



sash

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Cover note:

Our cover illustration by Sue Williamson originally appeared on a poster advertising the 29 January 'Free the Children' vigil held at St George's Cathedral, Cape Town to coincide with the opening of Parliament.

While it relates directly to the 'Free the Children' campaign we also use it for its powerful visual metaphor of the human impulse towards freedom. As such, it speaks to much of the content of this issue, which describes how so many South African children and adults struggle to reach beyond the barriers which constrain them.

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editorial



Mary Burton

This edition of SASH is the first to be published in Cape Town since a period from November 1958 to December 1961. We look back in pride and gratitude to the editors and their assistants who for the past 31 years have so ably presented to our members and supporters a reflection of our organisation and the society in which it exists.

We offer our congratulations to the new magazine committee, and our thanks and good wishes. They have assumed a heavy responsibility at a time when the task of portraying the reality in South Africa is fraught with risk.

The 11 December 1986 restrictions on what may be said, written or published, have made the task of editors and journalists extremely difficult.

Further restrictions were issued by the Commissioner of Police in reaction to an 8 January advertisement carried by several newspapers. It celebrated the 75th anniversary of the African National Congress and called for the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations. The restrictions prohibit further publication of that advertisement and of any other advertisement or report 'calculated to improve or promote the public image or esteem of banned organisations'.

The Black Sash was one of the 18 signatories to the advertisement. In supporting this call we were simply repeating what we have said before: if we are to have any hope of peace and justice in South Africa we must acknowledge the right of every adult citizen to an equal vote in electing the government. Elections must be free and fair, and this necessitates open discussion of the different policies of all political groupings, so that informed choices can be made.

We shall continue to work for the establishment of a political dispensation in the whole of South Africa which will be truly democratic and which will promote unity rather than division based on racial or ethnic criteria.

Mary Burton
National President, Black Sash

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people's education: the irony and the tragedy

helen zille



A delegation from the Lamontville Education Crisis Committee negotiates with a Deputy Director of the Department of Education and Training to reopen their school, which was closed by the Department last year. Their attempt failed.

After two years of turmoil in black education, the beginning of the 1987 school year was far more than the start of another term. The return to class of an estimated 1.8 million black pupils was an important political event, attracting intense interest and widely differing interpretations.

The government made sure that its own version dominated the news. No one could ask the leaders of the National Education Crisis Committee for their comment, as they were in detention.

The Minister of Education and Training, Dr Gerrit Viljoen, seized the opportunity to give the government credit for resolving the crisis, while proclaiming the defeat of 'radical organisations calling for boycotts'.

The implication of this (and other Department of Education and Training statements) was clear: the tough security action had succeeded in immobilising 'radical organisations' so that the ordinary student could go to school unintimidated. While the DET would still have to be wary lest some

students attempted to use the schools for 'revolutionary ends', the education crisis was, to all intents and purposes, over.

This interpretation has an easy appeal for observers who find the developments in black education over the past months contradictory, if not inexplicable.

During this time, apart from detaining the NECC leaders and hundreds of student leaders, the government drastically tightened the Emergency regulations, introduced stringent controls on the movement and activities of pupils, and effectively banned 'people's education' from schools.

Far from meeting any of the demands set as pre-conditions for a return to school at the two historic conferences hosted by the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee and its successor, the NECC, the government actually tightened its grip, introducing the most stringent security measures in South Africa's education history.

Many observers predicted an escalation of the crisis that had already paralysed black

'... for the first time, the education struggle attempted to move beyond protest and boycotts ...'

education in some areas. But, by mid-January, pupils were reportedly streaming back to schools and negotiations were apparently well advanced to re-open some 60 Eastern Cape schools closed by the DET during 1986.

The government believes its role was pivotal in the switch of direction, and to some extent that is true. The militant youth who believed that they could bring down the government 'before the next school term' by refusing to subject themselves to 'Bantu education', had gravely misjudged their strength and that of their adversary. No seasoned observer ever doubted that the boycotting pupils' political objectives were unattainable and that they would sacrifice far more than they could hope to gain through a prolonged boycott. No one doubted either that the government had the determination and the power to make the cost too high for the community to bear. And no one understood this more than the leaders and supporters of the NECC.

The government has never missed an opportunity to portray them as radicals propagating boycotts. Precisely the opposite is true. The whole *raison d'être* behind the formation of the NECC was to find a concerted, community-based means of ending the boycotts and replacing them with directed, organised action for fundamental transformation in education.

The NECC spent much of the year in delicate negotiations around the issue. Their greatest achievement was to make it politically acceptable to oppose the continuing boycott publicly, so that by the end of the year every major resistance organisation, including all important student groupings, was calling for a return to school, despite the government's continuing provocative action.

These organisations deserve the credit for the return to school, such as it was. (There is some scepticism about the validity of the official figures, and reports are heard of growing tension in Soweto and the Eastern Cape.) What the government portrays as the NECC's defeat was indeed its victory.

But the NECC and its supporters also realise that the return to school does not mean the end of the education crisis. They know that we are no closer to a meaningful resolution now than we were at the height of the boycott. Indeed, we probably moved even further away from that goal during 1986.

It could have been very different. Looking back on the developments of the past year, it is clear that there were several opportunities for a genuine breakthrough in addressing some of the causes of education-based resistance.

This article attempts to assess recent

developments in black education and to show that 1986 was not merely another instalment in its gradual disintegration.

During last year, for the first time, the education 'struggle' attempted to move beyond protest and boycotts towards pioneering a mass-based alternative.

It was captured in the slogan 'People's Education for People's Power'. Nor was this another revolutionary rallying call in the place of 'Liberation before Education'.

It represented perhaps the most significant shift in resistance strategy this decade, an unlikely turn from 'the politics of refusal' towards community involvement in transforming the education system. As such, it also provided the government with a unique opportunity for a creative response that might have broken the existing deadlock. Tragically, the opportunity was missed.

If this sounds a little far-fetched, consider the circumstances.

The slogan calling for people's education first surfaced publicly at the historic conference hosted by the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee at the University of the Witwatersrand on 28-29 December 1985. Students, parents, teachers and representatives from ideologically divergent popular organisations throughout the country came together during a week when people usually declare a moratorium on formal politics. But this was no time for a Christmas break. Parents and educationists realised that they had to tackle the education crisis head-on during the dying days of 1985 if they were to prevent 1986 from being 'The Year of No Schooling'.

This was the slogan mooted by many radical student activists in the vanguard of the struggle for 'Liberation before Education'. Ironically, the township youth, who had the most direct experience of the state's military might, were most optimistic about imminent victory. They dismissed the show of strength as 'merely the last kick of a dying animal'. They could not abandon the struggle 'now when we have got the government on its knees'.

Most parents were helpless before the wave of revolutionary adrenalin that surged through their children. Those who attempted to introduce a cautionary note were scornfully dismissed as conniving in their own oppression. The youth blamed 'Bantu education' for their parents' perceived docility — and they were determined to have none of it.

Then, in a brief message delivered from the stage of the Wits Great Hall, the politics of immediacy suddenly lost much of its potency.

It was a message from the ANC.

It came in the form of a report-back from a Christmas Day meeting between the SPCC and an ANC delegation in Harare. The SPCC

'It was a mistake to believe we could wage the struggle on our own.'

had sought the meeting to prepare the ground for the crucial Wits conference. They realised that no alternative strategy could win significant support if the township youth believed the ANC favoured an indefinite boycott.

In its message, the ANC took great care not to direct the decisions of the conference. But it stated clearly that 'Liberation before Education' was not an ANC slogan. While saluting the youth for their role in resistance, the implication of the ANC's message was clear: education should be incorporated rather than sacrificed in the struggle.

That simple message was enough to defuse the indefinite boycott strategy even before the debate began, and the conference ended with a unanimous call to students to return to school in January 1986.

Clearly, care had to be taken not to make this decision appear as a defeat for the student activist strategy. After all, the State of Emergency was still in force, their 'comrades' were still in jail, soldiers were still in the schools, Bantu education was still intact and the Congress of South African Students was still banned. Far from bringing the government to its knees, the students were now being asked to go back to school without achieving a single important demand.

Their support was achieved by convincing them that a return to school was merely a tactical shift to advance their struggle. The conference issued an ultimatum to the government, giving it three months to meet student demands. If this failed, the National Education Crisis Committee, born at the Wits conference, undertook to convene a second gathering to determine further action.

Predictably, when the NECC re-convened a conference in Durban in March, delegates agreed that their demands 'had not adequately been met'. But they nevertheless re-issued the call to return to school. Indeed, they went further. They called on students 'to re-occupy' schools that had been closed and 'to demand the right to education'.

Despite strong under-currents of discontent, most students again agreed to return to school. Their co-operation was partially based on organisational necessity. The prolonged boycotts of 1985 had severely hampered student mobilisation, dispersing their constituency and leaving a relatively small number of committed activists engaged in 'the struggle'.

They also realised that they could not afford to alienate their parents and many fellow students further. 'It was a mistake to believe we could wage the struggle on our own,' explained a student leader. 'We had to adapt our tactics to be sure that our parents would be with us'.

Not that the students interpreted the decision to return to school as an agreement

to submit to the traditional rules of the classroom. Many who had not been inside a school for months demanded promotion under the slogan 'pass one, pass all', rejecting conventional tests of competence as divisive and elitist.

And the agreement to return to school also depended on a crucial condition: that the NECC make active and rapid progress towards giving content to people's education in the schools. The task was delegated to a five-man NECC commission that was given three months to turn a political slogan into a clearly defined concept. More specifically, they were to provide enough course content for two afternoon sessions a week of people's education.

In retrospect it seems as if by mid-year a pivotal change of strategy had been negotiated and a precarious new balance of forces achieved. The NECC had succeeded in its greatest challenge by holding back demands for an indefinite boycott. But the return-to-school consensus was also under severe strain. The NECC had to deliver the goods.

All they had been asked to do, as a start, was to find the human and material resources to produce alternative course content for two afternoon sessions each week. Although this was a massive task, it was modest indeed when measured against the students' original and seemingly unshakable demand for the transfer of state power.

But the significance stretched far beyond that. In essence, the NECC, with the backing of the ANC and the most important internal resistance movements, was opting for transformation from within the present education system rather than the revolutionary goal of making education ungovernable.

It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this strategic shift in the present political climate. Up until this point the education crisis seemed entirely intractable. The politics of refusal and non-collaboration with state-created institutions was extending rapidly from the political terrain into education. The result could be far more devastating than a mere election boycott.

It was probably because the situation had reached disaster proportions that the potential germ of a solution emerged from the community itself. Almost overnight, education achieved a renewed capacity for transformation — not because of anything the government had done but because of the strength and direction of credible community leadership, including the crucial intervention of the ANC.

At a time when the gulf between the government and the resistance movements seemed to have become entirely unbridgable, an area of

'... it was a golden opportunity for the government to begin serious negotiations around major student grievances.'

meaningful consensus emerged that had been inconceivable a few months previously.

Both the government and its most important political antagonists (including the ANC) agreed on the major parameters: not only should education continue, but it should proceed within the institutional base of the schools. Nor was the NECC demanding the impossible. In the short term, its priorities clearly were to negotiate conditions that would prevent further educational disruption.

Remarkably, the NECC also received a mandate to negotiate — at a time when leaders still willing to talk to the government ran the risk of rejection by their own constituency, as Archbishop Tutu has learned.

At this pivotal moment the government's response proved crucial. The questions were first whether it would realise what was at stake, and next whether it would be able to respond constructively and in such a way that the NECC was able to deliver enough to retain its increasingly sceptical student support.

There were no serious political costs involved. Indeed, the NECC's demands could not have been more amenable framed in terms of the government's own declared policy. Firstly, the government is publicly committed to negotiate with any non-violent organisation. Secondly, it pursues an 'own affairs' education policy, quite compatible with the NECC's move towards increasing community control of the schools and the content of education.

Moreover, the NECC had amply proved the legitimacy of its educational leadership. The government could not even use the argument that it was committed to negotiate with 'moderate leaders'. They too, in the form of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA) and the Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA), had thrown their weight behind the NECC, to form a coalition rarely seen in black politics. Nor had this been achieved without considerable student anger at what they termed 'collaborators' being included in their struggle. In short, it was a golden opportunity for the government to begin serious negotiations around major student grievances. Instead it re-declared a State of Emergency, detained as many NECC leaders as it could find (including the cautious and conciliatory chairman of ATASA, Mr H H Dlamlenze) and immobilised the rest by forcing them into hiding. It was now impossible for the NECC to meet its educational mandate or to pursue the grass-roots consultation so essential to keeping the students on board and holding the coalition together.

In one tragic stroke, the precarious

equilibrium — that could so easily have proved a turning point — was destroyed. High school attendance in the Eastern Cape and Soweto began to drain away. Where students did attend classes, little formal learning took place. Teachers spoke about the continuing 'breakdown of learning habits' and the 'collapse of the education environment'. Activists pursued their own alternative programmes, teaching their comrades their homemade versions of the history of the liberation struggle and the evils of capitalism.

Subsequent efforts to resume the constructive strategy which had seemed so promising proved a failure. When they were released, NECC leaders again pursued their attempts to set up a meeting with the Department of Education and Training. They were careful not to set any unmeetable 'preconditions' but merely stated the obvious: that the continued detention of NECC officials and student leaders posed a serious obstacle to negotiations. The NECC pointed out that the participation of regional representatives, particularly from the Eastern Cape, was vital to the success of talks. Eventually, according to the NECC, they sent one of their Johannesburg officials, Mrs Joyce Mabudafasi, to the Eastern Cape in an attempt to secure a mandate to negotiate despite the continued detention of the local NECC representative, Mr Ihron Rensburg. After two days in Port Elizabeth, she too was detained.

The NECC also tried to explain to the authorities that the Emergency's prohibition on political meetings in the townships made it impossible to discuss negotiable issues on a wide scale within their communities. Without such participation, the NECC knew there was no hope of making any agreement stick, particularly where it counted most — in the schools.

The DET stalled at every turn. Firstly, it said it was powerless to influence detentions or Emergency provisions, referring responsibility to the state's security agencies. (The NECC does not dismiss this as an empty excuse. Those who have had contact with the DET say the department's opinions and actions are clearly subordinate to security interests.)

But the DET's reply to the NECC went further. It bluntly dismissed the argument that continuing community consultation was necessary for successful negotiation. In any case, said the DET, the NECC was not a 'legally recognised representative body' and had no *locus standi* to negotiate.

The official campaign to discredit the NECC continued. Leaflets appeared in Soweto accusing the NECC of deciding that 'children must go back to schools not to learn but to be taught stone-throwing, arson,

'... preparation for democratic participation is a precondition for political stability — the antithesis of revolution.'

necklacing and boycotting.' No one can prove that the government was responsible for the leaflets, but it would be interesting to know who else had the resources to distribute them by helicopter.

Is it possible to explain the failure of the authorities to use the crucial opportunity created by the efforts of the NECC to resolve the education crisis, and their systematic efforts instead to discredit the NECC?

'One thing is clear to me,' comments educationist Frans Auerbach, director of the teachers' programme at Soweto's Funda Centre. 'The government has absolutely no idea of the dimensions of the crisis, and still less of the political dynamics within the township. Otherwise it would have seen the emergence of the NECC as the most positive development in recent education history and the only hope of negotiating a resolution to the on-going crisis.'

Gerrit Viljoen has provided some clue to the government's thinking. He has conceded that people's education 'certainly has merits insofar as it represents a striving towards greater community participation.' But it would not be tolerated if it had 'revolutionary aims'.

His statement hinges on his definition of 'revolutionary aims', and he has recently provided his perception of this. In a newspaper interview he said people's education was clearly not an innocent correction of perspective, because the history of the ANC was considered a priority for a History syllabus! It seems almost inconceivable that the Minister can seriously expect the history of the ANC to be excluded from a relevant History syllabus in black schools.

But this does not clarify the substantive objectives of people's education. Whatever its central role in resolving the education deadlock at the beginning of 1986, is it not a revolutionary notion that will obviously be an anathema to the government?

'Of course the township communities overwhelmingly reject apartheid and want education to prepare the youth for participation in a transformed democratic society,' says Joe Muller, a senior lecturer in education at the University of the Witwatersrand, who is involved in education research and planning with the NECC.

'Obviously, a democratic objective is a revolutionary threat to apartheid. But in most other contexts preparation for democratic participation is a precondition for political stability — the antithesis of revolution'.

But the government is clearly worried about more than just the democratic impulse behind people's education. They, and many other whites, are becoming increasingly perturbed at its strong socialist content.

Ken Hartshorne, a retired state education planner, has addressed this issue in an excellent review of the problems and prospects of people's education, prepared for a recent seminar on the subject. He regards the socialist content of educational demands as the major difference between 1976 and the current phase of resistance.

This development, says Hartshorne, was both inevitable and necessary. 'It is a debate that every country has had to face, and continues to face. In South Africa it is very much a debate whose time has come.'

This is particularly so given the widespread perception of 'collaboration between the state and capitalist interests' and the scepticism of black youth that capitalism can redress economic inequality.

'Economic as well as political reconstruction is now on the agenda, and any consideration of the future of education has to take this into serious account.'

Elaborating on his paper in an interview, Hartshorne said that the government's fundamental mistake was to believe that support for socialism would disappear in the face of sufficient repression. 'The opposite is true.'

'The government faces a simple choice. It can either stand back and allow serious educationists the space to provide educationally sound content for people's education. Or it can continue to nullify their efforts, thereby ensuring that what emerges in the township streets really is revolutionary propaganda. It will be another self-fulfilling prophecy.'

The NECC's concern to avoid mere propaganda masquerading as people's education is reflected in the appointment of two subject committees charged with compiling alternative curricula in History and English. The committees draw together some of the country's leading academic specialists in these fields. In addition, educationists from various universities are planning research on appropriate education policy with the NECC.

These are sober and responsible deliberations, but the government perceives them as revolutionary because they assume that the education crisis has exposed the illegitimacy of the official structures and that it is beyond the power of the authorities to redress this situation.

The government disputes that the present education system is so widely unacceptable that it is leading to educational collapse. The Deputy Minister, Sam de Beer, frequently quotes statistics to underscore his point.

Of more than 7 000 schools under the DET's control, he says, only between 200 and 250 'suffered unrest' at the height of the crisis.

Auerbach dismisses these statistics as 'misleading'. He points out that 5 399 of the

'... the DET will steadily continue to lose control of the schools ...'

DET's 7 395 schools are farm schools in rural areas (with an average of 87 pupils each) under the direct ownership and control of white farmers. In 1985 there was 'unrest' in only 20 of them.

But this cannot be used to prove the inherent stability of black education. The real test must be sought in DET high schools, of which there are only 328. In terms of the department's own statistics, 230 (or 70%) of these schools faced serious disruption. This, says Auerbach, is a more accurate indication of the extent of the education crisis.

Hartshorne, for his part, keeps stressing that 'there is little understanding on the part of the government that where children are attending school, this is not a signal of acceptance of the system but rather an indication of the strength of the community's need for education, even if it is not the kind they wish, and of the lack of viable alternatives.'

He says that despite the return to classes the DET will steadily continue to lose control of the schools, and predicts its effective collapse within five years. 'Then the authorities will have to negotiate on a new kind of local management for schools based on parent-teacher-pupil bodies and a new curriculum.'

'The position will be much worse if the NECC is not there to negotiate with, either because it doesn't survive the State of Emergency or loses the support of the community.'

The only question, says Hartshorne, is whether black education will have to disintegrate before it brings the DET down with it or whether the authorities will recognise the inevitable and negotiate now about the management of schools and the content of the curriculum.

The question seems rhetorical. The answer is clear. The government is sticking to its ten-year plan to upgrade black education, with particular emphasis on improving teacher qualifications, the pupil-teacher ratio and school facilities. The plan will continue to be based on the goal of 'separate-but-equal'.

While providing some welcome improvements in teaching conditions, there seems little chance that the ten-year plan will have any impact at all on the long-term education crisis. Indeed, during the many interviews conducted for this article, it became increasingly clear that no government initiative — not even real reform such as creating a single education department — would significantly defuse the growth of resistance in black schools. The government simply does not have enough legitimacy or credibility to do anything that will win the support of the student community.

That doesn't mean the situation in education is entirely hopeless. Although it

missed its crucial opportunity in 1986, the DET still has the option of responding positively to the initiatives that come from the community itself, at present under the leadership of the NECC.

These demands have changed over the past months, and now focus primarily on the introduction of people's education in the schools. The committee of historians charged with pioneering an alternative approach for the History syllabus has completed an academically sound and educationally creative 'work package' for the start of the new term. This offers the government yet another opportunity to make way for the beginning of a creative process of transformation in Bantu education.

It seems almost certain to be another lost opportunity. The most recent Government Gazette issued under the State of Emergency prohibits the NECC from discussing the presentation of people's education courses at any government school or hostel. Nor may any people's education syllabuses be determined at such gatherings.

It is easy to predict that the education struggles of 1987 will hinge around this issue. Students are not going back to school because they think that Bantu education was all right after all, but to try to forge an alternative.

Eric Molobi, an NECC executive member based in Johannesburg, says that if the DET continues to prohibit people's education in the schools, the people will take their education out of the schools.

This would clearly be a reluctant second-best option with enormous costs. Opting out of the official system means forfeiting the qualifications and certificates necessary for further education or employment. It will inevitably re-open the rift between students and their parents, who still believe that education is the only passport out of poverty. And it will deeply divide the student community, as anger mounts against those who escape the township to attend private schools and colleges in white areas. For those who remain behind, educational standards will drop even further in the absence of even rudimentary facilities.

Perhaps the government anticipates these developments, hoping that their cost will be too high for the community to bear, leaving students no option but to go to school on the DET's terms. Given the present student mood, this seems unlikely to last. If students abandon their attempts to change Bantu education from within, the political premise on which resistance strategy has been built for the past three decades will become part of their political experience: transformation within the present system is not possible. □

POEM FOR DI BISHOP

and the bereaved of Cradock and Port Elizabeth

We have known death,
and the season of death,
and flowers of the season of death.

Today, we know life,
and the flowers of life;
flowers with names:

Bishop, Blackburn, Calata,
Galela, Godolozzi, Goniwe,
Hashe, Mhlawuli, Mkhonto.

We wear these flowers,
on our hearts, in our hair:
they fly as banners
in a rising wind.

Keith Gottschalk

Chairperson, Civil Rights Act, 76

*With acknowledgement to UpStream
poetry magazine 14 : 4 Spring 1986*



The assassinated led CRADORA, the Cradock Residents' Association, and PEBCO, Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation.

encouraging aspects of a domesticated economy

margaret nash



Margaret Nash

Signs of hope are always welcome, especially in these hard times. If you are worried that sanctions simply make the unemployment situation much worse, take heart: that is not the whole picture.

I am not an economist, but for many years I have been reading the business pages of the daily papers and trying to develop some sense of what goes on in that sector of our drastically unequal and unjust South African society. The following observations emerge from that process. They do not present, or claim to present, any comprehensive or authoritative theories about the overall effects of sanctions on the South African economy. However, they should indicate that the claim that sanctions cause unemployment need not be accepted without question, and they may encourage other non-economists to venture into this sphere of debate and action for justice.

Aspects dealt with briefly are the links between foreign investment and jobs, state promotion of low-cost housing during periods of recession, arguments for high technology, and changes in the hotel industry which seem to benefit the

majority population group of South Africa. Other spheres of activity worth investigating are listed even more briefly, and the article concludes with a few practical suggestions.

Foreign investment and jobs

It is often said that we need foreign investment in order to create jobs. (See, for example, the recent annual report of AngloVaal Industries.) However, there is no fixed, unchangeable link between the amount of capital invested and the number of jobs created, and state policy with regard to promoting labour-intensive rather than capital-intensive economic activities is affected by the availability of investment capital.

In its report on 1977 the South African Board of Trade and Industries made some 'general observations on policy and action in respect of the unusual business and economic conditions of the past two years'. Pointing out that it could not stimulate demand in general because the government wanted to strengthen the balance of payments and contain inflation, it

had concentrated on 'available areas of stimulation', i.e. import replacement, expansion of exports, and 'expansion of activities which have a low direct import content, a relatively high employment potential and which are economically or socially productive, of which the provision of low-cost housing to non-whites is the foremost example' (p. 21).

State promotion of low-cost housing

In other words, the building of 15 000 dwellings in Mitchells Plain for so-called coloured people during the depressed late 1970s was no coincidence. Nor is it a coincidence that the state is currently making some R1 750 million available for low-cost housing. It is also actively encouraging labour-intensive schemes and self-help construction methods (the Cape Divisional Council exhibition in October 1986, also the 'Greyling' houses at Khayelitsha), easing many of the restrictions that have hampered such developments, and facilitating the emergence of new or adapted institutions to promote township development and low-cost housing.

While not everything being done in this respect is above criticism, in general the direction seems positive. And the economic reasons for these reformist trends in providing low-cost housing are fairly straightforward: the construction industry needs to be kept viable (not least because it is a large employer of labour); low-cost housing uses local rather than imported materials and equipment; new home-owners/occupants invest more readily in consumer durables such as furniture, furnishings and home appliances, thus stimulating the retail sector and the hire purchase/easy credit institutions; bond-holders are 'less likely to indulge in anti-social activity'; and the high visibility of new housing presents a favourable image of the government.

All this contrasts with the boom periods when there is greater interest in building hotels, office blocks and shopping centres (because they are more profitable)

and developing amenities (resorts, sports centres, upgrading of race-course and rugby ground spectator accommodation) which are desired by the more affluent sectors of society.

Technology and jobs

Supporters of high technology argue that more efficient production with lower unit costs means being able to compete more successfully, thereby generating more profits and in turn being able to create more jobs.

That is an attractive argument but it seems to depend on ever-increasing economic growth. In most countries only the armaments industry shows a steady upward curve: other industries have huge ups-and-downs (crises of over-production). The global car market is said to be 25% overproduced at present. Without other major changes, producing smarter motor cars more cheaply does not automatically lead to all-round economic growth.

As for increased profits leading to job creation, investigate how some of the major corporations in South Africa — who dominate three-quarters of the economy — have been using their increased profits. In general, the trend has been towards automation and fewer employees per R100 000 of capital employed and/or turnover. And during the recession the buzzword has been 'rationalisation', which invariably means cutting back on workers and/or wages.

Changes in the hotel industry

Another sector that is undergoing positive change is the hotel industry. Because of the drastic fall in tourism from abroad, hotels have had to attract more South African guests. In the past year hotel prices have been substantially reduced by means of various special packages and discounts. In April 1986 mandatory racial restrictions were lifted and hotels were permitted to apply their own right of admission standards. By November 1986 FEDHASA reported that 87% of its members had adopted a non-

racial admissions policy. It noted that there were still problems: in country areas attitudes are more conservative, and among middle-class blacks there is ignorance or hesitation about the changes. Therefore publicity material was being designed for the black market, and new offices to promote hotel usage by South Africans include one in Soweto.

Perhaps because of the prevailing sanctions climate, many non-South African specialist staff are not renewing their contracts. To meet the shortage of skilled staff, at least one major hotel group has now instituted its own managerial and catering course for trainee black staff, providing them with considerably improved job prospects.

Other examples

The above are only a few examples of the ways in which improved opportunities are being opened up to blacks because of the enforced domestication of the South African economy and the policy of 'inward industrialisation' being adopted by the state. Those who are interested in learning more about the trends are encouraged to do their own exploring in regard to the issues already mentioned or in a sphere such as one of the following:

Fruit Industry. Western Cape fruit farmers and processors are the biggest employers in the region, with more than 250 000 workers. In objecting to and lobbying against sanctions they claim to be concerned about the well-being of these workers. They need to be asked what they have done, and are doing, to secure publication of the report of the state's own commission of inquiry into wages and conditions of farmworkers (the report was completed in 1982) and to get its recommendations implemented.

One could also look into the effect of the fruit juice industry on the poor. Some years ago it was stated that although the recently expanded fruit juice industry yielded a relatively small percentage of the total profit compared with the amount of the crop used, it helped profits indirectly by taking lower grade fruit off the market and

thereby supporting better prices for the higher grade fruit. If the need to sell more fruit locally leads to an increased supply of cheaper fruit, poor people will have cause for gratitude.

Small business development, and the informal sector. These are being encouraged and assisted as a matter of policy. For example, zoning restrictions which prevented residents of Mitchells Plain from engaging in small non-noxious home industries have been relaxed; and on 14 March 1986 the Committee for Economic Affairs of the President's Council called for submissions on 'The devising of a strategy for the creation of employment and for the development of labour-intensive industrial and commercial enterprises'. Many local authorities, regional bodies and voluntary organisations are actively addressing the long neglected problem of job creation.

Food production and peasant farming. The example of Zimbabwe's peasant farmers' success in food production is encouraging the provision of more agricultural land for 'coloured' farmers and the training of such farmers in the Southern Cape (*Cape Times*, 12 November 1986). In the long run this could lead to greatly increased black subsistence farming on some of the huge unoccupied white agricultural holdings.

Erosion of Group Areas restrictions. In face of the international pressure to dismantle apartheid and the internal realities of recession, organised commerce is actively supporting the process of deproclaiming central business districts in small towns as well as large cities. In the residential sphere, emigration and near-zero population growth in the 'white' sector have led to an embarrassing surplus of flats and houses in white areas. These are increasingly being occupied legally and 'not-so-legally' e.g. with the assistance of white nominees, and the government is under increasing pressure from its supporters as well as from its opponents to phase out or repeal the Group Areas Act. □

'We cannot believe that you would make us foreigners in the land of our birth'

Text by Marj Brown



We have lived and farmed at Braklaagte since 1906.

Photographs by Gill de Vlieg



Our children will be locked into unemployment....

The Bahurutse ba ga Sebogodi of Braklaagte have lived on their land since before 1907, when they procured their title deed. Braklaagte is an established Tswana village, nestling in the hills of the Marico in the western Transvaal. It has a population of approximately 9 000 people.

There is a great history of resistance amongst these people. They first fought removal in 1938 when a headman and 40 families were removed from a neighbouring farm. The village was saved by the outbreak of the Second World War.

In 1958 their chief was imprisoned, in Pretoria, to try to break his resistance to removal. The chief was imprisoned again, with his wife and a headman, for resisting the introduction of passes for women. No strategy succeeded in breaking the fierce resolve of these people to keep their land and their South African rights.

Then, when the people had come to feel that the threat of removal was over, the South African government devised a new plan

forced incorporation to lock them into the homelands. Without consulting the people, the South African and Bophuthatswana governments decided to redraw the boundaries of the homeland states and to include the Bahurutse ba ga Sebogodi in Bophuthatswana.

This will mean that overnight the people of Braklaagte will be robbed of their chances of South African citizenship and they will be treated as aliens in South Africa.

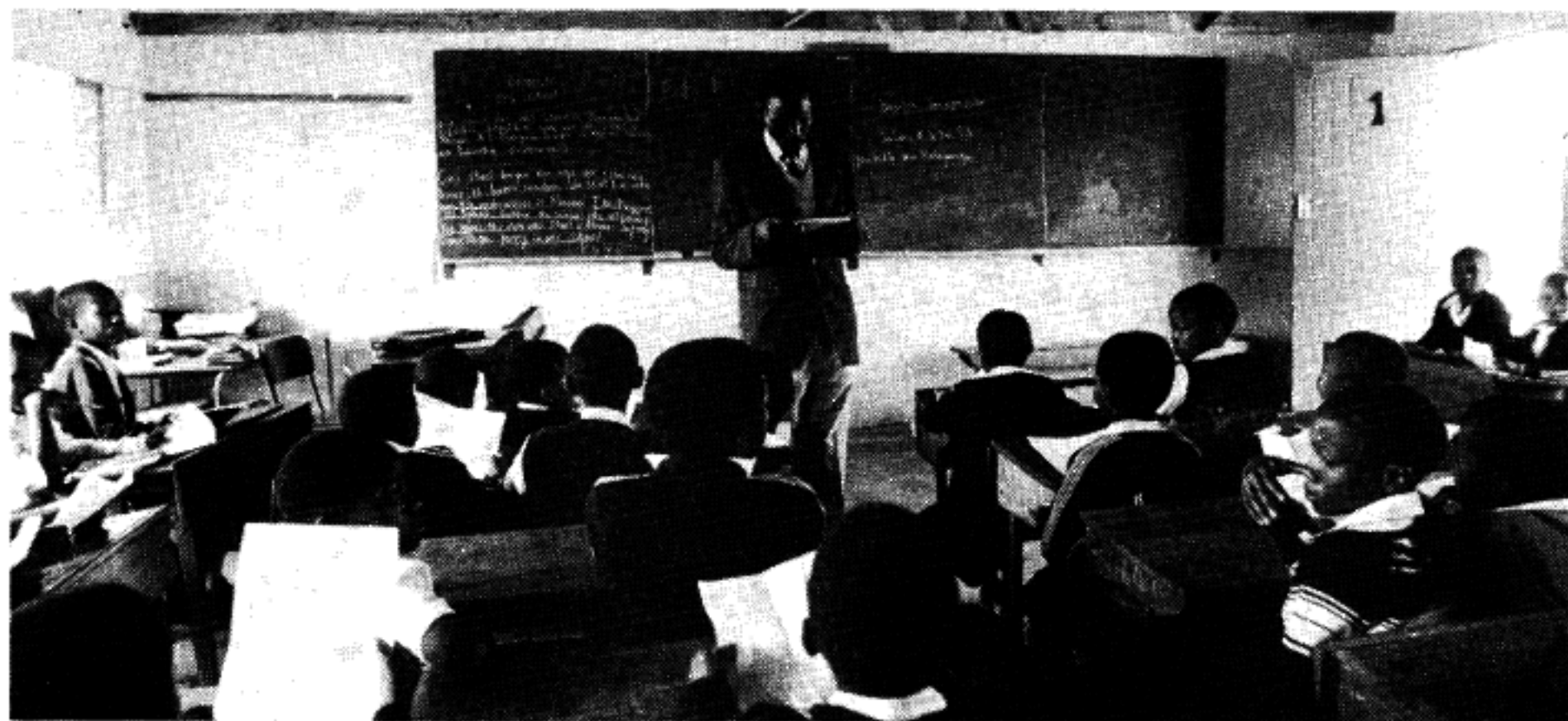
Last year the Bophuthatswana government sent a 'replacement chief' to Braklaagte in an attempt to depose John Sebogodi, who has ruled his people since 1949. Should the Bophuthatswana government succeed in this, the new chief will no doubt agree to incorporation. Thus forced removals, in the guise of forced incorporation, continue. □

In 1986 the Bahurutse ba ga Sebogodi addressed a letter to the state president in which they explained their position and asked to be left as they are. The letter is reproduced here and the heading and captions are extracted from it. (Ed.)



The peace in our village will be totally destroyed. ▷

We have developed our land, built schools, windmills, and wish to remain on it. ▽





We were very glad that we would be secure in our country as a result. Δ

He (President Mangope) has already tried to depose our chief, who has ruled us since 1949. ▽





△ ... our entire village has applied for our South African citizenship to be restored to us ...

▽ We and our children consider ourselves part of South Africa ...

Bahurutse ba ga Sebogodi
P.O. Box 570
ZEERUST
2865
1986.

President P.W. Botha
Union Building

Dear President Botha,

We are writing to you because we are deeply concerned about the news that we are to be incorporated into Bophuthatswana. We cannot believe that you would make us foreigners in the land of our birth, without speaking to us first. We feel sure that if you knew our feelings about the matter you would stop this terrible event that is sure to endanger our survival.

We have lived and farmed at Braklaagte since 1906. We have developed our land, built schools, windmills and wish to remain on it. We and our children consider ourselves part of South Africa, and our entire village has applied for our South African citizenship to be restored to us, as you promised. We were very glad that we would be secure in our country as a result.

But now this incorporation will destroy everything. Our children will be locked into unemployment in the homeland of Bophuthatswana. We will be punished by President Mangope for resisting incorporation and applying for South African Citizenship, because he rejects dual citizenship. He has already tried to depose our chief who has ruled us since 1949. The peace in our village will be totally destroyed.

At a time of unrest in our country, we feel it is criminal for the government to create more problems, as we have never had any quarrel with it, except when it has tried to take our land, which we purchased legally.

Please reconsider this terrible situation. We know you have it in your power to leave us alone and that we can stay in peace in South Africa.

Yours sincerely

Manganye
Manganye
N.A. Manganye
N.A. Manganye



1986 port elizabeth and uitenhage removals

judy chalmers

Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage have, until now, been spared most of the harsh realities of forced removals. The implementation of 'orderly urbanisation' in 1986 has changed all this.

These two centres, with Despatch in-between, are undergoing a 'sterilise and sanitise' programme which involves the uprooting and removal of thousands of township residents to areas less visible, less accessible, more easily policed and controlled, and which is calculated to break up existing community organisations and relationships.

Some 40 000 shack dwellers from Langa and Blikkiesdorp in Uitenhage and Despatch Township have been moved to sites in KwaNobuhle — an hour's walk from Uitenhage. In Langa, strong and well organised resistance to the move was whittled away by the detention of leaders under the State of Emergency. It was further eroded by a court order compelling some of the residents of Kabah (an area of Langa) to move. Nightly harassment by KwaNobuhle Town Council officials, for weeks on end, completed the demoralisation of the community. These people are now housed in tents or rebuilt shacks in a massive resettlement area which is inadequately supplied with basic services and far from work, schools and medical facilities.

This operation was termed 'a voluntary removal' by the authorities. Operation Real South Africa (a PFP action group), which conducted a survey in the area, found that without exception those who had been moved had done so totally against their will.

In mid-November 1986 the Black Sash Advice Office in Port Elizabeth received a call from the Red Location community.

Red Location, one of the oldest established areas in New Brighton, is a 'prime site': it is next to the New Brighton station and is spacious and level. Although water and sewerage facilities are utterly inadequate, this is because of departmental neglect, not because of difficulty of access. Many residents have lived there for thirty years or more, and shacks belonging to their children and grandchildren are attached to the main dwellings.

Threats of the impending removal, by order of the Ibhayi Town Council, were levelled at

the community from trucks with loudspeakers in September and again in early November 1986. They were told that Red Location was 'dirty' and that they would be better off in a new place.

On 14 November, certain residents were advised that 'unauthorised structures' must be removed in terms of Section 3B(1) of the Illegal Squatting Act. Eviction and relocation in Motherwell, a huge new township/resettlement area 20 km north of Port Elizabeth, faced 450 of the 1 370 families.

The people of Red Location got busy at once: a petition bearing more than 4 000 signatures was sent to the state president. An ORSA survey of 158 households in Red Location revealed that almost everyone was opposed to the move. Interviews with the appropriate officials took place but the Ibhayi Town Council would not relent.

The authorities sealed off Red Location, declaring it an 'unrest area' and a 'military zone', and sending in an increased military force to patrol the streets. It was announced that court orders would be obtained if residents refused to move.

An uneasy calm hung over Red Location. On 1 December came a surprise reprieve: people would not be moved, but would be given temporary homes in the area while better homes were built. Ibhayi Town Council has since announced a three-phase plan to redevelop Red Location: erect temporary houses in an adjacent area; move shack dwellers into them, and then proceed with the redevelopment plan. Red Location residents, while greatly relieved, remain on the alert. Some signs of vigilante action in the area are being monitored.

On the other side of Port Elizabeth, Walmer Township has been assured that, after many years of threatened removal, it will be permitted to remain. Here too, however, lodgers and shackdwellers have received eviction notices.

On the far side of Zwide lies the sprawling shack township of Little Soweto with its dense population of over 120 000. Will this be next on the 'orderly urbanisation' agenda? Will they too be forced to exchange a shack in town for one that fits in with the government's 'sanitise and sterilise' ideal? □

'I am too old to start a new life in a new place. I want to die here in the place I know.' —

Resident of Red Location, pictured below.



BLACK SASH ARCHIVES

the new explorers: sash emigrants and residents venture into the unknown

sarah-anne raynham

Who doubts the topicality of emigration as an issue? Allusions to emigration on the covers of glossy magazines have become sure sales stimulants, with many variants of 'The Agony and The Exodus', '101 More Reasons for Staying' and 'Apocalypse When?'. For most of us the bittersweet wit and black humour resonate too uncomfortably with our own experience for us merely to enjoy these clever pieces of journalistic craft.

In these and other forums the political debate about future scenarios, the scoring of points about leaving versus staying, the prognostic satire, all have personal dimensions to which Sash membership is not immune. We are part of that segment of South African society where personal choices can be debated, made and implemented. In fact, it is the very nature of Sash work which so harshly illuminates the extent of both our national malaise and our personal privilege. These contradictions and the heavy demands of the present have been instrumental in the development of a new band of explorers — those among us who leave and those who pioneer new ways of staying.

It is on the level of having to face new realities in a state of heightened awareness that I find the common ground between Sash emigrants (how we still own them!) and Sash residents. For the latter there needs to be a new classification. 'Resident' hardly conveys the characteristics of those unblinkered, consciously active stayers-on. More than ever, they now share with emigrants the less obvious but increasingly real need to wear the mantle of explorer. Both are faced with the challenges of very different but nonetheless new territories to conquer. The emigrants must come to terms with forging livelihoods and lifestyles on other continents, while the residents have to open up a newly created hinterland — South Africa of the 1980s and 1990s. The physical contours are the same but recent political and economic constraints have created a jungle as daunting as the dark continent of Africa must have been to the explorers of the past. The paradox is that once the mental leap has been made, this dark

region offers the same hope, excitement and room for innovatory exploration and achievement as that which sustained the early pioneers.

From those bold generalities the view from here on will be modest and internal to Sash. The modesty derives from tackling a very large issue through five personal perspectives. Our approach here is not to contest their arguments but to allow our members to speak for themselves. We begin from the interest we in the Sash have in understanding why some of our members choose to leave South Africa while others actively choose to stay. The balance between the viewpoints is a simple numerical one: two decisive emigrants, two committed residents, and one whose decision to stay is conditional upon her capacity to cope with the demands of working for change in Grahamstown. The others are all members of Cape Western Region.

The emigrants

Derryn Heilbuth

The interview with Derryn Heilbuth took place ten days before she left for Australia with her husband and two small children aged five and two. Derryn and Bruce are both journalists, and while the reasons for emigrating were largely political, they were also swayed by significant professional considerations. We wanted to know not only the reasons for their going but also what it felt like to make that decision.

'It was terribly, terribly difficult and at no stage in the whole process were we ever sure which way it was going to go. I was initially very against going and my husband was the one who wanted to go. It took about a year's discussion, arguing and convincing each other in order to decide. Then, once we had started the whole emigration process and Bruce had been offered a job in Australia, we were still at every stage of that process stopping and saying, 'Well, let's not do it'.

'The thing that you really have to stress is that obviously the reasons for leaving are

Derryn Heilbuth



'... the future government is going to be just a shadow of what we have at the moment.'

highly political, that you are leaving the country, which in a normal situation you wouldn't think of leaving. Although perhaps that's not strictly true. I was a student in Paris and lived in Europe for three years. There were lots of Americans who lived in Paris and there wasn't the same kind of value or the same kinds of implications when Americans left America to come and live in Paris as when South Africans leave the country for good. I think emigration is never solely political.

'The 'ordinary' reasons would be that as journalists, frankly, the prospects for newspaper journalism in this country are not particularly exciting. You write under all sorts of restrictions, which become more and more restrictive as time goes on. Australian publications are exciting and innovative.

'While there are professional career reasons, there are also others to do with adventure — going into a whole different society, learning new codes, making new friends, whole new lifestyles.

'Here we are living in a society that is very threatened, a society under siege that, from the reactions we've been faced with from some people, one has to stay and die for. All this great patriotism. I don't want to stay and fight for the present situation, and yet this is actually what it boils down to. That's what we would be doing, in a sense, with our son if we stayed — fighting for white privilege. We would be caught up in the military support of the present regime.

'You've asked what I would be prepared to stay for? An absolutely equal, open society. Again, you don't want to sound trite and clichéd — but a truly just society. Living in Africa you would frankly want to live under a black government — that's what I would stay for.

'I've always fought for a black-governed South Africa, yet what worries me now is that the future government is going to be just a shadow of what we have at the moment. I think there is a very strong danger of the repressive measures of now being repeated in the future. I remember seeing an interview with Breyten Breytenbach where he said the tragedy of apartheid is that it has brutalised both the oppressed and the oppressor, and I find that very true. There's no longer room for open debate. I think when that happens, it's just so dangerous.

'What I find so hard on a personal level is that you live here in a position of constant swaying between intense pessimism and intense optimism, especially if you're involved in an organisation like the Sash. My moments of doubt about going come most often when I'm sitting in a Sash meeting, because there is this feeling that there is so much to be done here. But after a while, being faced with enormous moral dilemmas every

single day of your life just becomes so exhausting that you just think, 'Let me be out of here, let me be free, let me be liberated just to enjoy my life and be with my children and make some kind of career for myself'. This becomes an almost impossible thing in this society if you are aware in the way Sash members are aware. We are increasingly living with the most appalling things that a normal society would never tolerate. But because we're in it, and in a sense there is nothing one can do about it, to a certain degree the brutalisation and dehumanisation become a norm. And I actually don't want to bring my children up in that kind of society.

'And yet in a lot of ways I think it's very much harder to leave than it is to stay, because you are cutting off so much for yourself and for your children. Both sets of our parents are still alive; we both come from big families, so there are lots of uncles and aunts and nieces and cousins. To cut your children and yourself off from that whole support system is dreadful'.

Glynis Lawrence

Glynis Lawrence and her husband also worked through a long period of vacillating between going and staying before deciding to emigrate to England in June this year. Both are involved in education and they have two young children.

'We decided to go because I see the situation as being so totally out of control that it is beyond anything I can do to change it. More than that, I just cannot take the extent to which the government can impose itself on me. My anger and annoyance at what I read in the newspapers is there, I suppose, because there's no real opening to vent your anger and to show how you feel about things.

'There are many other reasons: I don't like the way my children are assuming the attitudes of the average South African through their contacts with their peers at school. Neither they nor the peers mean it intentionally, but by the time they're sixteen they may be as prejudiced as everyone else. I also don't want to impose the military aspect on my son by staying here, by waiting until he's 18 and then saying, 'OK, it's your problem'.

'How can things get better when people display the attitudes they do? For instance, in my husband's work situation, as one of several outspoken 'left'-thinking teachers in a white suburban high school, he can't have the normal working relationships he would want to have. On 16 June last year everyone saw the headmaster of his school being marched off between two Special Branch officers. He was detained for a day and thereafter he asked teachers not to 'open their mouths' about

Glynis Lawrence



GILL COWAN

'It's a war situation, and people have become so numbed.'

things. Posters and everything else contrary to government policy had to be taken off classroom walls. John resents that; he cannot function as he wants to because he can't talk the way he would like to and doesn't know who will be reporting on him.

'I have a fantastic job at a new tutorial college — ideal hours and a very good salary. We're educating people who are there because of the boycotts. They're getting an incredibly good education, but they're being ostracised because they've left the black system — they're regarded as sell-outs. Everything you do has this other side to it and you can't turn your back on things and pretend they're not happening. You can't negate all these issues — they look you in the face all the time.

'Strangely, being in the Sash made it easier for me to decide to leave. Seeing the hardships of other people made me more aware of the atrocities that were being committed and I realised the extent of the state's involvement and how we couldn't work against them and their power. I worked at the Red Cross from the start of the Crossroads burnings, and I was aware of what was happening before anyone else I knew. No one knew the background, and I became very distressed trying to talk to others who knew nothing about it.

'It's a war situation, and people have become so numbed. When we were collecting affidavits I was taking a statement from someone. The question was, 'What was the most important thing you lost in the fire?' She answered, so calmly, with a straight face, 'The most important thing I lost in the fire was my baby'. The other Sash member and I just began to cry. It was such a shocking thing — her hopelessness in the situation — not even seeking further help — not to be outraged — she just accepted it.

In my position, with a family and children to think about, I suppose I'm selfish, but I'm not a complete revolutionary. If you do something I think is minimal, you get detained, and I'm not prepared to get detained. Whatever you did might not have changed anything after all.

'We're a close-knit family, we're happy and we have a nice home which we restored from a derelict state ourselves. We have everything we need, but then we have nagging thoughts that we've got it all 'illegally' in a way. We've got a guilt complex about how others have had to suffer while we've got everything.

'So, it's against all logical reasons to go — the reasons are entirely political.'

On the border ...

Rosemary van Wyk Smith

In her work as a social worker for the Grahamstown and District Relief Association, and as co-chair of Black Sash Albany

Region, Rosemary van Wyk Smith is heavily involved in a broad front of concerted action in an area that has been extremely hard hit by measures of repression.

She was born in England and over the last 21 years has lived and raised a family of four children in Grahamstown.

'If it were not for the momentum and enormous strides towards non-racialism made by the progressive movement here over the last four years, one would see the future as possibly rather bleak. Now I think the role of the white liberal has changed so much — it's no longer merely protest but action-oriented, and there is no need for the individual to feel alienated by the groundswell of change if one becomes involved in collective action. We'll need all the resources and skills available for the processes of reconstruction and consolidation. It's saddening to think that those who have chosen to leave often possess so many skills and are people who are most receptive to change.

'I suppose my reasons for wanting to stay finally boil down to a sense of commitment to the people of this country — there are so many incredibly impressive people here. They have really had to define their morality and their ethics — the issues are so important. I was in England for a year and I felt the issues were quite trivial there. So, I have a sense of pride at being part of the movement for change.

'And then there is also the land, the terrific feeling of space and the indefinable quality of light. For the first 15 years of my life in this country I sighed for the green hills of 'home' until one day I suddenly had an almost St Paul-on-the-road-to-Damascus conversion, looking at the low hills of the Eastern Cape, the scrub, the thyme bushes and cycads: I thought, 'I really love this land'. It has all truly got inside me, and that has a strong pull when one talks of leaving. Grahamstown is probably deeply entwined with my own identity.

'Living here now is very different from living in places like Cape Town. The townships are very close and you are very aware of what is going on. The Casspirs and police are very visible and it feels so much like a frontier. It has something of the Wild West heritage — whatever goes into the townships passes through the main areas of Grahamstown.

'The benefit of living at such close quarters to the townships is that we have established very firm links with the people. Through them we feel the harsh conditions of poverty and unemployment, the effects of the violence unleashed by state repression. We face a magnitude of problems. You get terribly involved — it gets quite heady working in the struggle, you know. But you feel quite

Rosemary van Wyk Smith



BLACK SASH ARCHIVES

'I have had to face what I was frightened of and come to terms with that.'

breathless sometimes, and I think there is a limit to what you can shoulder. I do feel this tremendous sense of commitment, but I don't know how I'll feel in six months' time. You wonder how long you can go on coping emotionally with these problems.

'I've decided that this year I'm going to try to define the boundaries. I haven't been very good at saying 'no', at taking on only one task and doing it well. I think you mustn't ever see yourself as indispensable. The problems are so awesome that it'll take years ... Aside from the things I've mentioned, what keeps me going is the rapid change over the past two years, and the fascination! I do think we're living in a very, very interesting time.'

The residents

In the following perspectives the decision to remain here was by no means a foregone conclusion. Although she now unambiguously places herself in this category, there was a time when Beverley Runciman and her husband faced the dilemmas of leaving.

Beverley Runciman

'When our son was born we started to talk about leaving with a sense of excitement, of going off and doing something together while we still had one small baby. 'Let's go out and explore!' By the time our second son was born I was working for the End Conscription Campaign and my attitude had hardened to 'I want to go — yesterday'. All this time Dunstan was convinced he was staying because his skills as an industrial designer were needed; he saw a role for himself and he was quite happy to contribute. We had arguments — not fights — but they got quite divisive!

'Several years ago I met an impressive woman at Pollsmoor while she was on a visit to her husband, a long-term political prisoner. We talked at length about the thousands of conscripts who were leaving. She said, 'We can't all go. Who is going to fight the struggle?' and then she said something that made me think for a long time, 'Anyway, they'll leave their toes in Africa'.

'The conversation affected me deeply. On one level, and in a strange way, I felt that for the first time I was being given permission to be white with integrity in South Africa by being invited to remain here and take part in the inevitable process of change. I was honoured that a black woman like her included people like me in her use of 'we'. That was some time ago and since then, of course, the ANC and other organisations fighting the struggle have called publicly for whites to remain here and participate in the reconstruction of the new South Africa — and this has strengthened my resolve to stay. 'On another level that conversation started

me thinking, 'Can I pull my toes out of Africa now?' I'm not from Cape Town; I'm from Zambia — and that is real Africa, you know. I lived and grew up in a place where there were no cars. I became an urbanised African only later when we moved to the cities.

'The question for me then was 'Could I go?', and as I became more and more politically committed, the question changed further to 'Do I want to go?' I began to wonder what I was going to do over there — fight apartheid? Well, why not stay here and fight apartheid? What's the point of moving your whole family to do something you can do at home much more successfully? Or if not more successfully, then at least in a different way. And that just gelled.

'Another major motivation for not leaving is simply that I feel I have no right to take up that option when 80% of the population don't have that option. When I think of what people in the townships are forced to live with, I really succumb to the whole guilt trip bit.

'I have had to face what I was frightened of and come to terms with that. Nothing I was specifically frightened of has happened to me yet. I suppose a bloody revolution frightens me most, but then who's to say that is definitely going to happen? We don't know what's going to happen, so why flee?

'People use so many contradictory positions to support their decisions to leave. Some arguments seem to be implying I'm doing something wrong by staying and so each time I hear somebody's leaving I have to reaffirm my desire to stay and why I'm staying.

'Commitment is such a funny word. I never think of myself now as 'committed'. It's more a case of 'permanent' — this is my home. Where else in the world can I make as genuine a contribution as here? I feel we have such an opportunity to make a significant impact on life here even if the impact is in little things. I have a chance to do things that count, and in other countries there may not be the big issues to grapple with.

'I must say, the fact that every choice you make is a difficult one, is a bit exhausting. I long to get up in the morning and just be free of those stresses, tensions, the anxieties about people in jail, the knock on the door. It has never happened to me, but the consciousness that it could makes you into an incredibly light sleeper which seems to last for life — it doesn't go away after the emergency!

'In the end, I'm a bit of a fatalist (or is it the Christian ethos of my upbringing?). I think I'm here to work out what I can actually change. What is the ultimate potential in your personal growth? It's how you land up when you're an old lady and you think, 'What have I done with my life? Have I accepted the challenges or have I run from them?' The

Beverley Runciman



GILL COWAN

'In the present climate you have to explore and find the gaps for creative action.'

macro challenge is right here in my country, and I'm hopeful for the future.'

Jenny de Tolly

In 1980, after living in Canada for eleven years, Jenny de Tolly and her husband, South African-born architect and planner respectively, returned to South Africa with their two children. The visit, which was planned as a two-year 'break' with no intention of staying, has been lengthened and changed to permanent residence of a kind which is anything but passive.

'In a lot of ways, coming back was almost as accidental as going. When we left in 1969 the economy was in much the same state as now. It was the Verwoerd/Vorster era and Cape Town was hopelessly stultified. Professionally, work in Canada was very exciting and we both became very involved there. I went through a very germane experience as part of a community living in 250 houses on an island off-shore from downtown Toronto. We were all faced with eviction, and we mounted a very strong and incredibly effective campaign to stop it.

'That was a very important learning experience for me. As a white South African who escaped from here because of a feeling of utter helplessness and uselessness, that experience gave me a sense of 'Hey, I've got rights and I can do something about my future!' I came back with the knowledge that I couldn't be passive again, and my family were well forewarned!

'We came back initially for my kids to spend time with my family, who are a terribly strong and important thing in my life. We also came back after Botha's 'Adapt or Die' speech, choosing to believe that he realised that radical change was needed, and hoping that our skills would be useful in the construction of a more equitable society. We were both strongly motivated by a sense of being able to contribute in a society where there wasn't the abundance of skills that there is in North America.

'We are a family who debates everything endlessly, and of course we keep challenging ourselves on the relevance of what one is doing here. But in the most real terms, I think, having looked at ourselves very honestly, when you look around the world there are really only so many choices. We had a wonderful life in Canada but when you have lived in the cold you have to be very realistic about whether you want to grow old in the cold. And then there are the Cape mountains, which are Peter's spiritual home and which exerted a very strong pull.

'Having changed continents twice has given us a degree of perspective on the way in which your lives are controlled no matter where you are. Living in North America you begin to perceive the degree to which you are

subliminally manipulated. It is a very consumer-oriented continent and, in fact, its very balance is dependent on the degree to which you consume. As to overt political control in Canada, a lot of the same rules apply there as here and one mustn't kid oneself that the politicians are any less powerful or ruthless. The essential difference between here and there is what the public will accept, and that the contests between opposing forces are conducted in a very public arena provided by the media.

'Being involved in Sash and getting to meet more black people has opened so much for me. I found the first two years back very hard — most women were so depressing, obsessed with the colour of their pools and their children's education. Joining Sash was an important turning point. I found women who were prepared to get up and do something, and who were just so much more interesting.

'Possibly one of the most germane experiences for me here has been meeting Matthew Goniwe. One is denied access to meeting people of that quality through the way apartheid works, and one comes to realise there are plenty of people like that. Of course, they don't dare show their leadership too strongly or they'll be killed or detained.

'In the present climate you have to explore and find the gaps for creative action. You can't go for big ambitious schemes, and you really just go on doing those simple things which keep alive what you want there to be at the end — reinforcing the democratic process in our own organisation and with other groups and organisations that are trying to establish themselves. Now that's very, very hard in the context of the state's actions, the violence and the brutalisation. The challenge of working for Sash has become so strong in me that a lot of other things become peripheral. It is an incredible, special organisation and, having survived 30 years, it is now going through a transition. I want to be a part of that.

'I understand my privilege but I'm not massively burdened by it. My privilege and Sash's privilege give us certain spaces that other people can't use, and we must use them as effectively and creatively as we can. The protections we have may well be getting very frail but the reality is even if you hit jail you're unlikely to die in jail, which in itself is something we should recognise as allowing us to push the boundaries a lot further than we do.

'Having experienced so much change I'm not scared of it, although I find it painful. As an optimist I look that much further ahead. If I were to let the horrors of now and of what I know is going to have to happen in the next ten years overwhelm me, then I would become immobilised and useless. And I don't like being useless! □

Jenny de Tolly



GILL COWAN



Can any good dragon
join in?

'Is this a private fight or can anyone join in?'

Anthony Barker, medical missionary extraordinary, practised for 30 years at the Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital in Nqutu in Natal. When mission hospitals were taken over by the government 10 years ago he moved to England, where he practised as a consultant in a London teaching hospital before retirement. Dr Barker spent the last six months helping to establish the Alexandra Clinic in Johannesburg.

In his 1986 graduation address to graduates in the law and medical faculties of the University of Cape Town, he spoke of the need in us for revision, and the excitement of facing new realities despite the present uncertainties. The following extract is from the closing section of his address.

FOR those who feel they can in honour stay, our history is filled with examples — men and women whose message we hear very clearly now. These are they who, from their response to our original question, 'What do I do now?', bid us take heart again, even at this late hour when the children are already dying ...

What would happen if they — if you — failed to carry on with the fight? Happily, mankind is a dragon-fighting species. All of us like to say with the Irishman who saw a good scrap developing in the pub, 'Is this a private fight, or can anyone join in?'

In this time, when the dragons are out in all their vanity and power, there is plenty of opportunity for us all to join in. We are well-equipped professionally to do so. We are sufficiently informed (in spite of the national lullaby daily played over our radio network); we are ready and willing to join in the struggle. But I think that there is one thing that we might yet need to nerve our arm and to steel our resolution. It is a measure of hopefulness. Hope is a virtue somewhat in eclipse just now, if only because we haven't thought very much about it, but I sense it was a fundamental hope in them that kept these doughty fighters I have mentioned, in the field. And which, moreover, enabled them so often to overcome.

Perhaps you think I'm lapsing into mere romance? That I am whistling extra loudly in the swirling darkness of this time? I am not. I learn this need for hope, not from the polite people of our

protected society, but from Alexandra and Zululand, and the impoverished and disadvantaged. Hear it in contemporary political satire, in freedom songs, in churches throughout the land. Recognise it in hospital wards, and in law courts when charges are dropped, one by one. See it in the ebullience of those who have come out of detention and earned their spurs in prison.

If these men and women, who have suffered so much more than we have, embody this splendid and cheerful virtue, who are we to grouch around without it?

We agonise, all of us, over the truly awful things that are going on in our South Africa. Sometimes we seem almost beaten to the ground. And yet, where more than here are there so many attainable goals, so many things to do for the amelioration of our wretched condition? We really can make a difference if we go on and on and on, like the Black Sash. Slowly we undermine the silliness of official orthodoxy. Who now preaches that apartheid which once was thought to be a direct export from the Kingdom of Heaven?

So let us show due courage: re-arm ourselves hopefully. With steady nerve and irrepressible hope, we know what to do now. We may even echo King Harry's words before Agincourt: 'Now God be praised who has matched us to this hour!' □

a letter from transkei

dorothea russell



OMAR BADSHA — AFRAPIX

It will be hard to do justice to how it is *LemaXhoseni*. Life here is lived at many levels: the beauty of Transkei, the warmth of the people, the generosity of the poor, the poverty, the oh-so-many ambiguities . . . and one learns, with time, to operate at these many levels, and to live with these many ambiguities.

Rains this season have been unprecedented in their abundance: the hills are soft and green, the grass long and lush. Around where we are, on the edge of Umtata, are spaces of endless open green. It's wonderful and good — so good for growing, energetic boys. With the convenience of a large town behind us, our situation, domestically speaking, is ideal, almost.

Yet the disturbing ambiguities hover. A few days ago I was in the local supermarket as usual, but with a different purpose — this time to buy a cake to bring to the Transkei Council of Churches office — all six staff members had just been released from detention — happy occasion, sobering reminder . . .

During our time here we have made many journeys, *en famille*, into the interior. Parts of Pondoland's sub-tropical lushness contrast sharply with Mount Ayliff's harsh scrub and Mount Frere's thin, poor eroded soil. Are we ever to forget Matatiele at the foot of the Maluti Mountains? 'Sweet Matat,' they say, 'where Jesus was nearly born.'

Our journeys have taken us to all sorts of places. I think of sitting down to evening prayer in Mvenyane, north-west Transkei, and that great extended family of Magadla — nineteen people, in flickering lamplight, singing some old, melodious, Xhosa hymns — a nightly event before supper. It was a supper which delighted our children, Siphos and Thabo, because they had helped to chase and catch that chicken and witnessed its quick slaughter, defeathering, cleaning of innards and roasting.

And Lusikisiki — what a journey to get there! Swivel, skid, slide on those wet, soft mud, dirt roads — nice canyons falling below us on either side — never mind, we're on a bus route. But we reach our destination — a mission station in the forest, verdant, lush, sub-tropical, misty, humid forest full of animals of many kinds — the local people knowing them only by their Xhosa names. The vervet monkeys come cheekily and frequently into the yard near Mhlauli's house where we were staying, to help themselves to a chicken or two, thus diminishing the income from the fowl being reared for selling!

It is a humbling experience, beyond anything I can ever describe, to be hosted in these little known places — the endless care taken to provide for our comfort and total, warm acceptance. Separate water is provided for teeth, apart from the pail of cold water and the pail of warm water for washing. And then

'Things here ... go their own way. They are swerving and not going straight.'

the lamps, candle lights, and the many touches of care and much trouble taken at mealtimes . . . lovely practised hosts.

And what is the other reality of these picturesque villages of round, thatched huts, nestling in soft valleys, lovely to the eye, warming to the heart — like Embhukuqweni, in the Xora district of the Eastern Transkei? Who has heard of Embhukuqweni in that wildly beautiful part of the country? Like many another unknown *lali* (small village), babies and very young children die there of hunger and hunger-related sicknesses.

Sikalazo Nqankqolo's family circumstances would typify an *umzi* (homestead) where hardship and hunger are daily visitors, not welcomed, but endured in a numb pain, with resignation. Sikalazo was born here in September 1968. His father spends much time in *iGoli* (Johannesburg) unemployed. His baby brother and baby sister, born in 1970 and 1972 respectively, both died before they reached their first birthdays.

By the time attractive, strong-featured Sikalazo (his name means 'complaint') was ten years old he was so malnourished and weak through years of prolonged hunger that he was sent to live with his mother's sister, Vetyetye, in another village, Cefane, to have some share in their *umqubo* (usually samp, beans, veg. and gravy, and occasionally meat). Meantime, his mother worked in Umtata. Sikalazo lived under some hardship because Vetyetye's husband is a bad-tempered man.

Two years later his mother returned to Embhukuqweni, leaving her back-breaking, R20-a-month job of breaking stones: it was killing her. Hearing of his mother's return home, Sikalazo took his opportunity, and, by stealth, one night, fled back to his mother — and back to hunger.

By 1985, having reached Std 4, his education, such as it was, fell by the wayside and the young lad had now to become, at seventeen years, the family's breadwinner, responsible for paying sister Pumpum's school fees and for her few books, as well as for fighting off hunger in their small hut in the hills.

At this time, Nonqukumfa, his mother, had one sheep and one lamb. The lamb died. So terrible was this loss in 1985 that the wrath of Tswi, the father, descended upon his wife and son in a violent way. The fragile structure of the Nqankqolo family was shattered over the death of a lamb.

Shortly after this incident, an *umlungu* (white man) arrived in the vicinity of Embhukuqweni in a bakkie. He loaded up the back with young lads capable of work and took them off to a tea plantation in Natal. Along went Sikalazo. This work, which lasted from May to October of 1985, brought the family R50 a month.

Sikalazo then tried his luck in Umtata. For days and weeks on end the refrain was 'No work'. At last, in March 1986, weary and hopeless, he found a job in a garage, for R15 a month, cleaning car-parts and the garage workshop generally. Exhausted from long hours and hard work, with so little pay, the 18-year-old did what surprised even himself. He walked out of the job — and with no prospects whatever of another one.

To make a long story short, his mother's brother, old Dlamini, took him under his wing, and today, Sikalazo has a garden job earning R100 a month. This is a help for one *umzi*, not too far from the much celebrated Transkei Wild Coast.

Recently we visited Ngqeleni, 30 km east of Umtata. In a homestead we learned that Mr Skoko, an elder of the *umzi* had, by wonderful chance, a job waiting for him in Umtata. The problem of getting there turned out to be a major one. He needed R3 for the bus to Umtata. Unfortunately we had no money with us. 'Perhaps someone could lend you R3?' we ventured. Heads hung and shook from side to side in the dim, soft light of the round mud-hut, and there was silence. A tawny kid goat scuttled across the dung-smearred floor, and our children laughed at the sight of it and chased it under a bed.

'No, no one can lend money here'.

'No one? In the whole village?'

'No, your child can be sick or it can be something as serious as that, but no one can lend money'.

And out of the silence that followed came the solution of sending someone down to Ngqeleni from Umtata on the following day, with the R3 in order to enable Mr Skoko to take the job as a watchman.

Because of the near total absence of cash in the whole village, it cost R6 and five hours journeying on buses and in taxis, in order that one man could take up a job.

It is thus, time and again, that the great question 'What can be done?' is thrust upon us. As one man from Lusikisiki said, 'Things here, therefore, go their own way. They are swerving and not going straight'. That is one way of putting it. And, clearly, there are no easy answers. This is grim, brute poverty in which the rural poor seem to be forever trapped. It is their reality — as they wake and rise to face the day — every day. Clearly, whatever happens in the future of our land, the realities facing poor people in the rural areas have to be a central concern of the churches and the wider society.

Greetings to all friends. Every good wish and all strength to the Black Sash in your efforts to let the truth be known.

Dorothea Russell

Dorothea Russell



the york conference on post-apartheid south africa

laurine platzky

It's not that post-apartheid South Africa is around the corner, but unless academics get going and come up with some pretty sorted-out alternatives, we're simply going to have the same system with more black faces in a wider variety of jobs', commented one academic at the York Conference held at the end of October 1986.

As I see it, there are three good reasons for shifting some of our energies from the current crisis to an examination of a longer-term perspective. Firstly, we tend to become caught up in the day-to-day opposition to apartheid. In the almost overwhelmingly repressive climate, we need to shake ourselves occasionally and ask where we are heading. What do we want in the long-term, and how does that fashion our current strategies and direction? We need goals towards which we can strive. Simply fighting apartheid is neither sufficient to define the methods of opposition used, nor is it preparing us for the future society.

Secondly, South Africans — black and white — have no experience of democracy. Even whites who are given the chance to vote every few years, are ignored or silenced if their views are slightly left or right of the ruling faction of the National Party. Without sound democratic structures, participation in policy-making in post-apartheid South Africa is likely to be extremely limited, so that the range of options is not able to be seriously considered by the majority of South Africans.

Thirdly, people's demands are based on their experience. If that experience is limited to existing options, without exposure to

alternatives, demands will reflect only current thinking. It is necessary to integrate future policy issues, including those based on the demands of the Freedom Charter, into debates within the trade unions and popular organisations.

It is thus important to bring home the debates on post-apartheid South Africa currently occurring outside the country. For it is the majority of people inside South Africa who must mould future policy. It is out of an integrated process of practical struggle here and now, and exposure to theoretical debates, that policy should be formulated. Mere sloganising will bring neither liberation nor food, housing and clothing in the future. In the process of giving content to demands, alternative solutions can begin to be considered.

The York Conference on 'The Southern African Economy after Apartheid' was one of the first of a number of meetings to discuss different aspects of a future South Africa. It attracted a wide range of academics, fieldworkers and others. The papers presented varied considerably in standard, accuracy and perspective. For a first attempt to debate these issues, I found the conference both very exciting and depressing. It was exciting to meet in person and debate with so many people whose names are familiar from the literature only. It was depressing, however, to see what little work has been done, and in those areas which have been broached, to realise how tentative those first steps are. Some sessions, such as 'The economist's role in the apartheid debate' and 'International comparisons: South Africa vs Latin America', were dominated by

economic, often technical, debates relatively unrelated to problems seen from the ground.

Other sessions, such as 'An economic overview: will South Africa be socialist?' and 'Trade unions and industrial relations', generated heated debate, particularly between academics of various ideological persuasions and observers from the ANC.

In other sessions I attended on population pressure, urbanisation, redistribution, 'Employment: women and the informal sector' and 'Agriculture: the land question and the political economy of the agricultural sector', I found some of the papers most stimulating and useful. Doug Hindson, who was one of the few to offer any thoughts on future research priorities, rather than concentrating on current trends, pointed to some strategies for handling urbanisation. There were also controversial papers such as that presented by Matthew Cobbett on 'The land question in South Africa: a preliminary assessment', in which he claimed there was no real demand for land; that, in a liberated South Africa, most people presently living in rural areas would move to town and, by implication, that rural development is not a pressing priority. (This is highly unlikely. In my experience thousands of people who have been removed, for example, are desperate to return to their land and to re-establish themselves as farmers.)

Space does not permit a review of the papers but — resuming the argument that these debates should not be inaccessible to local people, that they should be integrated into organisations, and indeed, that the researchers should more consciously be listening to the ground opinion in order to inform their theories — the final session of presentations, entitled 'What kind of economic system?' brought a number of perspectives together. In particular, John Saul's presentation, 'Race, class and the future of socialism in South Africa', using concepts of 'popular democratic' and 'proletarian' movements, explains why a 'positive dialectic' between them should be cause for optimism in building a society free of oppression and exploitation. □

jacarandas, casspirs and other signs of the time

cherryl walker

From Grahamstown a number of spindly roads fan out in an arc across the grey-green ridges and flatlands of the Eastern Cape, connecting the town to a number of small and widely scattered communities: moving clockwise from the south, Port Alfred and Kenton on the coast; Alexandria a little inland; Alicedale and Riebeeck East to the west; then Somerset East, Cookhouse, Bedford and Adelaide in a sweep to the north, and finally Fort Beaufort on the Ciskeian border.

They are tiny towns, their populations ranging from 1 500 to 12 000, largely unknown in other parts of the country, yet all intensely affected by the unrest that engulfs South Africa. Despite their smallness, their isolation and the endemic poverty, the level of politicisation among the black population of these towns is remarkably high. Although the two States of Emergency of the past 18 months have sent community organisations reeling, in recent years all have built up a full and active complement of civic, youth, student and women's organisations. Residents have staked their claims for real reforms, ones that would give them their rightful place in their country, through local campaigns — consumer boycotts, educational boycotts, stayaways — yet understand the national dimension to their struggle. On the other side of town, uneasy whites take shooting lessons and hire private guards, while sons and husbands join the commandos patrolling the dusty

township streets, and the security police go about their job of preserving the law and the order of the Republic with a ruthless zeal.

This is the area where the Albany Black Sash works. For many years it concentrated on the familiar problems that have constituted the workload of advice offices around the country: pass laws, UIF, housing, forced removals, pensions. In April 1985 some members decided to focus their energies more systematically on the cycle of community resistance and state repression that had been gathering momentum since 1984. All through the first State of Emergency and into the second, a small but extremely hardworking group of women has struggled to respond adequately to the escalating demands of a situation that more and more resembles a civil war. They collected statements and affidavits from the victims of repression; tried to direct those in need to the appropriate resource agencies, such as lawyers, doctors, detention support groups; organised a bail fund; attended the funerals that scarred the calendar with brutal regularity.

The volume of work was overwhelming, especially for a small group of volunteers, most of whom had full-time jobs and many other commitments. Early in 1986 it was decided to open a research office and to employ someone full-time to help coordinate and develop this work.

I arrived to open the office at

the beginning of August, when the second State of Emergency was nearly two months old. By then three key members of Black Sash — Priscilla Hall, Ann Burroughs and Louise Vale — were in detention. Massive detentions in the outlying towns had effectively severed the always vulnerable communication links between people there and Grahamstown. Community leaders not in detention were in hiding. Nobody was sure what could be published or what the consequences of reporting on events might be. Grahamstown's own black townships, geographically linked to the town in a way that apartheid had managed to destroy in so many other places, were virtually no-go areas for non-residents, sealed off by the massive presence of army and police and patrolled with a frightening thoroughness by the newly constituted municipal police force of the Rini Town Council (as the black local authority had now come to be called). Army and police Casspirs were a daily sight in the High Street; roadblocks a routine feature of travel.

Similar conditions prevailed in other parts of the country, of course. What adds a particular ferocity to the situation in the Eastern Cape is the smallness of the communities involved, their isolation from the resources and support networks operating in the larger centres, as well as the deep-seated frontier mentality of most white inhabitants. Repression in the Eastern Cape has a frighteningly personal dimension to it. It is not an easy place in which to hide.

My job over the past five months has been, essentially, to try to systematise and to continue the monitoring work already started — in a climate which makes all non-state-controlled information-gathering and dissemination suspect. My task has been defined as four-fold: ongoing monitoring of events; documentation; information and analysis; and liaison with other groups with similar objectives. While material collected over the past two years cries out for detailed analysis, the continuing

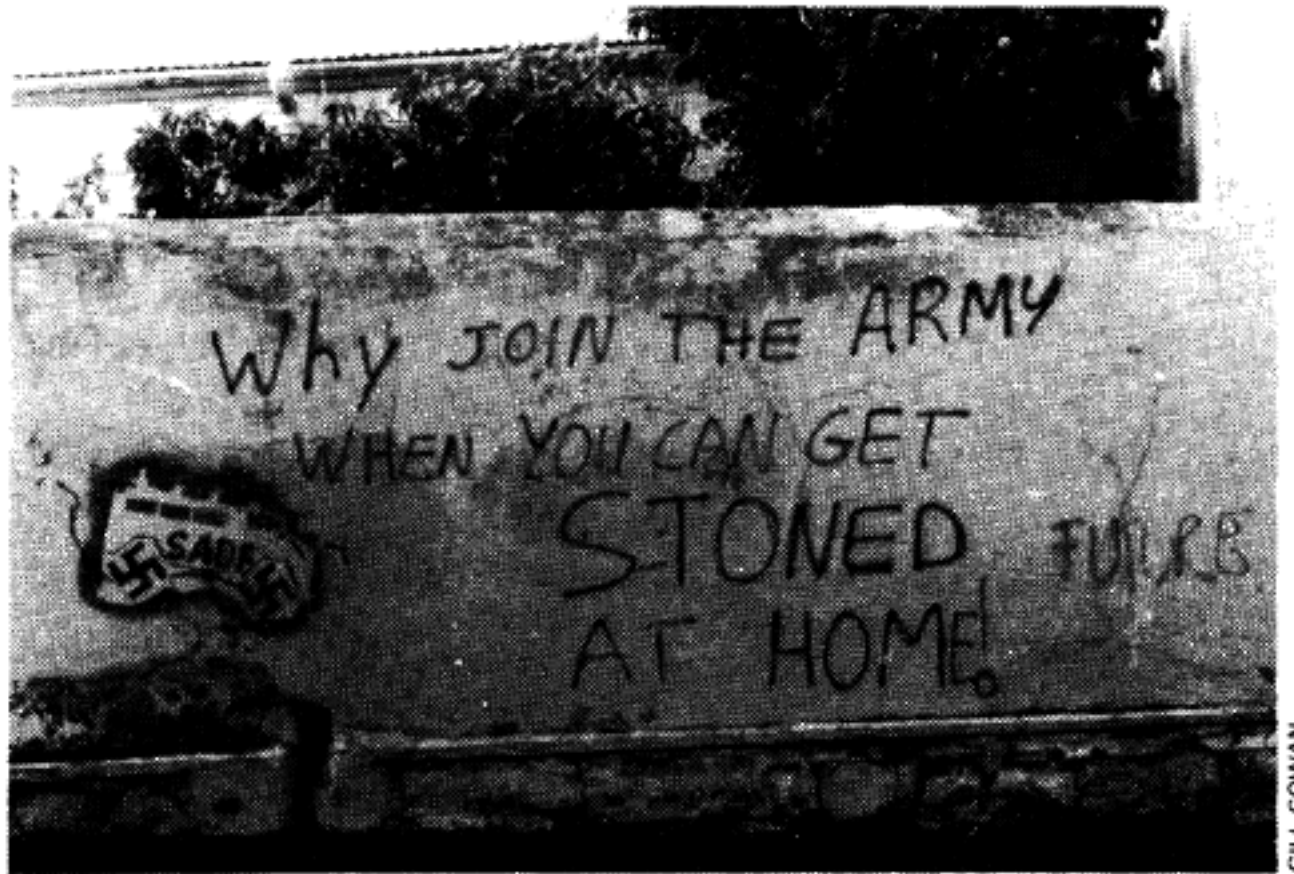
crisis takes up much time: a child detained, an alleged assault by a municipal policeman, an attack on a suspected police informer by angry youths. Even when everything appears quiet, a sense of imminent crisis lurks in one's mind.

We now have a functioning office, a word processor and a car. Statements continue to be collected and processed and such reports as come our way recorded. We try to keep track of names and numbers, and, where possible, to remind the world of what is happening. (The latest emergency regulations on press censorship are deeply disturbing; they strike at the heart of much of our work.) Although it is sometimes hard to accept the relevance of documentary work in times like these, the archivist and historian in me knows that it is important that a record of the terrible things that people are enduring in the townships and in the jails should be preserved.

In the midst of all this tension and uncertainty, white Grahamstown goes about its daily business with a blinkered determination to pretend that all is under control, which is often difficult to comprehend. Ignorance is compounded by fear and by greed. Part of our task has been to try to penetrate the defences, and to make the white community aware of what is happening down the road — through letters to the press, statements, a pamphlet for the 'Free the Children' campaign. What the impact of this is, is hard to assess. It seems that a siege mentality is taking hold. Neighbourhood meetings called to establish neutral, non-political community guard squads who will patrol their own suburbs in close liaison with the S A Police are well-attended. On the surrounding farms, the security fences and security lights are going up.

In the meantime, the local paper reports on commemorative dinners and craft shows, and 'Fright Night' plays at His Majesty's. At times it is hard to straddle the contradictions. Can spring really be so exuberant during a State of Emergency — can jacaranda blooms be so blue? □

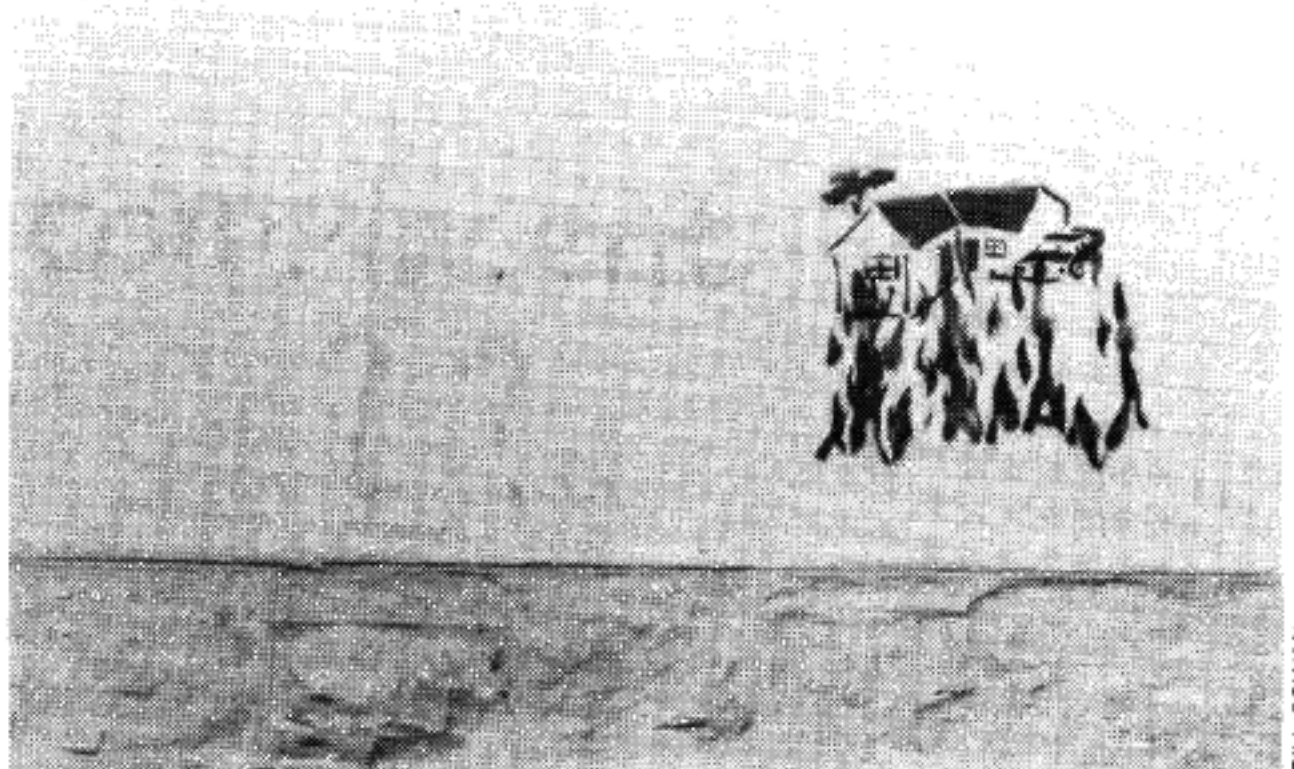
More signs of the time: local graffiti



GILL COWAN



GILL COWAN



GILL COWAN

an open letter

Dear Mrs Burton

I would be very interested to know what is happening to the Black Sash. I joined about 15 years ago, believing that it was an organisation of level-headed, intelligent women and that it stood for everything that was sound, honest and upright. Every society needs a conscience. We were that, and I felt proud and privileged to belong.

Ten or so years ago in South Africa it was relatively simple to distinguish the good from the evil, the just from the unjust, the true from the false. The Black Sash protested against what was clearly evil, and fought for the rights of the oppressed.

Today, however, we are caught between two ruthlessly cruel and terrifying evils. Anyone who protests against and condemns the one receives applause and approval from the whole world — deservedly so. At the mere mention of the other, there seems to be apologetic discomfort, or a sinister silence.

I attended a Black Sash workshop in Johannesburg during October 1986, in the hope that my confusion would be dispelled. However, this was not to be. It was clear that we all stand united against the evil of apartheid. But there seemed an unwillingness to admit even the existence of any other evil, this horror that has hardly touched our comfortable lives — yet. The tyranny, terror and murder in the townships profoundly affects the lives of the very people for whose rights the Black Sash has striven so valiantly all these years. People seemed to be reluctant to discuss this at all.

I am a nursing sister and I work with sisters who live in Soweto. What they say about life there is mind-bending. They speak only for themselves. They do not make sweeping statements claiming to speak for the nation or for the people. They do not volunteer information, looking for sympathy, understanding or moral support. Their stories vary only in detail.

They all say that one of the worst aspects of life in Soweto is that no one trusts anyone anymore.

They fear the police. Many say the police cause trouble and incite the youngsters, provoking violence and anger. A man I know told me his little brother was shot in the back and killed by the police while hiding from them — in a church.

They all fear the militant black youth, even more than the police. Those who pay their rent live in fear. Those who do not pay their rent live in fear. They speak of knocks on the

door late at night — children demanding compulsory donations for a wounded comrade or for a funeral. They dare not question or give less than R1. One family I heard of had about three or four youths move into their house one weekend. They simply took over, saying they had come to Soweto for a funeral. The family were too afraid to object.

A sister in another ward lost her husband earlier this year. On his way home he was dragged from his car, stoned to death and set alight. He was a young policeman. Then the family lived in dread for the day of his funeral. (I wished I had had the courage to go. We just sent her a tin of biscuits and a card.) I told a young black priest about this and his reaction was 'Oh well, they must expect it!' This attitude shook me rigid.

Would those brave ladies who attend funerals in the townships attend the funeral of a necklace victim? I ask sincerely, not critically. Is not all human life of infinite value and of equal worth?

I know that this violence is the result of apartheid. It was because of the monstrous violence of apartheid that I joined the Black Sash. But I find I cannot 'just understand' the violence. I have always detested the brutal acts of the police, the torture and killings and detentions. But why does it seem to be frowned upon when one expresses outrage and revulsion when people are hacked to death or stoned or burnt alive? Are silence and 'understanding' not simply an appeasement of this new monster, which we dread?

When other people behave in a savagely depraved and cruel way I feel compelled to condemn such acts, utterly. To do anything less, to just 'understand' — or even worse, to make allowances — seems to me to be a subtle, patronising insult not only to the humanity of murderous thugs but an affront to and a betrayal of all decent black people. I believe that selectively disregarding individual suffering because it is 'understandable' makes one an accomplice by default in murder and dementia and in the final destruction of all civilised values. I believe that we need to hold fast to truth, we need to fight duplicity in ourselves and in others, we need to cherish the sanctity of all human life. To do otherwise would be to cease, ourselves, to be wholly human. And history and our children would **not** defend us.

Yours sincerely

Barbara N. Waite

Mary Burton's reply

The central issue raised in this letter is whether the Black Sash has altered its attitude to the use of violent methods of bringing about change in South Africa. It is a question which has been asked before, and which has given rise to considerable debate within our organisation. It has been argued in the columns of our magazine, where it was the subject of an editorial in November 1984. Discussion at the 1986 National Conference led to the subsequent publication of a policy statement and a working paper on the principles of non-violence.

The fact that the question is being raised again is an indication of the deep concern which is inevitably felt by any organisation working towards the recognition and protection of human rights and liberties. The debate is also evidence of the tensions and anxieties which result from the dramatic increase in levels of violence throughout the country. The question is asked most pointedly because in the past few years the Black Sash has been seen to be working more closely with a number of community organisations. There is the underlying implication that some of these may be, if not responsible for, at least tolerant of, violent tactics.

My understanding is that the leaders of these organisations are committed to seeking non-violent methods of changing South Africa's structures. In mid-January, for example, representatives of the UDF, AZAPO and COSATU called for an end to violence in the townships. My closer contact during the past year with all regions of the Black Sash has convinced me that this commitment also remains true for all our own members. That we are able to explore and contain diverse opinions on particular issues, without sliding away from our basic principles, is part of our strength.

Our advice offices and our fieldworkers receive information about violence and counter-violence, and we continue to have a responsibility to all the people who seek our help. Among those who do so are people who in urban townships or rural communities experience brutal repression of resistance to the policy and practice of apartheid. In some areas where non-violent strategies such as boycotts have had a considerable effect on public opinion, leaders have been harassed and detained. When questions were asked

concerning the use of coercive methods of forcing people to join boycotts or stayaways, the reply sometimes given is: 'The whites are forced to join SADF; we also must conscript people onto our side'. For some years we have actively opposed conscription, and we do not support this version of it, but now the emergency regulations prevent us from voicing our view of compulsory military service.

The curbs on discussion and the organisation of many non-violent tactics create a crucial lacuna in the heart of this debate. We cannot hear the reasoning of those who have grown disillusioned with peaceful methods and turned to armed struggle. Nor can we rely on the wisdom of many of those leaders who might have kept the anger and impatience of their supporters in check, for they have been detained. There are heavy penalties for planning any civil disobedience. Rallies, demonstrations, even a cultural festival are all banned. In the townships funerals became occasions at which people could meet for a public show of support. Members of the Black Sash have attended funerals where we have known those who have died, or their families, or when we have been invited to be there — often because the families believed that our presence might help to ensure a peaceful outcome.

I believe that all the work of the Black Sash, whether it is in the sphere of advice office work or political campaigning, is a peaceful part of the march towards a new South Africa. We have tried to address the problem of violence and its effect on the population, particularly the youth of this country by, for example, holding a seminar in Cape Town and a conflict-resolution meeting in Port Elizabeth. We do reaffirm both our opposition to apartheid and also our absolute commitment to non-violence. We do agree with Dr Allan Boesak that violent tactics dehumanise the perpetrators at the same time as they hurt the victims. It is important that we say so. But I believe this is not enough. We must not withdraw from the struggle for freedom but must instead find ways of contributing to it that do not conflict with our principles. We must demonstrate by our actions that there *are* still other ways to bring about change. But we know that these ways are costly, and that the risks of peaceful but effective action grow steadily greater.

The Black Sash statement on violence

We live in a time when the struggle against the institutionalised violence of apartheid is rendering the townships ungovernable and bringing the country to the brink of civil war.

During war, violence breeds violence, and there are atrocities on both sides; winning a 'war of liberation' does not necessarily result in a just peace. In an increasingly warlike situation, what is required of an organisation such as Black Sash which is committed to justice and the rule of law and the use of non-violent methods in the attainment of these?

Some of our members claim that just as we have consistently condemned the structural violence of apartheid, now we should also condemn the 'liberatory violence' of those who have taken up arms against apartheid: that unless we do so we shall be acting on the basis of expediency rather than on principle. Others are uneasy lest we stand in judgement on people caught in a desperate struggle for survival and self-defence.

All of us feel deep revulsion and horror at spectacles of violence such as the necklacing of 'informers' and the exultant youths surrounding the victims; also deep alarm at the seemingly arbitrary and anarchic forms of violence that are intensifying the miseries of township life, to the point where people caught in the crossfire are fleeing like refugees to rural areas or to hiding places in the suburbs. And all of us want such things not to happen, just as we want an end to apartheid oppression, which is provoking and fuelling such violence.

It is difficult to contribute effectively to the ending of those and all other kinds of political violence and to the establishing of a just peace. And it is the latter task — learning to contribute effectively to the struggle for a society based on justice and the rule of law — that is the real challenge. To that task we commit ourselves.

Issued by the National Headquarters of The Black Sash, 5 Long Street, Mowbray, Cape Town, 7700.

December 1986



'During war, violence breeds violence, and there are atrocities on both sides ...' A cemetery wall provides a backdrop for increasing anger.

workshop on 'sash today and tomorrow'

charlene smith



The Black Sash is a group of 'intellectually powerful women and when that power is released great things can happen'.

This comment was made by an outside facilitator during the summing up at Transvaal Region's 'Sash Today and Tomorrow' workshop in October 1986.

The workshop was organised to evaluate who we are, where we are, what we think, and where we go from here. A pleasant surprise for the almost 100 members who attended was that, despite the pressures and splits in South African society, most of us are concerned about similar issues and still hold similar thoughts on them.

Netty Davidoff, a member since 1955, gave a moving opening address in which she reflected on the Black Sash through the years. Ethel Walt, Transvaal president, reminded us of Alan Paton's remark at the dedication of Sash many years ago: 'History and our

children shall defend us'.

Participants then separated into six groups, with a facilitator in each, to discuss 'Our vision of the future'. It was gloomy — a future of increased repression and ever more restrictive information control by the state. The groups saw increased state and right-wing actions against the Sash and the perceived left. (The spate of restriction orders against members already seems to bear this out.) They recognised that the country is in a situation of civil war, and that this will continue, with increased levels of violence on all sides.

The issues of necklacing and violence occupied much agonised time in all the groups. The Black Sash has always opposed violence and, 'ideally', this is still the case. Yet apartheid is a violent system, and it is recognised that much of the counter-violence is the result

of frustration after years of life under this system.

Should we be judgmental? Some felt that it is difficult to judge those in the struggle and to know their pressures. They felt unfair security force action should be condemned because we have the right to expect the police to behave in a decent way. The security forces should be trusted friends and protectors to the public. If they do not behave in an exemplary way, we should react.

Others felt there are difficulties in always criticising the government and its agents, if we don't criticise those on the left — particularly as they are working towards a future South Africa. The means, in other words, are helping to mould the end result.

Ultimately it was felt that if we do not comment on pertinent issues, particularly in our traditional fields of endeavour, it reduces the effectiveness of the Black Sash.

It was interesting to note that, despite many debates in the past about whether Sash should affiliate to other organisations, it is now more firmly felt that one of our strengths is our independence.

A second session was devoted to looking at the Sash of the future and the role that members can play in shaping it.

In summing up, the facilitators said it appears that Sash needs to increase its flow of information into the community. There seems to be a need for more creative projects and workshops, and a revamping of internal communications. They pointed out that the growth of an organisation is often tied to a charismatic leader. When that leader removes herself there tends to be a crisis and the organisation may become more bureaucratic. This does not appear to be happening in Sash, but we should be aware of this possibility. They detected a 'cry for management training and succession grooming' — vital to prepare future Sheena Duncans, Mary Burtons and Ethel Walts!

At the end of a stimulating day, the question was: 'Why have we never done this before?' Should such a workshop not become an annual event? □

FREE THE CH

charlene smith



In late October 1986, Gill de Vlieg and Aninka Claasens approached Transvaal regional chairperson Ethel Walt to suggest a campaign for the release of the hundreds of children believed to be in detention.

Figures were sketchy. Of the 22 000 people estimated at that time to have been detained under the State of Emergency proclaimed on 12 June 1986, at least 40% were thought to be children as defined by the Children's Act, that is, persons under the age of 18. Monitors believed that, of these 8 800 children, some 1 300 to 1 800 were still being detained. (The figure has risen sharply since then.)

Two weeks after the idea was mooted, and a small committee had been formed, a wide range of organisations and individuals was invited to a working meeting. Educators, doctors, lawyers, the clergy and social workers expressed their concern about the impact of detention on children, their families and the community at large. By December, 27 organisations, including partially state-funded bodies such as the Child Welfare Society were lending support to the campaign, and a 'Free the Children Alliance' had been formed.

At the November launch delegates heard the relatives of detained children describe their distress and helplessness when family members were seized. Matthew Molefe from Kagiso — the Witwatersrand township worst hit by child detentions — sobbed as he recounted his inability to protect his 13-year-old daughter, Happy Cleopatra, when

she was taken from the family home at 4 a.m. on 24 September.

A mother with two children in detention, aged 14 and 18, said, 'Whenever I try to eat, I cannot eat. I wonder if my children are eating. I can't sleep, because I don't know where my children are sleeping. We parents of detainees don't feel like people anymore, we feel worthless. I don't know if we'll run mad or die ... I keep writing letters to the police for permission to see my children, but I've received no replies'.

In a statement supporting the campaign, the National Medical and Dental Association warned that children who have been detained may develop bitterness, resentment and a thirst for revenge which propels them along pathways of future violence and abuse.

Experience bears out this frightening assessment. Audrey Coleman, a member both of the Black Sash and the Detainees' Parents Support Committee, told of some of the children she encounters daily in the Johannesburg office of the DPSC. Two little boys, aged 11, who had spent some weeks in detention before being charged with public violence, told her that they would stone the same government building 'tomorrow' if they had the opportunity.

Ethel Walt had the idea of Christmas cards to spread the 'Free the Children' message. The initial printing of 20 000 was snapped up within two days and the committee printed 50 000 more. Bumper and envelope stickers rolled off the presses too.

Prominent individuals here and abroad endorsed the campaign: Nadine Gordimer, Helen Suzman, Helen Joseph, Sydney Kentridge and others supported a public meeting in Johannesburg. 'Free the Children' campaigns were launched in France by Madame Mitterand and in Sweden by Mrs Lisbeth Palme.

Most important of all, every time the Alliance held a public meeting, parents of detainees gave their support — desperate for the campaign to succeed. Only die-hard conservatives appeared unable to identify with the tragedy of children in detention. As Ethel Walt observed, 'What kind of society needs to be protected from its own children? ... Only a government which can no longer govern normally because it does not enjoy the consent of the governed'.

On 10 December — Human Rights Day — about 400 parents of detainees crammed the Khotso House hall for a Christmas 'party'. The purpose was to celebrate the release of child detainees, if the government had found the compassion to free them; otherwise, to mourn and renew efforts on behalf of those who were detained.

The number of parents who attended was interesting in the light of the recent attempt by Commissioner of Police, General Johan Coetzee, to dispute figures compiled by detention monitoring groups. He and the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, had claimed that there are only 256

CHILDREN




Behind the statistics is the child. Natal Coastal Region personalised the campaign: each balloon carries the name of a child in detention and the words 'Free this child'.

children aged 11 to 15 years in detention nationwide. Their statement ignored the fact that in South Africa children are legally defined as those under 18, and that 16- and 17-year-olds tend to be the target group for detentions. There were about 400 parents of detained children from the Witwatersrand alone at the party, and by the end of the day we had 66 more names of detained children of whom the DPSC had been unaware.

A small glimmer of joy was the news that 21 children, ranging in age from 10 to 17, had been released. But when it appeared that little hope could be entertained that others would be freed, Sash members tried to deliver food and balloons to prisons where children were being held:

- Modder Bee prison on the East Rand
- Diepkloof prison, near Johannesburg
- Krugersdorp prison
- Westville prison, in Natal.

The 'Free the Children' campaign appears to have been of interest to officials whom we may not name. The home of Aninka Claasens was visited at midnight. So was the home of Gill de Vlieg. Gill had left, but a house-guest of hers was held for some hours and questioned — about the campaign, among other things.

As for me, a mother, I wonder why it seems such an impossible wish to want your children at your side, why it is such an impossible, subversive thing to want peace and brotherhood in South Africa. And I fear for all our children. □



ecc: the art of bouncing back

laurie nathan

Twice in the last nine months, the End Conscription Campaign has faced Emergency restrictions that the government intended as the organisation's death warrant. On both occasions the press wrote the ECC's epitaph. No one expected an organisation to survive when its very name might be construed as a 'subversive statement'.

Yet the ECC not only survived, it sometimes even flourished under the greatest repression in its three-year history. During this time, we in the ECC have learnt a fundamental lesson: whether we continue to operate effectively depends as much on us as on the government. It depends on how well we adapt to the new situation and learn the lessons of the past year.

This article is an attempt to share our experiences, in the belief that they may be useful to others facing similar challenges.

For the first six months of 1986 the dramatic growth we had experienced since the army moved into the townships continued. Thousands of people participated in campaigns and new branches were formed in Afrikaans-speaking communities.

The ECC's national impact and the reported low morale in the army intensified the authorities' reaction. 'Troopies' were given anti-ECC lectures, senior South African Defence Force officers accused it of 'undermining the will of the young people to defend South Africa' and rightwing smear campaigns intensified. Yet as we approached mid-year our biggest complaint was that we were growing faster than we could cope with organisationally!

When the Emergency struck in June, it looked as if all this would be

thrown into reverse. The first two weeks were traumatic. About thirty of our members were jailed and our meetings were banned in the eastern and western Cape. It was now an offence to make 'subversive statements' that could 'incite the public to discredit or undermine' conscription.

Our immediate reaction was to stop all public work. Under attack, it was necessary for us to turn inwards. The repression was not simply intended to stop high-profile campaigning: it also aimed to disorganise us by intimidating our members. A key task was to hold the organisation together, nationally and at branch level, and to maintain a high level of morale. We had to create the space for members to talk about their feelings of fear and anger, and support each other.

It was equally important to improve our security arrangements so that we were less vulnerable to detentions and police surveillance. Some of our office-bearers went into hiding; we avoided discussing ECC over the telephone, and destroyed all notes after meetings. The real challenge was to do these things without falling into the trap of becoming an underground organisation. ECC has always been and will remain a legal organisation.

However, we did fall into the trap of giving security priority over democracy. Discussion and decision-making initially tended to be centralised in our executive rather than involving all our sub-committees and affiliates. When we corrected this problem we found that our democratic way of working took longer in the new situation but, if we were careful, was not



more risky or less efficient. On the contrary, it improved the quality of our decisions and helped build unity.

The detentions also exposed our dependence on a few people for leadership and direction. The break from campaign work allowed us to put more effort into organisational training, including workshops on public speaking, the production of media, chairing meetings and developing theoretical and analytical skills.

By September we had gathered our strength sufficiently to consider public action. Our lawyers advised us that, despite the Emergency regulations, there was still much we could do. We could campaign against the general militarisation of our society, the school cadet system, the presence of troops in the townships and the legislation around military service. We could continue to use our name and call for a just peace. (Although the restrictions were tightened in the December revision of the Emergency regulations, our legal position remained essentially the same.)

We knew that even if our campaigns were legal, they still carried the risk of further detentions. But we could not ban ourselves by remaining silent. We had to go out and campaign.

Our first national campaign under the Emergency was defensive, demanding the ECC's right to speak. The centrepiece of the campaign was a newspaper advertisement, signed by 150 leaders of both black and white communities, calling on the government to recognise freedom of conscience.

Subsequent campaigns became more adventurous. Yellow ribbons decked the streets of Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Thousands of pamphlets told white school pupils that 'apartheid is sending us to war'. At a public meeting, University of Cape Town lecturers declared their refusal to register for 'Dad's army'. ECC called on parents to buy Christmas toys for peace and not war. Children came together for a non-racial picnic at Archbishop Tutu's residence.

Through these campaigns, ECC regained the national presence it had enjoyed before June. Our mistake was to underestimate the seriousness of the Emergency. The national crackdown in December caught us off-guard. Executive members in Johannesburg were detained and others served with restriction orders. In Cape Town, nine activists involved in the 'War is no Solution' campaign were detained and later charged under the Emergency regulations.

So 1986 ended on a sober note. Yet, despite harassment, our organisation remained strong and committed.

Our first objective in 1987 is to continue to raise awareness of the effects of militarisation and to increase pressure on the government to recognise the internationally accepted right of freedom of conscience regarding military service. Secondly, we will continue putting effort into organ-

isational priorities such as cohesion and morale, democratic processes, tight security and training.

Our third objective is to develop lower-profile means of reaching people — housemeetings, letters to the press, building a mass membership and strengthening ECC as a coalition. Under the Emergency our member organisations, and the Black Sash in particular, provided invaluable support and often took forward ECC work when we were unable to do so. The long-term future of the campaign may depend on the

extent to which these organisations are able to take up the issues of militarisation independently of the ECC.

For as long as there is conscription into an army that defends apartheid, there will be a movement against conscription — no matter what the government has in store for us. By compelling white men to contain black dissent through the use of force, the government makes itself vulnerable to dissension in the white community and in its army. Harassing the ECC will not change this. □



sash women on trial

susie power

On 5, 6 and 7 May 1986 the Black Sash held a stand outside East London's City Hall to protest about the detention of Duncan Village leaders. Three members went each day: one stood, while the other two sat on a bus-stop bench about 12m away. There was contact between members only when the poster changed hands.

The police watched and took photos — as usual, when Border stands. On 7 May a photo was taken of four women at the bus-stop before the stand itself began. A fourth member had come along to

tell the others of the threatening calls she had received, namely, that if the Sash kept up the protest somebody would be severely injured. The four were not wearing sashes at the time but the wording on the poster, 'Talk to the leaders — don't jail them', was clearly visible.

The four were charged with contravening a section of the Internal Security Act prohibiting gatherings between April 1986 and March 1987. On 19 December they were found guilty and received suspended sentences. □

REVIEWS

Growing up in a Divided Society: The Contexts of Childhood in South Africa ed. Sandra Burman & Pamela Reynolds (Ravan Press, 1986)

THIS book consists of a collection of eighteen essays on the theme of childhood in South Africa. The essays have been ably put together by joint editors Burman and Reynolds, who respectively provide an introduction and afterword to the book.

The essays cover a wide range of topics, which include health care, education, childbirth, divorce and the effect on children of the political turmoil of the last decade. Several essays look at childhood in the context of a particular socio-cultural milieu, for instance, that of a Jewish home, or District Six, or a

Natal sugar estate. The common denominator is the divided society in which South African children grow up and the effects it has on them.

Some of the essays have an academic approach such as Pam Reynolds' 'Calling Kin in Crossroads' and Charles Simkins' statistical analysis of household composition in South Africa. Others combine facts and figures with personal narrative, such as Helen Zille's essay on childbirth in South Africa (which should strike a chord in the hearts of all mothers) and Pieter le Roux's thought-provoking account of Afrikaner youth.

Many of the contributors to this book will be well known to Sashers. Indeed, several of the writers are Sashers themselves. Others will be known for their work in fields which have long been subjects of great concern to Sash members —

street gangs, forced removals, children in prison. And of course photographer Paul Alberts, whose contribution to the book is a photographic essay, needs no introduction to readers of *Sash*.

Growing up in a Divided Society is in many ways a distressing book for it serves to highlight the appalling conditions in which many children in our country are growing up. But it is also a challenging work which stresses the need for a new socio-political order in which all our children can grow and develop free of poverty, oppression, division, uncertainty and racist ideology. Its testimony certainly gives clout and additional meaning to the 'Free the Children' campaign.

This is a book which all Sashers will find invaluable both as a reference work and as a catalyst for personal growth and awareness. □

Jo MacRobert

Up the Creek Tony Grogan (Chameleon Press, 1986)

AT a time of unprecedented repression of the right to communicate news and views, the publication of this selection of brilliant cartoons by our honorary associate member, Tony Grogan, is like the sudden flaring of a beacon in a very dark scene.

For those who struggle for expression through the medium of words, the South African situation must seem to defy satire: its cruel and sordid realities outstrip the power of imagination to devise humorous exaggeration or parody. But the caricaturist of genius can convey a message far more cogently than the most passionate rhetoric. The anger and compassion expressed through these drawings lose nothing of their impact because tragic facts are highlighted by means of ironic humour.

Gentler themes are also represented: the TV-addicted family discussing TV's effect on South African English, and the picture of Archbishop Tutu

endangering his reputation for non-violence by striking a Bishopscourt visitor with a misdirected croquet ball; but the overwhelming majority of the cartoons are directly political. Here we have the doctor diagnosing a credibility gap in a soldier's head because of contradictory government statements about our military activities, and the schoolmaster brainwashing his class with simplistic South African 'history'.

Confusion in policy is illustrated by the simultaneous attempts of the police to force pupils into school in Soweto and to debar them from school in the Cape, and the unconscious ironies of the Nationalist ethos by the depiction of a heavily-armed policeman arresting a journalist for possessing a dangerous weapon — a camera. (Do they really, after all, *know* that the pen is mightier . . .?) There is the Casspir with its thuggish crew parked outside a police cell window while the prisoner within is offered his freedom on condition that he renounces violence. A peace demonstration at Christmas time is vigorously broken up by 'kerels by candle-

light', and Roman soldiers order the Magi to disperse, as three people together constitute an illegal gathering.

The most telling and now, unfortunately, the most topical of all is the series of cartoons in which our 'security' legislation is symbolised by a vicious but antiquated blunderbuss which 'progresses' from single-shot to automatic, then acquires a silencer, and finally is fitted with a rear-view sight enabling it to fire retrospectively — at each stage handled by the same oafish character from the Wild West.

We owe an inexpressible debt to this outstanding South African, whose wit is equalled only by his acute perception and unflinching courage. We rejoice that these examples of his work have been made available in a less ephemeral form than in the pages of a provincial newspaper and to a wider public than its readers. As other voices are stifled, their power to stir the conscience and to stiffen the morale of all who seek justice in our society, can only increase. Long may we know the inspiration of his sharp pen! □

Mary Livingstone

NEWS-STRIP

Restricted

ALBANY:

Ann Burroughs
Priscilla Hall
Joy Harnden
Bridget Hilton-Barber
Louise Vale

CAPE EASTERN:

Sandy Stewart

TRANSVAAL:

Jill Pointer
Dawn Ingle

The extensive nature of their restriction orders prevents our members from participating in widely defined actions related to 'publication' and any activities of the Black Sash and other named organisations.

On these grounds Ann Burroughs was unable to make her intended contribution to the article on page 17.



Is no news good news?

Detained

CAPE EASTERN:

Janet Cherry

Released

CAPE EASTERN:

Victoria Vena

Exiled

TRANSVAAL:

Annica van Gylswyk

Achievements and awards

Di Andrews (Cape Western) who, for meritorious service, has been made an Honorary Life Member of Life Line (Western Cape)

John Lambert (associate member of the Pretoria Branch, Transvaal) who has been awarded a D. Litt. et Phil., University of South Africa.

Retired

Mrs Lettie Malindi who, as interpreter and adviser for 29 years, freely shared her knowledge and experience and thereby made an invaluable contribution to Cape Western's Advice Office. We hope that she may have a peaceful retirement — and see the early release from detention of her husband, Zoli.

The editors

Obituaries

Fenella Douglas

Fenella Douglas, a founder member of Sash, died on 4 October 1986: a tall, good looking, blue eyed woman, who gave so much of her life towards helping others, with graciousness and warmth. Amongst her many interests was the work of the Marion Institute, the Girl Guide Movement and St Saviours Parish, Claremont, where she worked at the multiracial 'Open Door' lunch place. We, her friends, mourn the loss of a staunch and generous supporter of Sash, who took her place in stands, marches, demonstrations and meetings through some thirty years. Sash lives upon the support of concerned women, such as Fenella, who care — and act.

Ann Finsen

Doris Emmett

Doris (Dolly) Spencer Emmett came to South Africa from England in 1925 when her husband, Eric Emmett, was appointed Professor of Law at the University of Cape Town. After his death she became warden of Fuller Hall which at that time (1947) was the only women's residence. She championed her girls and was amused when Dr Davie, then principal, teased: 'The trouble with you, Mrs Emmett, is that you think all your geese are swans.' Of late she was an inactive member of the Black Sash but she retained a lively interest in her family and in current events. She died in Cape Town on 15 October 1986 at the age of 88.

Candy Malherbe

(from notes supplied by her family)

Mary Johnson

Cape Western lost an old and faithful member when Mary Johnson died in October 1986. Hailing from Orange Free State — a friend of Leo and Nell Marquard — Mary came to live in Cape Town and taught at Rondebosch Boys' Preparatory School for eight years before she retired. Those of us who knew her before age and loss of memory took their toll will not forget her steadfastness and pungent humour, nor her constant support of Sash principles and work. At all our gatherings, Mary's little green Morris was to be seen outside. Vale, Mary.

Bunty Aitcheson

We would be grateful if members in different regions could send us items reflecting events and milestones in the lives of the Sash memberships and associates. The categories above are not exclusive and we invite you to add to them as appropriate.

The editors

BLACK SASH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Cape Town March 12 to 15 1987

PROGRAMME OUTLINE:

Public Meeting	Claremont Civic Centre Main Road, Claremont	Thursday 12 March	8 p.m.
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Working Sessions	St Michael's Church Rouwkoop Road, Rondebosch	Thursday 12 March	12 to 5 p.m.
		Friday 13 March	9 to 5 p.m.
		Saturday 14 March	9 to 5 p.m.
		Sunday 15 March	9 to 1 p.m.

Observers Observers will be welcome for most of this time, although there will be some closed sessions. For further information please call (021) 65 3513

BACKGROUND:

Western Cape, now the headquarters region of the Black Sash, will be hosting the annual national conference this year, so preparations are under way for an influx of delegates, official observers and visitors from all regions. Of importance to the general public is the official opening on Thursday evening 12 March when Mary Burton delivers her presidential address and a guest speaker deals with some aspect of the South African crisis.

The main work of the conference is three-fold: to receive and review reports of work done by the regions, regional advice offices and rural action projects, also by headquarters and Sash magazine; to debate fact papers on various aspects of South African political economy, ranging from housing and forced removals to militarisation and the education crisis; and to establish policy guidelines by means of resolutions and strategy planning. A special conference issue of Sash will appear in May 1987.

Meeting for the first time under State of Emergency restrictions and constraints, conference will need to be disciplined, innovative and courageous in its approach. Relationships between delegates will be more important than ever. For this reason the first working session includes a substantial period in inter-regional groups, focussing on regional reports.

Conference will also pay tribute to the End Conscription Campaign. ECC arose directly out of the 1982 Black Sash national conference in Cape Town which unanimously endorsed a resolution proposed by national president Sheena

Duncan, opposing the system of compulsory military service. (The recent achievements and tribulations of ECC are set out on pages 34 — 35.)

A much earlier Sash national conference in Cape Town in February 1971 endorsed a resolution of the Civil Rights League on conscientious objection. It called for alternative service in fields completely unrelated to the Defence Force for persons who object on strongly held moral, ethical or religious grounds to compulsory military service.

Religious objectors have been granted some such right (with room for improvement). However the state still does not acknowledge and cater for the right of conscience, the innate sense of right and wrong, good and evil, which according to the Judaeo-Christian tradition as well as secular philosophy is characteristic of human nature. There is still much work to be done in opposing militarism and militarisation and in upholding the conscientious rights of those who seek positive alternatives to compulsory military service.

Our founders pledged themselves to resist any diminishment of the ideals of mutual trust and forbearance, or sanctity of word, of courage for the future, and of peace and justice for all persons and peoples. Conference is above all an occasion for deepening and strengthening that spirit of resistance, that dedication to the service of our country and of all who live in it. So may it be in Cape Town in March 1987.

Margaret Nash