

# THE EFFECT OF CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES ON THE LIVES OF THE AGED AND INFIRM IN MANGAUNG, BLOEMFONTEIN, 1940-1986

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking the effectiveness of any government depends on the quality of social security it renders to the defenceless people in its communities, being it the aged and infirm, the poor, sick or children. Social security involves proper care, accommodation and financial security. South Africa, with a population of almost 50 million people, is presently facing critical shortages of housing and old age homes, improper medical care and insufficient financial assistance for the aged and infirm. Disturbing press reports like those about the socio-economic conditions of the black aged and infirm are no surprise.<sup>2</sup> The Smit Commission, an interdepartmental commission investigating the socio-economic and political circumstances of urban blacks in 1942 – ostensibly the first official report on black social welfare in South Africa – indicated to Government the lack of proper care and accommodation for the aged and infirm in both urban and rural areas. The investigation by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) in respect of elderly people in Soweto and the townships of Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Vanderbijlpark revealed that these people were still experiencing serious problems with improper housing, finances including pensions, health facilities and the absence of socialising opportunities like library and recreational facilities in the 1980s. The *Star* concluded that their circumstances was “one of the most tragic problems in South Africa”.<sup>3</sup>

In broader context South Africa disposed of the largest percentage of black elderly people in Africa. In 1980 there were about 600 000 in the country, growing by

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<sup>2</sup> *Volksblad*, 31 August 2007. "Ouethuis by MRK verkla", p. 8; *Volksblad*, *Sake 24*, 29 August 2007. "Talle bakhand", p. 18; *Volksblad*, 8 May 2008 (Leader) and 9 May 2008 (Leader). For the purpose of this article the words *aged*, *infirm* and *elderly* are used interchangeably and mean a person who in the case of a male is 65 years or older and a female 60 years or older. Compare CM Swanepoel, *Maatskaplike behoeftes van bejaardes in Gauteng sedert 1994* (D. Phil, UOVS, 1999), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Star*, 16 October 1978, p. 8; AC Myburgh, *Die posisie en versorging van bejaardes onder die Bantoe in die Unie van Suid-Afrika* (D Phil, UP, 1957), p. 154; C van der Bergh and D Herbst, *Die lewensomstandighede van swart bejaardes in enkele blanke stedelike gebiede 'n verkennende ondersoek. Navorsingsbevinding SN-238* (RGN, Pretoria, 1984), p. 2.

about 20 000 per year to constitute an estimated 6% of South Africa's black population with Marocco close behind. The inability of the governments of South Africa and its northern neighbours – Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe – to cope with the unexpected influx to townships due to unfavourable agricultural conditions revealed the absence or limited effectivity of an accommodating social welfare policy manifesting itself in improper housing, extreme poverty and health hazards.<sup>4</sup>

These developing African countries contrasted sharply with the situation in developed Western Europe, Britain, North America and Sweden, respectively disposing of the significant large percentage of approximately 9% elders. The much larger percentage was due to urbanisation and industrialisation, pension schemes enabling them to buy nutritious food and pressure placed by private welfare organisations on the authorities to provide proper housing and advanced health services on the long term – sure tokens of an established social welfare policy.<sup>5</sup> Demographic challenges like a growing old age population and the unsustainable goals of an all-encompassing system of state financing and public service rendered solely by local authorities, obliged governments in Britain and Western Europe to redefine their responsibilities, encouraging cooperation between government welfare services, voluntary welfare agencies, families and informal support networks like carers of the aged and infirm in the 1970s. The question of the aged and infirm is thus viewed by these countries as a reality with far-reaching socio-economic implications receiving intensive attention from local authorities cooperating on large scale with private/voluntary welfare services. A prerequisite for successful community care policies is an understanding of the context in which these policies are to be implemented, such as the community structures involved, like the different race groups in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia where welfare services may be frustrated by language and racial antagonism.<sup>6</sup>

It is contrasting conditions like these in developing and developed countries that prompted this article to investigate the social-welfare situation of the aged and infirm in Mangaung, putting their plight in historical perspective over time to notify any improvement or continuing degeneration. The article aims to concentrate only on the critical issues of housing and financial assistance to the aged and infirm in Mangaung, due to the extensive and complicated nature of these two issues. The equally important matter of health care and related social matters like recreation are not discussed on account of the almost non-existence of archival information for the period under discussion. Two extensive surveys in townships at Cape Town, the East

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<sup>4</sup> Swanepoel, pp. 43, 47; D Dewar, *et al.*, *Urbanisation responses and policies in four case studies – Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe* (University of Cape Town, Urban Problems Research Unit, 1982), pp. 45, 71-72, 109.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*; Swanepoel, pp. 43, 47.

<sup>6</sup> T Schart and GC Wenger (eds), *International perspectives on community care for elder people* (Aveburg, Aldershot, 1995), pp. 217-219.

Rand and Soweto by the South African Bureau for Racial Affairs (SABRA) in 1967 and social welfare researchers under the auspices of The Urban Foundation in 1979 concluded that there was countrywide a significant lack of information on the health care of blacks, despite the lofty aims of the health legislation of 1919 (Act 36) and 1977 (Act 63) to implement a fully-fledged health service.<sup>7</sup>

There is actually a general scarcity of factual information on the common needs of the urban black aged and infirm people in South Africa and more in particular on the aged and infirm residents of the township of Mangaung for the period 1940 to 1986. It was only since the 1980s that some research papers were published on the social welfare needs of these people in Soweto, Tembisa at the East Rand, Katlehong at the West Rand and the townships at Cape Town. These papers were inspired by university research projects, the South African National Council for the Care of the Aged, The Urban Foundation, the HSRC and the SABRA.<sup>8</sup>

The scope of the article covers the period from 1940 to 1986. The year 1940 is an apt starting point because it was at the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of Locations Advisory Boards at Grahamstown in 1940 and at the meeting of the Smit Commission in 1942, that attention focussed on local authorities participating in an increasing degree in social welfare work, including poor relief being synonymous with the urban black aged and infirm. In pursuance of the recommendation by this Commission to local authorities to appoint social welfare workers to cope with the welfare matters of the increasing numbers of township residents, some steps (though still no clear-cut social welfare policy) were taken by JR Cooper, the able manager of the municipal Department of Native Administration of Mangaung, to render some welfare assistance to its residents – the aged and infirm included by implication. Cooper appointed Mangaung's first permanent black social welfare worker, Ernest Mothibeli, on 1 January 1943. The appointment of Mothibeli put the care of the residents on a more formal footing, but the plight of the aged and infirm was still not highlighted.<sup>9</sup> The article is limited to the period ending in 1986 when responsibility for the social welfare of the urban black countrywide changed hands from the municipal and sustaining regional authorities to the Provincial Administrations. The new draft welfare legislation of 1987 was also decisive for limiting the article to the above-mentioned period. To keep the contents of this research within bounds, the contribution of church denominations,

<sup>7</sup> Free State Archives, Bloemfontein (FAB), MBL 342, File 14/20, Vol. 3, Memorandum on Health Care Services to Town Clerks, 3 September 1975, p. 2; The Urban Foundation, *Urban black aged. A study by the Transvaal region of the Urban Foundation* (Johannesburg, 1980), pp. 82-89.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>9</sup> R Muller, *Social work in the mid-eighties the perceptions of black social workers regarding the role and relevance of social work among blacks in South Africa. Report S-195* (HSRC, Pretoria, 1989), pp. 8-13; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/34, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 31 January 1941, p. 3; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/36, Minutes Native Advisory Board, 12 March 1943 and Report by JR Cooper, September 1942, p. 2.

community welfare organisations and business will only be taken into account if they liaised with government initiatives.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

The social welfare policy of the government Department of Native Affairs was embodied in the long overdue Natives (Urban Areas) Act, Act 21 of 1923 and its consolidating successor, the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, Act 25 of 1945, embodying general policy for the administration of urban blacks. Sections 9 and 19 of the two acts respectively refer specifically to the provision of social welfare facilities like housing, health and recreation, but neglected to provide for the special needs of the aged and infirm such as old age homes, incorporating service centres and trained staff, preferably to be provided by the local authorities or by properly constituted local black welfare organisations. In the absence of the latter – church organisations were ostensibly only involved in a limited sense due to the extensive, specialised nature and costs of services – the responsibility for these services in Mangaung devolved upon the local Department of Native Administration. Should a local authority fail to comply with the conditions of the law, the Minister of the Department of Native Affairs, after reference to the Provincial Administrator, could step in to provide the necessary services at the expense of the local authority, the funds for which could come from the township's Native Revenue Account or financial grants from private persons or organisations. In terms of departmental policy one third of the profits from Bantu beer sales and 20% of the profits on the sale of conventional liquor by the municipal Department of Native Administration were also available to local authorities for social welfare purposes.<sup>11</sup>

Increasing urbanisation of aged and infirm blacks in Mangaung and rural blacks migrating to the township for work, reaching pensionable age, put unbearable pressure on overcrowded housing facilities and limited health services in the 1940s. Insufficient qualified social workers (due to low salaries) suffering under heavy workloads, inexperienced members of the Native Advisory Board (members elected by residents to advise township managers on socio-economic affairs) and unsympathetic municipal officials not attending to the serious problems of the aged and infirm like pension applications and dilapidating housing, accentuated the pressing need for a defined policy for the aged and infirm. The appointment of a social worker in 1943 and a township superintendent with defined duties in 1945 enabled Cooper as manager to concentrate on questions of policy, appeals, inspections and

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<sup>10</sup> FAB, BOD 117, File 3/3/1/2, Report Development Board, 31 May 1986; Report South African Welfare Council, June 1986-March 1988 (Pretoria, 1988), p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/38, Minutes Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 13 July 1944, p. 4; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/53, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 9 February 1954, p. 11; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/79, Minutes Bantu Affairs Committee, 10 April 1967, p. 2.

supervision generally. With these administrative arrangements Cooper had his eyes on the social welfare of the residents: "Social welfare demands every encouragement. In parenthesis I would venture the opinion that the future of Native Society will depend upon the character of the social service." With these words Cooper realised the importance of social welfare in the lives of urban blacks, but there was still a lack of a defined policy for arrangements between the local authority and the government departments of Native Affairs and Social Welfare to attend to the special needs of the aged and infirm in the 1940s.<sup>12</sup>

The neglect of a defined policy on the social welfare of the aged and infirm were soon criticised by different organisations at national level on the eve of the 1950s, such as the Conference of Administrators of Black Municipal Affairs in Johannesburg, the Native Representative Council (a black national advisory body to Government), the Congress of Locations Advisory Boards of South Africa (black members of advisory boards advising township managers) and the African National Congress (ANC). After referring to the usual complaints regarding improper housing, pensions, health, bus, library and recreation services the Congress of Locations Advisory Boards concluded: "You get plenty of sympathy, plenty of promises, plenty of nice words, and plenty of commissions of inquiry and often there it all ends."<sup>13</sup> Along the same lines the HSRC and Justice JH Steyn, Executive Director of The Urban Foundation, had to remind the reluctant National Party Government ten years later that "many black communities were seeking help with the care of their aged".<sup>14</sup>

Some significant political developments at national level impacted negatively on local initiatives to improve social welfare conditions (not to speak of social welfare policy) in townships countrywide. The sociologist, BW McKendrick, described the years 1937 to 1950 as a period in which the long-ingrained attitudes of white electors were reflected in discriminatory state-sponsored social assistance programmes by the Department of Social Welfare after its formation in 1937 (this Department was responsible for black welfare as well until the Department of Bantu Administration and Development took over in 1960). Its services were primarily directed towards the white people. Welfare legislation promulgated in this period was either discriminatory in itself or not applied to blacks with disrupting consequences for black social welfare policy. The coming into power of the National Party in 1948 only served to back up the policy of separate development and the apartheid ideology by government structures and legislation with no visible benefits for the urban black. In more practical terms the two national conferences of the Department of Social Welfare and Pensions to the Care of the Aged in 1950 and 1971 respectively,

<sup>12</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/38, Minutes Native Advisory Board, Annexure B, 16 January 1945, p. 2; Myburgh, pp. 154-155.

<sup>13</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/35, Minutes Native Advisory Board and Report Congress of Locations Advisory Boards of South Africa, 20 December 1941, pp. 1-2; Myburgh, pp. 4-9.

<sup>14</sup> The Urban Foundation, p. 1.

pertained to white elderly people only. These conferences revealed that the care of the white aged persons was so well driven that South Africa distinguished itself as one of the countries in the Western World with the highest percentage of the aged accommodated in homes where they were exposed to caring programmes.<sup>15</sup>

The discriminating racial policy of the Government and its reluctance to officially recognise the permanence of the urban blacks were deterrents to the development of welfare services for blacks generally and their aged and infirm in particular. Such a racial policy was perpetuated at local level in City Councils like that of Bloemfontein, consisting of a majority councillors elected by white nationalistic electors, giving preference to white interests when priorities had to be tabled.

Hope for improved care and the more effective administration of welfare services for Mangaung, in the absence of a sympathetic government and detailed welfare legislation for blacks, dawned in 1963 when Manager GJ Viljoen (successor to Cooper) introduced a reorganised township administration to cope with rising residential figures – approximately 63 000 – and a housing backlog of almost 4 200. He was to be assisted by two superintendents, enabling him to be directly responsible for welfare and recreational services. He proved his responsibility towards the welfare of Mangaung's residents by his appointment of a fourth social worker and reminding the Urban Bantu Council (UBC), successor to the Native Advisory Board in 1968, to put their mutual ethnic differences and feelings of animosity towards the white nationalistic government aside for greater effectivity, working as a team towards the social well-being of their community, especially in view of the worsening socio-economic plight of the aged and infirm. These cautionary words of Viljoen reflected, at least at local level, a greater sensitivity for the need of an effective welfare policy on the eve of the 1970s.<sup>16</sup>

The 1970s were characterised by some remarkable administrative changes at local level to improve the municipal services of the expanding townships. Administration Boards, proclaimed in terms of the Act on the Administration of Bantu Affairs, Act 45 of 1971, were established in proclaimed regions of the country to take control of municipal departments of Bantu Administration to coordinate and develop community services along policy lines in conjunction with the extensive social welfare legislation of 1978. Mangaung was included under the control of the Administration Board for the Southern Orange Free State (SOFS) Region in 1973. Black City Councils, elected by urban communities in terms of the Act on Bantu Local Authorities, Act 102 of 1982, succeeded the UBC and Community Councils, acting only in an advisory capacity. These city councils enabled the communities for

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<sup>15</sup> BW McKendrick, *Introduction to social work in South Africa* (Pinetown, 1987), pp. 12-13; Department of Social Welfare and Pensions, Report National Conference on the care of the aged, 22-25 March 1971 (Pretoria, 1971), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/80, Minutes Bantu Affairs Committee, 3 October 1967; FAB, MBL 319, File 14/1/3, Minutes Urban Bantu Council, 8 January 1969, p. 194.

the first time to take responsibility for the provision of municipal services, including the improvement of the social welfare of township residents.<sup>17</sup> To this end the three-fold welfare legislation of 1978, including the National Welfare Act 100 of 1978, provided for regional welfare boards to plan and coordinate all welfare services for the city councils in their respective regions, aiming in conjunction with voluntary welfare organisations to provide a full range of welfare services for blacks, setting the social, physical, psychological and economic needs of both black and white as goals. The regional welfare boards established social welfare committees in the townships of the SOFS Region, Mangaung included, encouraging self-help and community participation in welfare action programmes like the provision of food rations to the aged and infirm. The general guideline that the aged himself, his relatives and the community had to be involved in his care thus remained intact.<sup>18</sup>

With these important arrangements, creating a more uniform policy for the administration of the proclaimed regions, Government at long last acknowledged the permanency of township residents, raising new hopes with township managers like Viljoen that the worsening socio-economic plight of the urban black, including that of the aged and infirm, would be solved on a permanent and satisfactory basis. Notably, the preceding administrative arrangements and policy directives approached black social welfare only at a general level without reference to the special needs of the aged and infirm. Such a limitation in welfare policy only served to strengthen the intention to look critically at the extent to which the initiatives of local and central government promoted the social welfare position of the aged and infirm in terms of accommodation and financial benefits in Mangaung up to 1986.

### 3. ACCOMMODATION

At the White House Conference on ageing in Washington in 1973 the question was asked: “What does housing mean to the elderly?”<sup>19</sup> It was agreed that aside from his/her spouse, housing was probably the single most important element in the life of an aged and infirm person. Accommodation facilitates more meaningful lives, encouraging the development of aged people as useful contributing members of society. Whereas little information is available on the housing arrangements for aged and infirm people in Africa, the trend in Britain, Europe and the USA involved a range of accommodation types spanning independent living, like flatlet and boarding

<sup>17</sup> FAB, BOD 123, File 3/3/3/1/3, Memorandum Town Clerk, Bloemfontein, 19 August 1983, pp. 2-11; FAB, MBL 3/1/65, Mayor's Minute, 31 March 1973, pp. 49-51.

<sup>18</sup> Department of Social Welfare and Pensions, Report of the working group on legislation for the protection of the aged (Pretoria, 1966); MP Motshumi, *Developing community-based social services for aged people in Mangaung* (M. Soc. Sc., UOFS, 1992), pp. 37-78; ME Marais, *Die maatskaplike behoeftes, verwagtinge en probleme van swart gemeenskappe ten opsigte van intergroepverhoudinge in Suid-Afrika* (M.A., UP, 1989), pp. 47-49.

<sup>19</sup> The Urban Foundation, p. 128.

schemes, to full residential care in old age homes – the latter being also popular among white old age people in South Africa.<sup>20</sup>

The Smit Commission indicated the absence of accommodation for the urban elderly in South Africa in 1942, rendering their social security precarious. In the absence of a national welfare policy for the aged and infirm, initiatives by local municipal officials and black leaders were decisive for the welfare of these people. In the case of Mangaung *ad hoc* arrangements were made by sympathetic municipal officials, such as Manager Cooper and his successor GJ Viljoen, to ensure some social security for these helpless and poor people after pleas of local black leaders like TM Mapikela (Speaker of the ANC) and members of the Native Advisory Board like JB Sesing, stressing the “misery and extreme poverty” of these people.<sup>21</sup> It is not far-fetched to assume that politically-minded blacks of organisations at national level like the ANC and the Native Representative Council (an advisory body to Government of which Mapikela was also a member), showing increasing signs of dissatisfaction with the socio-economic and politically subjected position of blacks during the regime of Gen. JC Smuts (1939-1948), also exercised some influence on municipal township administration. The eventual outcome was that the homes of aged and infirm who failed to pay their ground rents and lodger fees since 1924, were either sold in execution (30 homes) or their arrears were written off as bad debts (104) during the World War II. Those whose homes were sold in execution were accommodated in municipal houses and rooms free of charge. Widows and husbands whose homes were willingly sold in execution to pay their overdue municipal debts were also accommodated in municipal housing. In 1980 about 80% of the aged and infirm countrywide were legal tenants of municipal housing. The rest were living with their children or relatives.<sup>22</sup>

Manager JR Cooper and his municipal Department of Native Administration even went a step further with their lenient welfare arrangements. The aged and infirm in Mangaung, living with their families, were absolved from paying lodger’s fees – a privilege which was ostensibly not valid for other townships in the country. Cooper also prohibited landlords to eject elderly tenants from their rooms if such landlords could obtain higher rents from other tenants. However, the responsible Native Affairs Committee refused the serious request of the Native Advisory Board and the non-official Mangaung Vigilance Association to also absolve those aged and infirm, who were registered standholders, from the obligation of paying an inclusive

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 131-132.

<sup>21</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/25, Minutes Joint Meeting Native Affairs Committee and Native Advisory Board, 27 March 1935, pp. 16-18; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/36, Minutes Native Advisory Board, Annexure B, 21 April 1943, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/35, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 17 October 1941; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/34, Report by JR Cooper, Annexure D, July 1940; Myburgh, pp. 139-144, 154-155, 199; Motshumi, pp. 17-18; Urban Foundation, p. 128.



monthly fee for ground rent, water, sanitary and refuse services for each lodger or own child over the age of 18 years on his premises. The Committee used the shortfall in the Native Revenue Account as an excuse not to absolve any standholder, even the aged and infirm, from paying the monthly fee for his lodgers. The Committee also knew that the standholder would be more inclined to pay up than his lodgers, as he would not like the City Council to doubt his financial capability to act as a responsible permitholder for a stand.<sup>23</sup>

These makeshift arrangements to alleviate the accessibility of the aged and infirm to accommodation was a countrywide phenomena, only serving to stress the dire need for a national policy on the care of the aged and infirm on the eve of the 1950s. Indeed, the urgency of proper accommodation for the aged and infirm in Mangaung surfaced in 1949, when the municipal Chief Inspector of Health reported that 400 of the 600 municipal houses and 111 municipal rooms occupied rent-free by the aged and infirm, had been condemned for demolition as they were not fit for residential purposes, actually being on the verge of collapsing. Almost 1 000 elderly were involved as the houses (and probably some of the rooms as well) were occupied by married couples, keeping in mind that many elders were without any means to survive independently. The Native Advisory Board, the Native Affairs Committee and the Congress of Location Advisory Boards of South Africa reminded the City Council of the obligation in the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 to provide suitable accommodation to the residents of its township, the aged and infirm naturally included. These bodies requested the City Council to speed up arrangements for the erection of an old age home for Mangaung's destitute aged and infirm, seeing that similar homes already existed at Port Elizabeth and Elandsdoorn near Bronkhorstspuit east of Pretoria.<sup>24</sup> After delays caused by staff shortages at the National Housing and Planning Commission of the Government Department of Health, which had to approve of the building plans, the first old age home of Mangaung, known as Boicochu, started functioning on 29 May 1951 in the suburb of Kaffirfontein. Built at a cost of £6 300 it was able to accommodate 50 people, including single persons and married couples. The running of its daily affairs, being financially subsidised by the Bantu Benevolent Fund of the municipal Department of Native Administration, was conducted by the Boicochu Old Age Committee, chaired by Manager Viljoen. Those aged and infirm who were no longer gainfully employed and whose children were financially unable to care for their destitute parents, were

<sup>23</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/35, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 13 May 1941; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/37, Minutes Joint Meeting Native Affairs Committee and Native Advisory Board, Annexure B, 6 December 1943; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/57, Minutes Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 19 April 1956 and Annexure A, 18 October 1956.

<sup>24</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/34, Report by JR Cooper, Annexure D, July 1940; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/38, Minutes Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 16 January 1945; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/46, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 3 February 1950, p. 2.

eligible for admission as inmates. The occupation of the home within the first year was indicative of the dire need for care and accommodation by the aged and infirm in the face of traditional family care being eroded by limited financial means and accommodation.<sup>25</sup>

The sympathetic stance of Manager Viljoen and the Native Affairs Committee contrasted sharply with the indifferent attitude of the National Party Government towards the social welfare needs of urban blacks as late as 1986. The government Department of Native Affairs evaded repeated requests by Manager Viljoen and his Native Advisory Board for at least one more old age home in Mangaung to solve the critical shortage of suitable accommodation for the aged and infirm by referring these people to old age homes in the present-day Gauteng without due concern for their emotional well-being if severed unwillingly from their families in their home districts in the Free State. The critical welfare situation of the aged and infirm, including their quest for accommodation, was overlooked when Government provided for loans from the National Housing Fund at a subsidised interest rate to enable local authorities to meet their lawful housing obligations by providing houses to employed single and married blacks for renting. These arrangements were made solely to meet the economic interests of the white electors – the aged and infirm were overlooked for not being gainfully employable.<sup>26</sup>

In an effort to accommodate the surplus homeless aged and infirm Viljoen requested the government Department of Native Affairs to erect an Old Age Home at Thaba 'Nchu near Bloemfontein or to substantially raise the pensions of 1 727 aged and infirm in Mangaung, amounting to 25 shillings only in 1951, to enable them to hire accommodation in the subeconomic housing schemes which the City Council planned for the lay-out of its new suburbs in the course of the 1950s. These requests of Viljoen stranded on the depleted Native Revenue Account of Mangaung and the stringent financial measures by the National Treasury to finance municipal housing schemes countrywide, leaving Viljoen, his Native Advisory Board and the Native Affairs Committee indeed without recourse for the aged and infirm on the eve of the 1960s.<sup>27</sup>

Viljoen, well aware that his Department was financially unable to provide sufficient and proper accommodation to the more than 1 200 homeless aged and infirm in the township, described their critical situation as follows in 1951: "It is heartbreaking to see old Natives, aged 80 or 90 years, who have spent all their lives on farms and displaced because farms are sold or cut up into small holdings, go begging

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<sup>25</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/49, Minutes Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 10 May 1951, p. 2; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/51, Minutes Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 15 May 1952, p. 2; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/52, Report by SCT Ramabodu, Annexure D, February 1953.

<sup>26</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/49, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 8 June 1951, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/49, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 3 August 1951, p. 7; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/49, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 4 May 1951, pp. 6-7.

for shelter.”<sup>28</sup> Actually the policy of the Native Affairs Committee only allowed aged and infirm people who were dependent on residents of the township, such as children or relatives. However, for sheer humanitarian reasons, Viljoen allowed these destitute people to enter the township. In an effort to accommodate some of them the Native Affairs Committee permitted the Boichocu Old Age Committee to extend Boichocu with ten more rooms in 1957.<sup>29</sup>

The 1960s were probably the most trying in the municipal career of Manager Viljoen in as far as the social welfare position of the aged and infirm in Mangaung was concerned. Welfare problems of the previous years then assumed critical proportions. The Methodist Church in the township and the Native Advisory Board in 1962 drew his attention to the ever-increasing accommodation crisis of the aged and infirm, which was intensified by the migration of about five elderly persons per month from the rural districts. Viljoen exclaimed at a meeting with the Native Affairs Committee in 1965 that “hy sit met die hande in die hare” (he was at his wit’s end) because the general housing shortage in the township was 4 200 and Advisory Board member A Mafura informed him that the houses of the aged and infirm in Kaffirfontein, where the largest percentage lived, “were falling”.<sup>30</sup> To complicate matters further the Department of Bantu Administration and Development in December 1967 ruled that all house owner schemes (99 years lease) in townships countrywide should be stopped and that houses should only be available to blacks on a rent basis. This ruling was clearly indicative of Government’s intention to coerce unemployed blacks, including the poor aged and infirm, to settle in the homelands in a desperate effort to ease the pressure on the housing crisis in the urban centres, simultaneously stimulating the viability of its homeland policy. Viljoen and his Bantu Advisory Board were shocked when, in pursuance of this ruling, they received a request in no uncertain terms from the Department of Bantu Administration and Development to relocate the inmates of Boichocu to the homelands early in 1968. If they refused the Department would cancel their pensions and the subsidy for running Boichocu.<sup>31</sup>

Government was determined to further its homeland cause in terms of its policy of separate development, regarding urban blacks merely as temporary sojourners. In the process it lost sight of the social welfare cause of these people. Fortunately for the inmates of Boichocu, Viljoen, for humanitarian reasons and under the impression of his legal obligation to look after the welfare of Mangaung’s residents, was not put off by the unsympathetic attitude of the Department. Besides Section 10 of the Natives

<sup>28</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/48, Report by JR Cooper, April 1951, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*; Motshumi, pp. 17-18.

<sup>30</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/75, Report by JG Viljoen, May 1965; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/70, Minutes Native Advisory Board, Annexure A, 12 December 1962, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> FAB, MBL 175, File 7/4/17/1, Vol. 1, Minutes Management Committee, Memorandum 5/1, 8 October 1968, p. 225; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/79, Minutes Bantu Affairs Committee, 22 February 1967, p. 2; BJ Behr, *Community services for the aged*. Publication 4/1971 (Department of Social Welfare and Pensions, Pretoria, 1971), p. 1; Van der Bergh and Herbst, p. 14.

(Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945, safeguarding their occupational rights in Mangaung, Viljoen informed the Department that Boichocu would only close if suitable accommodation for the aged and infirm was provided in the homelands, reminding the Department of its abortive promises for an old age home at Thaba 'Nchu dating back to 1949. Evidently such promises remained empty as Boichocu was still functioning in 1986.<sup>32</sup>

The 1970s witnessed a deepening of the accommodation crisis for Mangaung's aged people. It can be fairly assumed that the 1 054 houses occupied by so-called unproductive heads of families in the older suburbs of Kagisanong, Kaffirfontein and Batho were predominantly aged and infirm people. The usual excuse of money shortages by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development compelled Manager Viljoen to contract building contractors to bring about temporary repairs to their houses and to erect an unknown number of squatter shacks to house those elderly whose houses were beyond repair or had already collapsed. These shacks soon elicited strong criticism from the Urban Bantu Council (successor to the Native Affairs Board) and the English Press for the health risk it posed, also accusing the City Council for failing to properly care for its helpless aged and infirm residents. Matters worsened with the rent raise in 1974 to strengthen the depleted Native Revenue Account for infrastructural improvements in the township. Keeping in mind that about 80% of them were tenants of homes and receiving pensions below the cost of living, the raise in rents made it impossible for them to remain in their rooms/homes.<sup>33</sup>

The Administration Board of the SOFS Region conducted an extensive survey into the accommodation needs of the aged and infirm residents in Mangaung and the majority of townships in 1980. The aim was to budget for the most cost effective accommodation within the financial means of the aged and infirm who were mostly pensioners with an income as low as R33 per month in the early 1980s. This survey with the aged and infirm as a priority matter was ostensibly the first ever in the Free State and inspired by the general policy guidelines of the Administration Board and the social welfare legislation of 1978.<sup>34</sup> The Administration Board, however, failed to provide cost effective accommodation due to continuing stringent financial measures of the Government Treasurer to combat inflation, the high cost of infrastructure,

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<sup>32</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/80, Minutes Bantu Affairs Committee, 2 February 1968, p. 5; Motshumi, pp. 17-18; The Department of Bantu Administration and Development changed its name to the Department of Cooperation and Development in 1972 and to Constitutional and Development Planning in 1984; FAB, MBL 184, File 7/4/17/5, Letter GJ Viljoen – Town Clerk, Bloemfontein, 17 April 1972 and 13 July 1972.

<sup>33</sup> FAB, MBL 320, File 14/1/3, Vol. 2, Minutes Urban Bantu Council, 13 June 1972; File 14/1/3/1, Vol. 1, Minutes Urban Bantu Council, 4 June 1969; Urban Foundation, pp. 131-139; *The Friend*, 24 June 1974, "African's rent go up".

<sup>34</sup> FAB, BOD 369, File 19/4/2, Vol. 1, Memorandum Director Department Community Development, 2 October 1981.

limited availability of building material and the ruling of the National Housing Fund that no urban black was to pay more than 20% of his income to accommodation. The fact that rentals amounted to at least 45% of a pensioner's income barred him from renting proper accommodation. Indeed, the aged and infirm of Mangaung were still struggling to overcome the rent raise of 1974 and to re-establish themselves after their dilapidated municipal homes had collapsed beyond repair when another rise in rents from R4,20 to R10,00, to finance new infrastructure, struck in 1982. As about 80% of the more than 5 000 elders were rent payers, the Community Council of Mangaung (successor to the Urban Bantu Council) immediately complained that the rise was too high because "widows and the aged who comprised a larger percentage of lodgers renting rooms would not afford to rent the rooms".<sup>35</sup> Convinced of their plight and to prevent the elderly from exploitation by standholders, the Administration Board diminished the lodgers' fee by 50% - a step which reflected on the sympathetic stance of the Board and the responsible approach of the Community Council towards the welfare of its elder residents on the eve of the new City Council of Mangaung being instituted in 1984.<sup>36</sup>

Government evidently remained adamant to rate the housing needs of the aged and infirm second in terms of the housing policy circular of 1983. This circular allocated money to housing projects countrywide in order of priority, making provision for loans to the local authorities to serve building plots (infrastructure) to enable black employees to erect houses. The responsibility for building loans, however, was shifted to the private sector (building societies and employers). The inevitable conclusion when Provincial Administrations countrywide assumed responsibility for the social welfare of urban blacks in 1986 was that Government aimed to diminish its financial responsibility towards the urban black, leaving the aged and infirm at the mercy of local government and private welfare organisations to accommodate them in some of the few old age homes, lodging in some single room or two-room house if his/her pension could afford it or with friends or family.<sup>37</sup>

The fairness and impartiality of the economic measures of the Treasury and promises to erect more Old Age Homes in Mangaung and in the homelands were strongly doubted in the face of such homes erected and subsidised by the Department of Social Welfare and Pensions for whites, counting 229 in 1971 as against only 13 for blacks in 1982, despite the black residential figure of almost 17 million against merely 4 million whites. Evidently the National Party Government had a

<sup>35</sup> FAB, BOD 369, File 19/4/2, Vol. 1, Memorandum Director Department Community Development, 19 June 1981 and Circular 1 (1981), Bloemfontein, 3 February 1981.

<sup>36</sup> Motshumi, p. 62; Van der Bergh and Herbst, pp. vii, 10-11; EN Chinkanda, *Attitudes of the black public in urban areas with regard to the aged and care of the aged. Report S-168* (Pretoria, 1987), p. 9; FAB, BOD 135, File 3/3/3/4/3, Minutes Mangaung Community Council, 10 August 1982, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> FAB, BOD 368, File 19/4/B, Memorandum Urban Foundation, Bloemfontein, 30 September 1983, pp. 4-5.

decided preference for the welfare of its white electors. Indeed, in retrospect the accommodation situation of the aged and infirm in Mangaung had not changed for the better during the years under discussion. Except for the Boichocu Old Age Home, the accommodation circumstances of these people remained precarious in 1986.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4. FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

Post-war studies of poverty in the USA and Britain revealed the elderly as a major group suffering from insufficient money resources. About 3 million of the 7,5 million individuals in Britain having incomes below the poverty line were elderly in the 1960s and these figures were increasing in both countries due to unemployment, ill health or discriminating employment practices on grounds of age, sex and race (47% of black aged were poor compared to 25% white aged). Of all poor people the elderly are consequently the least likely to rise above the poverty line by their own efforts.<sup>39</sup> In the South African context such a conclusion boded ill for the urban black who had no political rights to bargain for a better socio-economic welfare dispensation. BW McKendrick described the years 1937 (when the Department of Social Welfare was established) to 1950 as a period reflecting the discriminatory state-sponsored social welfare and assistance programmes benefitting only the white elderly. The coming to power of the National Party in 1948 only served to back up existing government structures and legislation with no visible benefits for the black aged and infirm.<sup>40</sup>

The financially destitute position of the aged and infirm of Mangaung were impressed upon the township's Department of Native Administration and its Manager, JR Cooper, as early as 1924 when more than 130 were no longer able to pay their ground rents and lodger fees which were in arrears. To alleviate their financial burden, the complete destitute were granted free accommodation by the City Council and poor relief grants handed out to 271 completely destitute aged and infirm, including free medical services to all aged and infirm males and females. The rising cost of living also inhibited their employed children to care for them properly. The urgency of the matter was brought home to Cooper and his responsible Native Affairs Committee by the following letter written by the 72-year-old Peter Phatlane in 1942: "Sir, on account of ill health and old age I personally apply to you as I see I will be unable to carry this Winter through, to make some arrangement to relieve me on pension by the end of March."<sup>41</sup> I Mashotle, member of the Native Advisory Board, affirmed the critical financial and health condition of these people who were no longer fit for employment. They eventually turned to begging in the streets and

<sup>38</sup> Van der Bergh and Herbst, p. 14; Motshumi, pp 101-105; Urban Foundation, pp. 39-40, 1, 23.

<sup>39</sup> DB James, *Poverty, politics and change* (New Jersey, 1972), pp. 9-10; P Townshend (ed.), *The concept of poverty* (London, 1970), pp. 187-196.

<sup>40</sup> McKendrick, pp. 12-13.

<sup>41</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/35, Report by JR Cooper, January 1942.

at businesses, only to evoke the anger of an unsympathetic Chamber of Commerce, describing them as a nuisance to the white public. The Bantu Benevolent Fund, with Cooper as chairman, conducted a food distribution scheme in cooperation with the soup kitchen of the Salvation Army, also handing out charity gifts, being part and parcel of the annual Christmas Cheer of the City Council to about a 1 000 aged and infirm during the war years (1939-1945). Despite the welfare efforts of the private white welfare organisation *Kupugani* and the Rotary Club, the shortage of food proved to be a continuous problem in the 1960s, reaching critical proportions in the 1980s when the Development Board of the SOFS (successor to the Administration Board) distributed, with the help of the military, food rations to the destitute, aged and infirm.<sup>42</sup>

These relief measures were, however, too impermanent to be of real material value to the aged and infirm. The repeated requests of the annual Congresses of Native Advisory Boards and able township managers like Cooper for a municipal pension scheme, ostensibly awakened the Minister of the Department of Native Affairs, via sympathetic City Councils, to the cause of the aged and infirm. Hope for a better socio-economic life dawned in 1944 when Parliament amended the Pension Act of 1928, Act 28, to also include blacks in the State Old Age Pension Scheme. Their inclusion as late as 1944 is probably due to the racial opposition of National Party hardliners in Parliament, referring to the additional financial burden of such concession on the white tax payer, ignoring Parliament's lawful and humanitarian obligation to look after the welfare of all its subjects.<sup>43</sup> The City Council of Bloemfontein was in principle not averse to such a pension scheme, making provision for pensions to be paid out by the government Department of Native Affairs to blacks reaching the pensionable age of 60 for females and 65 for males on condition that application was made for such pension – placing of course an obligation on the municipal social welfare officer and the members of the Native Advisory Board who were in direct contact with the aged and infirm on a daily basis to render them assistance with the processing of these applications.<sup>44</sup>

The aged and infirm of Mangaung cherished the hope that their pensions would secure them a living above the poverty line in the 1950s, but were soon disillusioned by the parsimonious policy of the Department of Native Affairs, only promising them a higher pension than the meagre £1,10 per month which failed to meet their essential expenses. The following administrative obstacles handicapped the aged

<sup>42</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/25, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 15 March 1935, pp. 2-3; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/72, Native Affairs Committee, 5 August 1963, p. 15; FAB, BOD 310, File 11/2/1/6, Director General, Department of Cooperation and Development – Chief Director Development Board SOFS Region, 3 December 1984, pp. 83-86 and Progress Report Department Community Development, October- December 1984.

<sup>43</sup> Myburgh, pp. 241-245.

<sup>44</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/34, Report by JR Cooper, October 1940.

and infirm to readily acquire pensions or utilising such to their best advantage: The pay-out of pensions bimonthly instead of monthly rendered it very difficult to pay their monthly accounts. The excuse of the succeeding Department of Bantu Administration and Development that monthly payments entailed excessive and costly administrative work in view of the 400 000 pensioners countrywide were not convincing because such request dated back at least ten years – allowing enough time to budget for the expense and besides, countrywide whites, Coloureds and Indians received theirs monthly. Requests for many years for a more centrally situated venue for pension pay-outs in the township instead of at the inconveniently situated Office of the Native Commissioner near the City Centre on account of the age and physical disabilities of pensioners and their lack of transport also stranded on the excuse of the costs involved to erect new pension pay-out venues.<sup>45</sup>

The cost excuse of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development also handicapped requests by the City Council for larger Government subsidies to enable the Council to appoint more qualified municipal social welfare workers at higher salaries. The residential figure for Mangaung was more than 75 000 in 1970, including about 4 000 aged and infirm, all to be served by only four welfare workers. These workers played a crucial role in identifying for pension registration purposes destitute aged and infirm residents who disposed of no legal documents to prove his/her status as an urban resident in terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 or who were generally ignorant of their welfare benefits. Figures available for the years 1946 until 1968 indicated about 25 pension applications per month. Figures between 1968 and 1986 lacked, most probably due to understaffing in the social welfare office resulting in excessive workloads. Monthly applications for pensions probably surpassed 25 after 1968 due to more lenient influx control measures, more employment opportunities and improvements to health services.<sup>46</sup> The task of the few welfare workers were complicated by members of the Native Advisory Board neglecting their supporting role to report the destitute aged and infirm for pension applications and unsympathetic officials at the Office of the Native Commissioner, unduly delaying pension registrations which only served to postpone the humanitarian distress of these people. This picture looked even darker when The Urban Foundation confirmed that countrywide only 25% blacks received pensions in 1985, as against 86% Coloureds and 35% whites – the latter two minority groups.<sup>47</sup>

The question of small pensions being unable to keep up with the alarming rise in the cost of living in the 1960s overshadowed the succeeding years – not only in Mangaung but countrywide as well. Township Manager GJ Viljoen, his

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<sup>45</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/49, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 5 October 1951, pp. 9-10.

<sup>46</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/43-80, Reports by SCT Ramabodu, 1946-1968.

<sup>47</sup> FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/52, Report by JR Cooper, January 1953; Urban Foundation, pp. 25, 49; Swanepoel, p. 76.



Native Advisory Board and the responsible Native Affairs Committee referred to about 2 000 aged and infirm roaming the streets of Bloemfontein to beg for money, despite receiving state old age pensions which were ostensibly, in the absence of documentary evidence to the contrary, in the 1960s not much higher than the £1,10 per month, being paid since 1944 when the Pensions Act included blacks. The pension amount received by whites, Coloureds and Indians were at least R42,00 per month in the 1970s, increasing to R62,00 in 1980. Blacks received only R20,50 in the 1970s increasing to R33,00 in 1980, receiving about R30,00 less than the whites, Coloureds and Indians.<sup>48</sup>

The alarming impact of the totally inadequate R33,00 on the lives of pensioned blacks was borne out by HSRC and press reports for the years 1985 to 2007, indicating that at least 60% of pensioned blacks in the country were caught in a downward poverty spiral - a fact which is not surprising, considering that 98% of black pensioners in the townships of Gauteng, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth depended on their pensions as their only source of income. In the case of Mangaung the poverty spiral obliged the Welfare Section of the Administration Board of the SOFS to liaison with the Friends of Mangaung Society (a community-sponsored welfare organisation) to collect money for the aged and infirm to enable them to pay their lodger fees and municipal service charges.<sup>49</sup> The private sector partly contributed to this poverty spiral by excluding economically active blacks from membership of occupational pension funds on the grounds that they were temporary or contract workers, receiving pay on an hourly or weekly basis in terms of Government's contract labour policy. This happened despite the fact that pension funds especially suited to their circumstances were available. For the other part non-salaried black employees (wage earners) of local and central government were only regarded as late as 1978 as permanent full-time employees who qualified for membership of the Pension Fund of Associated Institutions, though still subjected to discriminating pension amounts.<sup>50</sup>

The credibility of the usual excuse of Government that inflation necessitated financial restrictions on the pension budget was questioned by the Bantu Advisory Committee of Mangaung and black leaders. Rev. S Tema of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa questioned the intentions of Government and the private sector with respect to the disadvantaged position of black pensioners in 1980: "We are sick and tired of these discriminatory reflections by a Parliament in which we have no

<sup>48</sup> FAB, MBL 323, File 14/1/3/1, Vol. 3, Minutes Urban Bantu Council, 14 December 1971, p. 2; Urban Foundation, pp. 25, 49; Swanepoel, p. 76.

<sup>49</sup> Chinkanda, pp. 7, 12; *Volksblad*, 3 November 2007, p. 18; Van der Bergh and Herbst, pp. 37-38; FAB, BOD 310, File 11/2/1/6, Director General, Department Cooperation and Development – Chief Director, Development Board SOFS Region, 3 December 1984, pp. 83-86.

<sup>50</sup> FAB, BOD 90, AK 14, Minutes Mangaung Advisory Committee, 9 November 1977, pp. 2-3, 14; FAB, BOD 88, AK 7, Minutes Mangaung Advisory Committee, 24 March 1976.

say.”<sup>51</sup> These practices occurred despite the declared aim of Government to eliminate discrimination based on colour in 1979, accepting the permanence of blacks in white urban areas. In the determination of pension amounts common human needs were viewed differently for the different population groups with the blacks at the bottom, indicative of the racial discriminatory stance of the National Party Government, and the blatant economic favouring of the white and industrial sectors of the community. The fact remained in the case of Mangaung that at least 80% of its residents, counting about 90 000 in 1986, including about 5 000 aged and infirm, were living below the breadline, testing to the utmost the welfare policy and aims of Government. Research conducted at other major townships confirmed that black urban communities were indeed the poorest socio-economic group, earning the least and eventually receiving pensions remarkably lower than those of whites. Indeed, the new draft social welfare policy of 1987 created the impression that local and central government failed to establish a satisfactory living environment for its black residents after the Second World War, including the aged and infirm.<sup>52</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

In South Africa the absence of a tradition of local responsibility for the development of old age care and the sole control of decision making in the hands of a white nationalistic Government handicapped local social welfare projects – contrary to the partnership concept of Western countries that government at national and local levels, including the community, share responsibility for the provision of social welfare services to the people. Indeed, research indicated that more than 60% of the black aged and infirm of South Africa expected of local and central government to take responsibility for their welfare. However, the aged and infirm of Mangaung, due to the racial partiality of local and central government for the socio-economic interests of its white electors, and in the absence of a defined social welfare policy, had to rely almost exclusively on the sympathetic assistance of individuals, namely the municipal officials of the Department of Native Administration and in particular the Township Manager and members of his Native Advisory Board, including the responsible Native Affairs Committee, to improve their poor social welfare situation. Politically inspired excuses for financial constraints and promises by the responsible government departments to provide social welfare services proved to be only a pretext to postpone these critical welfare benefits indefinitely. The result was severe backlogs in the provision of proper housing and sufficient pensions (including medical services) to the aged and infirm – standing in stark contrast to

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<sup>51</sup> Urban Foundation, pp. 60-61.

<sup>52</sup> Chinkanda, pp. 7, 12.

similar benefits readily available to whites on terms elevating them above the cost of living.

The fragmentation of welfare services for blacks at national level, being the joint task of a directorate within the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, the four provincial administrations and the regional administration boards, accentuated the absence of a uniform policy to look after the special needs of the aged and infirm irrespective of race. The conclusion is that responsible government departments, handicapped by this fragmented decision-making structure and the generalised nature of the new 1978 national social welfare legislation, failed to establish a satisfactory liaison with sympathetic and willing officials of the municipal Department of Native Administration of Mangaung and the succeeding Administration Board of the SOFS to improve the social welfare services of the township's aged and infirm.

The participation by a limited number of community welfare organisations and ostensibly non-participation by church denominations differ from trends in Western countries since the 1960s to share responsibility for social welfare with these sectors. Their limited participation in municipal welfare initiatives in Mangaung (and possibly in townships in the rest of the country) was probably not so much due to insufficient money resources, as to the aversion of black community leaders generally to the policy of racial separation of the National Party Government involving the refusal of political rights to blacks and the racial partiality to the socio-economic interests of whites.

The lack of critical social welfare services coincided with the increasing dissatisfaction of blacks with the partiality of the racial policies of the Government, viewing systems (social welfare) and resources (housing and pensions) more as symbols of oppression – a view reinforced by their severance from structures of decision-making and policy formulation. Indeed, the aged and infirm of Mangaung, suffering from the effects of large-scale poverty, shortage of proper housing and service centres to cater for their mental and physical health, typify the social welfare problems of the aged and infirm in the Third World setting in 1986.