

A1132 / Dal. 21

A 'CITY' WITHIN A
CITY. P.R.B. LEWIS

Rough drafts - hand written

A city within a city - The location of Soweto.

Tough drafted - hand written.

①

A 'City' within a City - The Creation of Soweto

On an occasion such as this, when one is celebrating an anniversary it is fit & proper that one should reflect on the history of one's City and pay tribute to those men and women, who helped create the vast Metropolis, of which we are so proud. It is instructive too, looking back at the changing attitudes & policies of the past. For attitudes & policies have changed in many respects for the better as I hope to illustrate to you. Let us hope we can learn from the mistakes of the past and take courage from the sterling & steadfast work of those, who strove so hard to improve the lot of their fellow citizens.

In his book written in 1938 entitled City Government - The Johannesburg Experiment John Maud, as he then was, ^{gives} an insight into conditions in the early days. I have drawn extensively from that book for incidents and events, which concern our subject - a 'City' within a City - The creation of Soweto in other words those conditions which concerned the provision of housing and other facilities for the Bantu people.

It must not ever be lost sight of that the first conception of Johannesburg's settlement was that of a temporary mining camp. When the Sanitary Board was formed ^{in 1857} its powers were limited as were the funds at its disposal as ~~soon as~~ the provision of most of the profitable services had been granted to concessionaires. No wonder that one Commission after another drew attention to the bad conditions under which the ^{negroes} Bantu lived. The

Native affairs Commission of 1903/5 strongly criticised the existing state of affairs as did the Indigency Commission of 1908 and the Municipal Commission of 1909 urged provision of proper sites for Natives and other non Europeans.

On a site near the present market in Newtown was an appalling slum shown in early maps as Kaffertown. This area was expropriated in 1903 and compensation amounting to R 2,240,092 paid. ~~as~~ But where to move the slum dwellers was the problem. Then, as now, the opposition of the ~~the~~ White electorate adjacent to the areas to which it was proposed to move the Natives, was so strong that plans had to be shelved. In 1904 there occurred in this area something even stronger than the opposition of the White electorate — an outbreak of plague. The officials of the Council acted that very night. All the inhabitants were cleared out and the whole slum was burnt to the ground.

The Council agreed that accommodation must be found for the refugees at even if only temporarily. For the Natives & Indians this was provided on a site adjoining the sewage disposal works at Klipspruit 12 miles from the Centre of town. Neither the remoteness from Johannesburg nor the closeness of the sewage farm endeared the location to its Native inhabitants.

This was the first location created. The next step was not until 1917 when the Council hired the disused mine for part of the Salisbury Jubilee mine. This was for use as a hostel for a few hundred native men.

In 1917 the Council requested the Government to grant it the right to sell Kaffir Beer. This the Government refused until the Council provided for more adequate municipal locations. This ^{permission} application was however granted in 1923 but not used until 1936. The statistics of high mortality rates of Natives in the 1918 flu epidemic stimulated the Council to take some action by establishing Western Native Township on a site, which in earlier years had been a sewage disposal works. Between 1918 & 1921 300 houses were built at Western. Meanwhile Natives were living under most unsatisfactory conditions in places such as Newclare, Sophiatown, Prospect Township, the Malay location and other parts of the Town.

A report from the Mott in 1923 reads.
(See para page 137 - Slum Properly.)

It was in 1923 that the Native Urban Areas Act was passed. One of the clauses, which had far reaching effect, was that which fairly & squarely placed the responsibility on local Authorities to provide housing for Natives living within their area.

In 1924 the Wemmer Barracks was built to house 1000 Native men. Western Native Township was extended by building a further 800 houses and a new location. Eastern Native Township was established with 400 houses. By 1927 accommodation provided by the Council was for 15000 people. At that time the estimated Native population was 96000 (excluding those employed & housed by the Council.)

Until 1927 the administration of Native affairs was a responsibility of the Lands & Estates committee. The ~~the~~ ^{net} expenditure on Lands Estate & Landline for that year was £124,980 while that on education was £16634

In 1927 Mr Graham Ballenden was appointed the first manager of Native Affairs & he ^{in 1928} ~~persuaded~~ ^{persuaded} the Council ~~to~~ to appoint a committee on Native Affairs. ^{Large} Extension to WNT & NT was put in hand &

by 1930 a further 850 houses had been built making a total of _____ at Western and _____ at Eastern.

New towns were proposed on local authorities in terms of an amendment to the Urban Areas Act passed in 1930. The Council then acquired 1300 acres of land on the farm _____ some 10 miles from _____.

A competition was held for the design layout of the township, competitors were asked to submit plans for its ^{lay out} ~~design~~ ^{design} to accommodate 8000 Natives. Provision was made for Administrative offices a public hall, a cottage hospital with dispensary & clinic, a central police station, a central hot office, & three district offices a fire station, ten sites for schools, ten sites for religious purposes, shopping centres, a market & a community store.

The new township was to be called Orlando after one of the ^{then} ~~then~~ ^{then} sitting councillors Mr Orlando Kent.

This step marked a new thinking and a new approach to the Natives' responsibilities. While it took many years to provide the facilities planned for, it is noteworthy that this planning was occurring during the period of depression in the early 1930's.

By 1935 3000 houses had been built to house some 18000 people. By the outbreak of war in 1939 a total of 5800 houses had been created ^{at Orlando}. The houses were built by white artisans at an average of _____ per house or _____ sq foot.

queue

* There is no doubt that owners of property expected their tenants.
The rents were charged a families lived in one room some properties of
a 50x100ft had ~~accommodated~~ as many as many as — people.
accommodated

In John Mounds book he states that unfortunately in the 10 years after 1927 the work of the Public Health Dept. did not develop as rapidly, or effectively, as that of the new native affairs department.

The Murray Thornton Commission of 1935 which was merged into the Public Health & Native Affairs Dept. ~~in the 1930s~~ criticized the ~~function of the~~ Public Health Dept. for its failure to prevent or cure the fearful squalor which prevailed in such areas as Gaspat Township, the Malay localities Saphalaw, Martindale & Newdon. It reported that the Mott must have been aware of the insanitary conditions prevailing & the lack of water supply. There was ^{no municipal} ~~no~~ water in her close until 1933, people being ^{dependent} ~~dependent~~ on suspect water from wells. By 1935 the Council had installed 27 Taps in Saphalaw where people ^{queried} ~~filled~~ for water & bought it by the ^{bucket} ~~bucket~~. No these areas were not connected to the Sewerage system & were dependent on collection of Sanitary refuse 3 times per week.

So while ~~we~~ ~~are~~ ~~become~~ the City was endeavoring to make a New East in Orlando it was only retaining a small portion of the native population ^{although} living in most unsanitary conditions in many quarters of the City.

* However after the Murray Thornton Commission a thorough reorganization ^{of the Public Health Dept.} took place on the lines of the Commission report & improvement immediately ^{issued} ~~ensued~~. It is a constant problem of the Mott's Dept. ^{ingult} ~~ingult~~ to maintain standards of housing until such an alternative accommodation for the ^{of} ~~of~~ shanty dwellers can be found. It is a very real problem to this day.

A fact not known to many people regarding the period 1903 to 1935 is the temporary range of municipal Valuations of land. At the end of the Cuyler-Sael Wak Johanning had a temporary boom and the Municipal Value of land was \$80,000,000 in 1906 by 1909 it had dropped to 42,000,000 by 1910 to 28,000,000 and it was not until 1935 that the Value had crept back to \$55,000,000. This notwithstanding the ^{quadrupling} ~~increase~~ of the European

$$\begin{array}{r}
 134408 \\
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 30 \overline{) 4032266} \\
 \underline{30} \\
 103 \\
 \underline{90} \\
 132 \\
 \underline{120} \\
 122 \\
 \underline{120} \\
 266
 \end{array}$$

* As a matter of urgency 4042 breeze back shelters were erected in Sharplowin in 1944 and at the Moroka Emergency Camp 11000 sites of 20' x 20' were allocated to families. It was estimated that approximately 50000 families living in appalling conditions required houses at this stage.

① The five war years changed almost every aspect of Bantu life in Johannesburg. There was a tremendous growth in the number of factories and industries directly associated with the war effort, resulting in an insatiable demand for Bantu labour. The Bantu population increased by leaps and bounds and in 1946 it was estimated that the Bantu population was 395,231 of whom 211,322 were men, 100,000 women and 83,909 children.

This abnormal increase in the population meant that all available resources normally provided by the local authority were swamped out. Ultimately sheer pressure of numbers forced the people out. Owners of houses revolted against their sub-tenants and these literally burst out of the available accommodation formed eleven illegal and uncontrolled squatter camps.

and over a period of time.

It is important to remember that there was no influx control of Bantu into the City at this stage.

It was in this way that one of the most unsavoury episodes in Johannesburg's history began. A situation developed where the health and safety of the whole City was threatened.

Apart from the health hazards which these squatter camps created, men rose overnight to take leadership and prey on the ignorance and latent violence of the Bantu who lived in these camps. Rule of law was openly flaunted and by illegal courts where savage punishments were inflicted. Municipal land in Orlando, Pimville, Dube, Newclare and Alexandra ^{was} ~~were~~ *Set up* forcibly taken possession of and the most wretched shanties erected almost on top of one another.

* The authorities were seriously embarrassed as there was no effective law to combat these movements. The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 1951 (Act 52/1951) brought relief, however, and this dangerous phase was finally brought to an end, but before that was achieved much trouble was experienced.

-2-

When the largest squatter camp was cleared in 1947 there were no less than 60,000 Bantu living there, who had to be resettled at Moroka.

Before this the leaders did all they could to hinder the authorities because they have now lost their illegal revenue and therefore continued to make trouble. In August 1947 they sparked off an attack on some municipally built shops and the latent tensions burst out resulting in a serious riot during which three European policemen were murdered.

population during the period & the creation of numerous additional newspapers during that period. Thus the assessed rate income of 5,253,127 for the year 1907 had dropped to 2,876,388 in 1910 and was in the range of 500,000 to 600,000 during the fifteen years 1920-1935. The total contribution to rates by the leading Departments for the 30 year period 1905 to 1935 was £4,032,266 or an average of £134,408 per year.

The ^{total} expenditure on capital from 1903 to 1936 was £17,689,175 and today our ^{capital} budget for one year alone is

So while we ^{our Government has} may be critical of conditions we must keep our perspective of the and realize the limited resources available to tackle the many & varied ~~calls~~ calls on the City's purse. (X) ^{at that time the N.P. was £1,400,000}

Then in 1939 came World War II & South African manpower & material were concentrated on the war effort. Industrial expansion was at an explosive rate demanding more & more labour. To the cities came the Natives in their droves. It was not only the men it was their women folk too. These were the days of the illegal squatter camps at Alexandria at Mousa and on Valet and wherever considered suitable.

See quote 1 from huyts tapes.

The Court's burden brought the hearing
program to a standstill.

How could one tackle a task of this magnitude? Where was the money to be found? What rent could the ~~would be~~ tenants pay? Could one build a house within the tenants' capacity to pay? Where were the builders? How could one meet the cost of services, which often exceeded the cost of the house. In 1950 the deficit on the Native Revenue Account was already R for the year and each new scheme involved a further loss. The Government's share of the loss for Johannesburg's schemes was R for for 1950.

Nevertheless during the period 1947 to 1951 5233 houses were built at Orlando East & West and at Jabavu. Various methods of construction were used by contractors who were becoming geared up to tackle mass production methods of construction. ^{The crushing} ~~burden~~ ^{was however, bringing the building programme to a screeching} by the end of 1953 the total ~~no~~ ^{no} of houses built was 17814 & hostel accommodation had been provided for 14120 men.

* As a matter of urgency HOUSING blocks 'Hellas' were erected in Stanbury in 1944 and at the Moroka emergency camp 11000 sites of 20' x 20' were allocated to families. It was estimated that approximately 50000 families living in appalling conditions required houses at this stage.

How could one tackle a task of this magnitude. Where was the money to be found. What rents would one build at ~~price~~ ^{at a cost} ~~people could afford to pay that~~ ^{on which} the people would pay a rent. Where were the people ^{to be} housed. How could one meet the cost of services which often exceeded the cost of the house. The City's deficit on the N.P.A. was already ^{in 1950} and each new scheme involved a loss. ^{of 1950} ~~It is true that~~ the Government ^{of the losses for jobs} ~~for 1950~~

During the ^{Schemes was R} ~~for 1950~~ period 1947 to 1951 5233 houses were built by various methods & by contractors who were ^{beginning} ~~beginning~~ to glaze up to tackle mass production methods of construction. European labour was employed but costs were high. But 5233 houses was only a tenth of the houses required at Orlando East and at Jaburu.

By the end of 1953 the total No of houses built was 17814 & ~~total~~ accommodation had been provided for 14150 men

+ Transport
Queen's Peak →

Then followed a period of
 During the year there was hesitancy on the part of certain elements at the City Hall to incur expenditure which would result in burdens on the ratepayers to meet losses on housing schemes. Was it necessary to provide financing for people who might leave the city before the ~~term~~ repayment of the 30 year loans? A Home Loans Board was formed ^{Board} ~~Board~~ ^{Mc} Churches & Chamber of Commerce & the Institute of Home Relations urged the Government & the Council to face up to the plight of the thousands of people living under these appalling conditions

~~Then~~ Then followed legislation which was to have the effect of ~~repealing~~ ^{repealing} the Statute.

In 1951 saw the passing of the ^{Banking} Building Workers Act. It now became possible to train banking workers in the building trade to work in the provision of houses for steel own people & thus reduce the cost of building.

In 1952 the ~~Banking Services~~

In 1952 the Banking Services Levy Act was passed. This was a levy on employed who did not have steel employees and was to be used ^{by the} ~~by the~~ ^{local} ~~local~~ ^{authorities} for the provision of Sewage disposal works, main access roads, water towers, main water reticulation, sub outfall sewers and lighting.

The passing of this act brought ^{local} ~~local~~ ^{protests} from employees who ~~wanted~~ ^{wanted} assurances that such a levy would be temporary & clear ^{once} ~~once~~ the emergency ^{it was regarded as a discrimination} ~~was~~ ^{had} passed. Representatives of employees serve on the committees administering these funds. To ~~ensure~~ ^{ensure} that expenditure ^{is} ~~is~~ ⁱⁿ accordance with the purposes for which the fund was created. This fund was ~~to~~ ^{to} be ~~paid~~ ^{paid} per year by ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~authorities~~ ^{authorities} & details of the uses to which the fund have been put are attached.

In 1953, what was called the site of Sewane Scheme became State policy. The idea behind this scheme was to move the people who were living cheek by jowl in the squatter camps on to sites 40' x 70', and on these sites ~~not~~ essential services such as sanitation & the ~~water~~ ^{water} provided, water made available & access roads built. On such a site a shack could be built on the back of the site so that when a permanent house could be built it would be in the part of the site & not interfere with the shack. On construction of the main house, the shack was to be demolished. This scheme was met with scepticism many people fearing that the shack would be a permanent feature, ~~they~~ not believing that houses would be built to replace the shacks.

In Johannesburg ^{30000?} such sites were surveyed & the service provided. The shacks followed & it was a period of great activity. ~~Some~~ Neighbors & friends helped each other during off work periods & over weekends & it was incredible how ^{houses} ~~work~~ was made from all sorts of second hand material. ^{It is pleasing to report that the only shacks that remain today are in few on sites where the occupiers have built a house of their own.}

In 1954 Johannesburg created a separate ^{Division} ~~Department~~ of Housing. The Council - to tackle the building of houses for the ~~city~~ ^{area}. At one stage it was intended that such work would fall under the City Engineer Dept. But for this work Mr Archibald the previous City Engineer ^{of Johannesburg} was appointed. He had shown great ^{drive} enthusiasm & ingenuity in developing Native Housing in Soweto. He was an individualist and tackled his assignment with enthusiasm and vigour. He was ~~not~~ had a liking for the Bantu worker & an interest in his advancement. He abhorred red tape - in fact he tore up a bundle and set out to achieve records. He did not think the Council had done ~~any~~ ^{good} previously established the Vocational training centre. At this centre training was given to carpenters, plumbers & bricklayers & these trained ^{men} formed the nucleus of the staff which ~~was~~ ^{now} nucleus

Made the Chairmanship of Nathan McCalla who succeeded
Mr. Menty, this committee has turned changed to a construction
committee where many difficult problems have been
resolved and ~~whole~~ ~~contrary~~ ~~points~~ of view have been put
and the as a result of appreciating each other part of view.
~~of the acknowledgment by the Govt~~

See attached

Another Cause of
friction

* In 1958 Dr. Kenwood ~~not~~ ^{in the departmental} ~~was~~ ^{was}
~~not~~ ~~part~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~committee~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~Chairmanship~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~then~~ ~~Dept's~~
Minister of Native Affairs (Mr. Menty). The hope of this
Committee was to ensure that Government Policy was
Carried out in Johannesburg. This committee was
labelled the Watch Dog Committee by one of the local
newspaper. Feelings were tense and the first step taken
by the committee was to get certain "assurances" from
the Council the first of which was that the Council
was to acknowledge that it recognised that - ^{some} of
the Act of Union legislation regarding Native Affairs was
referred to the Central Legislature.
The Council undertook to carry out - insofar
as it was enshrined in law.
These were times of tension and I have a vivid recollection
of the first & many of the subsequent meetings

were to be build up a team of workers which at the peak numbered.

In the year 1954 houses were built to be followed by houses in 1955.

The Council was dependant on Government housing loans. The Government had naturally to appoolise the funds available amongst all the local authorities applying for loans and the amount allocated to Johannesburg did not allow an impression to be made on the backlog and the Moroka Emergency Camp & Shantytown were still festering sores and places of crime. In 1956 Sir Ernest Oppenheimer visited Moroka and was so agast at what he saw that he arranged with his colleagues in the Mining Industry to loan the City R.6 repayable over 30 years, interest being charged at 4 7/8%. This was the injection that was needed and with the proceeds of this loan 14000 homes were built enabling the complete removal of the families from Moroka & Shantytown. In one year alone 10000 houses were built.

The acceptance of the loan required Govt. Approval. At the time the relationship between the City & the then Minister of Native Affairs Dr HF Verwoerd was, to put it mildly, strained. One cause of

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Page 10

~~One~~ Cause of friction was the Government's attitude regarding refunds of loans under sub-economic schemes. When the loans for the Orlando East & West & Jaburu schemes were given it was on the basis that within defined limits the losses would be shared 3 parts by the Govt & one part by the Council.

The Council first submitted its claim for loans in 1950. Up to 30/6/53 the loans on these schemes amounted to R2 158 346.

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and of this sum it was calculated, on the Council's understanding of the formula, that R1,004,640 was recoverable from the Government, but only R469,454 was recovered at that time.

X

In 1951 the old 3 1/4% formula was cancelled. In that year local authorities, in submitting claims for losses on the National Housing formula, were required to certify that tenants' incomes did not exceed R50 on loans prior to 1.10.46, and R60 thereafter. In 1952 differential incomes were laid down, and were fixed at R30 for Bantu. Local authorities were advised that a fully economic rate of interest would have to be paid on a pro rata share of the loans in respect of tenants with incomes in excess of those limits, and that the increased cost could be recovered by way of increased rentals. Legal opinion given to this Council doubted the Commission's power to do this. In 1954 the National Housing Commission agreed that the sub-economic rentals should be increased by 30c. for every R1-00 of the income over R30. In 1954 the Council, because of its unhappy experience under the National Housing formula, agreed to convert the 3 1/4% loans to 3% loans, thereby cancelling the sharing of losses on the schemes but insuring the benefit of the lower rate of interest.

In 1957 the Council's claim for over R800,000 under the old 3 1/4% scheme was finally settled for R250,000. The R250,000 was paid into the Capital Development Fund and earmarked for street lighting in the Bantu Townships. As in the Housing Act 1957 provision was made in Section 78(3) for legalising actions of the National Housing and Planning Commission which were not authorized at the time they were done, this Council's legal rights were swept away

A further incident which had not endeared the Council in Government circles was the Council's appointment ^{of a commission} to enquire into the riots which had occurred in the vicinity of the Duke Hostel. The Govt. had half-heartedly turned down as unnecessary the Council's request for a judicial enquiry. The findings of the enquiry were not to the liking of the Powers in Pretoria as aspects of Government policy were criticised. The conflict regarding the resettlement of the Bantu living in Sophiatown referred to later had also made for bad blood.

It was in this atmosphere when the withholding of housing loans was being used as a lever to deal with recalcitrant Johannesburg that approval of the acceptance of the R6 loan was sought, after prolonged negotiations permission was granted but a condition was attached that portion of the loan should be used for building hostels to accommodate Bantu Males, who were to be moved from offices, flats to implement the provisions of the Bantu Act which had been passed in

From 1954 to 1965 the housing division built 44661 houses and in addition built - Schools etc etc

At a total expenditure of R. Mrs Archibald left the Council's service in 19 This place was taken by his second in command Mr John Goodman.

Not the least important achievement of the housing division was the training of the building teams and making skilled workers

10 (contd 2)

of erstwhile labourers.

One of the achievements was the reduction in the cost of housing.

REDUCTION IN COST OF HOUSING.

The first houses erected by the Council were in the Western Bantu Township in 1919, when 2,192 houses were built. The two-roomed house cost

R240; and the three-roomed R280; and the four-roomed R340. The next scheme was at Eastern Bantu Township where the two-roomed houses cost R230; and the three-roomed houses R270. In 1932-1935 the Council started the Orlando East Scheme, where the two-roomed houses of 397 sq. feet cost R190; and the three-roomed house varied from R504; to R1,000; and the four-roomed house from R708; to R1,328. The 125 houses built in Pimville in 1944-1945 cost R988; for the three-roomed, and R1,198; for the four-roomed. When these costs are considered, and the fact that since that date costs of materials have been continuously rising, it is nothing short of a miracle that the houses built since the establishment of the Council's Housing Division, with the use of Bantu labour, have cost between R320 to R370 for a 527 sq. ft. house.

Owing to the difference in sizes of the houses a truer comparison is to state costs in prices per square foot. In 1930 the price varied from $42\frac{1}{2}$ c., to $52\frac{1}{2}$ c., in 1938 this had increased to $92\frac{1}{2}$ c., and in 1944 the houses at Orlando West cost R1.04 to R1.14. In 1946 the price had increased to R1.22 $\frac{1}{2}$, and the Jabavu houses built in 1947 cost R1.02. Then came the establishment of the City's own Housing Division, and the training of Bantu building workers. At a time when costs were increasing in comparison with the time stated above, the costs were decreased to from 61c., to $67\frac{1}{2}$ c., per sq. ft. The materials used at all times were not the same, but in considering the recent achievements in housing, consideration must not only be given to the number of houses that have been erected, but also to the cost at which they have been built, and the transformation in the lives of the labourers who have become trained artisans in the process.

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- 14 -

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At the time the Council undertook the sub-economic housing schemes at Orlando East and West and Jabavu, the National Housing Commission advanced the funds under a scheme whereby the interest charged was $3\frac{1}{4}\%$ on the understanding that losses incurred on such schemes should, within defined limits, be borne in the ratio of three parts by the Government and one part by the Council. ~~The Council first submitted its claim for losses in 1950. Up to the 30th June 1953, the losses incurred on these schemes amounted to R2, 158, 348~~

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