Minister of Bantu Administration and Development.

Dear Mr. Botha,

When you stated that there are no starving Bantu, how would you have defined the word 'starvation'? The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines it not only as dying of hunger but also as suffering from lack of food, feeling hungry and being deprived or kept scantily provided with food.

Can you honestly say, as a thinking man, that not one Bantu is starving in this country? Can you honestly say that no one feels hungry? You must have access to reports on resettlement villages at Grahamstown or the Sundays River Valley where Africans are kept scantily supplied with food, and conditions are created which cause many to perish directly or indirectly from hunger. A survey has shown that in Sekhukuniland at least 50 per cent of all children born alive fail to reach their fifth birthday and the majority of those who do die do not reach their third birthday. One may deduce from this that those who do not die of outright starvation have obviously a lowered resistance to disease.

Please, Mr. Botha, you are straining our credulity when you state: 'there is not one starving Bantu in South Africa — the Nationalist Government would not allow it.' If the Government would not allow it you could possibly use your influence to see that a basic minimum wage is paid to the African, that job reservation is done away with and that Africans are not endorsed out to the Siberia of the Transkei.

Will you press for the reintroduction of school feeding for the Africans and take the burden from charitable bodies who cannot meet the need, or do you acknowledge a man to be starving only when he is dead?

Yours sincerely,

Eastern Cape Regional Council of the Black Sash.

Outlook

Where we stand

We are reprinting this editorial from Outlook to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of that journal.

Outlook may be ordered from P.O. Box 363, Cape Town.

The roots of this journal go deep into South African history. Established at Lovedale in the Ciskei at a time when the eastern Cape was the uneasy frontier between men battling for possession of land, before the mineral development that was to bind South Africa together, the Outlook may claim to be as genuinely South African as any other institution. Founded before the Afrikaner Bond, and almost twice as old as Die Burger, this journal has for a hundred years been a forum for debate amongst men of all races about the quality of life in the changing society.

There are, broadly speaking, two possible responses open to men faced with the insecurities of frontier life. They can either accept the challenges of interaction, change and growth, or they can shut themselves off from any such threats by retreating into the secure isolation of a laager. The great divide in South African history is surely between these two responses. From its first issue this journal

has been unequivocal in its rejection of isolation. Understanding love to be, in Tillich's memorable phrase, "the drive towards the unity of the separated", the Outlook has been a focus of intelligent thinking about the social implications of the Gospel in South Africa.

It is false to think that our 'traditional way of life' has always been one of isolation or separation. In an editorial in 1894 this journal drew attention to the two traditional policies in the country, and reiterated its own belief (first expressed in 1880) that legislation which had the effect of 'widening the chasm' between black and white was unchristian and and would be disastrous. And it practised what it preached: "Among missions", wrote an observer in 1908, "Lovedale was distinguished by its catholicity. The pupils were "of all colours, white and black, brown and yellow, with numberless intermediate hues."

Having accumulated a wealth of experience through the turbulent years since 1870, the Outlook remains more than ever convinced of the truth of the things for which it has stood consistently — if not always successfully — over the century. Perhaps the most important of these has been a deep concern for the dispossessed, the poor, the powerless. This concern has not been expressed in blasts of self-righteous indignation: rather it has taken the form of alternative proposals backed by carefully marshalled evidence and objective criticism.

One of the journal's great strengths has been its refusal to separate individual man from man-in-community. Mission, for the Outlook, has never degenerated into the narrow pietistic view that seeks to save men's souls with no concern about the quality of the society in which they live. On the other hand, the journal's Christian understanding of man has prevented it from ever assuming that social engineering alone would improve the world. The wholeness of the Outlook's approach which has refused to divide man's soul from his body, and which has refused to accept as impenetrable barriers the frontiers of race, caste, class, wealth or domination, has been implicit in its columns throughout the ten decades. But although the Outlook has had a clear general approach to the problems of Church and society, it has usually sought to reach the truth in particular situations by means of discussion rather than dogmatic assertion. Whether it has been concerned with the beginnings of independent church movements, or working out its attitude to General Hertzog's franchise bills, the Outlook has always been a place where people could air their different views.

This is the tradition which we inherit today. Of what relevance is it to the South Africa of the 1970's? The barriers which divide our society are as real as were the rivers of the eastern Cape a hundred years ago. And the response of this journal can be no other than it has always been: to reach out towards others, particularly towards the powerless; to remove those barriers that prevent men from loving each other; and to hold out the vision that men can live together in peace and justice without destroying each other. There are those who argue that the realization of such a vision would produce a society of grey, faceless uniformity. This is not true. For the vision does not imply that everyone in the orchestra will be 'cellists'; it asserts rather that if the musicians are put into separate rooms the resulting music will be somewhat discordant.

We have lost the first round. Nonetheless, if we have read the signs of the times correctly, it would seem that there is — even among the most isolated groups in South Africa — an awakening to the fact (which the best of our poets and writers have long seen) that no man can shut himself off from his fellowman without crippling his spirit.

Looking ahead we see, as do people in many parts of the world, that the two main challenges of our time are: the need for economic justice between and within nations (particularly where the cleavages are along colour lines); and the impact of technology, which is transforming the world into a global village at bewildering speed. The ethical choices with which men are faced grow daily more complex and far-reaching. Moral issues raised by medical engineering, bio-chemistry and methods of mass-persuasion — to name only three developments — make it imperative that society have some institutions that both seek to illuminate the nature of the choices to be made and also provide some guidance as to the direction in which it should move.

For the past hundred years the South African Outlook has built up a proud tradition of Service on the moral frontiers of the times. In the years that lie ahead the journal pledges itself to continue to fight for social justice and to examine the choices that shape the nature of our life together.