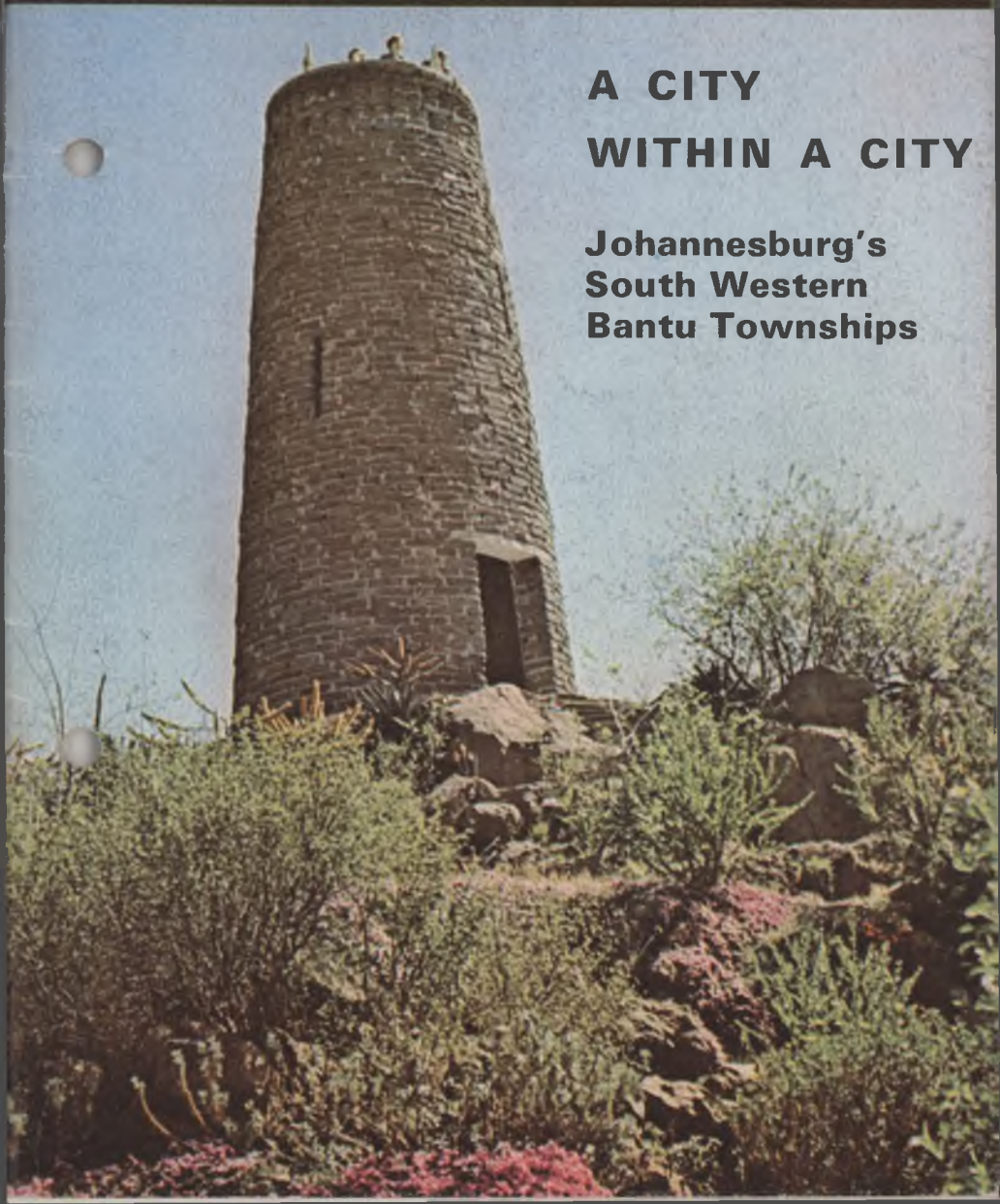


# SOWETO

**A CITY  
WITHIN A CITY**

**Johannesburg's  
South Western  
Bantu Townships**



A1434/1.1.7



Issued by the  
**NON-EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**  
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# SOWETO

*The post-war years saw the emergence of South Africa as a highly industrialised society with Johannesburg as the dynamic hub. To meet the labour demands of industry and commerce, the influx to the towns became a raging torrent of humanity and overwhelmed the meagre housing resources of the city at that time. As a consequence vast slums, with concomitant evils sprung up in and around Johannesburg.*

*The City Council had the responsibility of rehousing hundreds of thousands of Bantu working in its area, and the last two decades have seen the provision of liveable accommodation which was a complete break from the anti-social conditions of the past. In addition to the houses, services and amenities had to be provided.*

*In creating the multi-faceted entity which is Soweto, the Council has helped in one of the world's greatest slum clearance schemes of the post-war era.*



# SOWETO

## EARLY YEARS

At the turn of the century the Bantu population of Johannesburg was primarily male. These were itinerant labourers who stayed in the city a while before returning to the rural areas. Later more and more women accompanied their husbands to the city, and families settled in the area.

Pimville had been established in 1905, followed by various other townships at later dates.

The Non-European Affairs Department of the City Council was established as a separate entity in 1927, and took over the function of housing the Bantu population from the Parks Department.



*The price of progress*

Housing in the townships, with the exception of Pimville, was its responsibility.

### **The War Years**

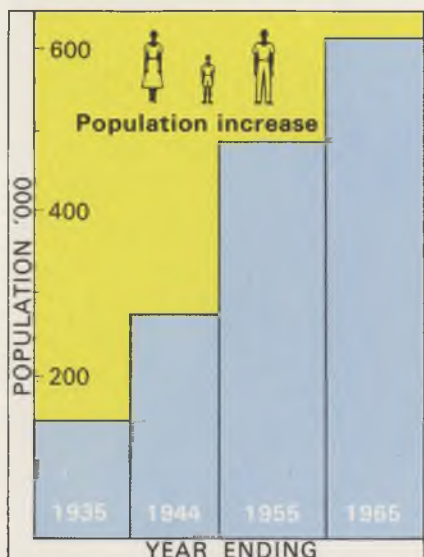
Then—the war. In 1939 the Bantu population of Johannesburg was 244,000. Many were already living in unsuitable quarters, but the N.E.A.D. had at this stage built approximately 8,700 houses in an effort to improve matters.

The effects of the war were disastrous for Johannesburg's Bantu population. The booming industrial development, centred on providing more and more material for the war effort, swallowed

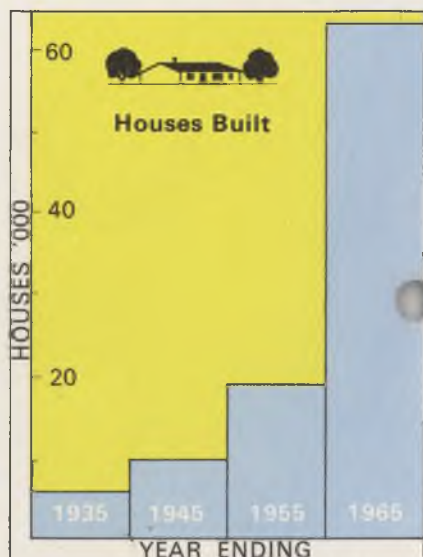
ever more labour, and Bantu workers streamed to Johannesburg in their tens of thousands. Families living in decent housing often doubled and trebled up, and slums of the most appalling proportions developed in areas where no adequate housing was available. Existing facilities became, first strained, and finally burst, and people spilled onto the bare veld with their belongings. Shacks built of tin, cardboard, hessian, mud, and any other material available mushroomed overnight.

During the war years all efforts were channelled in directions other than housing, however, and nothing was done for the people in the slums.

**Population growth—areas under Council and Bantu Re-settlement Board control, 1935-1965**



**Increase in the number of houses in Council controlled areas, 1935-1965**



### **The difficult years**

Such was the picture in 1946. The population had increased by 150,000 in 6 years. Eleven squatter camps had sprung up, the largest with a population of some 60,000. The rule of law was openly flouted. Gangster leaders imposed levies on the population, and imposed savage punishments when they weren't obeyed. Disease was rife, and sanitary and other services were non-existent.

The squatter camps had to be cleared at once and emergency camps were laid out to alleviate the position.

Conditions were still poor, but a measure of control was introduced and water and sanitation could be provided. These measures were often violently opposed by the erstwhile leaders of the population, who saw a lucrative way of life disappearing.

Housing costs money, however, and the city was responsible. The National Housing Commission helped where it was able, but it had to deal with the same problem on a national scale. Of vital importance was the ability to build cheaply enough for the tenants to pay the rent.



The Oppenheimer Tower—symbol of the new era



## The breakthrough

Thousands of houses were built under difficult financial conditions before the first breakthrough came in 1951. In 1951 the Bantu Building Workers Act was passed. Bantu "artisans" could, for the first time be trained to build houses in their own areas. Costs dropped dramatically. In 1953 the Bantu Services Levy Fund was established, whereby employers of Bantu labour had to contribute towards the provision of services for the townships.

The second breakthrough came with the introduction of the site and service scheme by the Government in 1953, which helped to alleviate the demand for houses tremendously. Under this scheme, sites, with services provided, were allocated to families, who erected temporary shacks, which were later replaced by brick-built, Council-built houses from funds made available by

the Government, as soon as possible. The problem, as always, was funds, and the moral dilemma facing the Council was, and still is, whether it was better to provide high quality houses, and therefore, fewer of them, while people remained in the slums and emergency camps, or to provide cheap, liveable quarters and hasten the disappearance of the slums. The latter course was chosen and remains in force to this day.

In 1956, the late Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, appalled at conditions still existing in Moroka, persuaded his colleagues in the mining industry to lend the City Council R6,000,000 repayable over 30 years. This was the injection of capital the city had needed, and in one year 10,000 homes were built, apart from hostels, schools and other facilities. Apart from this loan the Government provided R11,000,000 for the erection of dwellings and the provision of other facilities.



*Cultivating a new way of life*

## The present

The major part of the development in Soweto has occurred since 1956, and the end of the slum areas is in sight. Only a small part of Pimville remains. Eastern Bantu Township will soon disappear, and a new city will have been created.

But re-housing the people is the least part of slum clearance. New ways of life have had to be created. The people have had to accept civic responsibilities. New attitudes must develop. In the phenomenally short space of time since they have left the

slums the people have proved not only that they are capable of accepting these responsibilities, but that they welcome them. A new spirit is abroad. In 1968 the Urban Bantu Council was established to replace the old Advisory Boards, and this body of elected, and appointed men have set themselves high standards.

Soweto is not ideal, as the housing is often monotonous, and facilities sometimes few, but the primary task must always be the elimination of the slums and the provision of basic housing for every family. This target is in sight.





*Traditional ...*



*Western ...*



*The future*

## The people

Who are the people of Soweto?

Firstly, the people of Soweto are all Bantu. They belong to virtually all the tribes found in South Africa, but Zulus and Sothos predominate, with smaller numbers of Venda and Tsonga. The various tribes are grouped according to their national units, which allows, for instance, for their easy accessibility to schools teaching in the mother tongue. The degree to which they have adapted themselves to modern Western life varies considerably, ranging from people still close to their tribal background, to people who have accepted

much of Western life. Educationally too, wide discrepancies exist and the completely illiterate rub shoulders with university graduates.

Most of the people work in Johannesburg.



## The townships

Soweto is a complex of townships to the south west of Johannesburg. The name was coined from the first two letters of the words South Western Townships.

Services, equivalent to those found in any large city, are provided by the Johannesburg City Council. Rents cover all of these, with the exception of water and electricity. The majority of houses are let at R6.30 per month. Houses vary in size from two to five rooms, averaging 4 rooms, and often much larger privately built houses in areas such as Dube. Single men live in large hostel complexes.





*Paying the rent*

*The sympathetic approach*



## Administration

Soweto is administered by the Johannesburg City Council, on the third level of South Africa's system of three tier government—National—Provincial—Local or Municipal government. The policies of the higher levels of government are, of course, applicable to local government.

The Non-European Affairs Department administers Soweto, and is responsible through its Manager, to the City Council.

The Non-European Affairs Department functions in Soweto through a system of Township Superintendents, on whom the day to day administration rests.

Every day hundreds of people bring their problems to this man. Perhaps the breadwinner has lost his job;

perhaps there has been illness and arrears of rent have accumulated. Whatever the problem, they are sympathetically received and given a patient hearing. The officials have wide experience in this field, specialising in the peculiar problems of the various Bantu cultures, and are able to take appropriate action.

Workseekers are introduced to prospective employers; cash grants or food parcels are given to the needy. Pension difficulties are investigated and guidance is given. House ownership or legal questions are sorted out. The endless stream of personal troubles is dealt with expeditiously and with understanding. The welfare worker works in close consultation with the Township Superintendent.





*Mr. F. Mncube—first Chairman of the Urban Bantu Council*



## The Urban Bantu Council

The Urban Bantu Council was established in 1968 to replace the old Advisory Boards. Some members are elected by popular vote within the ethnic group, while others are appointed by the various representatives of chiefs in the Bantu homelands to represent their interests.

There are 58 members, who serve for 3 years. 41 are elected and 17 appointed by the Chief's representatives. The Council works on a system of 4

committees responsible for Amenities, Education and Health, Transport and Trading, and General Purposes and Housing.

Recommendations of the Council are considered by the Johannesburg City Council and no important matter affecting the people of Soweto is considered by the City Council unless the Urban Bantu Council has first made a recommendation.



*The three R's*



*Add two cups of flour*

## Education

Education in Soweto is the responsibility of the Department of Bantu Education, but Primary schoolbuildings are provided by the Johannesburg City Council from funds included in the rents of houses. Courses are tailored to the needs of the Bantu community, but the final matriculation examination is the same as that written by all other students in South Africa.

Education is a major factor in the adaption to a new way of life, and most families are extremely enthusiastic that their children be educated. The medium of instruction at primary

level is in the mother tongue, at secondary and high school level in the official languages.

The population explosion has also had its effect, and the Department has to contend with a chronic shortage of staff and buildings. There are, at this stage, enough primary schools, but there is a shortage at higher levels.

University education is provided at the various University Colleges for the Bantu, and technical training at the Vocational Training Centre (run by the City Council) and the technical college in Soweto.

# FIGURES OF INTEREST (JUNE 1970)

Total Bantu population of Johannesburg: 688,693  
(Includes mines, Council controlled areas and Bantu Resettlement Board Areas).

**The townships:** Population: 403,165 (Council controlled ares)

Area: Approximately 34 square miles  
Townships: 21  
Total Houses: 65,958

**Hostels:** 9. Population: 29,758

**Administration:** Offices: 11

**Education:** Attendance: 100,172

Schools	Lower Primary	Higher Primary	Lower Primary and Higher Primary (Dual)	Secondary	High	Technical
No.	79	34	7	3	6	2

**Health:** Clinics: 7 general plus sub-clinics (T.B., post-natal, etc.)  
Charges at Clinics: 20c  
Charges at Baragwanath Hospital:  
20c for out-patients  
50c for in-patients (all found)  
for any one illness irrespective of its duration.



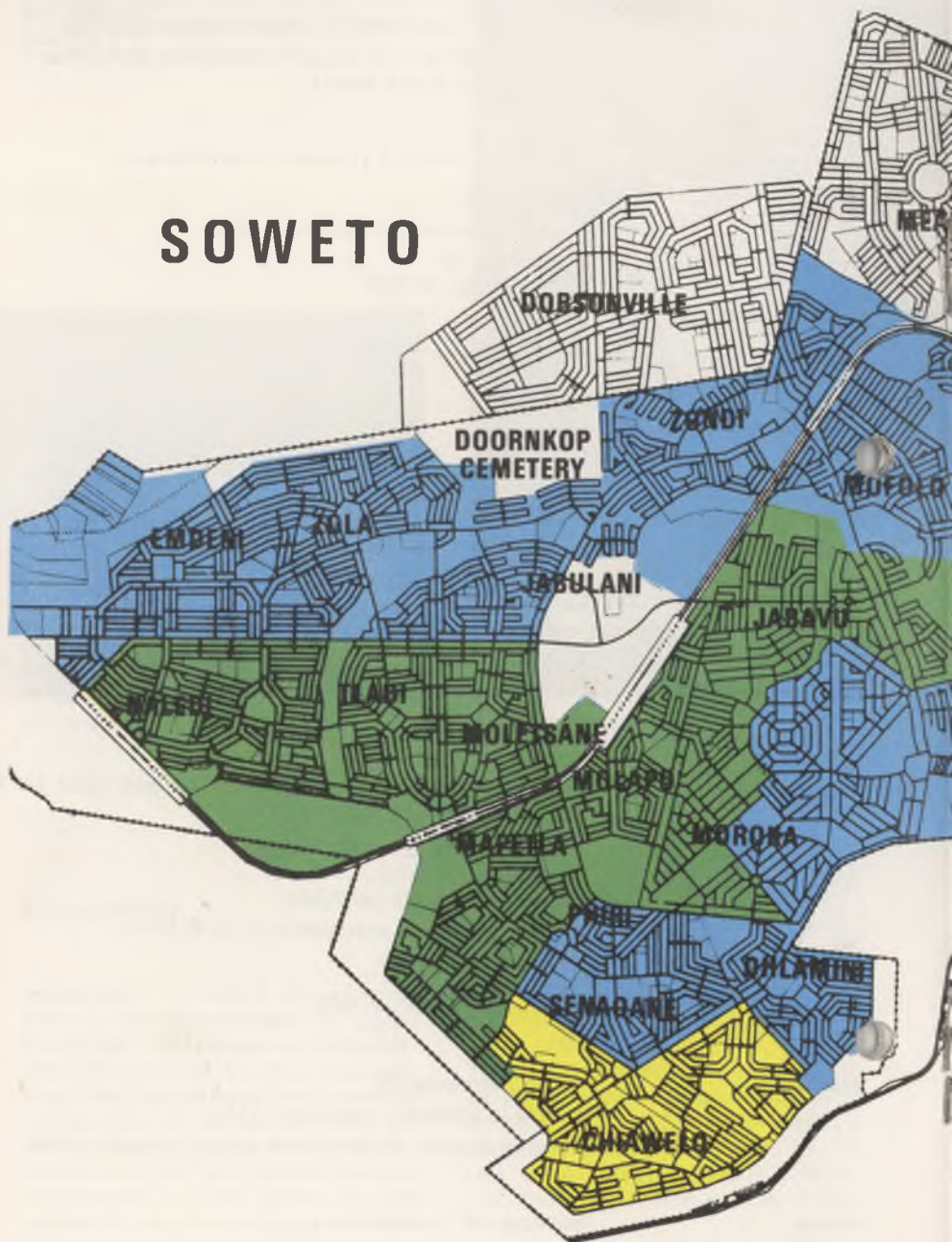
**Youth:** Population under 20: 55%

**Welfare:** Nursery Schools: 45  
People in sheltered workshop: 110  
Average number of cases dealt with per month: 2,000

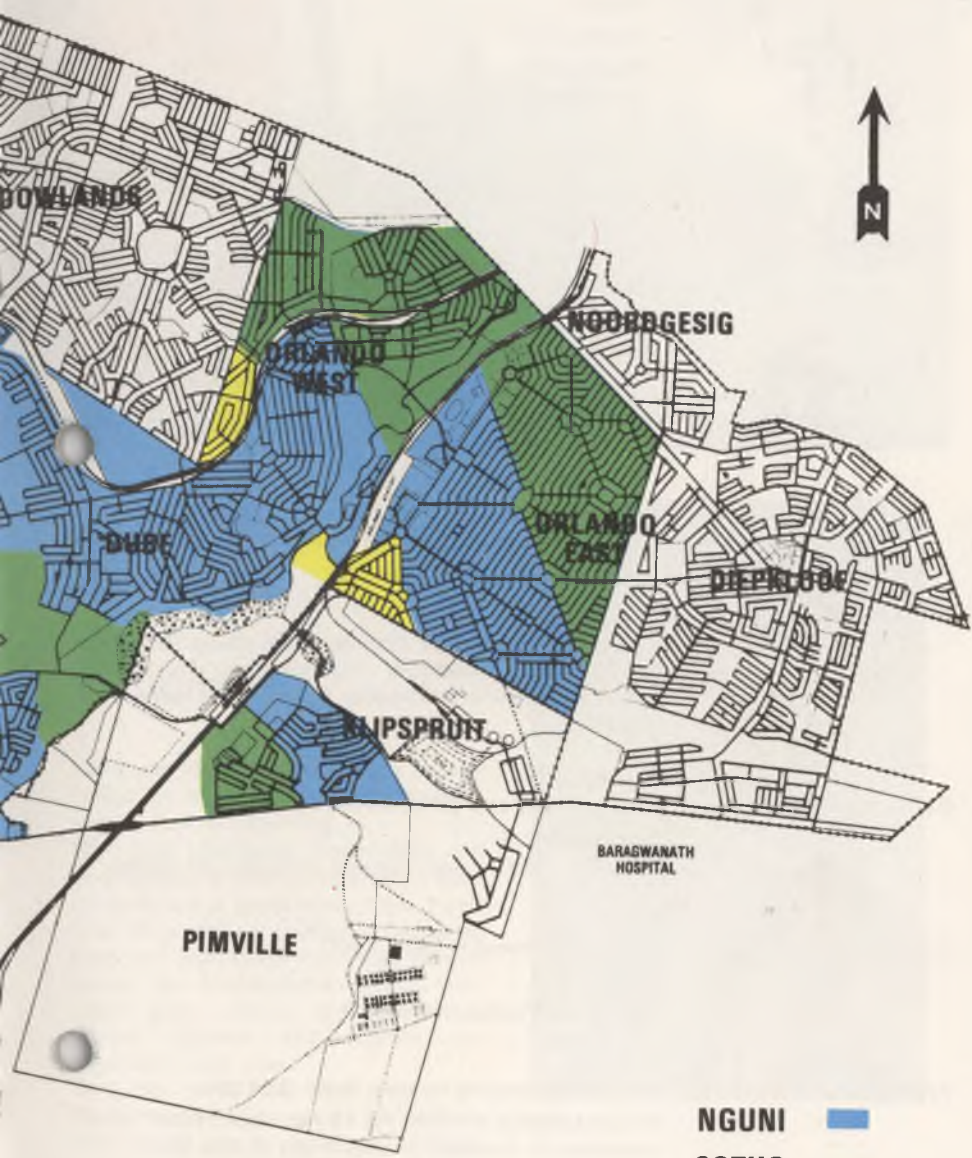
**Clubs:** Evening: 23 (mainly men)  
Afternoon: 27 (children)  
Women's: 8

**Public libraries:** 6

# SOWETO







- NGUNI**
- SOTHO**
- OTHER**

**Recreation:**

Facilities	1948	1970
Stadia	—	3
Sports Fields	14	92
Basketball Courts	10	74
Swimming Pools	1	4
Concrete Cycling Tracks	—	2
Tennis Courts	14	42
American Basketball	—	4
Club Houses	6	24
Communal Halls	3	8
Recreation Halls	—	4
Hostel Halls	2	3
Children's Playgrounds	5	39
Skittle Alleys	—	4
Dance Arenas	—	4
Athletic Tracks	—	3
Change Rooms	—	11
Golf Courses	1	2
Bowling Greens	—	1
Amphitheatre	—	1

These figures do not include halls, clubs, etc., run by churches, charitable organizations and others who provide a considerable number and variety of facilities.

**Bantu beer and liquor:** Beer gardens and off-sales depots: 24  
Bar lounges: 3  
Gallons of Bantu Beer brewed annually: 30 million

**Commerce:** Shops in Soweto exceed 1,500  
Banks: 1  
Wholesale Produce Market: 1

**Transport:** People commuting by train daily: 204,000  
Price of worker's ticket: R3.10 per month from anywhere in Soweto, 5- and 6-day tickets cost less.

**Religion:** Churches: 152  
Denominations: 70 recognised plus approximately 900 sects.

**TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE TO JUNE 1970: R69,870,836.**



*Taking a breather*

## Horticulture

Landscaped parks have been established in many areas, and facilities are constantly expanded.

The local residents themselves are encouraged to take an interest in their gardens and a great many have, apart from their flower gardens, vegetable beds and fruit trees. For these garden lovers the Horticultural Section provides trees, plants and invaluable advice. Garden competitions are organised each year.

Two fruit trees have been planted in the garden of every house in Soweto. The streets are bordered with shade trees and thousands are planted every year. In the parks and playgrounds, innumerable lawns and flower gardens are maintained.

In addition to this, a number of bold schemes have been initiated to provide "breathing spaces"—open-air community centres where people may foregather in their leisure hours—a favourite custom of the Bantu.



*Wheeee . . .*



*In for a check-up—mothers at a baby clinic*

## Health

The medical services operate from seven general clinics, with additional tuberculosis, dental and child health clinics. A large staff deals with over one million attendances a year.

The general clinics offer a 24-hour service including a midwifery service. Casualty and out-patient facilities operate as an integrated system under radio control with a base hospital at Baragwanath. A charge of 20c is made for each out-patient attendance but



treatment is never withheld on grounds of inability to pay. A service is also operated for patients who have to be visited in their homes by doctors and nurses. The Family Health Service which offers advice on all health problems, devotes considerable attention to the promotion of child health. Immunisation against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, smallpox and tuberculosis is vigorously pursued and, after inten-



*The herbalist is losing ground to the X-ray machine, as modern medicine proves its worth*



*Dental clinic*



sive mass campaigns, the level of immunity is maintained by administering over a half a million immunisations a year.

45 nursery schools are run, in the main by voluntary organisations, and these are visited and supervised by the Family Health Section to ensure the highest possible standards.

Tuberculosis services are provided free of charge and extend widely to cover diagnosis, treatment in hospital

and at home, supplementary feeding and follow-up of the patient and his family.

Fixed and mobile X-ray units are used for case contact and suspect examination, and regular visits are paid to factories and other places of work for routine examinations. All men placed in employment by the Municipal Labour Bureau have a routine medical examination and X-ray for tuberculosis.



*Pensioners need special help*

*Doing a useful job—the Sheltered Employment Workshop*



## Welfare

A wide range of services is provided to the unfortunates among the Bantu community. Among other things, rehabilitation work is undertaken at a Sheltered Employment Workshop for disabled persons. Here totally and permanently disabled Bantu are constructively occupied with weaving, sewing, netmaking and canework. They are paid on a piecework basis. Apart from general social work there are also a number of Social Workers who deal specifically with people who are suffering as a result of having contracted tuberculosis. These social workers ensure that the families of those receiving treatment are provided for while they are in hospital; and that they are re-employed after they have been cured.





Organising games at the club—*young club leader*



Building for the future



## Youth—Clubs

The Juvenile Employment Section was established to combat growing juvenile delinquency and has been an unqualified success. Youths in Soweto are encouraged to register with this Section: they are then given aptitude tests and advised to report to the Youth Centre in Dube. Here they are kept occupied with sport, cinema shows and lectures until employment suitable to the qualifications and aptitudes of each individual is found. The Youth Centre is the only institution of its kind run by a local authority. The Vocational Training Centre offers training in the basic building trades—bricklaying and plastering, carpentry

and joinery, plumbing and drainlaying, and electrical house wiring. The graduates are employed in the Council's Housing Division, City Engineer's and Electricity Departments.

Young people are also catered for in Youth Clubs. Activities include dancing, games, drama, singing, etc. Camps at the sea are arranged annually as well as a large Christmas party which thousands attend.

The Women's Clubs provide instruction in sewing, cooking and other domestic crafts, while activities at the evening clubs for men include boxing, wrestling, weight-lifting, etc.





*Ball games—always popular in Soweto*



## Recreation

A large staff of skilled personnel organize recreational activities in Soweto.

Football fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, swimming pools, play grounds, golf courses, etc. have been provided, many with clubhouse facilities. Three large Stadia are strategically placed for larger sports meetings.

The organisation of adult sport is left largely in the hands of Associations; the Recreation Section merely provides facilities and technical advice.

The schools, on the other hand, are not only provided with most of their sports requirements by the Recreation Section, but are also assisted in organising their Inter-School competitions. Over and above this, there are facilities

for rugby, cricket, hockey, softball and other popular games. Special provisions are made for indigenous activities.

There are large hostels in the area each of which about 5,000 men are accommodated. The Recreation Section has a permanent full-time organiser attached to each hostel to organise leisure-time activities, which include concerts, choir singing, boxing, weight lifting, physical culture, skittles and cinema shows.

Cinema shows are provided free of charge, every night except Saturday and Sunday, at 25 different venues throughout Soweto. Matinees are given twice a week.







*Community halls—  
important social centres in Soweto*





*Books—the gateway to new horizons*



*African Image*

## Art and Culture

A Cultural Section of the Non-European Affairs Department provides classes for adults and children in music (brass bands and orchestras), dancing (ballet and ballroom), painting and sculpture. Virtually every Bantu artist of standing in South Africa has received training at the Jubilee Art Centre run by this Section. The Bantu Music Festival is an annual event. Public libraries are to be found throughout Soweto.



*Sight, sound, and movement*





*Sectarian uniform*

## Religion

The religious convictions of the people in Soweto vary tremendously, ranging from the original tribal religions on the one hand, to membership of one of the accepted Christian churches on the other.

By far the greater portion of the population embraces Christianity, though in some cases it is only nominal. Hundreds of small sects have come into being, many of them indistinguishable from the tribal religions. These adapted religions satisfy the needs of a people in transition, where society is even now changing. Many of the sectarian churches have a very short lifespan.

Church sites are provided at convenient sites throughout Soweto at a nominal rent.





## Commerce

Commerce in Soweto is limited strictly to the Bantu. As the majority of the Bantus have never had experience of business before, they probably would not survive in direct competition with people who not only have more experience, but also more capital. Bantu business men have thus been able to acquire the skills, and very often build up the capital required to run successful business empires.

It has been the policy of the Non-European Affairs Department to decentralise business premises, to ensure easy accessibility to shops, but the shopping habits of the population are becoming more sophisticated.





*A gallon of beer . . .*

*A pint of ale*



## Bantu Beer and Liquor

In August 1962, "European-type" liquor became legally available to the Bantu in South Africa and the Council entered the distributive field with supply points throughout Soweto. Off-sale and on-consumption points, the latter in the form of modern bar lounges where customers can enjoy a drink and chat in pleasant surroundings have been opened.

In view of the poverty of the people generally and the constant demand for housing and other amenities, it would have been impossible for the Council to discharge its responsibilities in this respect had it not been for a municipal

monopoly in the manufacture and sale of Bantu Beer, the traditional low alcohol-level Bantu beverage. One third of the profits derived from the sale of Bantu Beer are spent on services calculated to improve the social welfare, recreational and health amenities for Bantu residents within Soweto. The other two thirds of the profits may be used in reducing the losses on housing schemes.

Bantu beer is retailed from beer halls, beer gardens and off-sales depots, nearly all of which are situated within Soweto.



## Transport

The fast electric rail service provided by the Government, between Johannesburg and Soweto carries commuters to and from work at reduced rates. Spur lines wind through the townships so that most people are within easy reach of a station. These lines carry a tremendous volume of transport. A fleet of buses also provides a link with the city. Private cars and taxis are used extensively.

Soweto itself is served by an internal bus service, which links up with the railway service. The bus service is run by the Public Utility Transport Corporation, which is subsidised, as are the railways, from the Transport Levy which employers of male Bantu pay.

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