

From excitement

From Page 7

elections. I never had the vote all these years and I'm not sure what difference my voting now will make.

I will still have to be convinced to vote and so far none of the political parties have convinced me that I should vote for them. None of the parties currently in parliament or those outside of it have shown that they are going to be changing anything in the country significantly.

I feel very scared and sad when I think of the future of this country. When I look at my two sons I wonder what the future holds for them. Everything just seems to get worse all the time. I wonder whether my sons will be able to find decent employment. The unemployment situation is so bad and the crime figures just seem to be rising all the time. People are starting to get very desperate.

Most of my friends feel the same way I do about the situation in this country. None of them have made up their minds about which party they will vote for, let alone whether they will be voting in the first place.'

KTC

For Funeka, who lives in KTC and chars in the southern suburbs of Cape Town, the times have changed. Greed and criminal behaviour is rife and she misses the community spiritedness of the townships. There is no reason to believe that things will be any different after a democratic election, she says.

She has 'bought' an ANC membership



THE VOTERS: divergent hopes, fears.

GISELE WULFSOHN, Southlight

card and occasionally attends community meetings in KTC. But deep down she doesn't think life in the new South Africa will be any different to that in her home territory of Transkei after independence.

'Whoever comes to power may make it even worse. It could be the same as in the Transkei where all Matanzima's family got the best jobs and earned more than anyone else.'

Why so pessimistic? She explains that it was the struggle politics of the mid-80s which, in introducing the element of force, first disillusioned her.

'It don't want to be forced to do anything against my will. We were forced to go to funerals, buy from the expensive township shops, join stayways...

'It is easy for the political parties to go around now and say that we won't be forced

to vote, but I'm sure they will ask why one didn't vote.'

A major problem, says Funeka, is the fact that ordinary people do not understand the negotiation process. Explanations in the mother tongue don't help much either because the concepts are new. 'It doesn't make sense...there are too many things that's got to happen, if you miss one thing, you're lost.'

She would not complain if things stayed as they are at the moment - but it would help if VAT were abolished, and the cost of food, clothing and transport were kept down.

Real change will only come, says Funeka, if people again practised their traditional communal values.

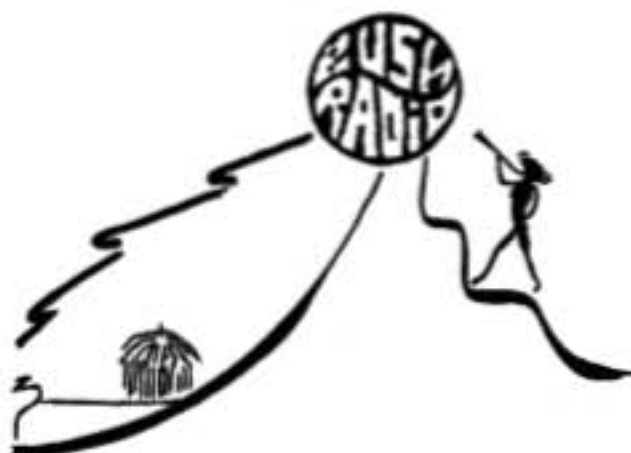
'My people were kind, we used to have feeling for each other, we used to greet each other...but not these days.

Bush Radio says, let's do it!

FOR a couple of hours on Sunday April 25, the Cape Town-based community radio initiative, Bush Radio, will go on air for the first time.

The concept of community radio has long been debated and discussed among service organisations, students and individuals around the country, and the volunteer-based Bush Radio project has been in progress for the past two years.

Bush Radio aims to serve as a community access radio station by offering service



organisations, community and mass-based organisations the chance to speak for themselves.

Based in Salt River in Cape Town, the fledgeling radio station will reach only a limited audience, but it will rely heavily on broad public support to survive, not only financially, but in terms of running

the gauntlet of broadcasting without official sanction.

Applications for a licence from the Department of Home Affairs have been turned down on the grounds that the broadcasting environment is in state of flux and all applicants should wait.

However, those involved in the interim national network of community radio broadcasters believe that community radio warrants special attention - it is not of a scale to threaten the powers-that-be and should be allowed on air as soon as possible.

Community radio operates on a non-profit basis. Its motivation is the exchange of information and ideas among ordinary people in an informal (radio-facilitated) environment. It is a 'voice from below' - music, dramas, talk-shows, stories and documentaries - from a perspective different to

'If you greet someone he or she can easily ask why you do that because she doesn't know you. It is very, very strange to us.'

KALK BAY

Freelance journalist Michelle Saffer holds out little hope for much change resulting from an election. 'I am not optimistic or pessimistic, it could go either way. I have no faith in politicians.'

She has never voted before – on principle. Having refused to take part in whites-only elections, she is nevertheless not convinced she will vote this time around. 'Voting will not be an automatic thing for me. It depends on the person, not the party.'

She adds that she cannot see herself voting for the National Party or the Democratic Party. 'Possibly I would vote for a candidate from the South African Communist Party, partly because I am attracted to what it stands for and partly because communism is collapsing all over the world and I would like to vote for it if I could.'

What she will be looking for in a candidate is a sincere commitment to economic development – and that means 'both growth and redistribution, not just one or the other'.

Her only real fear for South Africa's future is the possibility of continuing and escalating violence. 'I don't expect a civil war but I do worry that the anger and the expectations of people won't be able to be controlled. I worry that people won't be prepared to go through the democratic process, that people won't be prepared to wait, that it's too late to appeal to reason. Then what we will get will be outbreaks of violent anarchy and continuing and intensifying violence.'

those held by people in positions of power and prominence.

When Bush Radio ventures out onto the airwaves on April 25, its best defence will be a groundswell of public support, not so much for itself, but for the concept and principle of community radio.

The project is appealing for a simple letter or fax of support which will be greatly appreciated. It will serve both as a word of encouragement for those who will be broadcasting, and as an indication to those in power of the extent of public support for the right of small-scale, not-for-gain community stations to go on air.

Letters may be addressed to:

The Bush Radio Co-ordinating Committee, Bush Radio, PO Box 13290, Mowbray, 7705 (Fax 021-4485451 or telephone 021-4485450).

A healthy approach to radio

By SUE VALENTINE

IT'S 9.25am inside the converted trucking container which houses Zibonele Clinic in Khayelitsha and there's an atmosphere of anxious activity, excitement and anticipation.

Underneath the hospital bed at the end of the narrow corridor someone is fiddling with what appears to be nothing more than a compact hi-fi set.

There are five minutes to go before Radio Zibonele, a primary health care radio station, takes to the airwaves of Town 2 in Khayelitsha. The community health workers, with no knowledge of transmitters, signal frequencies or radio journalism interviewing techniques, fill the roles of reporters, presenters and role-play actors in the morning broadcast. In an environment where many people are illiterate and information by word of mouth is the norm, radio is the perfect medium for mass communication.

A sheet of newsprint stuck on the wall gives a breakdown of the broadcast sequence. The health workers who will be doing today's programme shuffle their notes nervously and wait in the corridor for their turn to squeeze into the tiny obstetrics examination room that serves as the studio. The air is indeed pregnant with anticipation!

Until just a few minutes ago the studio guest was nowhere to be found, but to everyone's relief he saunters in just before the signature tune starts up. A former TB sufferer, he will be the central focus of today's programme which will discuss the symptoms and effects of TB and how to treat and avoid the disease.

Just three broadcasts old, Radio Zibonele is the result of the efforts of Gabriel Urgoiti, an Argentinian doctor with experience of

community radio in the deep south of his own country. Urgoiti has been working in the South African health sector for 12 years.

The aim of the tiny radio station is to enhance and reinforce the services provided by the community health workers who offer primary health care treatment and advice during daily home visits in the area.

Through its tiny transmitter and antennae fastened to the roof of the container, Radio Zibonele can be heard up to 50km away. And in the crowded conditions of Khayelitsha, this means that potentially 20 000 people can tune in to the weekly, hour-long programme on health care.

The broadcast is entirely in Xhosa. Urgoiti

serves as the producer and sound engineer, monitoring the 30cm square mixing desk, popping in cassettes and the odd compact disc, while health workers take the seat next to the hospital



bed and pick up the microphone.

It's all very rough and ready, but the health care advice transmitted by Radio Zibonele every Tuesday morning comes through loud and clear to anyone in the 5-km radius with an FM radio.

'The only complaint is that the broadcasts are too short'

The response so far has been enthusiastic. The only complaint is that the broadcasts are too short. The only danger is that because it is illegal to broadcast without a licence, Radio Zibonele may not survive.

Zibonele means 'we did it together'. Here's hoping these words hold true for many more broadcasts!

Sue Valentine is Media Director with Idasa.