

## A REPORTER VISITS CAPE WESTERN'S BAIL FUND OFFICE

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**T**O a dingy room not far from Langa, furnished with a wooden bench and upturned tomato boxes, a stream of men and women came. They brought stories of hardships and sometimes they went away with lighter hearts.

Then, in the past few weeks, the stream suddenly became a flood—and few callers went away happy.

The room, on the Klipfontein Road, Athlone, is a temporary office of the Black Sash.

And the callers? They are the men and women of Langa and Nyanga whose lives have been shattered by a drastic tightening up of the pass laws in the Cape Peninsula.

Mothers must take their children and leave their husbands. Sons must leave their fathers. Families are being scattered.

The Black Sash has, in the past, often been able to help people in this plight by intervening with the authorities on their behalf.

Officials have sometimes overlooked technicalities and applied the influx control laws in a humane fashion. Now the regulations are being applied strictly according to the letter of the law.

### Endorsed Out

Calling at the Black Sash office one day this week, I found a group of men and women waiting. Some of the men were Transkei peasants, expressions of bewilderment on their faces.

There was a young mother, baby strapped to her back. Through an interpreter I heard her story.

The mother, Lizzie, lives in a Nyanga shanty with Matthew, a power station worker. They have three children, Beauty (4), Abednego (2) and Kenneth (three months).

Matthew came to Cape Town from Lady Frere in 1941—he is a fully-fledged "city man." In terms of the pass laws—the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 as amended—he qualifies as a permanent resident of the Peninsula. He has worked here for more than 15 years.

Lizzie and Matthew have been together since 1952 and they have been happy. Life for them has had its ups and downs. Once Lizzie took the children

and went home to her mother—but Matthew followed her and brought her back. Somehow, they never got around to getting married.

This year they started thinking about it. A date was set and the banns called. They were to get married next month. Then it happened. Down came a rubber stamp on Lizzie's reference book—she was "endorsed out."

Lizzie is one of a multitude of Native men and women who must leave the Peninsula. Like so many others, she has nowhere to go. She does not qualify as a permanent resident as she has not lived in Cape Town long enough. But she must leave Cape Town—if she stays she will be arrested.

### Nowhere to go

I looked round the room. Xhosa "clicks" punctuated the low buzz of conversation which came from the waiting men and women. Sitting alone, was a Native youth, his head bowed.

"That's Norman," said a Black Sash worker. "He has to leave his father and his brother and sisters in Cape Town and go back to the reserve. His mother is dead. Norman was born in Cape Town. His mother died when he was six and so he was sent to the reserves to be cared for by an aunt. He came to Cape Town to work as soon as he was old enough. But he has not worked here long enough to qualify."

Through the interpreter I spoke to Norman.

"Why must I leave my father?" he asked. "It is right that I should be with him. He is a very old man. I have nowhere to go."

Meanwhile, Lizzie had told her story to the Black Sash workers and left with a letter to the Native Commissioner—appealing for a "reprieve."

But there is nothing the Black Sash can do for Norman. He will have to leave Cape Town. If he does not he will go to prison.

**O** LORD GOD, When thou givest to thy servant to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory.—*Sir Francis Drake's prayer.*