimate work-related reasons seems to have been purposely ignored by Commandant Peard. This meant that innocent workers were thus liable for arrest by any policemen empowered by the new regulations unless they had permission for carrying certain implements deemed unlawful by municipal regulation.

An evolving apartheid system after 1948 saw the gradual introduction of more and more oppressive legislation designed to safeguard white political and economic hegemony. For the SAP this meant even greater involvement in enforcing politically motivated legislation to the detriment of ordinary crime-fighting. In Port Elizabeth the PECC was coerced into implementing labour registration and influx control measures after the 1952 October riots (see Chapter 8). It had successfully resisted attempts to enforce such legislation in March 1951. 22 Central government was convinced that the local location strategy in Port Elizabeth had failed to curb political agitation and unrest in the city hence the need for national

21 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1635, TC, PE to Native Com, PE, 16 Oct 1939.
legislation to enforce stricter political control over the growing urban black population. An amendment to the Urban Areas Act in 1952 ensured that Port Elizabeth, like all cities and towns in South Africa, was designated a prescribed area where influx control had to be enforced. In terms of Section 10 of this amendment, no black person was allowed to remain within a prescribed area for longer than 72 hours unless certain limited requirements were met. But even such strict legislation has been shown by Davenport to have been largely ineffective in curbing urban influx: better employment opportunities and higher wage prospects in towns far outweighed the consequences of breaking the law.

For the conservative police hierarchy in the city, wholly committed to apartheid ideology, the Council’s decision to apply influx control (initially to males only) to the city on 15 January 1953 was a welcome development. The revival of black political activity and the holding of mass meetings in the wake of the October 1952 riots had put the SAP’s repressive adroitness to the test, and it soon found that without the arbitrary powers of arrest provided by influx control laws, its hands were tied. Although the SAP had to wait until June 1953 for the Urban Areas Permits and Labour Bureau to be introduced in Port Elizabeth, it was pleased with this outcome as it could now carry out its duties more effectively. The Labour Bureau relied more on police detection of illegal workers in the city, by way of pre-dawn pass raids in townships and random checks on the street, than on the contravention of Labour Bureau regulations by employers. The excessive amount of time spent by the police on trying to stop the flood of illegal work seekers flooding the city was essentially a futile exercise - arrests of this nature were so common that they had little or no impact at all. For most blacks, a jail sentence imposed upon them by ‘white’ justice was no disgrace. If anything, it

brought the law into disrepute.27

But the central state’s march towards greater social control over its African population continued apace. The creation of a central reference bureau oversaw the issuing of reference books from 1952 onwards, and by the end of 1954 over 790,000 males had been compelled to obtain these new passes.28 Dogged determination by the government ensured that this number topped the three million mark in 1959. Women, in the meantime, were also affected by the newly enacted Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act of 1952 which abolished the previous pass law system in favour of the reference book system; women were also expected to carry the new pass book but only after 1956.29 The initial furore over this stipulation forced the government to proceed slowly with the registration of women, concentrating at first on smaller towns and rural areas, but by December 1960 all women were expected to possess reference books or face arrest.30 Although women resisted this new legislation often quite fiercely, police action, which frequently entailed the brutal use of batons, helped the government to achieve its aims.31
Ironically, Port Elizabeth’s city council, seemingly a bastion of liberal thinking in the pre-1950s era, was one of the most zealous supporters at local government level of the application of Section 10 (1) to women.\(^{33}\) The major reason for this change in political thinking can be attributed to the increasing dominance of National Party (NP) supporters in the PECC: Afrikaner numbers in Port Elizabeth were increasing rapidly (see Table 7.1) and the city had its first Afrikaans-speaking mayor in 1950. The local Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Oosterlig*, conservative in its political outlook and a supporter of the NP, also made its contribution to the changing political landscape of the city.\(^{34}\) It must, however, be kept in mind that a large percentage of Afrikaners remained loyal to the United Party, thus any correlation between Afrikaners and support for the NP must be treated as suggestive only.

**CURFEW REGULATIONS**

Curfew regulations were never applied continuously in Port Elizabeth during the period 1913 to 1956. When they were in force, however, they generally applied to the African sector of the city’s population only, although at times not very stringently. An example of this is when the PECC requested the SAP to be more vigilant in enforcing the curfew regulations of the city in March 1915 after it found out that 117 black people had been arrested for breaking the curfew during the previous year.\(^{35}\) This curfew had been implemented at the start of the

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First World War in August 1914 as a result of increased security measures in the city. The PECC had revised curfew regulations passed in January 1918 which prohibited the movement of any black persons within the limits of the municipal boundary between 9 pm and 4 am. A written pass or certificate was required by those who wished to move about during that time period. Those who broke the curfew were often treated like common criminals by the police, that is, they had to endure the indignity of arrest and related prosecution. The rigour of police enforcement of such petty regulations was to be instrumental in causing a deterioration in relations between generally law-abiding black people and the SAP as the twentieth century progressed.

Some whites living in the suburb of Kensington, not far from Korsten, complained during 1929 of ‘dozens of Hottentots, dagga rookers ... who prowl round our city streets’. Such people, they believed, needed to be kept off the streets at night by curfew regulations. In their opinion, the curfew regulations in Port Elizabeth were too lax and needed tightening up. Complaints of this nature implied that the police were not carrying out their duties efficiently; with limited numbers at their disposal, the local police authorities could not deploy their men at will.

When the Walmer NAB requested that the curfew regulations in force in Walmer be repealed in 1930, the station commander of the SAP in Walmer strongly opposed this move. His argument rested on two main reasons: the first being that location passes were easily obtainable, and secondly, if the curfew from 9:30 pm to 4:00 am was lifted, crime in Walmer would escalate appreciably. Seeing that similar regulations existed in Port Elizabeth, the SAP station commander seemed to believe that Walmer should have the same policy when it came to controlling the black population. Although it had a separate town council, Walmer was in fact an integral part of greater Port Elizabeth, and treated as such by the SAP.

36 NAR, NTS 4735 197/313 (B), Port Elizabeth Curfew, 4 Jan 1918.
37 *Port Elizabeth Advertiser*, 17 Aug 1929.
38 Port Elizabeth Archives Repository, Port Elizabeth (PER), Minutes of Walmer Town Council, No. 11, 28 May 1930. The number of people prosecuted for breaking the curfew since September 1929 was 27.
As from 1 June 1931 curfew regulations in Port Elizabeth (including Walmer) were terminated. Section 20 of Act 25 of 1930 repealed Government Notice 510 of 1911 which meant police could only warn blacks to stay off the streets after dark as prosecution was no longer possible.\textsuperscript{39} After investigation it was found that curfew regulations could be drafted under Section 19 of Act 20, so the NBL Superintendent went ahead and formulated draft curfew regulations for perusal by the NAC. Although the District Commandant favoured the re-imposition of curfew regulations, the NAC vetoed the plan in November 1931, in keeping with its laissez faire attitude towards influx control passes.\textsuperscript{40} 

Unhappy that the curfew in Port Elizabeth had been lifted, the District Commandant, Major Hart, appealed to the PECC to re-impose these regulations during May 1932. He noted that the Uitenhage town council had recently introduced a curfew; he was sure that such regulations had a beneficial effect in that criminals from the black community could have their unlawful activities more easily checked by the police.\textsuperscript{41} The Commandant seemed to think that curfew restrictions worked to the benefit of the public (presumably white), yet it is likely that a curfew benefited the police more than anybody else, mainly because it simplified their task as all black people on the streets after dark could be apprehended as potential criminals and charged for breaking the law, in this case, the curfew. The police did not have to wait for normal civil law to be broken before arresting anyone during the hours in which the curfew was operative. The NAC no doubt carefully considered all the Commandant’s arguments but nevertheless chose to ignore his request for a re-imposition of curfew regulations. Its liberal-minded councillors remained opposed to certain features of oppressive policing - the ‘liberal’ nature of the NAC will be discussed later in this particular section of the chapter.

A series of complaints about burglaries and other disturbances caused by ‘prowling natives’ in Mill Park, an upmarket suburb situated on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth in the 1930s,

\textsuperscript{39} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, Officer Commanding, Baakens Street police station to District Cmdt, 26 Oct 1931.

\textsuperscript{40} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, TC, PE to District Cmdt, 20 Feb 1932.

\textsuperscript{41} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, District Cmdt to TC, PE, 26 May 1932.
brought the issue of re-imposing curfew regulations to the fore once again.\(^{42}\) The Ratepayers’ Association representing South End and Humewood had also complained of burglaries and hoped that the police would attend to the problem.\(^ {43}\) A further aggravating factor in terms of crime in Mill Park, broached by a Mr C Anderson in a letter to the Town Clerk, was the lack of street lighting after midnight when these lights were turned off by the Municipality, probably to save money. The District Commandant, Chief Inspector M J Hart, believed that the return of a curfew was the only effective way to deal with crime prevalent in Mill Park at this time. Without curfew regulations, the police apparently found it difficult to prevent suburban crime. Commandant Hart believed that the black people wandering around at night were responsible for much of the crime in Mill Park - he hoped the curfew would be re-imposed before any more serious crime like rape occurred in the area.\(^ {44}\) Unfortunately for him, the PECC refused to accede to his request in February 1933, leaving Port Elizabeth a curfew-free city.

In August 1933 Hart’s replacement, Major G Lloyd Lister, met with members of the NAC to discuss the reintroduction of curfew regulations. Lister wanted to speak to the NAC face-to-face as he felt that correspondence between them was inadequate to deal effectively with the issue at hand. His main reason for wanting curfew regulations imposed in Port Elizabeth was to control crime, and to do that effectively, he argued that the SAP had to have regulations which controlled the ‘loafer type natives’ of which the city had a large number.\(^ {45}\) After listing a series of criminal statistics (theft, burglaries, etc) applicable to the hours of darkness, Lloyd Lister appealed to the Council for assistance in combatting such crime by introducing a curfew applicable to blacks only. Although unable to prove that these crimes had been committed by black or coloured people only, he believed that blacks had a penchant for perpetrating such crimes after studying such matters during his 35 years of service. He also wanted Korsten to fall under curfew regulations. Although admitting that black

\(^{42}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, TC, PE to District Cmdt, 10 Jan 1933.

\(^{43}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 1/1/1/52, Report of NAC, 23 Feb 1934.

\(^{44}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, District Cmdt to TC, PE, 12 Jan 1933.

\(^{45}\) CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/7, Minutes of Council-in-Committee: Curfew Regulations, 21 Aug 1933.
townships were exempt from such regulations, Lloyd Lister believed it would not be difficult to implement similar restrictions in areas like NBL. Asked if a shortage of SAP personnel was also a factor in the struggle against crime in the city, Lister stated he had not been in Port Elizabeth long enough to answer such a question adequately, an evasive reply, if anything, considering that he had already made up his mind that the city’s black population was prone to committing the type of crimes he refers to above.

After lengthy deliberations, and enquiries about the implementation of curfew regulations in other major cities of the Union, the PECC informed Commandant Lloyd Lister in October 1933 that it was not prepared to re-impose any such regulations on the black population of Port Elizabeth. Lloyd Lister did not take kindly to this decision. He obviously felt a little annoyed that the Council was not being supportive of his attempts to control crime in the city and requested reasons for its decision. It transpired that the NAC was unconvinced that crime had increased in any appreciable manner after curfew restrictions had been lifted in 1931, and it was also opposed to inflicting ‘irksome restrictions’ on the liberty of the black sector of the population.

Although the ‘liberalism’ of the NAC was more ‘pragmatic than principled’, as Baines points out, the influence of the British tradition of ‘fair play’ and justice nevertheless meant that SAP attempts to impose more stringent controls over the black population in Port Elizabeth often hit a brick wall. The paternalistic attitude of councillors like Schauder and Holland came to dominate the thinking of the NAC during the 1940s, and continued to do so until the early 1960s, despite a change in demographics which ensured that Afrikaners, usually conservative in outlook, began to influence the decision-making process within the PECC.

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46 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, Mem by TC, PE, on Curfew Regulations in PE, 18 Aug 1933.

47 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, TC, PE to District Cmdt, 19 Oct 1933.

48 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, TC, PE to District Cmdt, 14 Nov 1933.

from the mid-1950s.\textsuperscript{50}

In response to Commandant Lloyd Lister’s entreaty for the imposition of a curfew and a prohibition on the carrying of sticks, the NAC believed that to punish 21 000 people out of an estimated 22 000 for the criminal activities of a minority would be an unacceptable move by the PECC.\textsuperscript{51} Cllr Taylor noted that the statistics given by the District Commandant did not say when the burglaries had been committed. As far as he was concerned, if the crimes had been committed during daylight hours, then imposing a curfew would have been a futile exercise leading to unnecessary hardship in the lives of ordinary law-abiding citizens. The NAC decided to put this argument to the police, once again refusing to impose curfew regulations to control crime in the city. The ‘liberal’ tradition espoused by the PECC during the 1930s thus prevented it from taking this route in the fight against crime.\textsuperscript{52}

As a direct result of the New Brighton riots, the PECC decided to impose a curfew from 9 pm to 5 am within the Port Elizabeth municipal area. The curfew was to stay in place during the period of emergency implemented after rioting broke out on 18 October 1952. The PECC planned to repeal or amend the curfew once conditions had returned to a semblance of normality.\textsuperscript{53} But, as the Secretary for Native Affairs pointed out, the Governor-General could override any decision by a local authority without its consent. In this way, the Minister of Native Affairs could control matters to the satisfaction of the government. This was done when he decided to retain the curfew for as long as necessary, only amending it to reduce hardship when the appropriate time arose.\textsuperscript{54}

The SAP in Port Elizabeth had for years favoured the application of curfew regulations as a means of controlling crime in the city, so when the mayor suggested that the existing curfew be lifted, the District Commandant, Major G L Joubert, immediately opposed this plan. From

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{50}] Robinson, \textit{Power of Apartheid}, p 152.
\item[\textsuperscript{51}] CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1635, Minutes of NAC, 20 July 1934.
\item[\textsuperscript{52}] Robinson, \textit{Power of Apartheid}, p 152.
\item[\textsuperscript{53}] NAR, NTS 4735 197 313 (B), TC, PE to Acting Native Com, PE, 29 Oct 1952.
\item[\textsuperscript{54}] NAR, NTS 4735 197/313 (B), Sect for Native Affairs to TC, PE, 1 Dec 1952.
\end{itemize}
a police point of view he favoured the retention of the curfew for the following reasons: it reduced crime of a serious nature in white areas; throngs of black people, especially over weekends, would be absent from the streets where their presence annoyed whites going to or from places of entertainment; it was easier for black criminals to commit crimes when large numbers of black people were on the streets at night (their presence hampered police mobility when fighting crime); if curfew regulations were eased, it would result in inner city shebeens once again thriving, causing fights and the like which would demand the attention of the police. As far as he was concerned, domestic servants and other workers could easily get the necessary permission to move about within curfew hours. It was only in March 1958 that curfew regulations were slightly amended: instead of the curfew applying from 9 pm each night until 5 am, it was changed by Proclamation No. 85 of 1958 to take effect from 10 pm.

**POLL TAX**

The passing of the Native Taxation and Development Act in 1925 imposed a poll tax of £1 per annum on all black males 18 years and older. The new magistrate for Port Elizabeth, A B Herold, who assumed duties on 1 August 1928, soon discovered that the estimated amount of tax to be paid by the black community was around £6 000 yet only £700 had been collected for the current year. By making representation to the police on the matter, police action brought in over £800 in the following month. It was the duty of white constables to warn black people to pay their taxes, but in the eyes of the new magistrate, this led to a loss of revenue as virtually all these constables could not speak Xhosa, did ‘not know the habits of natives’ and were thus deemed unsuitable for the task. He therefore recommended that two black constables be appointed to the Native Affairs Department (NAD) specifically for this work. Inspector Strickland, the District Commandant at the time, was in full agreement with this plan. Two black constables attached to the NAD were duly appointed as from 1

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55 NAR, NTS 4735 197/313 (B), SAP District Cmdt to Mayor, PE, 16 May 1957.

56 NAR, NTS 4735 197/313 (B), Copy of Proclamation No. 85, 1958, Urban Area of Port Elizabeth - Curfew, 22 March 1958.

57 L Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (Yale, 1990), p 164.

58 NAR, JUS 900 1/420/25, PE Magt to Sect for Justice, 3 Sept 1928.
December 1928.\(^{59}\)

According to the Superintendent of NBL, J P McNamee, the collection of poll tax during the 1930s was trouble free.\(^{60}\) This does not mean, of course, that tax evasion did not occur. In Korsten during the 1930s police checks on poll tax payment were certainly not trouble free. Residents who had not paid their tax usually took evasive action when policemen were seen in the area. The repressive nature of policing in Port Elizabeth during this period is clearly evident when one focusses on Korsten: it seems that some policemen, black and white, beat and generally man-handled tax evaders, often using sticks and sjamboks in the process of arresting them.\(^{61}\)

Members of the SAP were accused of entering the homes of residents in Walmer Location, often late at night, in search of poll tax receipts early in 1930. This practice was particularly galling to residents who had already paid this tax.\(^{62}\) In some cases, black people entitled to exemption from this tax, often paid the poll tax purely out of ignorance, or fear of arrest.\(^{63}\) The Location Superintendent, E T Reynolds, promised to report the matter to the local station commander provided the NAB supplied him with the required affidavits dealing with this unacceptable police behaviour. It is unclear whether he did so or not. Nevertheless, the checking of poll tax receipts remained a duty of the SAP until the 1960s.

BEER BREWING AND ILLEGAL LIQUOR

Studies which have focussed on beer brewing in townships around South Africa have shown that this activity was a source of on-going conflict between township administrators and women beer brewers throughout the twentieth century; black women had limited employment opportunities in urban areas and therefore resorted to brewing traditional African beer to

\(^{59}\) NAR, JUS 900 1/420/25, PE Magt to Sect for Justice, 6 Nov 1928.

\(^{60}\) NAR, K80, Evidence by J P McNamee, 8 February 1937.

\(^{61}\) NAR, K80, Evidence by Mr I Mfuku, 10 February 1937.

\(^{62}\) PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, No. 11, 27 March 1930.

obtain an income.⁶⁴ For whites, the consumption of alcohol by blacks went hand in hand with crime, with the result that policemen were expected to reduce the incidence of petty crime by eliminating their access to alcohol. This, of course, was an impossible task, yet the SAP were required to expend a great deal of time and limited resources on the so-called scourge of urban blacks. Their task was made all the more difficult because, as argued by Proctor, home brewing and alcohol consumption was considered a ‘vital “freedom”’ by blacks and therefore a right worth fighting for, even if such a fight was usually non-violent.⁶⁵ In other words, the passive resistance course chosen by brewers and drinkers meant that they either hid the liquor, denied its existence or took flight when confronted by the SAP.

Although the PEM flirted with the idea of creating a beer brewing monopoly on a number of occasions, it never did so in the period under discussion, preferring to allow a unique domestic beer brewing system to be practised within NBL. The uniqueness of the system rested on its dual nature, that is, a combination of brewing and prohibition. Baines has argued that one of the reasons used by the local state in Port Elizabeth for justifying the legal brewing of beer in the township was the law-abiding nature of NBL’s residents.⁶⁶ Recognising the importance of traditional beer within the black community, the PECC allowed beer to be brewed on a rotational basis in only one half of the township. The half that was allowed to make beer, known as the ‘wet’ area (situated in the old Red Location), was divided into three wards and brewers in each ward were given six days in which to brew beer - they could not brew beer out of turn. The ‘dry’ area was inhabited by mainly church-goers and law-abiding residents. By restricting beer brewing to a specific area of the location, the PEM and local police force could more easily supervise and control this

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activity.\textsuperscript{67}

Even though the PEM had no legislative grounds to impose this system, the central government nevertheless allowed it to exist. The Natives (Urban Areas) Act Legislation was eventually amended (in 1937) to allow for the co-existence of domestic brewing and prohibition in a single area (discussed later in the chapter). To work successfully, the rotation system depended upon strict supervision by the location superintendent, his staff (location police) and the SAP. Enforcement of the system was unpopular with the women brewers as it entailed house-to-house searches, destruction of illegal or excess beer, and fines.\textsuperscript{68} Women, of course, were very rarely fined or convicted for actually drinking alcoholic beverages as this was anathema to their domestic responsibilities in African culture.\textsuperscript{69} They were in any case the brewers, and not the consumers, of alcohol.

Illegal trade in traditional sorghum beer in and on the outskirts of NBL during 1925 led to the PECC requesting the location police to put an end to it. Sergeant Stimpson was aware of this activity but owing to a shortage of staff, he was unable to do very much about it. He believed that the only way to reduce the problem was for the location police and the SAP in Korsten to co-operate on the matter.\textsuperscript{70} Those bringing beer into the township usually evaded the police by going through the veld. Nevertheless, Stimpson remained optimistic that this illegal trade could be stopped. To control the brewing and consumption of beer in NBL more effectively at this time, the PEM consequently appointed an African corporal to assist Stimpson.\textsuperscript{71}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} Robinson, \textit{Power of Apartheid}, p 107.
\item \textsuperscript{70} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/11/1275, Minutes of Finance Committee, 25 Aug 1925.
\item \textsuperscript{71} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/11/1275, City Treasurer to J C Kemsley, 15 Sept 1925. Police control in NBL was now carried out by six headmen, one white sergeant, a black corporal and nine location police constables.
\end{itemize}
Co-operation did, however, take place between the SAP in Korsten and the location police based in NBL during the latter half of 1925. In combined operations, usually over weekends, these two police units dispersed what were termed ‘unlawful gatherings’ in Deal Party, Cradock Place and Rocklands where beer drinking was a common occurrence. It appears that the SAP leadership considered that the location police needed to take more active steps in eliminating the illegal manufacture of traditional beer in NBL; only then would the illicit traffic in beer be stopped. The District Commandant, Inspector Strickland, seemed to imply that by allowing a surplus amount of beer to be brewed in the township, the location police were aggravating the problem of illegal beer finding its way out of NBL. It was thus up to them to apply themselves to the task within the boundaries of the township and eliminate the problem at its root.

At the Urban Native Affairs Conference held in November 1928, the resolution was adopted that the SAP, and not the location police, were to be held responsible for administering laws and regulations in connection with traditional African beer and other intoxicating liquor. In terms of their mandate, the police were expected to only handle matters strictly of a criminal nature. But because the brewing of traditional liquor, in itself a customary activity for Africans, had become criminalised and liable to prosecution unless licenses had been formally approved, the SAP had to ferret out illegal liquor activities. Unfavourable conditions of service endured by the SAP were thus often further aggravated by having to enforce laws on people who were in fact not criminally-inclined. All this served to make the police even more unpopular in townships like NBL, to the extent that location residents became more and more inclined to actively oppose or obstruct police work within township boundaries.

SAP enforcement of beer brewing regulations in NBL soon led to complaints from residents
about the manner in which the police conducted their beer searches. There were complaints that policemen used offensive language, were rough in their treatment of people and generally ignored the privacy of residents suspected of brewing beer illegally. The Superintendent responded to these complaints by suggesting that the behaviour of the police was simply a case of overly-robust enthusiasm. The PECC itself refused to seek redress on behalf of NBL’s residents, arguing that the police fell under the authority of the Justice Department. It preferred instead to simply pass the buck by implying that its hands were tied in the matter of police misconduct.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that policemen occasionally incurred the wrath of the local community in their attempts to eradicate illegal beer-brewing, leading to sometimes fatal consequences, as in the case of Constable Kosana of Korsten police station. After arresting a couple in possession of beer one night during April 1924 he was attacked by a crowd of onlookers en route to the police station; the injuries he sustained from the assault led to his death. Incidents of assault on policemen apprehending beer brewers were not uncommon elsewhere in the Union. In Langa township, Cape Town, for example, location policemen, white members of the SAP and even the Superintendent of the location were all assaulted by women protesting against an early morning beer raid during April 1939. Unfortunately for policemen, as servants of the state, they were often prone to attacks from even non-criminal elements due to the often suppressive nature of their work. Today, members of the South African Police Service are no longer the target of law-abiding blacks - a radically changed political landscape has eliminated their politically repressive role in society.

Although the Native Advisory Board (NAB) of NBL had raised the issue of policemen entering and searching homes in NBL during March 1929, whilst the occupants were out, it was only in September that a meeting was held with the NBL police station commander, Sergeant van der Walt, to discuss the matter. What concerned members of the NAB was the


77 Nongqai, July 1924, p 400.

manner in which policemen searched houses for illegal liquor and traditional African beer. They often entered houses without knocking even though the occupants were at home, sometimes used abusive language and searched homes in the early hours of the morning; it was feared that such provocative behaviour by the police could lead to trouble.\textsuperscript{79}

Residents of the Walmer Location experienced similar treatment at the hands of the SAP, but without sufficient incriminatory evidence, the police were able to successfully deny any accusations of wrong-doing.\textsuperscript{80} It was also alleged that police sometimes used duplicate keys to enter houses while the occupants were out and then left without locking them up again.\textsuperscript{81} What angered members of the NAB the most was that this sort of police behaviour did not occur in places like North and South End where crime was distinctly prevalent: to them, NBL houses were searched systematically simply because they were occupied by black people.\textsuperscript{82} Although Sergeant van der Walt did concede this point, he nevertheless promised that in future all policemen searching houses would be accompanied by a headman. According to Cllr Mkumatela, by utilising the services of headmen who had a more intimate knowledge of the township, the police would be guided more directly to those houses most likely to have illegal beer on their premises.\textsuperscript{83} In his concluding remarks to the NAB, Van der Walt undertook to ensure that law-abiding citizens in the township would have their homes left alone where possible.

Headmen were appointed in NBL to assist the Superintendent and SAP for control purposes. They were each placed in charge of a particular ward where their main responsibilities centred around the checking of registration cards, rent payments and the checking of deaths, disease and so on. Besides these duties, as designated peace officers in terms of Act 31 of 1917 (as amended), which provided them with powers of arrest, they were also expected to uphold law and order and to assist the police in searching for illegally brewed beer and other forms

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{79} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, Minutes of Advisory Board, 13 Sept 1929.
\item \textsuperscript{80} PER, Minutes of Walmer Town Council, No.12, 7 Oct 1931.
\item \textsuperscript{81} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1277, Minutes of Advisory Board, 15 Aug 1929.
\item \textsuperscript{82} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1514, Minutes of Advisory Board, 13 Sept 1929.
\item \textsuperscript{83} CAR, 3/PEZ 1/1277, Minutes of NAB, 12 Sept 1929.
\end{itemize}
of illicit liquor. These headmen also served as the eyes and ears of the Superintendent, their local knowledge of the ‘goings-on’ in the township provided sometimes valuable information to the township administrators. In time, however, particularly from the 1950s onwards, the headman system proved less useful to white administrators and the SAP. The main cause of this was the increasing resistance to white control brought about by the revival of political opposition in South Africa, led in the main by the African National Congress (ANC). The growing strength of the ANC in Port Elizabeth placed headmen in an increasingly difficult position: in 1955 headman were replaced by inspectors in uniform, and although designated as ‘peace officers’ with limited police powers, the Council never allowed them to be called ‘constables’ as this would have made the association with the SAP too close.

Despite being willing servants of the state in their fight to control the manufacture and sale of illegal sorghum beer, and the trade in illicit liquor in the townships, the police were in fact always on the losing side. What often made them even more ineffectual in controlling the manufacture and sale of beer in NBL was the partiality of some headmen upon whom they relied to lead them to the suspects. This tendency on the part of headmen to safeguard a favoured few above the rest made them less trustworthy in the eyes of some township residents; the latter then began to display more confidence in the neutrality of the police when it came to beer control. Others, like the chairman of the ANC’s New Brighton branch in 1932, accused policemen stationed in NBL of being anything but impartial, noting that during beer raids certain selected homes were not searched. He also accused black policemen of sometimes using unnecessary violence when arresting those suspected of breaking the law. Black constables were on other occasions seen to smash down the doors of houses, breaking

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86 NAR, K80, Evidence by A Tshiwula, 10 February 1937.
87 Police partiality towards favoured beer brewers was a national phenomenon. See, for instance, such practice in Potchefstroom in J C Wells, *We now demand! The history of women’s resistance to pass laws in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1992), p 82.
furniture, and so on, in their search for beer.\textsuperscript{89} To report such malicious behaviour was considered futile as police authorities generally ignored such complaints. Because many policemen who witnessed such deplorable behaviour refused to testify against their comrades the chances of black people getting redress was virtually nil.\textsuperscript{90}

The Native Economic Commission of 1932 made the point that, although being successful in finding hidden sources of liquor, the police could not prosecute the suspects successfully unless possession could be proved. It concluded that attempts to prohibit illicit liquor sales in black townships had failed and, in any case, it ‘would require many more times the present number of Police to destroy systematically all the liquor made.’\textsuperscript{91} The Commission believed that the Port Elizabeth system of having ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ areas was reasonably successful, yet the government persisted in using the SAP to police illicit liquor brewing and consumption. So the enforcement of socially oppressive laws remained a police priority to the detriment of routine crime fighting in black urban areas.

In March 1933 NBL was placed under the provisions of the Urban Areas Act of 1923 which allowed the existing beer brewing system to continue. The PECC soon thereafter promulgated new beer regulations (in August 1933) which had been framed under this Act although they were only implemented from 1 April 1934. Although somewhat cautious about allowing the police too much leeway in policing beer brewing in NBL, the PECC nevertheless approached the Minister of Native Affairs to approve regulations allowing policemen the right to search for beer anywhere within the city’s municipal area. He duly approved, and these regulations, once implemented, allowed the Location Superintendent, any police force member or designated local government official, to search any premises where domestic beer was suspected of being brewed, stored or sold illegally.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{89} NAR, SAP 200 15/8/30, D/ Sgt de Lange to Sub-Inspector, CID, PE, 7 March 1932.
\textsuperscript{90} UG 50-1937, Lansdown Commission, 1937, p 71.
\textsuperscript{91} UG 22, 1932, Report of Native Economic Commission, 1930-1932, p 110.
\textsuperscript{92} Baines, ‘History of New Brighton’, p 132.
Certified beer brewers in NBL found themselves being prosecuted for possessing nominal amounts of beer over the legal limit soon after Sergeant Strydom had been transferred on promotion from NBL in 1936. Cllr Pendla of the NAB believed that had he still been in charge of the NBL police, such incidents would never have arisen. This suggests that Strydom handled the matter of beer brewing in a sensible manner, allowing a certain amount of leeway for those caught overstepping the legal limit permitted by the law. In contrast to Strydom’s leniency, Superintendent McNamee exhibited a far stricter approach to beer brewed in excess of regulations. His propensity for personally emptying containers where the legal brewing limit was exceeded earned him the nickname *uGilifatyi* (literally, ‘one who kicks over barrels’).

District commandants across South African were reminded by Commissioner de Villiers in September 1937 to co-operate closely with local authorities when policing black townships in their areas of jurisdiction, particularly when it came to carrying out raids to control the illegal brewing of beer and other intoxicating liquors. Whenever raids were carried out, location superintendents had to be informed and co-operated with, while at the same time a representative of the local authority was to accompany the police on such forays. District Commandants also were advised to plan their raids carefully, to ensure that they had sufficient men to cope with possible resistance, and, lastly, take care that the raiding party did not split up into small groups. The prestige of the force was at stake: it was feared that any failure or setback in such operations would have a negative impact on the standing of the SAP.

The PECC noted with concern that an amendment to the Urban Areas Act of 1923 on 26 August 1938 meant that black policemen and headmen could no longer search for illicit beer without warrants. Only white policemen retained that authority. In the past headmen had

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93 CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1557, Minutes of NAD, 26 Nov 1936.
95 NAR, NTS 4484 519/313, SAP Com to All Dep Coms, 28 Sept 1937.
96 NAR, NTS 4484 519/313, Chief Dep Com to Dep Coms, Union, 20 Sept 1937.
97 NAR, NTS 4484 519/313, TC, PE to Native Com, PE, 23 Sept 1938.
been used effectively by the Council to supervise the brewing of domestic beer in NBL. The previous advantage of headmen being able to catch illegal beer brewers unawares was now lost as authorised personnel or policemen had to be called first, thus allowing law-breakers time to remove or eradicate any traces of illegal beer. Representations to higher authority by the PECC failed to change the new regulation, the argument used by the Secretary for Native Affairs in November 1938 was that the new system needed a proper trial period before any amendments could be entertained.\(^{98}\) From the police point of view, the suppression and control of the brewing and selling of beer remained in the hands of local authorities, like location superintendents, and the SAP would only get involved when needed.\(^{99}\)

The principle of prohibiting domestic beer in locations was abandoned by the amendments made to the Natives (Urban Areas) Act by Act No. 46 of 1937, operational nationwide as from 1 January 1938. The amended act made no provision for NBL’s ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ areas system. The result was that New Brighton residents decided after having a public meeting to continue home brewing under the existing system on a voluntary basis.\(^{100}\) But problems arose when, despite the resolution taken above, some residents demanded the right to brew beer in their area of NBL. The Advisory Board suggested that the Superintendent transfer those who wanted to brew beer to the ‘wet’ areas but, as Baines points out, this was not really practical, neither was it a long-term solution to the problem.\(^{101}\) The PECC was finally able to find the solution to this problem when amendments to the Urban Areas Act (36 of 1944) allowed it to legalise its dual system (domestic brewing and prohibition) which had been in existence for a period of nearly 30 years.\(^{102}\)

In an attempt to control the illegal liquor trade emanating from shebeens in Korsten, Schauder and South End, the PECC met with the District Commandant, Major H L Peard,
in March 1939. The Council was concerned that excessive alcohol abuse by coloured tenants of its housing schemes was creating social problems, besides the fact that rent was not being paid to it, particularly by those abusing alcohol. In some areas it was unsafe to be out at night over weekends due to anti-social behaviour caused by drunkenness; to some residents, it appeared if the police were doing nothing about the matter even after being informed of this state of affairs.\textsuperscript{103} Cllr Adcock was careful to point out that the Council was not criticising the police for lack of action but rather it wanted to work with them in eradicating the problem.\textsuperscript{104} As far as Major Peard was concerned, although shebeens did exist, the problem centred on the issue of coloured people selling liquor to blacks as the former, like whites, had no restrictions placed on them as regards the buying of liquor.\textsuperscript{105} The SAP was handicapped by the intermarriage of coloureds and blacks so when police raids took place, the coloured spouse would claim ownership of any liquor found. Peard believed that as so long as coloured people had unrestricted access to liquor, with some elements selling their excess to black people, the PECC would always face a liquor problem.

When asked by Cllr Schauder whether police could patrol housing schemes over weekends to stop the illicit sale of liquor and drunkenness, Peard replied in the negative. Insufficient staff, not an unwillingness to comply with the request, was his problem. One plan of action instituted by the SAP to reduce the flow of illicit liquor into the black townships was to compel the PE Tramway Company to warn its drivers to refuse to convey passengers they noticed were carrying excessive amounts of alcohol.\textsuperscript{106} To ensure this happened, police carried out periodic checks on buses plying the route between the city and the townships.

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\item \textsuperscript{103} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, PE Charity Organisation to Cllr W C Adcock, 17 March 1939.
\item \textsuperscript{104} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Minutes of Joint Committee meeting with SAP, 6 March 1939.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Apparently black males with a Std 6 Certificate were also allowed to buy European alcohol during this period. Interview with Mr W N Prince, KwaZakele, Port Elizabeth, 11 June 1999.
\item \textsuperscript{106} CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1515, Notes of interview between PECC and Col. J F Coetzee (Chief of CID of Union) and Col. O J Horak (Deputy Com of CED), 8 May 1939.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Much the same was done on taxi, tram and railway routes.\textsuperscript{107}

In the view of the SA Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), hostility between the SAP and members of the black community in South Africa had increased by 1941 due to assaults by the police, as well as assaults on the police by those resisting arrest.\textsuperscript{108} Resisting arrest and obstructing police work did little to improve relations between these two groups in South Africa. The SAIRR believed that the primary causes of such hostility lay in the attitude of the police towards black people, their searches and arrest of people with sometimes small quantities of illegal liquor in their possession, and their penchant for undertaking such searches at all hours of the night. Such raids often ended in clashes between the police and black people, feeding the innate resentment prevalent in the community of the oppressed. The Native Affairs Commission, appointed on 4 July 1941 to investigate matters relating to traditional beer, found that police methods in carrying out beer raids were resented countrywide, particularly the invasion of privacy at all hours of the night.\textsuperscript{109} Pregnant women, and those with babies, found in possession of home-brewed beer after such raids were often arrested and kept in custody - this sort of treatment was strongly criticised by some members of the NAB of NBL who believed such women should receive warnings only to appear in court.\textsuperscript{110} The Penal and Prison Reform Commission of 1947 would have been in full agreement with this approach as it recommended that when mothers were arrested, it was up to the police to ensure that young children left behind were placed in the care of responsible people.\textsuperscript{111}

The NAC was disturbed by the incidence of illegal liquor finding its way into the new McNamee Village sector of NBL during mid-1943. Much of the liquor was found in houses

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\textsuperscript{110} CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/15, 20 Nov 1941.

\end{flushleft}
near the boundary with Sidwell which pointed to this illegal liquor being smuggled in from Korsten. The NAC felt that the headmen were becoming too lax in their duties; in its opinion, SAP vigilance was accounting for all prosecutions related to the sale of illicit liquor. This belief was refuted by the NBL Superintendent who argued that it was the headmen who had in fact done all the work in this connection.\textsuperscript{112} The suggestion that the south-west part of McNamee Village be fenced in to prohibit the movement of liquor into the township was rejected by the Superintendent. He quite rightly pointed out that no fence would stop the movement of liquor into the area in question and would simply create further hardship on township residents who would have to find an alternative route to the city centre. The services of the SAP were nevertheless considered invaluable and an appropriate letter of appreciation was despatched to the District Commandant, Chief Inspector P J Jordaan, while at the same time requesting him to try and trace the source of supply of the illicit liquor. Jordaan promised to do his best in this regard.

The brewing of beer on the outskirts of NBL made it virtually impossible for the police to counteract this illegal activity as it was extremely difficult for them to apprehend the culprits, let alone find the beer itself. Lack of evidence thus made it virtually impossible for the SAP to secure convictions. All they could do when finding beer-brewing sites was to destroy the receptacles and liquor which they confiscated in the immediate vicinity. Although raids were carried out at least three times a week with the assistance of headmen, the area was too large to be covered in one raid, hence the successful flight of brewers in the bush.\textsuperscript{113} Although admitting that headmen had recently been more active in ferreting out illegal beer brewing, the District Commandant still considered them to be somewhat slack in carrying out these duties. But this should come as no surprise as it was not easy for them to be party to enforcing regulations against their fellow township dwellers for an activity considered an integral part of their culture. From the SAP’s point of view, the only way to suppress the illicit liquor trade in NBL was for beer brewing to fall under full municipal supervision but in this matter, the PECC refused to budge, sticking to its long-held preference for controlled domestic brewing.

\textsuperscript{112} PER, 25/117 No. 2, Minutes of NAC, 15 June 1943.

\textsuperscript{113} CAR, 3/PEZ 1/3/2/15/19, SAP District Cmdt to NAC, 20 June 1944.
In regard to the request by the NAB that the PECC permit beer brewing throughout NBL, including the site and service area, the Council agreed to this proposal in August 1956 with the proviso that a trial period of three months first be tried. The District Commandant of No. 81 Police District (Korsten), Captain J Joubert, queried this new arrangement after reading about it in the press. It would appear that the Council had not informed him of its decision to extend the beer-brewing concession; this lack of communication suggests that differences of opinion between local authorities and the police was set to continue in the matter of beer brewing for the foreseeable future. A council monopoly on beer brewing in Port Elizabeth was introduced for the first time in 1968, mainly to generate further income for the depleted native revenue account.

ABUSE OF POLICE POWERS
Endowed with certain powers over the average citizen by the state, whether local or national, it was not unusual to find that policemen sometimes abused that power. Many policemen were guilty of enforcing repressive and discriminatory legislation in an abusive, uncivil manner, and often resorting to assault in their zeal to enforce the law. Frankel suggests that policemen prone to this type of behaviour usually reserved their ‘deepest aggression’ for well educated and highly urbanised blacks who had succeeded in life despite the constraints of segregation and apartheid. The nature of policing in South Africa also encouraged confrontation which meant that the potential for violence was always close at hand.

In 1917 the attention of the Minister of Justice was brought to the unnecessary violence used towards coloured and black people when arrested by white and black members of the SAP. Force was only to be used when absolutely necessary and handcuffs only on particularly violent or dangerous persons. As far as the SAP Commissioner, T G Truter, was concerned,

\[114\] PER, 25/117, No. 2, TC, PE to Sect, NAB, 31 Aug 1956.
there was no need for beating, kicking or ill-treating of arrested persons at any time. According to him, the frequency of black constables carrying out such acts had to be stopped by white policemen under whom they worked.\footnote{NAR, SAP 397 15/38/47, Circular to all SAP units, 13 Aug 1917.} Guilty black policemen had to be instructed clearly on the correct procedure when affecting arrests. Unfortunately such directives did not always reach those policemen persistently guilty of abusing their powers. Police very rarely made much effort to police one another adequately.

It was not only members of the SAP who were tempted to abuse their authority. Although it was never conclusively proved as the incident was never fully investigated by the police, the complaint by a NBL resident that the location police, appointed by the PEM, had abused her and her daughter sexually suggests that these policemen were also liable to misuse their powers to commit immoral acts. A Mrs Masoka had her house searched for illegal liquor by two location policemen in the early hours of 28 September 1924. Mrs Masoka accused the policemen of being under the influence of liquor at the time.\footnote{CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/742, Krogscheepers to TC, PE, 25 Oct 1924.} After ‘searching’ the two women who had virtually no clothes on, the policemen then took Mrs Masoka, and some ‘kafir beer’ as evidence, to the lockup for the rest of the night. She was released by Sergeant Stimpson in the morning as he doubted whether the liquor in her possession was intoxicating.\footnote{CAR, 3/PEZ 4/1/1/742, Williams & Elliot to TC, PE, 13 Nov 1924.}

Accusations that relations between the police and black people were strained in Port Elizabeth due to rough handling came from Cllr Pendla of the NAB whilst he was giving evidence to the Lansdown Commission of Inquiry during February 1937. Although not denying this may have been the case for the greater Port Elizabeth area, the Superintendent of NBL, J McNamee, believed this was untrue of the area under his jurisdiction. He had received no complaints personally about abusive behaviour being perpetrated by the SAP stationed in NBL.\footnote{NAR, K80, Evidence by J B McNamee, NBL Supt, 8 February 1937.} J H Spilkin (mentioned earlier) corroborated McNamee’s evidence. Nevertheless, what Pendla was saying was that although the policemen based in the township...
did not manhandle residents of NBL, policemen from outside the township tended to do so, particularly members of the CID carrying out raids for illegal liquor. Such provocative behaviour on the part of the police often led to retaliation by the residents and incidents of stone throwing occurred from time to time.\textsuperscript{122} When the local police and headmen carried out liquor raids, there were no clashes at all, according to Pendla, as people generally submitted quietly. Nevertheless, Pendla’s conservatism and loyalty to his township’s police contingent may have inured him to instances of police brutality within New Brighton.

Any raids carried out by the police in Korsten were not characterised by such meek cooperation, if Pendla’s view of liquor raids in NBL is to be regarded as realistic. By the SAP’s own admission, it had few friends in Korsten as many of the residents there looked upon the police as their enemies.\textsuperscript{123} In fact, Sergeant Boshoff, stationed at the Baakens Street police station, was adamant that the majority of black people living in Korsten preferred not to see the SAP in their area at all. Joyce Kirk, in her study of resistance to segregation in Port Elizabeth during the period 1890-1910, makes the point that the SAP never really had effective control over Korsten. When policemen tried to arrest suspects in the area, for example, they were often assaulted. She suggests that this type of behaviour needs to be viewed within the context of a community united in its stand against police harassment and racial discrimination.\textsuperscript{124}

Mr W N Prince, who grew up in Korsten during the late 1930s remembers that the police were ‘not bad’ in those days. Most people did not hate the police although that ‘depended on the kind of policeman ... some would arrest people in a very nice way.’ As far as Mr Prince was concerned, the hatred only really began when policemen ‘just grabbed and handcuffed you without saying anything’.\textsuperscript{125} For him, the change in police conduct and

\textsuperscript{122} NAR, K80, Evidence by A F Pendla, 8 February 1937.

\textsuperscript{123} NAR, K80, Evidence by Sgt W Boshoff, 10 February 1937. p 2 845.


\textsuperscript{125} Interview with Mr W N Prince.
increased hostility of law-abiding blacks towards them began after the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953 (implemented from 1 April 1955). By 1954, resistance to second-rate education had developed into a boycott of formal schooling in black townships across the country.\textsuperscript{126} Parents in NBL began sending their children to classes situated beyond the confines of formal school buildings. Mr Prince remembers police disruption of these informal classes being the specific cause of the beginning of police hatred by ordinary, law-abiding members of the black public in Port Elizabeth. But the fear of the SAP, he believes, only began in the early 1960s in the city when ‘people were disappearing like flies’, often pulled out of their beds in the early hours of the morning by both black and white members of the SAP. By that stage, suppression of banned black resistance movements was a full-time job for members of the SAP’s counter-insurgency units.

It is true, however, that some members of the SAP did physically maltreat blacks in Port Elizabeth during the period under discussion. The District Commandant, Major Verster, admitted as much to the Lansdown Commission in 1937. To combat this unacceptable behaviour by certain members of the force, Verster said he instructed the CID to investigate all such cases to ensure that those guilty of these crimes were prosecuted accordingly.\textsuperscript{127} Although it may have been official policy to investigate police brutality and to punish those found guilty, it appears that incidents of assault or manhandling by police were not always carefully investigated.\textsuperscript{128} The implication is clear: many policemen guilty of misconduct were never brought to book.

Plans to improve relations between the public and the SAP were reported in the press during December 1947. R J Brink, the Deputy Commissioner of the Witwatersrand police division stressed that recruits were to be trained to respect the public, irrespective of race.\textsuperscript{129} Lectures were presented to recruits during training which emphasised the need for policemen to show


\textsuperscript{127} NAR, K80, Evidence by Major Verster, District Cmdt, 1937, p 2 655.

\textsuperscript{128} NAR, K80, Evidence by J H Spilken, lawyer, 1937, p 2 667.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{The Sunday Times}, ‘Palmer plans better relations between police and public’, 14 Dec 1947.
courtesy and tact to all members of the public. The officer commanding the SA Police College in Pretoria stressed that everything possible was done to teach recruits how to be friendly, cheerful and civil in their dealings with the public at large.\textsuperscript{130} The failure of the College’s training methods has been well documented; most literature on the South African Police is unequivocal in its criticism of racist, arrogant policemen.

In April 1948, Brink was reported to have said that while a law was on the Statute Book, it was the duty of the SAP to enforce such laws unreservedly. At the same time, he stressed that the police were to carry out their duties with courtesy and consideration. Although willing to admit that the police were not altogether blameless when criticised for their sometimes harsh enforcement of laws pertaining to black people only, he was quick to defend them, insisting that black people were not ‘without blame’ when they demonstrated against repressive laws; in such cases, they were ‘inclined to show a definite disobedience’.\textsuperscript{131} Yet, to all intents and purposes, this strategy by the SAP hierarchy to improve relations between the police and the black public, although supported by the Department of Native Affairs, appears to have failed by 1953 when viewed from an African perspective. Having legislated black people, the numerical majority in South Africa, into ‘artificial minority status by law’,\textsuperscript{132} the government was forced to continue employing its police force to maintain this system in an often brutal manner.

The use of firearms by the police to quell unruly behaviour was not limited only to the black community in Port Elizabeth. In the mainly coloured area of South End a routine police patrol by two constables, less than two months after the outbreak of the New Brighton riots in October 1952, ended in death for one civilian and injury to five policemen when a minor fracas developed into a small-scale riot.\textsuperscript{133} While attempting to stop two coloured men

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{130} NAR, SAP 393 2/217/47, Commanding Officer, SAP College to SAP Com, 24 Nov 1947.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Rand Daily Mail, ‘Col. Brink Says Police Try to Treat Natives Civilly’, 3 April 1948.
\item \textsuperscript{132} J Marquard (ed), A Century of South African Short Stories (Johannesburg, 1978), Introduction, p 17.
\item \textsuperscript{133} NAR, SAP 500 36/61/52, Annual Report for Cape Eastern Division, 1952.
\end{itemize}
fighting in Walmer Road, the two constables, T de Villiers and P Nel, were assaulted by spectators. Nel was rendered semi-conscious by a blow to the head and in an effort to save himself from attack by a knife-wielding attacker, De Villiers shot and killed his would-be assailant, Ibrahim Basserdien, before losing consciousness. Police from Baakens Street police station were rushed to the scene and while attempting to remove Basserdien’s body, came under attack by a stone-throwing crowd. Passing cars were also being stoned at this juncture. To protect themselves, the police resorted to their firearms which also effected the dispersal of the crowd. It appears that no other deaths occurred.

In some instances, it appears as if certain members of the SAP were out to provoke trouble with township residents. In New Brighton, for example, a raid by the police into a sector called White Location in search of illegal beer brewing during 1953 saw policemen armed with rifles incite people under the influence of alcohol to demonstrate. Such policemen were obviously looking for an excuse to use their firearms. Any attempt to bring about closer co-operation and goodwill between the SAP and the black population was thus, to some degree, idealistic, as the police could never hope to be impartial or just purveyors of the law within an oppressive system.

It was apparent to the SAIRR by 1953, judging by the number of complaints it had received over the years, that relations between the public service and the black population left much to be desired. Ill-treatment and lack of consideration by the Department of Justice, the SAP, Railways and Post Office created unnecessary tension and ill-feeling between the black community and officials serving the afore-mentioned state departments. In an attempt to improve relations between the SAP and black people, a policy had been adopted in 1947 to bring SAP Deputy Commissioners of each police division in the Union into contact with prominent leaders of the black community on a regular basis. The idea was to bring about a better understanding between the two groups so that mutual suspicion and distrust could be removed from their dealings with each other. In urban areas like Port Elizabeth, district

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135 University of the Witwatersrand, AD 843/RJ/Aa.12.20.5, SAIRR Memo, 1953.
commandants held meetings with members of the Native Advisory Boards. Yet the mayor of Port Elizabeth, Cllr J S Neave, naively believed that no feelings of hostility existed between members of the black community and the SAP, stating that the police carried out their duties in a tactful and fair manner. Cllr Neave, like the majority of whites, had little idea of the nature of the day-to-day lives of black people living under a system of oppressive laws peculiar to them.

Perhaps such ignorance displayed above was partly the result of skilled suppression of the truth by the apartheid state. The hierarchy of the Justice Department (including the SAP) was certainly aware in 1954 - and in the decades before - that the police were guilty of covering up assaults committed by members of the force. To prevent this from happening, the Attorney-General requested that all dockets where complainants had withdrawn complaints or declined to prosecute be sent to him for his decision. But the prospect of black complainants successfully obtaining redress for police brutality became even more remote as the 1950s wore on. Increasing black political protest activity was matched by an increase in police brutality: the use of live ammunition became commonplace as a means of crowd control, and the use of torture such as electric shocks to obtain confessions reared its head for the first time in 1954. Beatings, always a popular form of violence utilised by the police, became even more widespread after 1956.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above narrative that, until the end of the Second World War, black people living in Port Elizabeth experienced somewhat fewer restrictions than their counterparts in townships elsewhere in the country. This was due mainly to the absence of a regular curfew and pass laws, infrequent registration of employment contracts and limited rights to beer brewing. It is not surprising therefore that the city was known to have had one of the lowest

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138 CAR, PPE 1 18/1/6/33, SAP Com to All SAP Dep Coms, 26 March 1954.
139 See J D Brewer, Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa (Oxford, 1994), Chapter 4, for details of police brutality.
black crime rates in the country until at least 1952.\textsuperscript{140}

That police enforcement of numerous pieces of oppressive legislation made them increasingly unpopular in Port Elizabeth during the 1930s is made apparent by the findings of the Lansdown Commission. Law-abiding black people living in New Brighton resented being criminalized by petty regulations related to township administration. They also complained of poor treatment at the hands of mainly young Afrikaner policemen who showed scant respect to black people in general. The Commission established that poorly educated policemen from rural backgrounds were those most likely to abuse their position of authority. It is apparent therefore that the failure to recruit a better class of men for service as policemen, coupled with the unpleasant task of sometimes imposing unjust laws, opened up the SAP hierarchy to censure and criticism. Colonial-style policing imposed upon the SAP by a state overly concerned with its survival as a racially-based entity meant that, as an institution, the SAP was forced to compromise any liberal policing values it may have held. The manner in which the police enforced influx control regulations in Port Elizabeth in 1953, on-going restrictions on beer brewing and the like, tarnished their poor image even further.

Brewer argues that the ‘persistent brutality and insensitivity of the police when implementing’ minor restrictive administrative regulations governing the lives of blacks created deep-seated resentment. The main reason for this was the SAP’s almost total disregard for the differences between peace-loving blacks and those belonging to the criminal class. He argues further that the SAP’s ‘reputation for partisanship’ in policing the various ethnic groups in South Africa was well established within 20 years of its creation.\textsuperscript{141} Part of the reason why policemen were disliked and feared in the black townships of Port Elizabeth is attributable to sometimes rigorous enforcement of unpopular regulations. Urban blacks particularly resented the strictures imposed upon their social lives by the enforcement of pass and liquor laws, a factor made patently clear in this chapter. As Brewer points out, laws governing liquor and


\textsuperscript{141} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, pp 134 and 139.
movement 'were particularly problematic because they epitomized the penetration of the state into the ordinary lives of urban Africans.' The responses of oppressed people to instances of political and industrial policing will be explored in the next chapter.

142 Brewer, Black and Blue, p 135.
CHAPTER 8

POLICING POLITICAL AND INDUSTRIAL UNREST IN PORT ELIZABETH: 1913-1956

INTRODUCTION
Throughout the 1913-1956 period the South African state was reliant, not only on stable economic and social conditions, but also on its access to loyal and powerful para-military (South African Police) and military (Union Defence Force) forces to maintain power. Following Max Weber’s thesis, that all states are founded on force, Posel argues that the stability of a state is dependent upon the monopoly it has to legitimately use such force to retain power. She argues further that one of the most significant features of the state ‘is its quest for legitimacy amongst (at least some of) its subject peoples, buttressed and complemented by the institutionalised use of coercion to retain power.\(^1\) However, it must be kept in mind that states generally depend on much more routine forms of power, and the police are involved in both aspects of this: force and routine governance.

The South African state, like many others, relied upon a complex mix of force and routine forms of government to stay in power. Even in situations of conflict, the possibility of negotiating a solution, or avoiding violent clashes, were considered. There is nothing in an undemocratic state which suggests that it has to resort to violence, but there is probably more room for violence in states which have exhausted their potential for legitimation or routine administrative order. The South African state during the period under discussion was certainly not governed by a legitimate government, hence its need to utilise the police in a manifestly coercive manner.

For some police historians, the control of public disorder is a problem limited not only to political authorities but also to police authorities, and is viewed as one of the most serious

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problems facing police leadership in all ages. And in most cases of this nature, rioters or protesters causing public disorder, find themselves in conflict with a ruling class usually composed of middle or upper class elements who align themselves unequivocally with the representatives of law and order. The government in South Africa, representative of the white ruling class, therefore ensured that this social group received the highest priority when it came to the control of crime. Although crime-fighting was not ignored in urban black areas, it never received the same amount of attention heaped upon the white areas. However, where blacks did receive priority policing was in the field of industrial and political policing, and when black protest action intensified after 1945, so too did the SAP’s repression of such protest. The increasingly suppressive nature of the government from the 1950s onwards, with the SAP playing a significant role, has been well documented.

The police have in the recent past (during the 1985/6 insurrection, for example) been accused of being responsible for at least 60 percent of political deaths through ‘structural violence’. The term ‘structural violence’ is narrowly defined here (as opposed to a broader definition where the entire apparatus of apartheid did violence to ordinary people, through determining location, life opportunities, poor health, and so on) as the calculated use of violence - shootings, beatings and torture - where police rules are largely ignored by certain elements within the police force. The increasingly repressive nature of policing in South Africa after the 1950s had the effect of inducing an armed struggle (counter-violence) against the minority white government which could be fully justified by the structural violence of the state against an oppressed majority. The SAP, as the most important armed wing of the South African apartheid state, was expected to suppress any outbreaks of counter-violence aimed at undermining the socio-political and economic security of the country. The point being made


here is that there was a growing violent culture over the period in question.

This chapter concentrates on the SAP’s role in various incidents of industrial and political unrest, almost always from ‘below’, which occurred in Port Elizabeth during the period under discussion. Two world wars kept the SAP busy with incidents of anti- and pro-German activities, the neutrality of the force being in doubt on both occasions. The 1920 riots revealed the willingness of the SAP to use gunfire as a means of crowd control although in this case, irresponsible vigilante action sparked gunfire from policemen. By the early 1950s, however, police responses to political protest and social disorder was unashamedly more brutal and oppressive in nature. The government increased the ability of the SAP to deal with any covert and overt threats to its authority by passing a variety of new laws (Public Safety Act, Suppression of Communism Act, among others) in the early years of the decade. This chapter will attempt to show that although legislated powers granted to the SAP for the control of riots and other forms of social unrest during the study period were adequate, its power to control adequately the course of any unrest was substantially reduced by insufficient manpower in the city. The police, as state workers, were thus ill-equipped at ground level to deal effectively with incidents of political and industrial violence.

ANTI-GERMAN RIOTS: 1915

The sinking of the British liner, the Lusitania, on 7 May 1915, by a German submarine seems to have been the catalyst for the anti-German riots which occurred in Port Elizabeth from 13-14 May 1915. Similar demonstrations took place elsewhere in the Union at this time, notably Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Krugersdorp and Kimberley. Closer to home, Hummel has shown that anti-German sentiments in Grahamstown, even though never leading to violence, shared many characteristics discernible in the larger centres mentioned above. With feelings running high and rumours spreading that a mass meeting was on the cards to protest against German citizens being allowed to remain in the city, the mayor, Cllr A W Guthrie, scheduled a meeting for 17 May

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but people were too impatient to wait that long. By November 1914 there already existed a strong feeling among the white public that all German subjects in the city be interned or sent elsewhere. These sentiments, which displayed an exaggerated pro-British patriotism, had their roots in the essential English character of Port Elizabeth during the earlier decades of the twentieth century.

In the early evening of 13 May 1915, a Thursday, a large crowd of mainly white people gathered in the Market Square to condemn the sinking of the Lusitania; many in the crowd were also intent on driving German sympathisers out of the city. The SAP was aware of the impending meeting and had organised its forces accordingly. Nevertheless, the sudden rush by the crowd up Western Road towards the German Club (the Liedertafel) caught them somewhat unawares (see Illustration 8.1). By the time the police force had arrived at the Club, the crowd had already set the place alight. Once there, it appears as if the police were powerless to stop the masses, being ‘jostled and forced aside’. Not satisfied with only destroying the German Club, the rioters now split up into smaller groups, then smashed doors, windows, stock, etc of German-owned businesses in the CBD area. It was only at 3 am that the city centre returned to calm once more. Members of the Algoa Rifle Association assisted the police in protecting the damaged properties for the rest of the night.

By 7 pm on 14 May another crowd began to gather, estimated to be around 2 000 to 3 000 people, except that this time a larger percentage was coloured. Why a large number of coloured people were anti-German is nigh impossible to gauge. It is possible that, like whites, they were equally susceptible to the influence of a jingoistic press. In any event, the various homes of German people were targeted in areas like Park Drive, South End and Central. Once again, without access to motorised transport, the police were left virtually flat-

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8 National Archives Repository, Pretoria (NAR), SAP 21 6/245/14/177, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, Cape Eastern Division (CED), 2 Nov 1914.


10 NAR, SAP 86 1/335/15/2, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 18 May 1915. The District Cmdt of PE, Inspector Neale-Shutte, arrived at the German Club before the rioters by car but was powerless to stop the crowd.
footed in their attempts to prevent further destruction of German-owned property. This was in contrast to the anti-German riots of 1914 in Cape Town which saw the highly successful use of motorised transport in dealing quickly with potentially explosive urban unrest.\textsuperscript{11} A large number of foot policemen could be moved from one trouble spot to another thereby carrying out successful policing by employing the element of surprise. A plan to use influential people with cars in Port Elizabeth to pre-empt the rioters in their rush to destroy property seems to have failed as vigorous protestations were simply ignored.

By Saturday 15 May, normality had once again returned to Port Elizabeth. The SAP District Commandant, Inspector R F Neale-Shute, called upon members of the mounted branch based in Walmer, Swartkops and Korsten to assist in patrolling the city over the weekend. He admitted the police had been powerless in preventing the destruction to property over the preceding two days unless they had resorted to force. To have done so, in his opinion, would have been disastrous.\textsuperscript{12} To have organised a baton charge, or to have fired upon the rioters, would have inflamed the situation even further. An insufficient number of men at his disposal undoubtedly made the task all the more difficult.

The police nonetheless managed to prevent the looting and complete destruction of property once doors and windows had been smashed by the anti-German rioters. With only 58 policemen to cope with the large, unruly mobs on 13 May and with their ranks increased to 82 on 14 May, it is not surprising that the SAP were largely ineffective in their attempts to prevent the destruction of German-owned property.\textsuperscript{13} The commitment of some police force members to the protection of property owned by German citizens is also questionable. During this early period many policemen in Port Elizabeth were British citizens and therefore quite

\textbf{Illustration 8.1 Mob damage to the German Club}
(M Harradine, \textit{Chronicle})

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{The Nongqai, the Illustrated Monthly Magazine of the SA Police}, July 1915, p 33.
\textsuperscript{12} NAR, SAP 86 1/335/15/2, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 18 May 1915.
\textsuperscript{13} NAR, SAP 86 1/335/15/2, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 21 May 1915.
sympathetic to anti-German rioters. The police were able to arrest 61 people, of whom seven were released; the remainder were charged by a local magistrate for public violence and fined between £2 - £100 or given the option of short-term imprisonment. The prosecution of the above rioters did not go unnoticed: around 500 men assembled in Market Square to protest against the government’s policy in the matter and calls were made for local members of Parliament to interview the Minister of Justice to drop the charges.\(^\text{14}\) The outcome of this request unfortunately remains unknown.

THE 1920 RIOTS

The 1920 Port Elizabeth riots is an example of how poorly organised co-operation between the police and white vigilantes led to the unnecessary carnage in the city centre. Baines has shown that indecisive police leadership, particularly in the lack of control over the white vigilantes\(^\text{15}\), was the most likely cause of the shootings which left 24 people dead, but there were, of course, many other factors which led to the final drama being played out on the street outside the Baakens Street police station. The role of local business, local authorities, representatives of the central state and economic conditions in the post-war years were all contributory factors in the outbreak of the riots.

The high cost of living in Port Elizabeth during 1920 initiated the call for higher wages by members of the black and coloured communities. Eventually a meeting was held between a deputation of black and coloured workers and employers in Port Elizabeth in January 1920 to discuss wage increases. Not long after this meeting Samuel Masabalala formed the Port Elizabeth Industrial and Commercial Amalgamated Native and Coloured Workmans Union (PEICWU) with himself as president.\(^\text{16}\) Masabalala requested increased pay and a minimum

\(^{14}\) NAR, SAP 27 6/245/14/349, Detective T Airey, PE to District Cmdt, PE, 3 June 1915.


\(^{16}\) NAR, JUS 275 2/950/19, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 4 Nov 1920.
wage of 10s per day for unskilled workers, threatening a strike by September if demands were not met.

With local authorities and employers were becoming more and more concerned about the possibility of strike action by the PEICWU, a deputation led by Masabalala met with the mayor. But the hardline attitude taken by the main employers of unskilled workers in Port Elizabeth led to a breakdown in further negotiations. Masabalala, apparently undeterred by this stubborn attitude, decided to call for a general strike if the PEICWU’s demands were not met. Police involvement in this affair thus far had been limited to surveillance of Masabalala and the union. Eventually Inspector H J Halse, the District Commandant, met with Masabalala, but his intimidatory tactics failed to make the union leader repeal his call for a general strike.

In the end, representatives of the local state and members of the Justice Department (incorporating the SAP and the local magistrate) took a decision to pre-empt the strike planned for 3 November. The local magistrate, C E Stidolph, approached the Minister of Justice on 21 October with a request to prohibit public meetings in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act. If this proved impossible, he asked to be granted the necessary authorisation to remove Masabalala from the city for a period of at least six months. When this avenue proved fruitless, a decision was taken to charge Masabalala for inciting public violence at a public meeting held in Korsten on 17 October. It was at this meeting that the well known African leader, Rev Walter Rubusana, was assaulted by supporters of Masabalala. The latter was duly arrested by Detective Head Constable W H Anderson on the morning of 23 October in his home in Korsten, and taken straight to a cell in the Baakens Street police station. This police action, instigated in an attempt to crush the power of the PEICWU (viewed as a militant organisation in some quarters), was ‘to precipitate an unprecedented tragedy in Port

Illustration 8.2 The crowd outside the Baakens Street Police Station during the early afternoon of 23 October 1923
(SAP Museum Archives, Pretoria)

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Illustration 8.2 The crowd outside the Baakens Street Police Station during the early afternoon of 23 October 1923
(SAP Museum Archives, Pretoria)
Halse maintained after the shootings that the threatened strike had nothing to do with Masabalala’s arrest. It was rather the violence and threat of violence at the 17 October meeting, where Rubusana had sustained minor injuries, which necessitated his arrest. As Baines points out, this statement was an attempt to vindicate *post hoc* the misguided decision on the part of the local authorities to arrest Masabalala. Halse nevertheless accepted full blame for the consequences of Masabalala’s arrest even though he had taken the decision to arrest him after discussions with Stidolph and the Superintendent of New Brighton, Grattan.

Union members gathered on Market Square the same day Masabalala was arrested and vowed to release their leader even if force was necessary. After meeting with a PEICWU deputation in the Baakens Street police station to explain why Masabalala had been arrested, Halse persuaded this deputation to return to the crowd outside and to ask them to disperse. Halse had agreed beforehand, in consultation with the magistrate, to deny bail when Masabalala’s release on bail was demanded. Further discussions took place on Market Square, the outcome being an ultimatum being presented to Halse: if the police refused to release Masabalala at 5 pm the police station would be forcibly entered to free him.

Matters came to a head when Union officials returned to the police barracks at about 5 pm to demand Masabalala’s release. In the interim, Halse had quickly arranged an increased deployment of policemen around the police station while all off-duty men were placed on immediate standby. He was, however, unable to prevent the news of the expected showdown from spreading across the city. A crowd of around 3 000 people, comprising mainly Africans and coloureds, with quite a few whites lingering around, moved into Baakens Street to keep an eye on proceedings (see Illustration 8.2).

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20 NAR, JUS 275 2/950/19, SAP Dist Cmdt to Dep Comm, CED, 4 Nov 1920.

21 Baines, ‘South Africa’s Amritsar?’, p 4.
As the deadline for Masabalala’s expected release approached, the crowd became increasingly restless. Attempts to persuade the crowd to disperse failed. Policemen on the steps outside the charge office, under the command of Sub-Inspector M J Hart, were soon fending off stones and other objects being thrown at them; they also had periodically parry blows aimed at them by stick-wielding men. Faced with this constant provocation, the police bearing the brunt of these assaults displayed exceptional discipline and fortitude, at no stage resorting to firearms to protect their persons. A charge of four mounted policemen around 5:30 pm failed to disperse the crowd. It served to anger the hostile crowd even more, as evinced by Sub-Inspector Hart’s testimony that after the charge, some members of the crowd rushed at the police with greater anger and vigour. Soon thereafter a number of ex-soldiers and civilians made their way into the police station and offered their services to the SAP. They were taken inside, armed with rifles, and mostly posted on the balcony overlooking the Baakens Street. They were ordered not to fire on any account until clearly instructed to do so by a police officer.

A further attempt to clear the entrance to the police station by using a water hose failed as the nozzle came off, immediately reducing the effectiveness of this crowd control device. With tension mounting, one or two shots were suddenly fired without any apparent order being given to do so. In an almost spontaneous reaction to this, the policemen on the steps and the civilians on the balcony opened fire indiscriminately on the crowd who turned and ran. Within a matter of minutes 24 people lay dead or dying and 40 were wounded. The exemplary patience and tolerance of the police stationed on the steps, headed by Sub-Inspector Hart, instead of being rewarded by a peaceful resolution of the standoff, ended rather abruptly in a hail of bullets.

The mystery of who fired the first shot (reminiscent of the first shot fired in Lexington, USA, which started the American War of Independence) was never cleared up: conflicting evidence suggested that it came from either the crowd, the police on the steps, or from the armed

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civilians on the balcony of the police station. This shot, coupled with the tense atmosphere of the confrontation, sparked a volley of rifle fire which resulted in unnecessary carnage in the heart of Port Elizabeth. For Dippenaar, the official historian of the SAP, the matter is seemingly beyond dispute: police fire was in retaliation to being fired upon, arguing further that the large crowd was extremely aggressive in its demeanour, and that somebody in this unruly crowd was the cause of the shooting.\footnote{25} In a counter argument, Baines has suggested that the first shot probably came from one of the vigilantes on the balcony, most of whom were ex-soldiers.\footnote{26} He argues further that they were probably ‘trigger happy’, a view which is supported by the large number of spent cartridges found on the balcony as opposed to the number found on the steps manned by the police below. The police directly in front of the crowd had more reason to fire into the crowd as their physical safety was more at risk than that of the vigilantes safely positioned on an elevated balcony.

To counteract any damage that the fleeing crowd might do to either people or property, Halse dispatched 25 men towards North End. Cars filled with policemen were sent to patrol other parts of the CBD while armed civilians under the leadership of police officers moved into areas like Sydenham, New Brighton and Humewood. That evening a motorised patrol was sent to stop a large group of men from heading towards the power station. When attacked by this group the police under Sergeant Orchison apparently opened fire as a last resort and succeeded in driving this group off, leaving one person dead and seven wounded. Had the police not opened fire when they did, it appears likely that their safety was threatened, if various witnesses to the incident are to be believed.\footnote{27}

Patrols by vehicle and horseback continued day and night for several days with the help of civilians, sworn in as special constables, and policemen seconded from nearby towns, such as Grahamstown, Middelburg and East London. The Port Elizabeth police had to accommodate 188 men in the barracks designed for 80 over a period of 10 days. Although


\footnote{26} Baines, ‘Port Elizabeth disturbances’, p 119.

\footnote{27} NAR, JUS 275 2/950/19, Inquest re shooting during Native Riots, PE, 1920. See evidence by G J Rowe, F Cutting and E Morrick, 27 Oct 1920.
living in such cramped quarters these policemen never complained nor was there any reason to institute disciplinary action against any of them.\(^{28}\) The conduct of the police during the whole episode was in fact commended by the Walmer Town Council, particularly the role played by Sergeant F W Hooper, station commander of Walmer police station, who had led the mounted charge into the crowd in an attempt to disperse them.\(^{29}\) The irony of this commendation seems to have been lost to the Walmer Council as the mounted charge had failed, ending with the ignominious unseating of some of the mounted men. Further positive feedback on the conduct of the SAP came from the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce which applauded the police for successfully protecting the lives and property of the city’s residents during a period of civil turmoil.\(^{30}\) Members of the SAP were once again employed largely to safeguard the white inhabitants of the city, a situation already made apparent in Chapter 7. It also took the opportunity to call for an increase in the police establishment of 135 men (excluding location policemen) serving the Port Elizabeth magisterial district.

SAP members attached to the CID of Port Elizabeth remained closely involved with the whole episode because of their surveillance skills, soon finding out that Selby Msimang, a Bloemfontein-based union leader and president of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union, had been invited to the city by the PEICWU to assist them in sorting out their problems.\(^{31}\) Masabalala had in the meantime been transferred to Grahamstown to await trial. Public meetings held in Korsten and New Brighton on 30 and 31 October respectively were addressed by Msimang who wanted the strike scheduled for 1 November cancelled in favour of a negotiated settlement with employers. In this he succeeded but Port Elizabeth workers at the time never obtained the 10s a day minimum wage aimed for by Masabalala.\(^{32}\)

\(^{28}\) NAR, JUS 275 2/950/19, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 4 Nov 1920.

\(^{29}\) Port Elizabeth Archives Repository, Port Elizabeth (PER), Minutes of Walmer Town Council, 3 Nov 1920.

\(^{30}\) NAR, JUS 275 2/950/19, Sect, PE Chamber of Commerce to Minister of Justice, 9 Nov 1920.

\(^{31}\) Baines, ‘Port Elizabeth disturbances’, p 128.

These meetings were attended by Native Constable Ngoza who was expected to minute the proceedings. In close proximity, mounted policemen also made their presence felt, perhaps reminding people, as Baines suggests, that further bloodshed had to be avoided at all costs.\footnote{Baines, ‘Port Elizabeth disturbances’, p 129.}

Concern that the union was potentially a subversive organisation under the influence of communist agitators (this was never proved) induced the SAP to go as far as infiltrating the organisation by having a black detective join it.\footnote{NAR, JUS 275 2/950/19, ‘Native unrest at PE’, 31 Oct 1920.} This type of surveillance was in keeping with the SAP’s nationwide policy of maintaining close watch over all organisations suspected of being influenced by Bolshevism. In later years, particularly during the mid-1950s, the surveillance activities of the SAP’s undercover agents at various black political meetings being held in South Africa led Professor Z K Matthews, a renowned ANC activist, to comment sarcastically that the police were ‘the main link between the Government and the African people’.\footnote{Karis, T and Carter, G (eds), \textit{From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa}, Vol 3 (Stanford, 1977), p 21.}

Black detectives were often sent to attend political or union meetings in townships and details of their reports were dispatched to police headquarters in Pretoria. Any hint of communism in any speeches made by people described as ‘agitators’ received special attention, that is, their movements and rhetoric were closely monitored by the SAP in conjunction with the local authorities.\footnote{Cape Archives Repository, Cape Town (CAR), 3/PEZ 4/1/1/1634, Minutes of NAC, 22 Oct 1931.} Black policemen, of course, undertook such duties at a risk to their lives. Brewer cites an example of a detective in attendance at an ANC meeting in Klipspruit in 1919 being dressed as a woman to escape after being exposed as a policeman.\footnote{Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 98.} It has been argued by some historians that police penetration into the daily lives of black people became more marked after 1927, mainly as a result of enforcing laws enacted by the Hertzog administration.\footnote{Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 130.}
An inquest into the shootings appointed by the Smuts government concluded that the District Commandant, Inspector Halse, had made an error of judgement by not releasing Masabalala on bail. The conduct of the rest of the police force involved in the unfortunate event was considered to be of a high standard, the Commission believing that the officers and NCOs did their best to disperse Masabalala’s supporters without bloodshed. Nevertheless, the involvement of civilians, armed by the police but not properly controlled by them on the balcony of the police station, was heavily criticised by the Commission. The virtually uncontrolled shooting of black and coloured civilians from the balcony by white vigilantes after the police on the steps had been ordered to cease fire indicted police leadership even further - had Halse placed these armed civilians under direct police control, or not armed them in the first place, undisciplined shooting from the balcony could have been prevented altogether. Even if the vigilantes on the balcony had not fired the first shots, although it is highly likely that they did, the carnage on the streets below would have been considerably reduced.

POLICING RIGHT-WING MOVEMENTS
The South African Grey Shirts (Port Elizabeth Division), influenced by events in Germany where Adolf Hitler had assumed power in 1933, organised a meeting in the Feathermarket Hall in January 1934 to perpetuate their anti-Semitic ideas. Just two weeks before this gathering took place, a meeting had been held in the same venue to protest against ‘undesirable immigrants’ being granted permission to settle in South Africa. The meeting was essentially the result of anti-Semitic feelings coming to the fore in Port Elizabeth at a time when failed attempts were being made to incite the local population against the Jewish community. Most supporters of this movement were members of the Afrikaner working class and right-wing youths, the latter in particular were attracted by the wearing of uniforms. Even the ‘Junior Nationalists’ took to wearing uniforms to display their party-political

39 NAR, JUS 275 2/950/19, Report of the Commissioners, 11 Jan 1921, para 69.
40 M Harradine, Port Elizabeth - A social chronicle to the end of 1945 (Port Elizabeth, 1996), p 193.
41 Harradine, Chronicle, p 193 and 195.
The leader of the anti-Semitic organisation, L T Weichardt, was the guest speaker. The District Commandant, Major Lloyd Lister, attended the meeting in person, and also arranged to have about 30 policemen posted outside the hall in the event of trouble. The *Herald* reporter estimated the crowd to be about 3 000 people but this may have been somewhat exaggerated.

After Weichardt came to the podium, simmering tensions between Grey Shirts and very pro-British members of the crowd opposed to them, came to a head when a heckler was forcefully evicted from the hall by supporters of Weichardt. A scuffle ensued and within seconds the hall was full of men ‘battling fiercely’. The police contingent struggled to restore order but eventually prevailed although nobody was arrested - only two men were sent to hospital for minor injuries. A march down to the Market Square of about 100 men, singing ‘Rule Britannia’, was closely monitored by the police but no further trouble was encountered.

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 appears to have caught the SAP in Port Elizabeth somewhat off-guard. Chief Inspector P J Jordaan, the District Commandant, admitted after the war that the force was poorly prepared for dealing with unexpected incidents related to a war situation. Nevertheless, the SAP soon adapted itself to a war footing and was able to identify quickly any sources of potential danger and threat to the security of the state held by suspects considered sympathetic to the German cause.

One of the first politically-orientated tasks expected of the SAP after the outbreak of the war was the curtailment of any pro-German sentiment by German sympathisers. It was the job of the SAP to round up any suspects or enemy aliens before handing them over to internment camps set up by the government. The activities of those who did not justify internment were

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43 EPH, ‘Grey Shirt meeting terminates in riot’, 30 Jan 1934.

44 NAR, SAP 391 2/4/47, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 11 June 1947.
blocked by placing them under the control of a district control officer - it was the duty of the police to bring such people to the attention of this officer.\textsuperscript{45} In this way, the police had a direct hand in keeping potentially dangerous suspects away from military camps, war production factories, the harbour and other strategic facilities considered vital to the war effort in Port Elizabeth. In all these activities the SAP worked hand in glove with the intelligence sector of the UDF. The Port Elizabeth public were generally helpful in tracking down any persons suspected of being anti-government, almost to the point of being a nuisance as many people investigated by the police were found to be innocent of any charges levelled against them.\textsuperscript{46}

Although a fairly insignificant member of the National Party and the \textit{Ossewa Brandwag} (OB) in 1939, B J Vorster, a future prime minister, was appointed the leader of the OB in Port Elizabeth soon after his arrival. The Smuts government kept a wary eye on anti-British behaviour and the activities of the OB. Men like Vorster were kept under close police surveillance, even to the extent of breaking into his Newton Park home one night in search of incriminating evidence.\textsuperscript{47} Detective Constable Gert Prinsloo was appointed to attend Vorster’s OB meetings even though they had been friends during their school days in Sterkstroom.\textsuperscript{48} It is possible that the SAP hierarchy used this friendship to gain greater insight into Vorster’s political views and future plans - Prinsloo was in fact a regular visitor at Vorster’s home in Newton Park. Then again, being an astute and cunning politician, Vorster could very well have used this relationship to his own benefit.

Vorster was eventually arrested in September 1942 after being invited to attend a meeting in the CID’s New Law Court offices which were just across the road from Vorster’s law practice. He was detained in the New Law Courts police station cells until his transfer in mid-December to Koffiefontein, an internment camp for all German sympathisers regarded

\textsuperscript{45} NAR, SAP 391 2/4/47, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 11 June 1947.
\textsuperscript{46} NAR, SAP 391 2/4/47, District Cmdt, PE to SAP Dep Com, CED, 11 June 1947.
\textsuperscript{47} H O Terblanche, \textit{John Vorster-OB-Generaal en Afrikanervegter} (Roodepoort, 1983), p 90.
as potentially subversive by the Smuts government. It appears that the main reason for Vorster’s arrest was his anti-war stance and the fact that he was an OB general, and therefore in a position to incite others to oppose the war against Germany.  

The outbreak of war meant that the SAP had to keep potentially subversive Afrikaner-dominated movements such as the Stormjaers and OB, para-military organisations which were sympathetic to the German cause and opposed to British ascendancy in South Africa, under close surveillance. But before this could happen, the SAP had to ensure that its own ranks were purged of men who were members of the above organisations. The centenary celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938 had revived Afrikaner cultural nationalism, and led to the creation of the OB. According to Dippenaar, the majority of policemen, who were in any case Afrikaans-speaking, joined the organisation. Because Smuts suspected that the OB was a military-type organisation operating as an Afrikaner cultural movement he banned all civil servants from belonging to it after war broke out. He apparently feared a repetition of the 1914 rebellion. Yet he did not immediately ban policemen from belonging to the OB as he believed their sworn loyalty to the state would hold good. For Smuts, policemen were policemen first and Afrikaners second, but clashes between servicemen and stormjaers, supported by OB policemen, soon changed his mind. After the OB was declared an unlawful organisation in mid-1941, Commissioner de Villiers decreed that all policemen had to resign from it.

On 8 December 1941 fighting broke out between pro-Nazi supporters of the OB and a group of UDF soldiers and airmen in Main Street, Port Elizabeth, within the vicinity of Central Hotel. The latter were apparently provoked into a fight by the former. Being a Saturday evening it is possible that alcohol had some role to play in starting the brawl. The SAP and military police arrived in time to prevent any serious conflict from arising, and after identifying the ringleaders, took them inside the Baakens Street police station for questioning. A large crowd gathered outside the police station, estimated to be around 1 000 people, while

49 Terblanche, Vorster-OB-General, p 140.
50 Dippenaar, History of SAP, p 144.
51 Brewer, Black and Blue, pp 157-158.
the interrogation was being held. It would appear as if the police made no effort to disperse the crowd which eventually vacated the area around 3 am. The result of this fracas was the internment of three men at the Koffiefontein camp. In the meanwhile the District Commandant obtained police reinforcements from nearby towns as a precautionary measure. These men remained in the city until 31 December 1941.

Port Elizabeth police on the whole, however, had very few problems with OB activities during the war years, unlike the Witwatersrand and Orange Free State, where support for the movement was much greater. The OB in those areas went so far as to encourage nationalistic young Afrikaner policemen to resign from the force but in the end very few did.

**LAUNDRY STRIKE: 1948**

A deadlock in wage negotiations, and demands for improved working conditions, between laundry workers and employers led to a strike of about 200 laundry workers during April 1948 in Port Elizabeth. Coloured women were the first to strike but they were quickly followed by black women sympathetic to their cause. The strike caused employers to make use of scab labour. Employers used their delivery vehicles to transport these scab workers to their premises, even threatening to run over striking workers blocking their route. Raymond Mhlaba, employed by Nanucci Dry Cleaners at the time, remembered going into laundry premises with other strikers to evict scab labour with whom they ‘fought like nobody’s business’. He was eventually arrested and given a suspended sentence; he also lost his job. What provoked the already exasperated and angry striking workers even further was the protection employers enlisted from the SAP. In desperation the South African

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52 *EPH*, ‘Serious rioting in the city’, 8 Dec 1941.


54 Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 159.


56 University of the Witwatersrand (WITS), AH 646/Dc 8.74, Sect, SATLC to All Secretaries of Unions, PE, 6 May 1948. For instances of local authorities in Port Elizabeth assisting employers in their opposition to strike action see J Cherry, ‘The myth of working class defeat: Port Elizabeth in the post-war years’, *Kronos*, 20
Trades and Labour Council (SATLC) appealed to fellow trade unionists to show solidarity with the laundry workers by spending some time at picket lines before going to work.

The strike had in the meantime generated considerable publicity for a number of reasons: one being that it was not limited to large firms like Atlas - around six smaller companies in the city were also affected by the strike. Other reasons documented by Cherry centred on the use of scab labour, the inconvenience it caused to the white public, picketing and scuffles between police and strikers.\(^57\) The stoning and burning of some delivery vans provided the media with further material for public consumption.

To combat the SAP’s interference in the strike, who arrested 13 strike leaders under the Riotous Assemblies Act, the local committee of the SATLC appealed to its headquarters in Johannesburg to protest police intervention. By insisting that the strike was illegal, employers were able to persuade the SAP to protect scab labour en route to their premises after striking workers attempted to prevent such labour coming in.\(^58\) Once the Department of Labour had ruled that the laundry strike was legal the SAP was forced to refrain from interference in the industrial dispute;\(^59\) the strike leaders were also released.

According to the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division in his annual report of 1948, the police did not interfere at any stage of the strike. He stated that policemen were merely placed on duty near the premises affected by the strike, and carried out investigation into several cases of assault, malicious damage to property (the burning of an Atlas van) and contraventions of the Riotous Assembly Act.\(^60\) The benign involvement of the police was disputed by Gus Coe of the NUDW (National Union of Distributive


\(^{58}\) Wits, AH 646/Dc 8.74, SATLC leaflet, ‘Laundry Strike- Latest!’ , 6 May 1948.

\(^{59}\) Wits, AH 646/Dc 8.74, Sect, SATLC HQ to Sect, SATLC, PE, 14 May 1948.

Nevertheless, once police interference was eliminated, the way was opened for the employers and union to find an amicable solution to the strike. This happened on 27 May 1948 when a wage agreement was reached. Unlike other unions elsewhere in the country, notably in Cape Town, Durban and East London during previous years, the Port Elizabeth union offices were not raided by the SAP on this occasion. These police raids, seen as reminiscent of Nazi police methods by the SATLC, often resulted in the confiscation of documents necessary for the settlement of industrial disputes. Like the garment workers’ strikes in Germiston in 1928 and 1931, no incidents of violence were recorded, either between scabs and strikers or between police and strikers. Relations between strikers in Germiston and the police were in fact quite cordial with little evidence of ill-feeling between the protagonists, perhaps because most of the strikers were young Afrikaner females whose working class backgrounds coincided closely with the young Afrikaner policemen sent to maintain law and order.

**BUS BOYCOTT: 1949**

The bus boycott of 1949 lasted almost four months, from 19 April to the first week in August, and was illustrative of militant black local leadership prevalent in politics and industry in post-war Port Elizabeth. Lodge has shown that political leadership in the city during the 1940s and 1950s usually favoured ‘direct action as opposed to lobbying and negotiation’; part of the reason for this, he argues, lay with the more ‘liberal’ policies espoused by the local authorities when compared to other centres. So when issues such as an increase in bus fares, or rising costs of living arose, black leadership generally favoured the shortest route to either protest action or to a resolution of the problem. This approach meant that the police, more often that not, were given little time to watch proceedings from the sidelines and

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62 Wits, AH 646/Dc 5.27 (1), Acting Sect, SATLC, Johannesburg to Minister of Justice, 2 Oct 1946.
were quickly brought into play.

The South African Railways (SAR) held the monopoly on bus and train transport between the CBD and New Brighton Location. When it suddenly increased its bus fares (from 3d to 4d) on 1 April 1949, at a higher percentage than expected by the NBAB, a protest meeting was organised on Sunday 17 April in New Brighton. It was not only the increase in bus fare that was discussed but other grievances were also aired. People complained of an unreliable service, arrogance and verbal abuse by white bus drivers (and conductors) who, on occasion, randomly took unscheduled routes and purposely disembarked passengers outside the New Brighton police station where they were sometimes forced to endure humiliating searches by SAP members.\textsuperscript{65} The black public was urged by the NBAB to use the train instead and to boycott all buses on the New Brighton-City route but those who chose to use the buses were not to be molested in any way. As from 19 April, the date set for the start of the boycott, buses were seen plying their route virtually empty. Police reports stated that no violence or picketing was evident.\textsuperscript{66}

From a police point of view, what was important about the bus boycott was the possibility of violence and the fomenting of politically-motivated objectives arising out of the boycott. For this reason the SAP always ensured that it knew who the organisers were and what was being said at all meetings to do with the boycott held in NBL. At the first meeting held to implement the boycott, the police noted with satisfaction that no intimidation or force was to be used to enforce the planned action, neither was anything of a communistic or anti-apartheid nature uttered by the organisers.\textsuperscript{67} In subsequent meetings, it was stressed by the black leadership present, including Raymond Mhlaba, a known communist and committee member of the bus boycott movement, that the boycott was non-political and not sponsored by the SA Communist Party.\textsuperscript{68} As far as the police could determine, no incidents of assault


\textsuperscript{66} NAR, SAP 468 15/12/49, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 21 April 1949.

\textsuperscript{67} NAR, SAP 468 15/12/49, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 21 April 1949.

\textsuperscript{68} NAR, SAP 468 15/12/49, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 27 April 1949.
or intimidation had occurred by the end of May. Intimation by the *Eastern Province Herald* that the bus boycott was faced by possible collapse and violent clashes between those for and against it was refuted by the SAP early in June. Police patrols monitored the situation closely and had received no complaints of intimidation or interference from NBL residents up to that stage.\(^{69}\) It is possible, however, that residents may have been too afraid to report such matters to the police for fear of reprisals. It is equally possible that the *Herald* had its own agenda, being critical of any strike or boycott action it perceived to be communist-inspired.

By the middle of July 1949 the number of people using railway buses between New Brighton and the city centre had increased considerably. After about three months the bus boycott was finally breaking down, and when the Bus Boycott Committee threatened to intervene more forcefully, the SAP intensified its patrols to cope with any outbreak of violence. By the beginning of August the bus boycott had virtually come to an end, with passenger numbers at 66 percent of the number which had used the buses before the boycott began.\(^{70}\) It is not clear whether negotiations between the Transport Commission and the Bus Boycott Committee successfully arranged for a subsidy of bus transportation by the PEM and employers as further evidence on the boycott appears untraceable. Both Lodge and Govan Mbeki conclude that the SAR eventually surrendered its bus service to New Brighton in favour of the Bay Transport Bus Service.\(^{71}\) The latter bus company then replaced its white drivers and conductors with black men much to the satisfaction of the location residents. Whether or not the Bay Transport Service reduced the fare to the original 3d remains unclear.

**THE 1952 DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN**

For the African National Congress (ANC) the 1950-1952 period heralded a new approach to dealing with the intransigent National Party government. Henceforth, it planned to adopt a policy of mass action which was more militant (but not militaristic) in its approach. Its envisaged Programme of Action planned to use boycotts, strikes and incidents of civil violence as key strategies to challenge the government.

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\(^{69}\) NAR, SAP 468 15/12/49, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 8 June 1949.


disobedience as a means of protest. This plan of action, planned jointly by the ANC and South African Indian Congress (SAIC), came to a head with the Defiance Campaign, the ‘largest scale nonviolent resistance ever seen in South Africa and the first mass campaign pursued jointly by Africans and Indians.’

The first stage of the plan of action was a national stay-at-home day, scheduled for 26 June 1950, to protest against the Unlawful Organisations Bill (Suppression of Communism Act) which was aimed directly at stifling black protest activity and organisation even further. Those participating in the stay-at-home were advised to remain ‘quietly at home’ in order to avoid any clash with the police. Although the response to this call was poor in the Gauteng region, in the Eastern Cape, more especially in Port Elizabeth, the response was impressive. The reason for this strong showing is generally accorded to the immense support that the ANC has traditionally enjoyed in the city.

The Afrikaner celebration of the Van Riebeeck Festival on 6 April 1952, boycotted by black political groups around the country, was seen as a prelude to the Defiance Campaign. Mass rallies took place around the country with Z K Matthews the main speaker in Port Elizabeth. Thereafter the Defiance Campaign was set in motion around the country; it commenced in Port Elizabeth on 26 June 1952 when Raymond Mhlaba, chairman of the local ANC branch, led 30 volunteers through the ‘Europeans Only’ entrance at the New Brighton station. They were promptly arrested for breaking the law, as were many others around the country.

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73 Lodge, Black Politics, p 35.


One of the objectives of the campaign was to target apartheid laws on railway stations and post offices. The police were warned well in advance of impending action so that they could be present to effect the arrests, a strategy specifically courted by the ANC.\(^{77}\)

As the campaign spread and the number of volunteers who had been arrested, increased, the government became somewhat anxious about its impact in the Eastern Cape. Because about 70 percent of all those arrested came from this area of the country, the SAP Commissioner, Major-General Brink, decided to visit Port Elizabeth during August 1952. Although the campaign was free of violence up to this stage, conditions in the city prompted him to bolster the manpower needs of the local police contingent by arranging a temporary transfer of about 60 black policemen to the city. They were housed in weatherboard buildings attached to the New Brighton police station. These buildings were erected at no cost to the PECC, being the responsibility of the local PWD office.\(^{78}\) A vacant lot situated just behind the police premises was identified as suitable for the temporary structure which was to be removed once they were no longer required.

During this period of on-going passive resistance, black workers at Boere Saamwerk Beperk went on strike in support of a co-worker seeking to regain his position at the firm on 7 August 1952, the police were called in to arrest those on strike. A strike at Central Saw Mills on the same day also entailed police action but the strike was settled amicably with no violence being perpetrated by either the SAP or the workers.\(^{79}\) Nevertheless, police numbers in Port Elizabeth were maintained at a high level to deal with any possible mass strike action.

Even with its extra manpower, however, the SAP admitted that it was difficult to give proper protection to those workers facing intimidation due to their willingness to work.\(^{80}\) There was also a problem in arresting strikers because no provision existed in Port Elizabeth for the

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77 Lodge, ‘Creation of Mass Movement’ in Hindson, (ed), Working Papers, p 100.
78 PER, 25/110, No. 4, District Representative, PWD to TC, PE, 20 Aug 1952.
79 NAR, NTS 7691 372/332, Native Com, PE to Chief Native Com, 8 Aug 1952.
80 NAR, NTS 7691 372/332, Chief Clerk, Dept of Labour, PE to Sect, Dept of Labour, 9 Aug 1952.
registration of service contracts in terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act. It was found that unless strikers were arrested at the factory site, the SAP’s task was made virtually insurmountable. Striking workers at the Metal Box factory were arrested in July 1952 for participating in an illegal strike when they arrived at the factory premises for their pay but the Department of Labour bemoaned the fact that striking workers at other companies were not being caught as easily.  

The Native Commissioner of Port Elizabeth, D J Jordaan, the acting District Commandant, Captain Venter, the NBL Superintendent, Mr Boast, and two representatives of the local Department of Labour met with members of the Midland Chamber of Industries in August 1952 in order to convince them of the need to control black labour, particularly strike action in the area, by pressurising the ‘liberal’ PECC into implementing influx control and registration regulations. They eventually succeeded in their aim as the Midland Chamber decided to request that the Council impose laws governing the movement of black people, that is, Influx Control and Pass Law regulations, but this only happened after the 1952 New Brighton riots had forced the Council’s hand which by this stage needed little urging - the liberal element in the Council was losing its previous influence in an increasingly conservative body (See Chapter 7).

Workers at the Val-Orange factory were arrested for striking on 29 August 1952 without incident, but when a small group of ANC- supporting workers tried to encourage other newly-appointed workers to strike they refused. Unsuccessful in their attempts to instigate a major strike, the ANC supporters then staged their own strike within the company’s premises on 1 September, which was quickly supported by onlookers outside the factory who demonstrated in sympathy with them. Confrontation with the police occurred when the approximately 60 demonstrators refused to disperse: 10 policemen baton-charged them, the latter sustaining minor injuries to two men with none of the demonstrators receiving serious injuries. This action was justified on the grounds that had the police not intervened, the demonstrators outside the main gate would have assaulted the non-striking workers, thus

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81 NAR, NTS 7691 372/332, Chief Clerk, Dept of Labour, PE to Sect, Dept of Labour, 9 Aug 1952.
82 NAR, NTS 7691 372/332, Native Com, PE to Chief Native Com, 8 Aug 1952.
causing a serious conflict to occur.\textsuperscript{83} Although the factory continued with production after this incident, the SAP nevertheless kept the factory under surveillance.

By mid-October about 2 000 volunteers in Port Elizabeth had participated in the campaign and the city’s new jail in North End overflowed at odd intervals as passive defiers served their time instead of paying fines. But the campaign had run its course by then, with resistance to the various apartheid laws waning. The total number of arrests in Port Elizabeth, as a direct result of the campaign, came to 2 007 (in East London the figure was 1 322), or 34 percent of the total for the whole Eastern Cape region.\textsuperscript{84} The success of the campaign in Port Elizabeth has been attributed to a number of factors, such as the lack of stringent influx control regulations, the homogenous nature of the black community, the strength of trade unionism and strong support for the ANC.\textsuperscript{85}

The outbreak of rioting in Port Elizabeth on 18 October eventually caused it to grind to a halt. The voluntary, passive-like resistance characteristic of the Defiance Campaign was replaced by undisciplined mob-like behaviour once the ‘paint riot’ began. The ANC’s approach to protest action nevertheless remained non-violent and its leadership remained committed to this policy despite the use of violence by police and rioters in Port Elizabeth. The role of the SAP in the October riots will be discussed in the section below.

**THE NEW BRIGHTON RIOTS: 1952**

The spark which ignited the New Brighton riots was the theft of paint by two black men at the North End railway station on the afternoon of 18 October 1952. When a Railway Police constable tried to apprehend the thieves on their arrival at NBL station, they resisted and soon obtained help from passers-by. In the ensuing struggle, the constable opened fire with his revolver, killing one man and wounding two others, with the result that the hostility of the growing crowd increased considerably. The police at the New Brighton police station were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{83} NAR, SAP 500 35/7/52, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 4 Sept 1952.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Lodge, *Black Politics*, p 46.
\end{itemize}
quickly contacted about the confrontation and a squad of men was despatched to the station immediately to assist the Railway Police.

In the meantime a Captain H J Croucamp was contacted by the station commander of the NBL police about the situation; Croucamp then arranged the mobilisation of men from other police stations within the Port Elizabeth district before proceeding hastily to the railway station. Upon arriving at the scene of the unrest, he noticed immediately that the demeanour of the blacks confronting the police was particularly hostile. Reinforcements under Captain J Joubert of the Korsten police soon arrived but the rioters at the railway station were not intimidated by the enlarged police contingent, and increased their barrage of stones. Use of revolvers by the police against the crowd seemed to have little effect and only after rifle fire was employed did the crowd disperse, taking any wounded comrades with them. The wounded were removed from the scene to prevent the police interrogating them. The police, being the first line of defence against civil unrest, were caught unprepared in this instance, thus compelling them to use the easiest means at their disposal - the firearm - to protect state property, their own lives and that of other whites in the township. Yet up to this stage of the riot, neither the lives nor the property of white civilians in the vicinity of the railway station were threatened. The reverse was true for policemen. While waiting for reinforcements, the police within the police station grounds felt threatened by a large crowd of black people standing nearby observing the standoff at the railway station down the road. To counter any possible threat to the police station, Croucamp organised 20 men to remain on guard in and around the station.

The killing of black people by white policemen was seen in some quarters as the main reason why white civilians in NBL at the time were randomly targeted by the incensed throng which had witnessed police ‘strong arm’ tactics at the railway station: there was a need to avenge

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86 NAR, SAP 480 15/7/50, SAP summary of riot, nd.
87 SAP Museum, Box 30-11/1, No. 2482, Report on NBL riots by Chief Inspector, SAP, PE to Dep Com, 19 Nov 1952.
89 Baines, ‘Defiance Campaign’, p 59.
the death of black comrades, thieves or not.\textsuperscript{90} Further police action in NBL resembled a cat and mouse game, that is, wherever the rioters went next to sow mayhem, the police followed as fast as possible, but were too late to save the life of W M Laas, a white man who had just dropped off some black employees in the township. He was pulled from his vehicle (which was later set alight), assaulted and killed by the militant crowd. When night fell the crowd melted into the township, leaving the SAP to think that it had stemmed the unrest and therefore able to quit the township. Darkness may have also made the police feel more insecure in hostile surroundings.\textsuperscript{91}

Nightfall favoured the activities of those bent on the destruction of all things symbolising white power and authority. Thus, the Post Office, milk depots and the Rio cinema were targeted for destruction. By the time the SAP, alerted to the rekindling of riotous activities, arrived at the Rio cinema, three white males lay dead. Nevertheless, they were in time to rescue the wife of one of the deceased, who had been stripped naked, raped and assaulted. Police action did at least, on one other occasion during the initial period of civil upheaval, save the life of another white civilian in NBL, that of A Isaacson, a shopkeeper in the township.\textsuperscript{92} As soon as his premises came under attack he telephoned the police who were able to get to him on time.

Meanwhile, further police reinforcement had arrived to patrol the location and to prevent any residents from leaving the area. All off-duty policemen in the city were called into action. According to police sources, the men coming into the township as reinforcements were properly equipped with rifles and sten guns.\textsuperscript{93} Further attacks on property through the night, some of which were set on fire, required the attention of fire engines, which, like ambulances entering the township, needed police escorts. By about 3:00 am the next morning the police declared that the township was finally at peace once more. The period of rioting had lasted from around 3:45 pm, 18 October to 3:00 am, 19 October. Police listed the casualties as four

\textsuperscript{90} Wits, AD 8431/RJ/Aa 12.19.5a, SAIRR Memo, 24 Nov 1952, para 2.
\textsuperscript{91} Wits, SAIRR Memo, 24 Nov 1952, para 2.
\textsuperscript{93} NAR, SAP 480 15/7/50, SAP summary of riot, nd.
whites and seven blacks killed, with two whites and 24 blacks wounded during this period - two policemen sustained minor injuries. Damage to property was extensive, estimated at £23 772.94

Police reports stated that matters remained somewhat unsettled for a few days after the 18th, but ‘firm action on the part of the police brought the natives to their senses’.95 Reinforcements from nearby police stations, reminiscent of the 1920 riots, began arriving in Port Elizabeth two days later to bolster the existing police establishment. These men accorded the locally-based police some rest as many had carried out patrols day and night without a break, some even sleeping on the lawn of the New Brighton police station, fully clothed and fully armed.96

The Minister of Justice, C R Swart, soon arranged for the local magistrate and police leadership in Port Elizabeth to meet with the PECC to formulate appropriate measures to deal with the unrest situation.97 One outcome of this directive from the Minister of Justice was the promulgation of curfew regulations in Port Elizabeth as from 7 November 1952. No black people were henceforth allowed in any public place between 9 pm and 5 am without proper authority.98 Political meetings in NBL were also prohibited by the Council.

In its assessment of the riots the SAP was at no time able to prove that the riots, beginning on 18 October, were planned in advance by any black political grouping opposed to the apartheid regime.99 Although perhaps accepting that the riot was unplanned, both Swart and Dr H F Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs, were nevertheless quick to blame the defiance

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94 NAR, SAP 480 15/7/50, SAP summary of riot, nd.
95 NAR, SAP 480 15/7/50, SAP summary of riot, nd.
97 NAR, SAP 200 15/8/30, Private Sect to Minister of Justice to TC, PE, 3 Nov 1952.
98 Extraordinary Government Gazette, No. 4958, 7 Nov 1952.
99 SAP Museum, Box 30-11/1, No. 2482, Report on NBL riots by SAP Chief Inspector, PE to Dep Com, 19 Nov 1952.
campaign of the ANC and the SAIC for the outbreak of violence. Verwoerd went further, blaming the liberal-minded PECC’s failure to implement urban apartheid to the full as a cause of the riots.\textsuperscript{100} For its part, the PECC simply blamed outside ‘agitators’ as a cause of the riots, in this way directing any blame for the unrest away from itself.

A further factor to be considered as a cause of the riots was the involvement of the SAP. Although official reports praised the police for their commendable restraint in their dealings with riotous behaviour, for others, their excessive use of firearms was to blame for the unrest. The ANC, for example, accused the government of using the police to ‘terrorise’ blacks which caused an ‘explosive and dangerous situation.’\textsuperscript{101} Baines has reflected on the fact that press reports omitted to mention that whites, and symbols of white power, were attacked only after a number of blacks had been shot by the police.\textsuperscript{102} He has also established that township residents blamed the spontaneous outbreak of the riot squarely on the police whose excessive use of firearms to disperse threatening crowds initiated the violence.

In conclusion, the New Brighton riots once again showed that the police favoured the ‘iron fist’ approach to quelling social and political unrest when faced with a spontaneous outbreak of violence. It is unlikely, however, that the rioting occurred as a direct result of political action; Kuper has argued that no evidence exists to show any connection between the Defiance Campaign, organised along strictly passive resistance procedures and the New Brighton riots.\textsuperscript{103} But the tensions created between the forces of law and order and the oppressed majority during the course of the Defiance Campaign cannot be completely ignored. The sudden outbreak of violence which ensued between the police and black rioters was, according to Tom Lodge, due mainly to the tensions which had been building up between these two protagonists as a result of the Defiance Campaign.\textsuperscript{104} So when the initial

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[100] Baines, ‘Defiance Campaign’, p 63. For an explanation of the PECC’s reaction to Verwoerd’s accusations, see pp 63-64.
\item[102] Baines, ‘Defiance Campaign’, p 65.
\item[103] Kuper, Passive Resistance, p 133.
\item[104] Lodge, ‘Creation of Mass Movement’ in Hindson, Working Papers, p 102.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
disturbance began on the New Brighton railway station, it is highly likely, as suggested by Baines, that marginalised tsotsi elements in the township took advantage of the situation to commit arson, looting and murder.\textsuperscript{105} Much the same thing happened during the East London riots which followed in November 1952.\textsuperscript{106} In both the Port Elizabeth and East London riots the police had adopted platskiet politiek, a term coined by General J B Hertzog, leader of the National Party in 1922, when he described the quelling of the white-led 1922 Rand Strike by the Smuts government.\textsuperscript{107} Little did he realise the irony of his statement: his own party was to employ the same deplorable tactics against black opposition in the future.

**AFTERMATH OF NEW BRIGHTON RIOTS**

When the ANC decided to embark on an indefinite strike of all black workers in the Eastern Cape as from Monday, 10 November 1952, the white public throughout the province apparently reacted with great alarm and demanded adequate police protection. Protection was also needed for those black workers who refused to strike and so the SAP Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division appealed to headquarters for additional men. By 6 November additional manpower was arranged and posted to towns falling within this police division. Port Elizabeth received help from the Western Cape and Witwatersrand police divisions: 18 black and coloured policemen from the former area and 22 whites, 55 blacks from the latter area.\textsuperscript{108} The preponderance of black policemen in these contingents was due mainly to a continued shortfall in the white police establishment during the early 1950s: by 1951 there was still a shortage of 1 653 men.\textsuperscript{109} The black component of the SAP was not as severely understaffed hence the availability of black policemen for emergency deployment to trouble spots like the Eastern Cape. These men were expected to be in Port Elizabeth for a period of six to eight weeks; they were sent on the first available train. Normal travel and subsistence allowances were paid to them plus extra pay for the period

\textsuperscript{105} Baines, ‘Defiance Campaign’, p 75.
\textsuperscript{107} Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 95.
\textsuperscript{108} NAR, SAP 497 15/11/52, Acting SAP Com to Dep Com, CED, 6 Nov 1952.
\textsuperscript{109} Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 190.
spent in Port Elizabeth. They were housed at various police stations in the city, and where insufficient accommodation existed, tents were provided. Where a shortage of police vehicles existed, the necessary transport was requisitioned from the Union Defence Force.

Even though the strike was restricted to one day (10 November), and only really effective in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, it was decided by the SAP leadership to retain the extra police contingent until the end of the month in certain towns of the Eastern Cape. Riots during early November in East London had also placed a strain on police manpower requirements in the Eastern Cape.\textsuperscript{110} By the end of November more than half of the extra men sent to Port Elizabeth and elsewhere were returned to their home stations as conditions were considered satisfactory by the Deputy Commissioner of the Cape Eastern police division.\textsuperscript{111} The SAP believed that the arrival of police reinforcements in the Eastern Cape, together with the firm stand taken by the PECC against ANC threats to call a general strike for an indefinite period, compelled the ANC to settle for a one-day strike.\textsuperscript{112}

In the event of riots or disturbances breaking out, particularly in black townships, District Commandants were instructed at the end of 1952 to ensure that sufficient white policemen were at hand to assist black policemen caught up in any such social unrest. The main reason for this directive was that black policemen were considered ill-equipped to deal with any occurrence of such a nature.\textsuperscript{113} Armed white policemen had to come to their aid as black policemen were not issued with handguns or rifles.

As a result of the riots which broke out in Port Elizabeth, the Minister of Justice, C R Swart, the Commissioner of Police, J A Brink and Brigadier C J Rademeyer (he became SAP Commissioner in 1954), visited the city in January 1953.\textsuperscript{114} This high-powered delegation is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} See A Mager and G Minkley, ‘Reaping the Whirlwind’ in Bonner, et al (eds) \textit{Apartheid’s Genesis}, p 229.
\item \textsuperscript{111} NAR, SAP 497 15/11/52, Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 28 Nov 1952.
\item \textsuperscript{112} NAR, SAP 500 36/61/52, Annual Report for Cape Eastern Division, 1952.
\item \textsuperscript{113} NAR, SAP 163 39/5/27, Policy: Native Branch of SAP, 9 Dec 1952.
\item \textsuperscript{114} \textit{Nongqai}, Jan 1953, p 83.
\end{itemize}
indicative of how seriously the government took this outbreak of civil unrest in the city. One of the consequences of this visit was the improvement of the New Brighton police station’s inadequate security arrangements. It was decided to erect a fence over two metres high around the police station. The Council had no objection to this fence provided of course that it entailed no cost to itself.\textsuperscript{115} The fence also served to safeguard the property of the Council as the SAP still rented its facilities in New Brighton. Two search lights were placed on the roof of the police station as an added security measure by the PEM at the request of the SAP.

A further result of the riots in the Eastern Cape was a proposal from a London-based company to supply the SAP with anti-riot equipment, such as teargas and riot guns. It argued that shooting unarmed rioters was perhaps effective in the short term but long term consequences were often far more damaging to the reputation of a police force and its government.\textsuperscript{116} A more humane way of dealing with disorder was possible. In order to sell its ideas and equipment to the SAP it emphasised that its wares, used by highly trained police squads, had proved successful in Palestine, India and other British colonies around the world. The SAP was soon convinced of the necessity to improve its riot-control methods and equipment, purchasing two water-cannon in 1956.\textsuperscript{117} In later years it added 47 Saracen armoured cars to its anti-riot repertoire but the training of policemen as specialist in riot-control only began in 1960 after the Sharpville massacre. Within a few years, all policemen, white and black, were trained in riot drill as a matter of course during training.

In order to facilitate the collection and co-ordination of data on all aspects of ‘native affairs’, the Department of Native Affairs set up a bureau of information. The SAP was requested to play its part in contributing to the success of this bureau by providing it with information to be found in police reports to do with black unrest and related incidents. Thus, in 1953 Deputy Commissioners were instructed to co-operate in this venture by submitting all such reports to Pretoria for the benefit of the Secretary for Native Affairs. Commissioner J A

\textsuperscript{115} PER, 25/110 No. 4, Minutes of Finance Committee, 22 Jan 1953.

\textsuperscript{116} NAR, SAP 476 2/18/50, Director, Civil Protection Ltd to SAP Com, 19 Nov 1952.

\textsuperscript{117} Brewer, \textit{Black and Blue}, p 210.
Brink believed that by co-operating in this manner, the SAP could promote and maintain good relations between itself, magistrates and Native Commissioners.\textsuperscript{118}

The Criminal Procedure and Evidence Amendment Bill of 1955, besides aiming to make improvements in the administration of justice, sought to provide the SAP with new powers to safeguard the security of the state. The clause dealing with police powers gave rise to considerable opposition in the House of Assembly. There was concern that the proposed right of any policeman to enter any premises on suspicion that something was taking place which could endanger the security of the state was viewed as a threat to the liberty of all law-abiding people in the country.\textsuperscript{119} The government argued that the danger of communism had to be countered in the strongest possible manner and thus enacted the bill.

Both Korsten and New Brighton police stations were also considered to be short of personnel in 1955 but the emphasis was not on fighting ordinary crime, but to police industrial strikes and political agitation. With its mixed population, the Korsten police area was seen as the breeding ground for communism, and the existing police strength was reckoned to be inadequate to deal with this increasing ‘evil’. The NBL police needed more men to cope with the increasingly hostile attitude of the township residents towards white authority, and for their own safety, policemen patrolling the township had to move around in twos and threes. The SAP also regarded NBL as the headquarters of the ANC in Port Elizabeth, with this political party being held responsible by the police for all political incitement which arose on a regular basis.\textsuperscript{120}

**CONCLUSION**

The SAP responded in a variety of ways to the instances of mass protest outlined in this chapter. Ranging from the anti-German riots of 1915 to the New Brighton riots of 1952, the

\textsuperscript{118} NAR, SAP 480 15/7/50, SAP Com to All SAP Officers, 28 Jan 1953.

\textsuperscript{119} Wits, A410/B1.1.65-1.1.93, M Ballinger Papers, File 3, Memo on new powers for police, 25 Feb 1955.

\textsuperscript{120} NAR, SAP 514 9/19/54, SAP Dep Com, CED to SAP Com, 22 Aug 1955.
responses show a significant change in police dealings with political, industrial and civil unrest. During the anti-German riots of 1915 the police were indecisive and remarkably restrained in their attempts to stop the destruction of German property at the hands of mainly white rioters. They were seemingly unwilling to employ more violent methods of police control, such as baton-charging or firing upon the unruly crowd. The nature of this response to white rioters would suggest that the police were perhaps more circumspect in their dealings with whites: politically, the use of excessive force by police to quell white unrest was highly risky and likely to cause a setback for the ruling party, as Smuts found out as a result of the government’s violent suppression of the 1922 Witwatersrand miners’ strike.\textsuperscript{121}

Indecisive leadership occurred again during the 1920 riots, leading to the tragic death of 24 generally law-abiding workers and lookers-on. Poor control over proceedings, once the main protagonist had been arrested, was probably one of the main causes of the afore-mentioned deaths. Ineffective negotiations between the police and union leaders, failure to disperse a volatile crowd and insufficient control over vigilantes, all contributed to the mayhem which followed. Yet, despite constant provocation from unruly members of the crowd, the police maintained their discipline until the first shot was fired. According to the inquest which followed, the police discharged considerably fewer bullets than the trigger-happy vigilantes. One must therefore conclude, on the basis of the inquest report, that the police were generally restrained (due to highly disciplined behaviour during a period of intensive provocation) in their reaction to civic unrest in Port Elizabeth at this stage of their history.

By the 1930s the SAP leadership in Port Elizabeth appeared more organised in its dealing with political unrest, taking pro-active steps to snuff out any signs of violence posed by the rise of the Afrikaner right-wing. The outbreak of violence at a Grey Shirts meeting in 1934 was dealt with quickly by a large contingent of policemen without the need to resort to extreme methods. Much the same could be said after the outbreak of World War II when German sympathisers like Vorster were interned without recourse to undue violence. Strikes and boycotts during the late 1940s also saw the police maintaining a low profile, ensuring that violent action was kept to a minimum; surveillance rather than confrontation seemed to be

the approach favoured by the police during this period.

Police involvement in the Defiance Campaign, and the New Brighton riots which followed, revealed a somewhat ominous change in police tactics when suppressing the consequences of black political mobilisation. When outnumbered, but not outgunned, the police were swift to resort to the use of firearms in order to restore law and order. In some ways, the SAP was caught unawares by the more militant and destructive nature of the rioting which occurred during the 1950s. In the years following the period under discussion, the police force became more and more repressive in quelling any signs of unrest, to the extent that it purposely sought ways of improving its tactical ability in this field of policing by purchasing anti-riot equipment and training its personnel in riot control methods. The police’s interest in riot control technologies suggests that the SAP hierarchy during the mid-1950s recognised that the loss of life was unacceptable, and that new forms of crowd control were needed. The fact that the SAP purchased water-cannons in 1956 suggests too that the SAP was willing to use less lethal forms of crowd control as its first option, keeping firearms as a last resort.
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This study has sought to situate the work of the South African Police (SAP) within the context of a medium-sized, industrial city in South Africa, namely, Port Elizabeth. The primary concern of this thesis has been to elaborate on the organisation of policing in Port Elizabeth, day-to-day working conditions of policemen, routine crime-fighting, socially oppressive policing and political policing. Relations between the SAP and the state (central and local) were also given due consideration. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that this relationship was never meant to be a central concern of this work: police-state relations have been discussed when the topic at hand warranted it, for example, when the concerns of the local and central states impinged strongly upon the work of the police in maintaining law and order in black and coloured townships (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

The colonial nature of policing (see Introduction) in South Africa necessitated close relations between the state and its police department because the ‘South African state used the police to implant an alien rule on a subject population that resisted it, requiring the police to intervene in social conflict in a politically partisan fashion.’¹ This particular approach to policing in South Africa needs to be understood within the wider context of policing in South Africa’s history. Van der Spuy argues that the legacy of militarism (closely associated with colonial-style policing) so frequently ascribed to the SAP should not be viewed as idiosyncratic but rather as having ‘derived from the very structure of a colonial-type society’.²

For Albie Sachs, the most distinguishing feature of a police force is not so much its size but rather its structural elements, namely, internal organisation, the amount of power at its disposal, and lastly, its role in society.³ In South Africa, as elsewhere, an important feature

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of policing centres on one of its key features: the enforcement of laws legitimised by government. In the words of Brogden, this ‘legal mandate gives the police institution, almost uniquely, the legitimate right to use force in the attainment of its objectives.’⁴ Without this conscious monopoly of power over the instruments of repression, it is doubtful whether the white minority could have sustained its political ascendancy.⁵

To retain its pre-eminent position in South Africa after Union in 1910, white society chose to entrench and retain minority rule by relying upon the constitution and its military forces, the Union Defence Force (UDF), the SAP and the South African Mounted Rifles (SAMR). The use of the SAP in a colonial-style policing format played a central role in maintaining that position until President F W de Klerk’s radical political reforms ushered in the ‘New South Africa’ in 1994. The structural organisation of the SAP from 1913 to 1956 retained this nineteenth century approach to policing: highly centralised, controlled by a cabinet minister (and thus a servant of its political master) and essentially employing repressive methods of policing against the black sector of the population.⁶

Although essential for the survival of the apartheid state, the SAP was never equipped adequately for its task, with a shortage of personnel and matériel a constant gripe which came from its central and local leadership. The District Commandants of Port Elizabeth were always under pressure from their station commanders and the representatives of the local state (the PECC and the Walmer Town Council) to acquire more staff. The police in the city had to often rely on brute force and the political support of the Justice Ministry to successfully combat outbreaks of unrest in the absence of sufficient manpower and equipment as evinced by violent episodes described in Chapter 8. This paradox of an under-equipped, under-staffed and under-funded police force being vital to the continued existence of the racist state, may be explained as follows: although unable to attract sufficient whites to the

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⁶ Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 333.
force and being unwilling to employ blacks outside their own areas, the SAP could nevertheless rely upon a large, volunteer white police reserve force to supplement any staff shortages it experienced. The South African state’s success in maintaining a system of internal colonialism during the 1913-1956 period was not based solely upon police or military power, but also ‘the degree of social control embedded in every institution of South Africa’s structures of internal colonialism, and the political and technological capacity of the police to resort to maximum force as a first resort.’

Training of police recruits in a para-military tradition throughout the period covered by the thesis was done with the following overt intention in mind: to equip recruits with the skills necessary to maintain ‘proper’ control over blacks. The importance of discipline and musketry was emphasised at the expense of skills required in routine crime-fighting, thus, the civil tradition of policing was always considered secondary to that of socially and politically oppressive policing. Attempts were made to broaden the police training curriculum in the years before 1956, mainly to include more aspects of law, general knowledge, bilingualism and public relations but the above-mentioned aspects remained the most important elements of police training. However, training in riot drill and in the use of armoured cars and tear gas was never a feature in the period studied - the need for such training only became necessary after 1960 when the struggle for freedom in South Africa became more violent in nature.

The concept of formal training for black recruits was resisted until the 1940s. This meant that black policemen posted to Port Elizabeth had to receive on-the-job training at their respective police posts. Coming from a deprived background as a result of institutionalised discrimination, their ‘inferiority’ was further entrenched in the minds of the white public, and white policemen, who considered them incompetent without realising that their ‘incompetence’ was the result of training deficiencies. Yet, once the system of black police training was established, black policemen were trained at venues totally separate from the white Police College in Pretoria. Separation in wider South African society was thus perpetuated within the force - there was to be no social interaction between white and black policemen.

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Almost throughout the whole period falling within the parameters of this thesis, the recruitment of blacks remained a far easier exercise than that of whites. The extensive use of blacks by the SAP has been described by Brewer as appearing to be an enigma but in fact, he argues, it was quite understandable. For police authorities, there was nothing enigmatic about recruiting black policemen to assist in the suppression of their own kind as this policy was consistent with the colonial tradition of policing elsewhere in the world. For black policemen, a career in the SAP was a means to stable income in a racially structured society where good jobs were hard to find. They were not given preferential treatment by a job colour bar, unlike the ‘poor whites’ of South Africa, many of whom became policemen purely as a means to an end, that is, a better paying job in the private sector.

The working conditions of the police serving in Port Elizabeth have been shown to be generally far from satisfactory. The Lansdown Commission of 1937 revealed that remuneration, promotion prospects, accommodation and long hours of duty were some of the most common complaints shared by policemen. Policemen in Port Elizabeth who chose to resign from the force in search of better work prospects elsewhere were in a more fortunate position than their colleagues working in smaller centres as the manufacturing-industrial base of the city provided a number of alternatives to a police career.

The unattractive remuneration package offered by the SAP was also a factor which prevented many English-speaking youths, and better educated Afrikaners, from joining the force. Young men from Port Elizabeth and its rural environs generally preferred to follow a career in the commercial sector, a situation which led to the majority of policemen serving in the city having a ‘poor white’ or bywonder background. District Commandants complained that the generally deficient language and literacy skills of ‘poor white’ policemen contributed to a poor public image of the SAP in Port Elizabeth. Because of their lack of urban sophistication and their own relatively inferior status within (white) society, policemen sharing this social background were the ones most likely to treat blacks in a rough, arrogant manner.

Although often critical of the SAP’s crime-fighting capabilities, whites living in the more exclusive suburbs of Port Elizabeth nevertheless appeared to appreciate the fact that their

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8 Brewer, *Black and Blue*, p 333.
policemen were generally underpaid and overworked. Ratepayer’s organisations representing members of this upper-income group felt compelled to call upon the government to increase the remuneration of policemen, particularly when their well-being and security was at stake.\footnote{Port Elizabeth Archives Repository, Port Elizabeth (PER), 25/110, No. 3, Sect, Mill Park branch of Ward 3 Ratepayers’ Association to TC, PE, 11 Oct 1945.}

By the mid-1950s, whites in Port Elizabeth were getting preferential treatment in terms of policing as the state, in order to limit influx control, began to increase police patrols in exclusively white areas at the expense of black locations. In the latter areas, civil policing deteriorated markedly, leaving them ‘vulnerable to the predatory gangs and criminality that flourished amid high levels of urban poverty.’\footnote{I Evans, \textit{Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa} (Berkeley, 1997), p 116.} The deteriorating crime situation in Port Elizabeth’s black townships (due partly to overcrowding and growing poverty) and increased police activity aimed at enforcing influx control regulations (discriminatory legislation absent in the city until 1953) during the mid-1950s, is corroborated by the oral and written evidence provided in Chapter 7. A poorly maintained infrastructure, such as roads and lighting, made the policing of ordinary crime even more difficult for the police in areas like Korsten and New Brighton. For underpaid and overworked policemen, policing such areas was never easy as life and limb were often at risk.

For the majority of black people, the SAP was never regarded as ‘an impartial, representative, and nonpartisan police force’, rather, it was viewed in some quarters as an ‘occupying force’, its chief task being the military-like imposition of apartheid legislation after 1950 rather than the protection of individuals from crime.\footnote{Penuell Maduna, ‘Policing among Blacks in South Africa’ in M L Mathews, P B Heymann and A S Mathews, (eds), \textit{Policing the Conflict in South Africa} (Gainesville, 1993), p 43.} The SAP, because of its political partisanship, never transcended the oppressive approach to the policing of black people. Although it possessed a relative but constrained autonomy throughout the 1913-1956 period, the political authority of the Minister of Justice meant that the SAP operated under the close scrutiny of the state. The South African state’s obsession with the consolidation and maintenance of
state authority meant that policing of ordinary crime in black areas was always going to remain of secondary importance. Policing in townships like New Brighton focussed more on rooting out instances of illegal beer brewing, enforcing the payment of poll tax, implementing local and central government regulations, such as those governing influx control while gangsterism, assaults and other assorted crimes thrived. Routine crime-fighting in black areas was never a state priority.

Van der Spuy, a sociologist, has summed up the essence of policing in South Africa before 1994 by arguing cogently that the SAP’s legacy of militarism must not be seen as a twentieth century idiosyncrasy but rather as the result of the South African state’s colonial origins. The SAP in Port Elizabeth, from 1913 to 1956, revealed all the characteristics of a force performing three types of policing, namely, civil policing, socially oppressive policing and the policing of industrial and political protest action. Nonetheless, the argument that policing became systematically more brutal and vicious in Port Elizabeth (and the rest of the country) after the period covered by this thesis still holds true. The implementation of influx control after 1953 in Port Elizabeth brought the city in line with other major urban centres in the country. Policemen in the city began to intervene more and more systematically in the ordinary lives of black people: location regulations were now not the only forms of control being experienced by them. Thus, Evans’s notion of ‘political policing’ could be applied without much reserve to the policing situation in Port Elizabeth after 1953.

Brewer has identified the first known examples of ‘systematic inhuman treatment and torture’ as being perpetrated by the police during the mid-1950s, citing examples of electric shocks being used on blacks to force confessions. In Port Elizabeth, perhaps the most infamous example of the consequences of police brutality was the incarceration, interrogation and torture of Steve Biko, the black consciousness leader in 1977. He died in Pretoria, over a
1 000 kilometres way, of injuries sustained in Port Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{16} The numerous incidents of police harassment, maltreatment and harsh treatment before the 1950s had now become systematically augmented by sheer cruelty in the fight against so-called communist-inspired, subversive forces.

Policing before 1913 and after 1956 in the city are both fields of study which warrant attention, particularly the latter period, given the upsurge in interest in the SAP’s recent history as manifested by the findings of the Truth Commission in 1998. Hopefully this work will also afford us a deeper understanding of an apartheid society where large numbers of black people have sometimes suffered a variety of indignities (such as being criminalized by unjust laws) brought about by the often over-enthusiastic enforcement of discriminatory laws by local and central state officials and their ever-present assistants, the police. A fully comprehensive history of the SAP, written from ‘below’ and ‘above’, to clarify the role of the police in perpetuating apartheid in Port Elizabeth after 1956, remains to be written.

\textsuperscript{16} N B Pityana, M Ramphele, M Mpumlwana, and L Wilson, (eds), \textit{Bounds of Possibility: the legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness} (Cape Town, 1991), p 71.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

District Commandants of Port Elizabeth: 1913-1960

Inspector R F Neale-Shute: April 1913 - Jan 1917
Left Port Elizabeth on promotion to Kokstad, Transkei.

Inspector H Halse: Feb 1917 - March 1922
Participated in the South African War before joining the police. Promoted to Sub-Inspector in 1908. Commanded a police squadron of Hartigan’s Horse during the SWA campaign during World War I. Previously in Middelburg, Cape, before promotion to Port Elizabeth in 1916. Led a contingent of Port Elizabeth SAP during the Bulhoek episode in 1921. Killed on 12 March 1922 in Benoni during the 1922 Rand Strike. Buried in Port Elizabeth. A military funeral procession, observed by thousands of people lining the streets of the city, preceded his burial.

Inspector T C Whelehan: 1922
Served as Sub-Inspector in Cradock before the formation of the SAP in 1913.
Served as Chief Deputy Commissioner at Headquarters in Pretoria from 1928 - 1933.

Inspector L Strickland: Jan 1923 - June 1928
Born in South Australia. Came to South Africa during the South African War. Served in the Cape Police before joining SAMR in 1913. After being Commandant in Port Elizabeth served in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Inspector J Jones: 1928 - July 1929

Chief Inspector M J Hart: Aug 1929 - July 1933
Arrived in Port Elizabeth in Dec 1916. Previously in Beaufort West. Served as Sub-Inspector at Baakens Street and served as second-in-command under Halse. Transferred to Queenstown as district commandant in 1926 after promotion to Inspector. Promoted to Chief Inspector in 1932.

Chief Inspector G Lloyd Lister: Aug 1933 - April 1935
Promoted to Chief Inspector in Aug 1932 while serving in Port Elizabeth. Promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and transferred to Kimberley.

Chief Inspector Beresford-Wood: May 1935 - Oct 1936

Chief Inspector F J Verster: Nov 1936 - Feb 1938
Transferred to Pretoria in 1938.

Chief Inspector H Peard: March 1938 - Aug 1941
Transferred to Grahamstown.
Chief Inspector P J Jordaan: Sept 1941- Feb 1946
Promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and transferred to Pretoria.

Chief Inspector W J Swartz: April 1946 - Feb 1949
Had served in Port Elizabeth before his return as District Commandant.

Chief Inspector P S Fourie: March 1949 - 1953
Transferred to Pretoria in early 1953.

Lieutenant-Colonel R van Heerden: 1953 - July 1953

Lieutenant-Colonel J L Drummond: Aug 1953 - 1956 (?)

Lieutenant-Colonel G L Joubert: 1956 (?) - Dec 1958

Sources: Harradine’s Chronicle, The Nongqai.
APPENDIX B

South African Police Commissioners 1913 to 1956

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T G Truter</td>
<td>1 April 1913 - 30 November 1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I P de Villiers</td>
<td>1 December 1928 - 31 July 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>R J Palmer</td>
<td>1 August 1945 - 31 July 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>J A Brink</td>
<td>1 August 1951 - 23 September 1954</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>C I Rademeyer</td>
<td>24 September 1954 - 31 July 1960</td>
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