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Zehn Jahre „Hallische Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte“

Vor zehn Jahren, im Frühjahr 1996, erschienen die „Hallischen Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte“ zum ersten Mal. Die Herausgeber haben das Jubiläumsjahr 2006 zum Anlass genommen, um einige Veränderungen zu realisieren, die bereits mit dem Begründer der Reihe – dem leider viel zu früh verstorbenen Zeithistoriker Prof. Dr. Hermann-Josef Rupieper – diskutiert worden waren. Der neu gestaltete Einband in den Farben der Universität soll die „Hallischen Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte“ noch stärker in die Wahrnehmung der wissenschaftlichen Institutionen und Bibliotheken rücken. Diesem Ziel dient auch die Präsenz im Internet. Interessierte Leser können sich künftig unter www.geschichte.uni-halle.de/halbz/halbz in deutscher und englischer Sprache über die Geschichte und Schwerpunkte der Reihe sowie über Kontaktmöglichkeiten informieren. Außerdem sind dort die Inhaltsverzeichnisse aller bislang erschienenen Hefte abrufbar. Beginnend mit dem vorliegenden Heft werden in allen zukünftigen Ausgaben auch kurze Zusammenfassungen zu den einzelnen Beiträgen online veröffentlicht. Bei allen Neuerungen hält die Reihe an ihrem bekannten Konzept fest. Sie will in den einzelnen Ausgaben auch weiterhin die Breite und Vielfalt der zeitgeschichtlichen Forschung widerspiegeln. Wie bisher werden vorrangig Beiträge vorgestellt, die auf der Grundlage noch nicht veröffentlichter Quellen basieren. Zusätzlich sollen aber verstärkt die Ergebnisse von Wissenschaftlern außerhalb Deutschlands berücksichtigt werden, die sich der Untersuchung zeitgeschichtlicher Themen seit 1917 widmen.

Das vorliegende Heft ist – und darin folgt es der Tradition der Vorjahre – eine Plattform für gestandene Historiker sowie junge Nachwuchswissenschaftler. *Jeremy Krikler* stellt in seinem Beitrag das Thema Gewalt in den Mittelpunkt. Er fragt nach den Faktoren, die Gewalt begrenzen. Am Beispiel eines Streiks weißer Minenarbeiter in Südafrika 1922, der sich zu Kämpfen mit der schwarzen Bevölkerung ausweitete, argumentiert er, dass es vor allem die persönlichen Alltagsbeziehungen zwischen Schwarzen und Weißen waren, die eine Dämonisierung der schwarzen Mitbürger verhinderten. Daraus erwuchs, so Krikler, eine gegenseitige Vertrautheit, die wesentlich dazu beitrug, dass die Gewaltbereitschaft der weißen Angreifer nicht weiter eskalierte. Krikler fordert ausdrücklich zu weiteren vergleichenden Arbeiten zum Thema auf. Auch *Michael Lemke* macht in seinem Beitrag auf die Bedeutung vergleichender Forschung aufmerksam – allerdings in einem anderen Zusammenhang. Er beschäftigt sich am Beispiel der SBZ/DDR mit Fragen der Sowjetisierung nach 1945. Im Zentrum stehen Ziele, Strukturen, Methoden und Wirkungsweisen der Sowjetisie-

rung sowie die Interessen, Handlungsspielräume und Interaktionen der sie tragenden und der von ihr betroffenen Kräfte. Die Forschung sollte, so Lemkes Argumentation, stärker vergleichende Analysen vorlegen und damit zur Internationalisierung und Verortung des Phänomens Sowjetisierung im Kalten Krieg beitragen. *Michael Ploenus* spricht in seinem Beitrag einen Aspekt an, der als Teil des Sowjetisierungsprozesses in der DDR zu werten ist, die Durchdringung der Hochschullebens mit dem Marxismus-Leninismus. Dafür zeichneten eigens errichtete Abteilungen, Institute bzw. Sektionen verantwortlich. Sein Beitrag geht am Beispiel der Universität Jena dem Verschwinden dieser universitären Lehr- und Propagandaabteilungen im Zuge der „Wende“ nach. Für Halle müsste erst noch untersucht werden, ob Ploenus Recht hat, wenn er Jena als paradigmatisch für vergleichbare Einrichtungen in der DDR bezeichnet. Mit dem Zeitzeugeninterview von *Thomas Pruschwitz* wird eine Rubrik wiederbelebt, die eine zeitlang regelmäßig in unserer Reihe vertreten war. Anlass war die Veröffentlichung der Memoiren von Heinz Schwarz. Der SED-Funktionär und langjährige Generaldirektor des Chemiekombinats Bitterfeld gibt detaillierte Einblicke in die Wechselwirkungen zwischen Staatssicherheit, Staats- und SED-Funktionären in einem der führenden chemischen Großbetriebe der DDR. Seine Betrachtungen bieten Gesprächsstoff für weitere Forschungen über die Träger des SED-Staates unterhalb der obersten Führungsebene. *Inga Grebe* und *Jana Wüstenhagen* lenken die Aufmerksamkeit auf den – im deutschsprachigen Raum – noch relativ wenig bekannten Forschungsraum Lateinamerika. Im Mittelpunkt stehen archivalische Quellen für die Zeit nach 1945 in Chile und Argentinien. Ihr Fazit ermuntert zu weiteren Untersuchungen: Trotz aller noch bestehenden Hindernisse haben sich die Bedingungen für Forschungen in und über Lateinamerika in den letzten zehn Jahren zum Teil erheblich verbessert. Die Herausgeber wünschen wie immer eine anregende Lektüre.

Halle (Saale) im Mai 2006

Jana Wüstenhagen und Daniel Bohse

Constraints upon popular racial killing: a South African case

by Jeremy Krikler¹

Bouts of popular racial or ethnic violence – pogroms or race riots – have invariably drawn historians to focus on their origin, context and brutal results.² This focus, however, leads us away from a recurring fact of the phenomenon: despite the fury, hatred, numbers and arms of the attackers, the overwhelming majority of the victimised group survive the ordeal. Might something be gained, then, by focusing an analysis largely on the factors that restrain killing once it has begun? This is the question that animates this article, which deals with a moment of popular racial killing in South Africa, and which seeks to emphasise to historians the need to investigate as much why killing does not happen as much as why it does.

In 1922, on South Africa's Witwatersrand – the gold-bearing region with Johannesburg at its centre – there was a white miners' strike against employer attempts to increase working hours, reduce wages, reorganise production and (in some cases) replace white with African³ workers. In the midst of this struggle, white proletarians and their allies were suddenly gripped by hysterical fears that black people were about to turn murderously upon their communities. Whites sought safety from the putative peril, sometimes turning local cinemas into sanctuaries, and white crowds and individuals turned upon local Africans, killing around twenty of them. This was, arguably, the only 'race riot' by whites in South African history.

I have explored and explained the racial killing of 1922 elsewhere,⁴ and readers seeking to follow its causes and pattern should consult those writings. When I first presented the facts regarding this outpouring of racial

¹ The author thanks Eliza Kentridge, Jana Wuestenhagen and, especially, Vic Gattrell for comments on earlier versions of this paper.

² Examples of this focus are legion. See, for example, Elliott Rudwick's: *Race Riot At East St. Louis, Carbondale 1964*; William Tuttle, Jr.: *Race Riot. Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*, New York 1970; Jeremy Krikler: *White Rising. The 1922 Insurrection and Racial Killing in South Africa*, Manchester 2005; John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (eds): *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, Cambridge 1992; and Malcolm McLaughlin: *Power, Community and Racial Violence in East St Louis*, New York 2005.

³ In accordance with South African usage, the term 'African' is used in this article to refer to black people.

⁴ See Jeremy Krikler: *The Inner Mechanics of a South African Racial Massacre*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (1999) and Krikler, *White Rising*.

violence, one of the questions posed to me was: ‘why weren’t more people killed?’ That might appear a strange or even callous question. However, it is quite legitimate. By the time of the South African killings, the white working class on the Witwatersrand had constituted itself into something of an army made up of formations called commandos, led by officers, and often composed of discrete units.⁵ Hundreds, perhaps a few thousand of the strikers, had access to firearms, and they were – a few days after the pogrom – to turn them against South African police and soldiers in an insurrection. In short, they were to engage in the far greater violence of a rebellion once the racial killing by crowds had ended.⁶ Quite obviously, they had the capacity to wreak enormous violence upon black people – especially as such people did not have access to firearms – and there is little doubt that they killed far fewer Africans than they could have. What was it that restrained them?

I. Police action against the racial violence

The easiest explanation is the police. Historians of the United States and other places have alerted us to the centrality of police action or inaction to the scale of racial killing. Where the police and other authorities gave a license to killing crowds, as in East St. Louis in 1917, dozens of African Americans could be killed in a single day.⁷ Likewise, the scale of the deadliest pogrom in Czarist History, that in Odessa in 1905, which saw hundreds of Jewish people murdered, was decided by police and soldiers giving a free hand, or even support, to the pogromists over a three-day period.⁸ With respect to constraining violence against black people, 1922 well may have been the proudest moment in the history of the South African police. Again and again, they intervened to protect black people who might otherwise have been killed. This runs somewhat counter to the history of white police forces in South Africa who acquired a notorious reputation for violence against black people in the segregation and apartheid eras. An explanatory comment is, therefore, in order before evidence of police actions on behalf of Africans in 1922 is detailed.

⁵ See J. Krikler: ‘The Commandos: the army of white labour in South Africa’ in: *Past and Present*, May 1999.

⁶ See part 2 of my *White Rising*.

⁷ See Malcolm McLaughlin: ‘Reconsidering the East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917’, in: *International Review of Social History*, 47 (2002), esp. pp. 187 (casualty figures), 188, 198-9, 207.

⁸ See Robert Weinberg: ‘The pogrom of 1905 in Odessa’, in: Klier and Lambroza (eds): *Pogroms*, esp. pp. 263-7, 270-2.

Essentially, the police on the Witwatersrand in 1922 (and, indeed, in the early-twentieth century more generally) viewed white workers as the most formidable enemy of public order, as indeed they were. Major labour upheavals – in 1907, 1913 and 1914 – had already resulted in military mobilisations against white workers. In 1922, the strikers, as already noted, formed themselves into something of an army and invaded public space in the most dramatic way. When the police were instructed to protect strike-breakers and disperse pickets, the strikers took them to be in the enemy camp and serious confrontations – in one case with mortal casualties – developed. The racial violence of 1922 occurred in March of that year, when the police themselves increasingly came under attack until, at last, just after the racial violence ended, they were subjected to an onslaught in which many of them were killed, wounded or taken prisoner by the strikers.⁹ In 1922, then, when strikers began to attack Africans – even in the midst of hysterical claims that all whites had to stand together against a supposed black peril – the police took this as a mob threat to order by people who were their enemies. Consequently, they acted vigorously to defend the African victims of the strikers, and to restrain the racial violence of 1922. Consider the evidence.

East of Johannesburg, at the Primrose Mine near Germiston, where strikers launched a terrifying attack upon black miners that left many dead and wounded, the men of the South African Mounted Rifles, a police cavalry force, helped to end the violence.¹⁰ In Langlaagte in Johannesburg, where strikers ‘seriously assaulted’ two Africans, the police held a few black people in the cells ‘as a protection against the strikers who had threatened to kill them’.¹¹ This policy of sheltering people to prevent attacks upon them was to be viewed most dramatically at the Marshall Square police headquarters in Johannesburg, which was not far from Ferreirastown, site of a terrifying frenzy of racial violence on 8 March. Indeed, the headquarters, usually a place for black people to fear and shun, became a crucial

⁹ See Krikler, *White Rising*, part 2.

¹⁰ For these events and their context, see Transvaal Archives Depot [TAD], Archives of the Special Criminal Court, 1922-23 [SCC], Case No. 3/1922, *Rex v. M. Olivier et al.*; and University of the Witwatersrand Library Historical and Literary Papers [UWL], AH646, TUCSA [Trade Union Council of South Africa] Records, SAIF [South African Industrial Federation] Papers, Bd6.2.1, File 3, case concerning Primrose Mine Shooting. The first of these sources is housed in the State Archives, Tshwane (Pretoria), and hereafter will be referred to as TAD, SCC; the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg) source will hereafter be referred to as UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers.

¹¹ TAD, SCC, Case No. 65A/1922, *Rex v. J. de Villiers and B. de Wet Roos*, preparatory examination [prep. exam.] testimony of Constable David Rinke.

sanctuary. A police commander actually remembered having ‘had about 150 natives brought to Marshall Square,’ and how he ‘had to keep them there practically the whole of the afternoon’ to keep them safe.¹²

A dramatic sense of how decisive the police were in limiting killings in Ferreirastown comes from an incident at Cohen’s bakery in Marshall Street, where Africans had been discovered by enraged whites and around which gunfire could be heard reverberating. A ferocious attack was launched upon the bakery workers here, with the crowd stoning the yard and men shooting away.¹³ This brutal siege was lifted by a force of policemen led by Sub-Inspector William Sawle, though not before the crowd had killed or fatally wounded a few people: others were rescued by the police.¹⁴ Later that day, the police were crucial in preventing what may have turned into a terrifying invasion of Ferreirastown by white strikers, one which threatened to turn into a racial onslaught. For after the shootings in the area, Captain Frederick Lloyd prevented ‘a large commando’ that numbered about a thousand from moving through the district. He threatened to summon troops unless they obeyed him. The men were ‘marching in fours ... armed with sticks and pieces of iron and all sorts of ugly weapons’.¹⁵

In the suburb of Vrededorp in the west of the city, where half a dozen people were killed during this time,¹⁶ police deployments were central to

¹² Central Archives Depot, Tshwane (Pretoria) [CAD], K4 [Archives of the Martial Law Judicial Inquiry Commission], unpublished evidence of the Martial Law Commission, p. 64: testimony of Lieutenant-Colonel R. Godley. Hereafter, this source will be referred to as CAD, K4, unpubd evidence of the MLC.

¹³ For the violence around this incident, see CAD, K4, unpubd evidence of the MLC, p. 576: testimony of J. Dury, general manager of Rowe, Jewell and Co, an engineering concern next to the bakery (which included a yard, as he makes clear); and p. 582: testimony of plainclothes constable J. Folkersz; *The Cape Times*, March 9 1922, ‘Ferreirastown Fight’: cutting in Central Archives Depot, Tshwane (Pretoria) [CAD], Archives of the Governor-General of South Africa, 1905-74 [GG], Vol. 966, file 19/650; and *Rand Daily Mail*, 9 March 1922, ‘Fierce Fight In A Yard’. Hereafter, the governor-general’s archives will be referred to as CAD, GG. I should note that in referring to the stoning of the yard, Constable Folkersz gave the address (31 Marshall Street) but did not refer to it specifically as Cohen’s yard. However, he referred to the gunman shooting into the bakery yard and then going ‘into the house at 31 Marshall Street’ where more shots were fired. Another source situates the bakery at 29 Marshall Street (UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.2.57, Case concerning A. Kruger, typescript statement of Detective Head Constable Andries Hoffmann). It may well be that the bakery was a production-cum-residential complex comprising both addresses.

¹⁴ CAD, K4, unpubd evidence of the MLC, pp. 408-9: testimony of Sub-Inspector William Sawle.

¹⁵ CAD, K4, unpubd Minutes of the MLC, p. 434.

¹⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 March 1922, p. 5: ‘16 Killed: 55 Wounded’.

silencing the guns of the assailants.¹⁷ At times, officers in this area made apparently successful approaches to leaders of the strike commandos – Alf Church and one Venter – to rein in their men.¹⁸ Finally, the police were important in ending racial attacks in Sophiatown and the Western Native Township, places where people of colour predominated and which the city administration considered as primarily designated for them.¹⁹ The attackers of the people in these areas came, in the main, from the white suburb of Newlands that lay to the west of Sophiatown, and which boasted a large and well-organized commando. Members of it invaded the district on 8 March, firing their weapons and inducing terror.²⁰ A detective sergeant got to Sophiatown at about noon, in time to witness a counter-mobilization against the white invaders. He proved crucial in calming and peacefully dispersing the African crowd, and also in prevailing upon the commando leader, Kromhout, ‘to withdraw his men’.²¹ When the commandos returned later in the day, the detective sergeant was once more active in getting one of their leaders to ensure that they left Sophiatown.²² The whole tenor of police action on this day in Sophiatown, as elsewhere in Johannesburg, was

¹⁷ For evidence of this, see CAD, K4, unpubd evidence of the MLC, pp. 292: testimony of Constable Johannes Bezuidenhout and UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.3.22, case concerning Jacobus M. Stoltz, typescript statement of Constable Andries J. J. de Kock (he misdates the relevant incident, however) and CAD, K4, unpubd evidence of the MLC, pp. 193-4: affidavit of T. Bayne, New Brixton Cemetery superintendent, submitted by Major A. Trigger.

¹⁸ See, for example, CAD, K4, unpubd evidence of the MLC, p. 646: testimony of Detective Sergeant C. H. Toft; and p. 348: testimony of Captain Ferdinand Kunhardt. The captain here refers to 9 March; since there was no shooting in Vrededorp on that day, he must have meant the 8th.

¹⁹ For the nature of these areas, see CAD, K4, unpubd evidence of the MLC, p. 555: testimony of Colonel S. Pritchard, Director of Native Labour.

²⁰ See CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 555-6: testimony of Colonel S. Pritchard. An intimation of large-scale fleeing to a ‘Location’ after shooting in Sophiatown can also be found in UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.2.49, case concerning J. van Wyk et al, typescript statement of Jacobus Hurter. For a policeman’s eyewitness view of the armed incursion, see TAD, SCC, Case No. 4/1922, Rex v. C. Stassen, testimony of Detective Sergeant Robert James.

²¹ TAD, SCC, Case No. 4/1922, Rex vs. C. Stassen, testimony of Detective Sergeant R. James.

²² This incursion occurred after the killing of two African men in Sophiatown by the striker, Carel Stassen. For the killings, see generally TAD, SCC, Case No. 4/1922, Rex vs C. Stassen. For the fact of the policeman, in effect, getting the commando leader to order his men to leave, see in this case the testimony of Detective Sergeant R. James. In another source, James referred to the commando leader (Viljoen) ‘eventually’ following the police instruction ‘to withdraw the commando and take them away from the township’: see TAD, SCC, Case No. 2/1922, testimony of R. James.

to prevent battles between white strikers and members of the local black community. The police were seeking, with some success, to minimise conflict and casualties.

II. The role of white managements, officials and allies in defending Africans

The minimisation of African casualties during the period of racial killing resulted sometimes from the actions of whites connected to the black people under attack. This was probably no more in evidence than at the Primrose Mine in Germiston on the east Rand. Here, the mine manager and the small party of armed company employees organised by him mounted a counterattack at strikers storming murderously towards the residential compound housing the black labour force. The story is complicated, because it is arguable that the battle between white and black mineworkers at the Primrose Mine would never have occurred had the management not deployed Africans to guard mining property against the strikers. Nevertheless, the strikers' onslaught upon the black mineworkers was initially repulsed by the actions of the small force of whites led by the mine manager who, in effect, called them to arms in the idiom of racial paternalism: 'Are we going to see our boys murdered in cold blood[?]'²³

There are many other instances of whites acting to protect potential victims against the racial violence. It may be, for example, that defensive mobilizations by black people were set in train through the warnings of whites. This is suggested by evidence from the Johannesburg suburb of Vrededorp. On the afternoon preceding the night of gunfire on 7 March, a few whites who were described as 'friendly disposed towards certain coloured people' and concerned to keep them safe let them know 'that trouble was expected that night'.²⁴ Warnings about intended attacks were

²³ Documentation of relevance to the organisation and deployment of the defenders can be found in: CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 635-6: testimony of Edward Niland, compound manager; and TAD, SCC, Case No. 3/1922, Rex v. M. Olivier, prep. exam. testimonies of Charles Bahlke, shiftboss; Thomas Bruce, mine manager; Henry Grigg, acting mine manager; and Lionel Difford, mine secretary. Bahlke renders the question quoted in a different form and as a statement. Quote from Grigg's testimony, which recounts what the mine manager (Bruce) said. The importance of the mine defenders' actions in staying the onslaught is made clear in the evidence of Grigg (already sourced). See, in addition, the prep. exam. testimony of Captain Gerhardus Kruger in the SCC source. For a comprehensive narrative of the events at the New Primrose Mine, see Krikler, *White Rising*, Introduction, which also makes clear the role of management in deploying Africans against strikers.

²⁴ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 194: testimony of Major A. Trigger.

passed on and a look out maintained.²⁵ As we shall see, when whites attempted to make an armed incursion into the African area of Vrededorp on the night of 7 March, Africans were indeed primed to resist them.

Their resistance will be considered later, but – for the purposes of this sub-section – one must also note that when whites attacked Vrededorp Africans in the vicinity of the school, the white superintendent of the nearby cemetery, Thomas Bayne, acted to defend them. Bayne had a relatively close connection with the local black community since his house was barely separated from their district – as he remarked, ‘practically speaking my house is in the Malay Location’ – and people of colour clearly had enough confidence in him to approach him on the afternoon of 7 March, about the men (clearly strikers) who had moved into their area and insisted that they shut up their shops.²⁶ When that night, white attackers opened fire at Africans, the principal entrance to the cemetery was opened for them so that they could ‘take cover within’. Bayne also contacted the police, though they took well over an hour to arrive. The help provided by the superintendent may well have been important in minimising or preventing African casualties at the moment of greatest danger in this area on 7 March: for even as Bayne opened the strange sanctuary for local residents, ‘a cross fire’ spat from the streets, the trees and the open ground. Armed men were ‘advancing’ amidst ‘continuous firing’. Once the police arrived, the situation was quickly defused, but it is clear that the defensive actions of the cemetery superintendent provided a crucial shield in the period between the commencement of the attack and the arrival of the police. It appears that only one fatality resulted from this particular onslaught.²⁷ Many more might have died had Bayne not acted as he did.

The next day in Vrededorp, racial violence against a local Indian resident, the doctor William Godfrey, was also terminated through the actions of a white person, this time – it appears – a man from within the strikers’ camp who had ‘known him for many years’. It was such action – bespeaking connections between Vrededorp whites and potential racial victims – which may have saved some lives during the period of racial killing. At any rate, it was after the striker’s intervention that an ambulance

²⁵ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 648: testimony of ‘Native July’.

²⁶ For quotations and evidence, see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 535 and 531: testimony of T. Bayne.

²⁷ The context and developments regarding the attack may be followed in CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 531-5: testimony of T. Bayne; and p. 192-3: affidavit of T. Bayne, provided in the testimony of Major A. Trigger. Bayne may have erred in describing the fatality as an African woman; other evidence suggests she was Indian.

was called and that the doctor was hospitalized.²⁸ A particularly dramatic instance of a white man protecting Africans comes from Ferreirastown in Johannesburg on 8 March, a day – it will be recalled – of furious crowd action against Africans. Whites combed the area for black people who were pursued and attacked. When the assailants came to focus on the African workforce of the engineering firm Rowe, Jewel and Company, the actions of its white general manager, John Dury, proved crucial. With remarkable cool, he pretended to the attackers that there were no Africans present; he also aided the black workers when they moved from hiding place to hiding place, thereby evading the whites searching for them.²⁹

III. The role of the workers' movement in restraining the violence

Malcolm McLaughlin has shown that the racist crowd if left to itself can generate ever-higher levels of brutality as the people at the heart of the violence – those composing the ‘mob core’ – increasingly set the pace, crossing new thresholds.³⁰ Given this, factors of restraint operating within the camp of the racial assailants can be crucial in preventing escalations in the horror. The fact that the racial violence of 1922 grew out of a strike movement meant that the white workers, from whose communities the racial assailants were drawn, could be reined in by their organisations. There is no doubt that they were.

Of particular importance in this regard was the leadership of the strike commandos, those paramilitary organisations set up by the strikers of 1922. Thus, the documents cited earlier regarding Vrededorp and Sophiatown in Johannesburg show that on 8 March the police approached leaders of commandos there – men such as Church, Venter and Kromhout – to withdraw their men from battle zones, which they did. Paradoxically, had the strikers not formed themselves up into commandos, it is likely that the racial attacks – especially, the mass onslaught upon the Primrose Mine Compound, where many people lost their lives – would not have been as devastating as they were. But, on the other hand, it was the existence of

²⁸ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 387-390: testimony of Dr. W. Godfrey. Some assailants were identified as tramwaymen (p. 388) but the men in the shop are generally referred to as ‘strikers’ (p. 389).

²⁹ For the racial violence in Ferreirastown on that day and/or information relating to the engineering firm and the attack on it, see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 647: testimony of Detective Sergeant Charles Toft; pp. 574-6: testimony of John Dury; p. 584: testimony of ‘NATIVE KLAAS’, employee of the firm. Quotations from Dury.

³⁰ McLaughlin, *Reconsidering the East St. Louis Race Riot*, pp. 203ff.

commandos with recognised leaderships which meant that attacks could rapidly be called off and men led away. They might even be restrained entirely. The commandant of Johannesburg's Jeppes Strike Commando informed his men during the insurrection 'that under no circumstances was any firing to be done at natives'.³¹

Aside from the role of some commando leaders in restraining their men, the trade union leadership publicly called for the attacks to end in a press announcement that warned strikers of the damage that was being done to their cause by the violence.³² According to one local leader of the strikers, violence against Africans ran the risk of providing the government with 'the excuse to bring in Martial Law against us'.³³ Not surprisingly, the General Staff, Strike Headquarters – as the leaders of the South African Industrial Federation called themselves – did what they could to halt the attacks. They even summoned commando leaders to a meeting on the night of 8 March. Twenty to thirty of them turned up and they were duly advised to help prevent racial attacks.³⁴

The rank-and-file leaders most given to hopes of workers' revolution also did their best to end the violence. Those revolutionary miners who were to emerge as key leaders of the insurrection in Johannesburg – Percy Fisher and his close comrade, Harry Spendiff – were particularly concerned to counter 'anti-Native feeling'. During the general strike – the pogrom erupted in its midst – some members of a 'mass picket' targeting the Johannesburg telephone exchange suddenly began attacking African

³¹ For the evidence, see TAD, SCC, Case No. 49A/1922, Rex v. Johannes Louw, prep. exam. testimony of Thomas Rodger, Jeppes resident, and Judgment. Quotation from Rodger.

³² For the trade unionists' notice as it appeared in the press, see – for example – Cape Times, 9 March 1922, 'Wanton Attacks On Natives': cutting in CAD, GG, Vol. 966, File 19/650. For their liaison with the police on 8 March in crafting the notice, and for the leading trade unionists' initial draft order regarding the racial violence, see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 196-7, 213-4: testimony of Major Trigger. According to Trigger – see CAD, K4, p. 197 – he had the trade union notice 'immediately sent ... to the Star, and it was published, I believe in the first issue that day [i.e. 8 March]'. Trigger was centrally involved in deciding the content of the notice.

³³ TAD, SCC, Case No. 2/1922, Rex v. I. Viljoen et al, testimony of Johannes Mare, a Newlands strike commando leader. I should note that this argument appears in the midst of Mare's self-serving insistence that he argued against such violence. The strategic argument, however, remains cogent.

³⁴ Passage constructed from CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 213: Major A. Trigger; TAD, SCC, Case No. 75/7/1923, Rex v. George Carter and Charles Glencross, exhibit A in the trial and testimony of George Carter, commando leader; Case No. 1/1922, Rex v. R. Erasmus, testimony of George Thompson, SAIF president, and R. Erasmus, commando leader.

spectators. 'Running hastily to the spot,' Fisher 'forced the whites to stop. Pointing to the cordon of soldiers encircling the telephone exchange he shouted "There's the enemy. Leave the blacks alone."³⁵ In fact, 'LEAVE THE KAFFIR ALONE. WHITE WORKERS, HANDS OFF THE BLACK WORKERS!' was the title of a leaflet put out by the Communists at this time.³⁶

The activism of people within the white workers' movement broadly defined, then, must have imposed limits on the racial violence of 1922. It was important, not only in the specific actions detailed above, but also in refusing a moral license to those perpetrating the violence.

IV. Black resistance to the racial attacks

Racial violence, because it is a process of victimisation, immediately draws a focus around aggression. Therein lies the danger for the historian. It is all too easy, in reconstructing the frenzied brutality, to see action only in the deeds of the perpetrators. Such an approach can mislead seriously, for the closer one looks at popular racial violence, the more evident it is that resistance shapes, deflects or even forces it on to the retreat. Thus, one recent study emphasises how central defensive actions by African-Americans have been in restricting fatalities during popular racial violence in the United States.³⁷ Shlomo Lambroza's study of pogroms in Czarist Russia in the early twentieth century, meanwhile, suggests the importance of self defence organisation amongst Jewish communities in minimising casualties. This helps to explain the contrast, for example, between the scale of the Jewish casualties in the two pogroms of 1903: that at Kishinev (47 dead) and Gomel (10 dead).³⁸

In 1922 on the South African Rand, there was a marked impulse to defensive mobilization or counterattack on the part of black people. Thus on 7 March, the first day of the racial attacks, when the black residents of a labour compound in Doornfontein in Johannesburg were menaced by the strikers, the compound manager had to restrain the Africans from doing battle with the whites: 'the boys [were] making for the gate, armed with

³⁵ Edward Roux: *S. P. Bunting: a political biography*, Cape Town 1944, p. 53. See also the reference to the actions of 'Fisher and others' in Jack and Ray Simons: *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950*. London 1983, p. 298.

³⁶ See Jack and Ray Simons, *Class and Colour*, pp. 294, 298.

³⁷ See McLaughlin, *Power*, chapter 6, which considers the effects of resistance in more than just East St Louis.

³⁸ S. Lambroza, 'The pogroms of 1903-1906' in Klier and Lambroza (eds) *Pogroms*, ch. 8, esp. pp. 208, 209-10.

sticks and bars of iron and anything'.³⁹ A day later, in even more dangerous circumstances, something similar occurred at the city's Salisbury and Jubilee Compound, a residential complex for black workers that was run by the municipality.⁴⁰ There, again, many Africans in and around the compound revealed a marked tendency to meet any attack – 'let us go and meet these strikers' – in one case even storming out of the complex when attackers opened fire. And if the African workers retreated after still more gunfire, they nevertheless deployed sentries and seemed ready on the night after the shootings to 'break out' *en masse* 'if they happened to see any of the strikers in the neighbourhood'.⁴¹

What the events at the Salisbury and Jubilee must suggest is that its black residents, despite being without firearms, were determined to retaliate against racial assailants who did have them. In some cases, as the archival record discloses, the African workers were actually restrained by others from doing battle.⁴² It is quite true that the impulse to defend or counter-attack was sometimes the occasion for casualties amongst Africans: at the Primrose Mine in Germiston, where eight Africans were killed and many more wounded, the whites were infuriated by an earlier African determination to resist their aggression.⁴³ Nevertheless, even if particular incidents of resistance led to white retaliation and black fatalities, the resistance itself emphasised to whites that if they attempted concerted attacks upon the labour compounds or black residential areas, they would risk casualties

³⁹ For this incident and its context, see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 499f.: testimony of Frank Marshall, compound manager.

⁴⁰ For facts regarding the Salisbury and Jubilee and the workers it housed, see the evidence of its manager, David Swan, to the Martial Law Commission: CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 490, 491.

⁴¹ My knowledge of the events at the Salisbury and Jubilee comes, overwhelmingly, from Central Archives Depot, Tshwane (Pretoria) [CAD], Archives of the Government Native Labour Bureau [GNLB], Vol. 311, File No. 125/19/48, 'Industrial Unrest: 1922. Rioting and attacks on natives,' statement of compound manager David Swan dated 9 March 1922. (Hereafter, this source will be referred to as CAD, GNLB.) Further details can be gleaned from Swan's evidence to the MLC: see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 492. There are some differences in the two documents, and I have generally preferred the first source to the second since it was composed a day after the events. All quotations and information are drawn from Swan, except for the words of fortitude and defiance cited, which come from CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 496-7: testimony of Sidney Emanuel, storekeeper. Additional testimony relating to these events may be found in CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 283: testimony of Sub-Inspector W. Brown; and p. 498: testimony of 'POLICE BOY PHILIP'.

⁴² Testimonies of Swan (9 March 1922), Emanuel and Philip cited in the preceding note suggest this.

⁴³ See Krikler, *White Rising*, pp. 3ff., 143ff.

themselves, not least because once the first attacks occurred Africans were primed to resist.

Indeed, what is noticeable, at the Salisbury and Jubilee compound, as elsewhere in Johannesburg, is how rapidly Africans elaborated organised vigilance to guard against any further attack. Consider the events in the suburb of Vrededorp, where the first of the racial attacks of 1922 commenced. Almost immediately those attacks began (on 7 March), the local black community feared a more organised attack, for example upon their school, and vigilance was immediately exercised. Thus, when Bayne, the white cemetery superintendent whose home was very close to the African area of Vrededorp, was walking about on the night of 7 March, he met ‘one or two of the coloured people who had a picket on the coloured school’ owing to their having ‘been informed that the school was to be blown up’. The ‘boys ... were taking their duties in shifts’, he remembered. Indeed, it is quite possible that the racial attack in the vicinity of the cemetery was the response of whites, hoping to destroy the school, who realised that they were straying into a defended area: that night, after the attackers moved stealthily into the area near the cemetery and ‘crossed at the back of the school’, a party of Africans could be seen proceeding nearby, and it was then that the gunfire erupted.⁴⁴ As shown earlier, aided by the cemetery superintendent, the Africans initially took cover from the gunfire, but, by the end of the night, a few hundred of them had assembled to outnumber and confront the whites at the border of their neighbourhood.⁴⁵

Indeed in Vrededorp, where the racial killing on the Rand in 1922 began, there was no shortage of mobilisation or vigilance. A police sergeant who came on duty at 11 p.m. on 7 March patrolled the district through midnight and into dawn. The darkness was full of eyes. Men of the Vrededorp Strike Commando were keeping watch and, at least once, the patrolling officer saw ‘natives about in every doorway and passage’ in the location. That night and the following one, there were significant numbers of ‘natives as well as coloured people ... [who] slept on their verandah’s [sic]’. Their community, however, was not merely in dread; it had mobilized in self-defence: the sergeant remarked upon its general, if light armament – ‘most of them [the Africans he encountered] were carrying sticks’ – and, in the small hours of the morning of 8 March, he had come across ‘some 150

⁴⁴ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 531-2, 534-5: testimony of T. Bayne, cemetery superintendent; and p. 192: affidavit of T. Bayne submitted by Major A. Trigger.

⁴⁵ For the confrontation and events around it, see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 531-5: testimony of Thomas Bayne, cemetery superintendent; and pp. 192-3: affidavit of T. Bayne, provided by Major A. Trigger.

natives' who 'said that they were watching the white commando, because if they were going to be killed they were going to be killed fighting, and not in their beds'.⁴⁶

In fact, on the morning of 8 March, 'a number of natives collected near the Vrededorp Subway and signified their intention of resisting any further assaults ... upon them by the strikers'.⁴⁷ They 'stoned the white people at the ... subway' and, the usual inequality of armaments manifest, this was answered by gunfire.⁴⁸ According to a local African cobbler, the shooting was copious and several black people were shot in this area.⁴⁹ But what this violence should not obscure was that the stoning seems to have been some kind of African announcement that the movement of whites into their area would not be tolerated: the subway seems to have been a boundary between the white and black communities; hence the stand taken at it. And note that after the stoning, the whites are referred to as shooting, but not moving through the subway. The area was clearly showered with stones to keep them out. A newspaper reported that 'the native and coloured inhabitants of the location lined the wall of the subway, and threw stones into the roadway below'. It was soon enough 'littered with missiles and other relics of the conflict'.⁵⁰

Some of the counter-mobilization by the black community may have been occasions for white attacks: the stoning around the subway, as shown, was answered with gunfire, and a mass gathering on the morning of 8 March appears also to have been the prelude to shootings.⁵¹ But what such activities also signalled, as did the initial confrontation near the cemetery, was organization and determination, elements which must have given the white attackers pause for thought. And it is certainly striking that in Vrededorp on 7-8 March, the white attackers – while firing at black people and into their neighbourhood – did not actually launch an offensive incursion into the black 'location' itself. This must have been, in part, due to knowledge that – if they did – they would be moving into an area tenanted and commanded by people prepared to give blow for blow. No doubt, the half dozen white men injured in Vrededorp – '[t]heir hurts ...

⁴⁶ For the sergeant's description of these and related events, see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 294-6: testimony of Sgt H. Wisby.

⁴⁷ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p266: testimony of Sub-Inspector A. D. Whyte. This source notes the throwing of stones by the Africans at the subway, as does the next source.

⁴⁸ TAD, SCC, Case No. 6/1922, Rex v. P. J. Metzinger, prep. exam. testimony of D. F. Wydeman, Vrededorp resident.

⁴⁹ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 648-9: testimony of 'NATIVE JULY'.

⁵⁰ Rand Daily Mail, March 9 1922, 'Natives Killed and Injured'.

⁵¹ See *ibid.*

occasioned by sticks and stones⁵² – served as walking advertisements for this fact.

Even in Ferreirastown, where mob attack was the rule on 8 March and where there was not a large settled black community, but – rather – tiny groups of Africans in residences knotted around places of employment, there was significant resistance. For if the police were central to preventing the attacks there from having more murderous outcomes, so did defensive actions by black people. This might take the form of placing one's self under police protection (some people being attacked ran to where the police were),⁵³ or stealthily avoiding detection (as did the workers of Rowe, Jewell & Co. mentioned earlier) But such defence could, however, also involve retaliation. This is why, when Detective Head Constable Andries Hoffman moved through Ferreirastown on 8 March, he not only saw an African at a street corner 'alive but ... shot through the abdomen', but a white man, 'his face [completely] covered in blood'.⁵⁴ And there is other evidence that can be pointed to: a constable who spoke of seeing 'a few Natives on the roof of a house' in Main Street hurling 'stones or bricks on the white people' below;⁵⁵ or a senior police officer who noted that Africans 'had to clear' on that day in Ferreirastown, but who also signalled that there were places in the district where they replied to the violence in kind.⁵⁶

There was certainly retaliation at the bakery where that merciless attack occurred. It is clear that whites had to be treated in hospital because of the struggle there.⁵⁷ Indeed, when a plainclothes policeman first happened

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ See, for example, UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.2.57, case concerning A. Kruger, typescript statements of Detective Head Constable A. Hoffmann and John Katuhula, Rand Water Board employee.

⁵⁴ Ibid., typescript statement of A. J. Hoffmann.

⁵⁵ TAD, SCC, Case No. 13/1922, Rex v. Nathan Stone, prep. exam. testimony of Constable J. Maree.

⁵⁶ UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.2.57, case concerning A. Kruger, typescript statement of A. Hoffmann.

⁵⁷ The Cape Times, 9 March 1922, 'Ferreirastown Fight': cutting in CAD, GG, Vol. 966, File 19/650. According to another source ('Chronological Record Of Attacks On Natives' in CAD, GNLB, Vol. 311, File No. 125/19/48, 'Industrial Unrest: 1922. Rioting and attacks on natives'), only three whites were injured in the fighting in Ferreirastown. This is almost certainly an underestimate: it conflicts with the evidence just provided; it also probably does not take into account the injured men treated by women at the Pretoria Hotel to whom I refer shortly. The GNLB source above was composed to detail 'Attacks On Natives', so it is not necessarily a good guide to the injuries sustained by whites: indeed, although my research has disclosed that one white man was killed in fighting around the New Primrose Mine, the GNLB document does not note this in detailing casualties there.

upon it, he remembered stones flying into and *out of* the bakery yard. It was not long before he saw ‘one striker with a blood-stained bandage round his head’.⁵⁸ A newspaper report of the fighting in the vicinity of the bakery could record how hard fought it was: ‘A number of men would surge forward, and the sound of conflict in the passages was always followed by Europeans being forced back.’ On a number of occasions, ‘a shower of stones’ and the odd bottle ‘followed their retreat’.

Still the fight raged. Occasionally one of the [attacking] men would come out of the building in the area of the fray with a broken head and blood pouring down his face. At the side of the old Pretoria Hotel a number of women ... dressed wounds.

There were repeated attempts to storm the yard, firearms ‘were continually cracking away,’ yet the Africans ‘held their improvised fort bravely’.⁵⁹ Theirs was ‘a desperate fight’ and they left ‘several broken heads among the besiegers’.⁶⁰

The small number of Africans – only 16 are mentioned – who kept this baying crowd at bay must have felt the time pass with a killing slowness. For this was a siege that went on for an hour or more before the mounted police arrived to lift it.⁶¹ By then, the besieged – heavily outnumbered and virtually unarmed, if one excludes what was to hand in the area they held – were clearly about to succumb. The fact that the police commander who cleared the yard found those Africans (who were not casualties) in hiding,

⁵⁸ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 582, 583: evidence of Constable J. Folkersz. I am presuming that the yard referred to was part of the production-cum-residential complex of the bakery.

⁵⁹ The Cape Times, 9 March 1922, ‘Ferreirastown Fight’: cutting in CAD, GG, Vol. 966, File 19/650. Note: my wider research into the events suggests to me that the newspaper here erroneously labelled the attack upon the bakery yard as being an attack on the yard of Rowe, Jewell & Co. I have determined this from a comparison of this newspaper account with the more detailed (unpublished) narratives of the attacks which I have built up from a range of other sources, most of which are detailed in notes 13-14 and 29 of this article. The Cape Times may have been eliding the two attacks.

⁶⁰ Rand Daily Mail, 9 March 1922, ‘Fierce Fight In A Yard’. Note: the RDM is slightly misleading in not noting that the bakery (rather than Rowe, Jewell & Co.) was the focus for the most serious fighting referred to.

⁶¹ For the duration, see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 576: testimony of J. Dury, general manager of Rowe, Jewell & Co, which neighboured the bakery; and The Cape Times, 9 March 1922, ‘Ferreirastown Fight’: cutting in CAD, GG, Vol. 966, File 19/650. I have arrived at the approximate number of the people besieged in the bakery yard by adding together the numbers of dead, wounded and in hiding, for which see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 408-9: testimony of Sub-Inspector William Sawle.

beneath beds in a loft,⁶² suggests that the denizens of that place of horror had retreated to their final sanctuary. The fight could not be continued. As one newspaper put it, ‘it was evident that the crowd of Europeans were gaining the upper hand, and the worse looked likely when a squadron of mounted police appeared on the scene’.⁶³ We know that it was the mounted police who put an end to this pitiless offensive, but also that they arrived on the scene an hour or more after it began. If the besieged Africans had put up less of a fight, if they had resisted this frenzied crowd (some of its men ‘rushing about ... acting like mad people’)⁶⁴ for say only 30 or 45 minutes, what would have been the fate of the people who ultimately survived the siege of the bakery?

Resistance was to be viewed elsewhere in Johannesburg – notably in those areas in the west, Sophiatown and Western Native Township, where people of colour predominated. When the armed whites arrived in Sophiatown on 8 March, there was evidently much terror and flight.⁶⁵ This was an entirely appropriate response. After all, even children from the local school could be fired upon.⁶⁶ But, once more, this did not merely result in flight. One attack upon the children led very rapidly to a counter-mobilization. Their fathers hastened to the Acting Superintendent of Municipal Locations while the white gunmen ‘retired to the Main Road’. A few hundred Africans ‘armed with sticks, knives and other dangerous weapons came running through ... determined on attacking the Europeans on the Main Road, who were even then firing ... in the direction of the Township Location’. Helped by local residents, the superintendent prevented this, and spoke to the assembled Africans, ‘keeping them quiet until the Europeans

⁶² CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 408-9: testimony of Sub-Inspector W. Sawle.

⁶³ The Cape Times, 9 March 1922, ‘Ferreirastown Fight’: cutting in CAD, GG, Vol. 966, File: 19/650.

⁶⁴ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 583: testimony of Constable J. Folkersz.

⁶⁵ See CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 555-6: testimony of Colonel S. Pritchard. An intimation of large-scale fleeing to a ‘Location’ after shooting in Sophiatown can also be found in UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.2.49, case concerning J. van Wyk et al, typescript statement of Jacobus Hurter. For further relevant evidence, see CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 661: testimony of Charles Rooks, Sophiatown builder; and pp. 824-5: testimony of John Baynes, Sophiatown resident.

⁶⁶ See TAD, SCC, Case No. 14/1922, Rex v. John Brummer, prep. exam. testimony of Joe Wilson, unemployed Coloured railway worker; CAD, GNLB, Vol. 311, File No. 125/19/48 (‘Industrial Unrest: 1922. Rioting and attacks on natives’), statement of Charles Roberts, 10 March 1922; and CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 565: testimony of Charles Roberts, acting superintendent of municipal locations, Johannesburg.

left the Main Road'.⁶⁷ Again, the instinct of the Africans had been to take the battle to the racial assailants, an instinct that could also be witnessed elsewhere in Sophiatown on 8 March, where the police in effect demobilized Africans who turned out with makeshift weaponry.⁶⁸ Whites entering the district were being very rapidly taught that they could expect retaliation if they ventured aggressively into it. This may be one reason why Sophiatown was never subjected to a murderous onslaught in 1922.

In fact, there were two Africans killed in Sophiatown on 8 March, murdered by a lone gunman who was later executed.⁶⁹ However, those killings and the aggression of March 8 1922 had delivered their own lesson. African pickets were deployed, and when white men fled into the township a few days later, they were hunted to their deaths.⁷⁰ A sense of how the Africans of Sophiatown were now primed to resist any further incursions into the township can be gleaned from their response to the opening of insurrectionary hostilities on 10 March. The Newlands Strike Commando attacked the police in their area on that morning, and the sound of the gunfire was heard in Sophiatown. When John Baynes, a local white building contractor, was roused by his children and told of what could be heard, he took it to be further racial killing ('more native shooting,' as he put it). Local Africans evidently thought so too. For Baynes had only just 'opened the blind,' when he 'saw about 60 natives armed with sticks': 'They said they were going to meet the advance, and defend themselves and save their families.'⁷¹

As one African later remarked: 'The Natives in Sophiatown were prepared to defend themselves and it had been arranged to sound a whistle when there was danger.'⁷² White men coming into the township, then, even if they had not planned to attack Africans, could expect to trigger a mobilization against themselves. Since the murders of the two Africans a

⁶⁷ This passage is based on the GNLB and CAD, K4 documents mentioned in the preceding note.

⁶⁸ See TAD, SCC, Case No. 4/1922, Rex v. C. Stassen, testimony of Detective Sergeant R. James.

⁶⁹ There is a mass of information on the killings and their context in UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.2.6, case concerning Carel Stassen; in TAD, SCC, Case No. 4/1922, Rex v. C. Stassen; and in CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 853: testimony of Solomon Nanabhai, Sophiatown storekeeper.

⁷⁰ I deal with the killings shortly. For the evidence on which these lines are based, see TAD, SCC, Case No. 2/1922, Rex vs I. Viljoen, testimony of Sub-Inspector W. Long. I have presumed that the pickets were deployed since Long specifically noted that he 'gave ... permission [to do this] to the natives of the various locations'.

⁷¹ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 826: testimony of John Baynes.

⁷² TAD, SCC, Case No. 69 (1/1923), Rex v. W. Solt et al., prep. exam. testimony of one 'Julius' ('a Fingo').

few days earlier, Africans ‘there were all armed’⁷³ and, as a black teacher informed a member of the Criminal Investigation Department, they warned ‘that no single white man who comes into Sophiatown will be left untroubled [*ongehinderd*]’. He would be killed.⁷⁴ Early in the morning of 10 March, while the Witwatersrand succumbed to the first daring attacks of a white workers’ rising, this warning became a prophecy when three white men – at least two of them armed – entered the township, possibly fleeing from the state forces. They fired a few rounds, perhaps in warning, for they neither wounded nor killed anyone, but they were pursued and fatally clubbed or stabbed.⁷⁵ In one of these incidents – the evidence refers to two separate occurrences – the white men are referred to as being chased by Africans armed with ‘sticks and stones & choppers’. The mobilization was not a half-hearted or haphazard one. One black resident remembered hearing the pre-arranged whistle of warning and how he ‘saw a crowd of [armed] natives running up’. One of them told him that ‘the Dutch had entered Sophiatown ... and that they were shooting the natives’. He got his own sticks ‘and followed the crowd’.⁷⁶

V. The question of master-servant relations – an internal restraint?

When one has toured the evidence regarding how police, employers, black resisters and people in the workers’ movement restrained the racial violence in 1922, there still remains a question. At times, amongst whites

⁷³ Ibid., prep. exam. testimony of A. Schareneck, a Coloured machinist from Sophiatown.

⁷⁴ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 806: testimony of Helena Griesel. My translation. Griesel was the widow of one of the murdered men and her evidence must be treated carefully. In this instance, we may accept it since she gave details of the CID officer who could corroborate it.

⁷⁵ The cause of the fatal wounds is suggested by the composite prep. exam. testimonies of Joseph Levin (surgeon), one Julius (‘a Fingo’), Richard Adams (a Coloured resident of Sophiatown), H. Chouler (medical officer); and the testimonies of Dr. Robert Ray, H. Griessel and Gert Verster in TAD, SCC, Case No. 69 (1/1923), *Rex v. W. Solt et al.* A flight from the state forces is implied for two of the whites by CAD, K4, unpubd evidence of the MLC, p. 783: testimony of Solomon Mangera, a Sophiatown Indian. There is a mass of evidence concerning the killings and their context in the case mentioned above (*Rex v. W. Solt*) and in CAD, K4: for example, in pages 783-4, 786-9, 791-4, 803-5, 807, 851, 854. I have come across no evidence of African casualties from shooting in Sophiatown on 10 March. Note that the evidence pertains to two separate incidents, although I have dealt with them collectively here.

⁷⁶ TAD, SCC, Case No. 69 (1/1923), *Rex v. W. Solt et al.*, prep. exam. testimonies of George Patrick (Sophiatown carpenter) and of one Julius (‘a Fingo’).

who might have killed black people, one found an internal restraint operating. We can see this most dramatically if we follow the men of the Newlands' Strike Commando on 8 March 1922. They invaded Sophiatown on that day, loosed off rounds, and terrorised the African population, but they failed to account for any casualties. It was as if they could not be sure if the black people present really constituted their enemy. Certainly, one would have expected victims, unless the attackers were not actually targeting people. Consider the evidence.

At around noon on 8 March, a detective sergeant commanding a small party of constables heard shots emanating from Sophiatown, and got there to find 'members of the Newlands Commando galloping about ... and also men on foot' as well as cyclists. There were 50 to 60 such men 'shouting and rushing about', with the majority armed with handguns, rifles and sticks. They seemed 'very excited' and 'appeared to be attacking'.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, these men were evidently not determined on casualties. For, if Charles Rooks, a local builder, spoke of 'a lot of armed men, Europeans, walking backwards and forwards in the township and firing ... among the natives and the coloured population'; and if Jan Charlie, a local African resident, talked of the Newlands Commando having 'fired at people in Sophiatown',⁷⁸ it is notable that the commandos whom the Detective Sergeant came across (they were led by a Commandant Kromhout) appear neither to have killed nor wounded anybody.⁷⁹

What we have here is an example of whites, animated by a hysterical belief that black people were rising and had to be countered, entering a predominantly-African district in force and with arms, and yet – despite their sound and fury – not actually taking lives. They had the capacity to kill many Africans, but killed or wounded none. They contented themselves, rather, with rampaging through the area, firing off rounds, perhaps in the air. Alan Lester has suggested that we should consider this as indicative of the white strikers having what he calls a 'performative' aim. Their actions were a kind of theatre designed to show black people who was dominant. Killing was not necessary for this; a theatrical demonstration of firepower

⁷⁷ TAD, SCC, Case No. 4/1922, Rex v. C. Stassen, testimony of Detective Sergeant Robert James.

⁷⁸ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, p. 661: testimony of Charles Rooks; and TAD, SCC, Case No. 4/1922, Rex v. C. Stassen, prep. exam. testimony of Jan Charlie.

⁷⁹ See TAD, SCC, Case No. 4/1922, Rex v. C. Stassen, testimony of Detective Sergeant James, which suggests that the killings in Sophiatown occurred after Kromhout had complied with a request 'to withdraw his men from the township'. After this, James 'proceeded to the western native township,' and he was quite explicit in stating that up until then, he had 'received no report of natives being killed or wounded in Sophiatown'.

would have been quite sufficient.⁸⁰ This is an intriguing idea, though one could argue that controlled theatricality – particularly by men with guns who are facing those without them – only becomes a possibility when those who engage in the drama have sufficient discipline not to run riot; and also sufficient knowledge of (or connection to) the people subjected to the theatre so as to construe them (even in the midst of hysterical rumours) as an audience of some kind rather than an undifferentiated enemy.

Perhaps one can, tentatively, make an argument that a reason for the limits placed on the racial killing lay in the very closeness of relations between white and black, a closeness that emerged pre-eminently on the domestic level, but which then affected the way in which white and black people related to each other in the wider society. The argument has to be treated with considerable care because the relations one is talking of are master-servant ones and these, as is well known, breed their own cruelties. Subordination precludes a relationship of equality and insubordination is often the occasion for violence. Indeed, during the insurrection of 1922, a refusal by a black person to follow the command of a white striker to halt could lead to killing. This was the case with respect to the only racial murder that occurred on the west Rand in 1922, that which took place at the Bantjes Mine in the small settlement of Florida in the midst of hysterical worries of African rebellion.⁸¹

It may be significant that, in large part, the victim in this case was killed for refusing to stop when commanded to do so. In an upheaval in which white racial identity was perceived to be under threat, perhaps the gunmen instinctively felt that an African deserved the ultimate sanction for refusing – even if through terror – to obey the order of whites. Master-servant relations may then have had something to do with this killing. Even so, however, such relations between the races also brought white and black people together, made them familiar to each other, which then made it difficult for many whites to interpret people of colour in purely threatening terms: perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that one of the pickets at the Bantjes Mine tried to stop his fellows from firing. 'Don't shoot the boy[!]' he is said to have shouted out.⁸²

⁸⁰ Alan Lester made this point when I delivered a paper on this subject at the University of Sussex in 2004.

⁸¹ For this killing and its context, see TAD, SCC, Case No. 5/1922, Rex v. J. Brussouw and G. van Wyk; and UWL, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.2.9, case concerning G. van Wyk and J. Brussouw.

⁸² See TAD, SCC, Case No. 5/1922, Rex v. J. Brussouw and G. van Wyk, testimony of Rudolph Theunissen, Bantjes bootmaker, who shouted out. In his testimony, the miner Percy Geldenhuys recalled somebody yelling "Don't shoot".

There is a difficult question that must be raised, though it is not clear that it can be answered. Could master-servant relations have created such familiarity between black and white people that, even in the midst of hysterical fears regarding Africans, they somehow restrained the killing? The white workers' army of 1922, an army powerful enough to defeat or neutralise the police and army in the opening days of the insurrection which erupted on 10 March, overwhelmingly did not turn its guns upon black people. Had it done so, the casualties of 1922 would have been very much higher. Did the very closeness of relations between the races in the homes of white proletarian masters have anything to do with this? African servants, we must not forget, were a universal presence in the households of white South Africans.

It is sometimes forgotten just how common it was for white workers on the Rand to have black domestic servants. Robert Noonan who, as Robert Tressell, was later to write that classic socialist novel, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*, had a personal servant when he worked in the building trade on the late-nineteenth century Rand.⁸³ Charles van Onselen's close look at the Witwatersrand from the beginnings of its urban development until the First World War suggests that the black servant was ubiquitous and central to the white working class household.⁸⁴ My own research into the Rand strike of 1922, although not specifically designed to elicit such evidence, has uncovered numerous instances in which black people, sometimes children, were employed in the households of the white mineworkers.⁸⁵ Hints of the phenomenon could be found even during the insurrection itself. When a family of rebels – 'a father and two sons' – wanted to give themselves up in Johannesburg, recalled a police officer, '[t]he man sent a kaffir boy [a servant? – J. K.] to me with a note'.⁸⁶ Elsewhere, a striker hoping to leave central Benoni, a focus of air attack during the insurrection, stayed with his young servant ('my boy', 'a nigger boy' – probably a transla-

⁸³ Fred Ball: *One Of The Damned: the life and times of Robert Tressell*, author of 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist', London 1980 (reprint), p. 18.

⁸⁴ Charles van Onselen: *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, vol. 2, New Nineveh, Johannesburg 1982, pp. 3, 9, 20, 21, 22, 29, 32, 52, 57.

⁸⁵ For this employment of black people note, for example, the implications of the following: comments made by Esther van Wyk, striker's widow, and Captain W. Loftus in CAD, K4, unpublished minutes of the MLC, pp. 1262-3 (Van Wyk), p. 372 (Loftus); UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Case concerning A. S. van Aswegen and M. Mulder, typescript statement of Annie Masilo dd. 19 April 1922 (in the context of Mulder's status as a miner, for which see the prep. exam. charge sheet).

⁸⁶ CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 116-117: testimony of Sub-Inspector F. MacDonnell.

tion of *kaffertjie*) until an ambulance got to his house: the youngster had been wounded in an air raid.⁸⁷

Such evidence reminds us how enormously complex master-servant relations were in the white working class household. Command and obedience were intrinsic to them, but it would be an error to imagine that these relations did not generate – in however distorted a way – some intimacy, trust and concern. In the Germiston area in 1922, one mineworker had a young African working in his household. That young servant was referred to by both his master and his mistress as '*kaffertjie*' ('little *kaffer*'), but for them this seems not to have been an abusive term. This child was evidently sent out with their own young son Bennie on chores and the striker could refer to them collectively as '*ons soentjie* [sic: *seuntjie*] *en kaffertjie*' ('our little boy and little *kaffer*'). Indeed, when the striker and his wife recalled how the boys were missing during a dangerous time, and then found, it was not unusual for them to refer to the boys together.⁸⁸

The history of black and white relations within the white working class household has yet to be written. When it is, we may be astounded by the way in which racism and cruelty were tempered by intimacy, and combined with a certain affection. How else can we explain the fact that in the heyday of apartheid, David Goldblatt, probably South Africa's greatest social photographer, found in the homes of the poorer whites 'an intimacy [between the races] that would have been unthinkable in the liberal homes of the cities'. On the west Rand, he remembered a case, captured in a remarkable photograph, where 'the servants' children ran in and out of the "master's" house', and where a racial epithet was invested with warmth.⁸⁹ Indeed, at the very end of the twentieth century, an ethnographer found a white miner using '*my kaffer*' or '*my kaffertjie*' as terms of endearment for his son and the white woman with whom he lived. We may find this offensive, and it is true that this was only used to refer to those below him in the domestic hierarchy, people who served him in one way or another, which suggests the degree to which race had become combined with paternalism and authority within the white working class household.⁹⁰ But

⁸⁷ TAD, SCC, Case 62A/1922: testimony of Johannes Myburgh, Benoni miner.

⁸⁸ UWL, AH646, TUCSA Records, SAIF Papers, Bd6.2.1, File 3, case concerning Primrose Mine Shooting, undated typescript statements of Herman Sauerman, miner, and Isabella Sauerman, his wife. For Sauerman's status as a miner, see the charge sheet at the beginning of this file.

⁸⁹ David Goldblatt 55, London 2001, pp. 24-5, text by Lesley Lawson. Goldblatt was referring to people living on smallholdings near towns. For evidence of some mineworkers living on these in the 1920s, see Krikler, *White Rising*, p. 27.

⁹⁰ See Paul Stewart: '*Goieie-nag my kaffertjie: a vignette*', unpublished paper presented to the conference on 'The Burden of Race? *'Whiteness'* and *'Blackness'* in Modern

it could not have done this if black people had not come to symbolise, somehow, close relationships in the white home.

Somewhere in this intimacy and contact, a deep part of virtually every white South African, given the prominence of African carers in their childhoods, must lie part of the explanation for the fact that – notwithstanding the racial fear and violence of 1922 – limits were placed on the demonisation of black people. Unlike whites in the South of the USA, a historical tradition of lynching is virtually unknown amongst whites in South Africa. The enmeshment of black and white on the domestic level helps to account for this.

It is probably impossible to find definitive proof of the importance of master-servant relations in constraining the violence of 1922 – this is why the argument that is offered here is tentatively raised. One is talking about a set of relations, cruel but also intimate, that generated such familiarity between people that they limited amongst most whites the capacity for the dehumanisation of black people that is necessary for racial killing. This is not a fetter that held everybody back, and one cannot expect it to be recognised or talked about by those participating in the events of 1922. Historians do not expect their subjects to comment upon their psyches. But the white workers' army, soon to engage in formidable actions against the police and the army, on the cusp of trying to overthrow the government, brought infinitely less than its full force to bear upon the black communities they believed were threatening them. In explaining this, one must give the police, the white 'allies' of black people, the African resisters and the workers' leaders, their full due. But at the end, one is still left with things to explain – the very considerable unused firepower, the fact that strikers made no attempt to attack the black people closest to hand (those who lived in their own streets and on the properties of the white workers). When all the more obvious restraining factors have been advanced, the fact is that far more fearsome casualties could have been exacted, and yet somehow they were not. Perhaps, the reason for this lies in the very connection of white and black people, something forged in the cruel foundry of master-servant relations.

It may be appropriate, then, to end this article with evidence which suggests that, during the pogrom of 1922, perpetrators of the racial violence could have their brutality stayed by the possibility of a connection between the victims and a white master of some sort. As will be shown, the brutality could be frighteningly released when it was discovered that no such connection existed.

The evidence comes from Alfred Paulsen, the manager of the Vrededorp Municipal Sanitary Compound, which housed 370 African workers. On the night of 7 March (this was when the racial violence began), 40 or more white men arrived and – armed with firearms, ‘heavy sticks’, and even the odd assegai or sword – they came to be in control of the compound gate. Alleging that they ‘had information that the boys [i.e the compound residents] were going to break out to kill the white people in Vrededorp, and the women and children’, they spent some of their time lobbing ‘missiles of all kinds over the fence’. A set of chilling exchanges took place between the compound manager and these men, as they sought to identify Africans. As the compound manager remembered, two Africans, who ‘looked as if they had had a bad handling from the Europeans’ were ‘brought up’ and Paulsen was asked if they were resident in the compound. He knew nothing about them. Instructions were given and ‘they took those boys away to the kopjes at the extreme end of Krause Street where the rebels were’: ‘they were taken away and that is all I saw of them’. Shortly afterwards, another African betraying the marks of ill usage was brought before the compound manager to clarify if he ‘belonged to me and after having a look at him I said he did not’. This may have been a death sentence. A striker ‘drew a bayonet from the inside of his coat and stabbed the native with it’. The unfortunate man was then ‘badly knocked about’ before being felled by yet another bayonet wielder who ‘stabbed the boy in the side’. This African, too, was ‘carried away ... taken to the kopjes as well’. The savage treatment meted out to these black people might have been linked to the fact that it could not be shown that they ‘belonged’ to any white man. Without such authority demonstrable, any hope of sanctuary was denied. The compound manager had actually ‘offered to take the boy [the last victim] in but was told to mind my own business’.⁹¹

VI. Conclusion

What does this article suggest for historians of popular racial killing? It stresses the need to pursue connections between potential victims and the people from groups who are not victimised if we are to understand fully why most people survive pogroms. In the case dealt with here, a number of examples demonstrated how important these relations were. Employers of Africans, or those supervising them in the labour compounds, were shown to have played a decisive role in protecting black workers who could so

⁹¹ Evidence and quotations deployed in this paragraph come from CAD, K4, unpubd minutes of the MLC, pp. 590-2: testimony of Alfred Paulsen.

easily have fallen victim to enraged whites. Likewise, whites who were familiar with local people of colour – think of the role of the cemetery superintendent *vis à vis* Africans in Vrededorp, or the intervention of that striker which halted the violence against the Indian doctor whom he knew – were important in the protection of people who were being victimised. Major studies of pogroms should no longer be content with merely one or two throwaway lines regarding this.⁹² Indeed, it can even be argued that studies of survivors of genocide need to be more aware of this phenomenon. Raul Hilberg's meditation on what allowed people to survive the Holocaust focuses upon the personal qualities of survivors, but has nothing to say about their connection to people beyond the Jewish communities.⁹³ Above all, historians must look for the deeper cultural and social factors that limit the degree to which a phenomenon is able to take hold: in this case, the connections forged by master-servant relations played an important role. They certainly did so in the case of white management's actions on behalf of black people under attack, but – as suggested – they may also have had a place in limiting the ability of the white working class to furnish killers from its midst.

A focus on constraining factors also helps to guide us to the hopeful in the midst of the horrific. Generally, the killing crowd does not have things its own way: in this case, the police, the leaders and organisations of a workers' movement, people sympathetic to potential victims, resistance by Africans, the complex enmeshment of black and white people in master-servant relations – all these served to restrain attacks that could have been far more devastating. This reminds us that the pogrom does violence not merely to its victims but to the wider society of which they are part. It also makes clear that for the localised and somewhat constrained killing of a pogrom to be overridden by a genocidal programme, the massive force of the state (or occupying army) is required. For only these have the power to terminate or neutralise the factors of constraint which, mercifully, tend to hem in popular racial violence. Thus, the Nazis were able to engineer a pogrom in certain Lithuanian towns that accounted for thousands of Jewish people in a matter of days. But even its organisers would have been

⁹² See, for example, Weinberg, *Pogrom of 1905 in Odessa*, p. 279, where those who 'sheltered... Jewish neighbours and friends during the terror' are referred to but no examples are given.

⁹³ See Raul Hilberg: *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders. The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945*, New York 1993, chapter 17. It is significant that Hilberg reserves his discussion of people who sheltered Jews to his chapter on 'Helpers, Gainers, and Onlookers' (chapter 19, pp. 212ff.). Separating this discussion from that of the factors that allowed people to escape the fate of extermination fragments the historical reality and diminishes the social in explaining survival.

only too aware of the work that was required to achieve this. As the local *Brigadeführer* of the *Einsatzgruppen* noted: ‘To our surprise, it was not easy at first to set in motion an extensive pogrom against the Jews.’ Anti-Communist partisans had specifically to be encouraged to do the job.⁹⁴ Something in the local culture and society, even a society as known for its anti-Semitism as was white South Africa for its racism, must have prevented ordinary Lithuanians from participating in the killing. As this article has emphasised through a South African case study, historians of popular racial violence would do well to turn their attention to the complex web that constrains the violence that surges through the streets but which somehow fails to sweep all before it.

⁹⁴ Raul Hilberg: *The Destruction of the European Jews*, New York 1961, p. 203.

Resümees / Abstracts*

**Dr. Jeremy Krikler, Senior Lecturer, Department of History,
University of Essex**

This article explores the factors that restrained a bout of racial violence which erupted during a white miners' strike in South Africa in 1922. Far fewer lives were taken during the violence than might have been the case, given that the perpetrators of the killings were drawn from an armed and militarised community. As the analysis demonstrates, the pogrom was limited by actions undertaken by the police, by various whites linked to potential black victims, by black resisters themselves, and by personnel from the organisations of white labour. Finally, it is argued that the enmeshment of whites and blacks in master-servant relations created such familiarity and connections between the races that the potential for demonising black people was limited. This, it is suggested, was decisive for restricting the scale of the pogrom.

**Prof. Dr. Michael Lemke, Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung
Potsdam / Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin**

Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich am Beispiel der SBZ/DDR mit Fragen der Sowjetisierung nach 1945. Im Zentrum stehen Ziele, Strukturen, Methoden und Wirkungsweisen der Sowjetisierung wie auch die Interessen, Handlungsspielräume und Interaktionen der sie tragenden und der von ihr betroffenen Kräfte. Die Forschung sollte, so wird hier argumentiert, stärker vergleichende Analysen vorlegen und damit zur Internationalisierung und Verortung des Phänomens Sowjetisierung im Kalten Krieg beitragen. Der Verfasser entwickelt dazu erste Fragen und Vorschläge.

Dr. Michael Ploenus, Leiter der Geschichtswerkstatt Jena

Der marxistisch-leninistischen Durchdringung des Hochschullebens kam in der DDR eine besondere Bedeutung zu. 1951 wurde ein für alle Studenten verbindliches Gesellschaftswissenschaftliches Grundstudium eingeführt, später marxistisch-leninistisches Grundlagenstudium (MLG) genannt, das bis zum Herbst 1989 bestehen blieb. Für seine Realisierung zeichneten eigens installierte Abteilungen, Institute bzw. Sektionen verantwortlich. Der

* In der Reihenfolge der Beiträge.

Beitrag geht dem Verschwinden dieser universitären Lehr- und Propagandaabteilungen im Zuge der „Wende“ am Beispiel der Universität Jena nach. Trotz des speziellen Lokalkolorits sind die wesentlichen Grundzüge paradigmatisch für vergleichbare Einrichtungen der DDR.

Thomas Pruschwitz, Student, Institut für Geschichte, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

Heinz Schwarz, SED-Funktionär und ehemaliger Generaldirektor des Chemiekombinats Bitterfeld, spricht in diesem Interview über seine persönliche Bekanntschaft zu Walter Ulbricht, bewertet die Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik in der Ära Honecker ebenso wie die Niederschlagung des 17. Juni 1953 und den Mauerbau im August 1961. Der heute in Halle lebende Schwarz beschreibt aus seiner Perspektive die Wechselwirkungen zwischen Staatssicherheit, Staats- und SED-Funktionären in einem der führenden chemischen Großbetriebe der DDR. Seine Betrachtungen bieten Anknüpfungspunkte für weitere Forschungen über die Träger des SED-Staates unterhalb der obersten Führungsebene.

Inga Grebe, Doktorandin / Dr. Jana Wüstenhagen, Hochschulassistentin – beide Institut für Geschichte, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

Die Autorinnen geben einerseits einen allgemeinen Überblick über die Archivsituation in Chile (2001) und Argentinien (2005) und gehen andererseits konkret auf die Bestände einzelner Archive (Nationalarchiv, Außenministerium, Wirtschaftsministerium, etc.) in Santiago de Chile bzw. Buenos Aires ein. Im Mittelpunkt stehen archivalische Quellen für die Zeit nach 1945. Inga Grebe suchte nach Dokumenten zur Außenpolitik der DDR gegenüber Chile seit 1949. Jana Wüstenhagen beschäftigte sich mit der Beschlagnahme deutscher Firmen in Argentinien durch den argentinischen Staat nach dem 2. Weltkrieg. Beide Verfasserinnen ermuntern ausdrücklich zu weiteren Forschungen über und in Lateinamerika, wo es in den letzten 10 Jahren einige Verbesserungen in der Bibliotheks- und Archivverwaltung gegeben hat. Am Ende des Berichts findet sich eine Liste mit den Adressen und Kontaktmöglichkeiten der besprochenen Institutionen.

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Herausgegeben von Jana Wüstenhagen und Daniel Bohse

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