

SASH

CURRENT ISSUE



EASTERN CAPE FOCUS

THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PENSIONERS
HOPE LIES WITH THE PEOPLE
FUMBLING FOR A SINGLE CITY
LESSONS FROM ALOES: FIVE PROFILES

The Black Sash Dedication

In pride and humbleness we declare our devotion to the land of South Africa; we dedicate ourselves to the service of our country. We pledge ourselves to uphold the ideals of mutual trust and forbearance, of sanctity of word, of courage for the future, and of peace and justice for all persons and peoples. We pledge ourselves to resist any diminishment of these, confident that this duty is required of us, and that history and our children will defend us.

So help us God, in whose strength we trust.



The Aims and Objectives of the Black Sash

The organisation shall be non-party political and undenominational and by non-violent and peaceful means shall pursue the following objectives:

- to promote justice and the principles of parliamentary democracy in South Africa,
- to seek constitutional recognition and protection by law of human rights and liberties for all,
- to further the political education and enlightenment of South African citizens and others,
- to address in all its work how each area of such work affects women,
- to undertake whatever other activities may further the objectives of the organisation.

SASH

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Cover:
 Sue Morrell Stewart (1992)

SASH magazine

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Editorial

The focus in this issue falls on the Eastern Cape. For the most part the articles reflect a scorched earth, decimated by a relentless series of scourges, from the ethnic purging of the Zuurveld and the debilitating cattle killing, to migrant labour, forced removals, political assassinations and callous developmental neglect. Repression and resistance have been the shaping forces of this border country, where the ghosts of the vanquished and the vanished continue to haunt the landscape. Sandile. Hintsa. Biko. Blackburn. Goniwe. And many hundreds more.

Their sufferings remain largely unrequited. When the murderers of Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto and Sicelo Mhlawuli are finally apprehended and brought to justice, perhaps then all the region's ghosts will rest; perhaps then we can "all forget ancient war and ancient debt" – but not before that. An indemnity that pre-empts justice in the case of the Cradock Four will rob the region of a benediction that only confronting the truth can bring.

If poverty and drought characterise the area, then the only metaphor for the people who survive in this harsh environment is that of the resilient aloe, a metaphor we borrow from Athol Fugard (*A Lesson from Aloes*). The Eastern Cape has not only bred several of the country's leaders, but in every town and village it has bred people of courage, whose stories reveal lives of endurance, sacrifice – and humour.

Stripped of its migrant men, often drained of hope and broken in spirit, the Eastern Cape is above all distinguished by the figures of the women left behind: the drawers of water and hewers of wood, many of whom wring from their abandonment a new independence and self-reliance, and the hope of a new security for their children. These are small achievements, often pathetic in the face of prevailing conditions. Only a massive influx of development resources and energy will bring real hope to the region. This issue of SASH is dedicated to the women of the Eastern Cape, whose undaunted spirit is expressed in the inventiveness of their strategies for survival.

Judy Chalmers Lynette Paterson



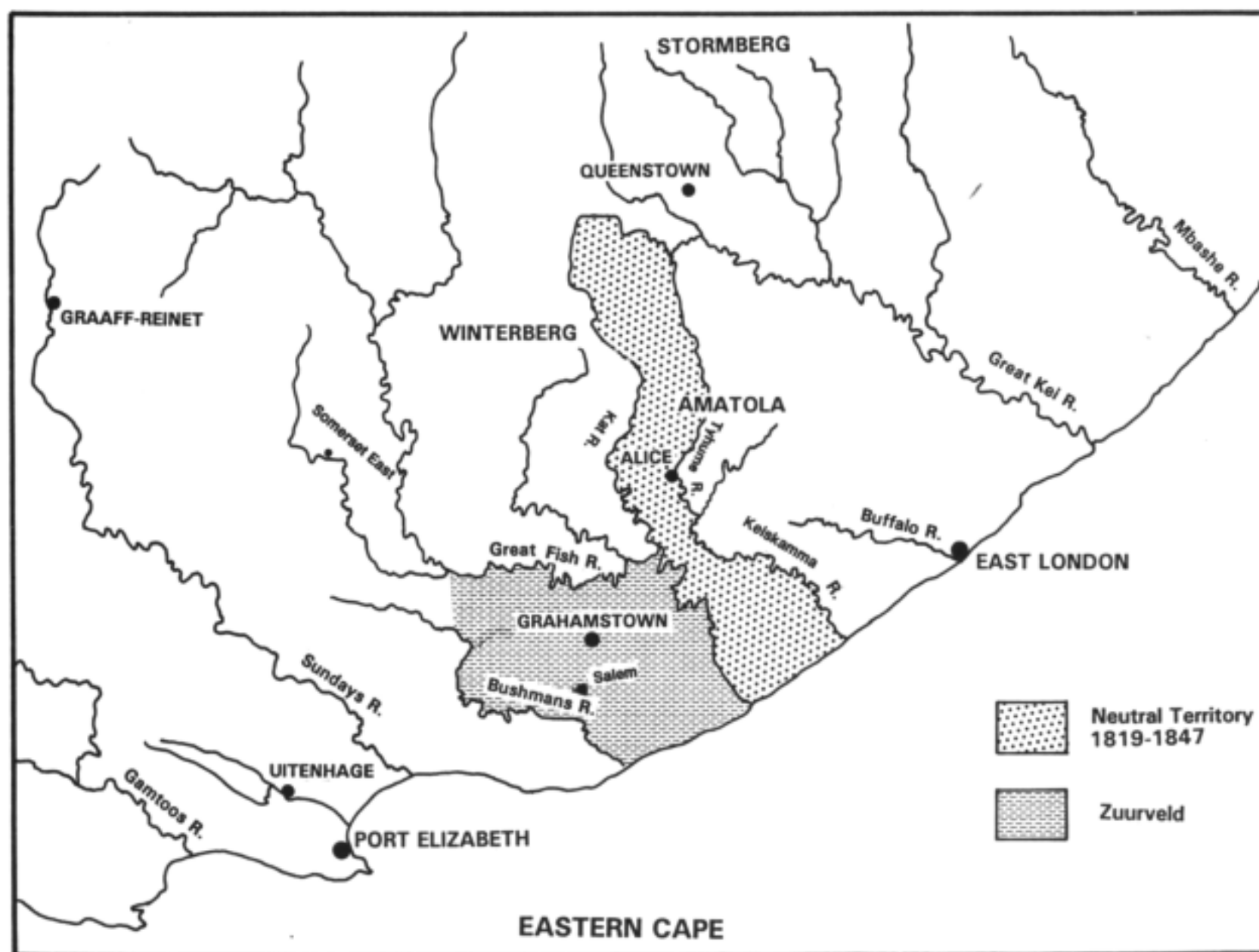
A retrospective view of the Eastern Cape

The spirit of tenacity that characterises the Eastern Cape has produced individuals and movements that have had a marked influence on the history of South Africa. Betty Davenport reports.

The Eastern Cape has always been regarded as the frontier, with everything that that implies – hardship, conflict, neglect by central government, and resentment of government interference. In earlier times it was where peoples of different cultures clashed, mainly over land and cattle. Today it is a frontier in the sense of still being a neglected limb of the Western Cape. There have been times when separatist movements have canvassed vigorously for independence, and this can be understood by those who know the Eastern Cape well, for the frontier spirit

of independence, resistance, endurance and hope still unites and divides people there.

The geographical frontier can be roughly located east of the Gamtoos River. Before the mid-eighteenth century, the Xhosa occupied the area between the Sundays and the Mbashe rivers, where they mingled for years with the San and Khoi as these were pushed eastwards by the advancing trekboers. The Xhosa also absorbed Mfecane refugees such as the Mfengu, runaway slaves from the Cape, and some shipwrecked Europeans. In spite of this mixture of people,



Xhosa society was stable: they were cattle people with a strong lineage system; chieftainship was a divine office; ancestors were revered. They occupied the slopes of the Winterberg and Amatola mountains, each community claiming a river valley with pasturage and water. They used the higher slopes of the Drakensberg for summer grazing. It was a prosperous and thriving society. Travellers through the region estimated a total population of between 40 000 and 100 000.

By the middle of the nineteenth century this scene had changed dramatically. The Xhosa kingdom had shrunk, pastures were no longer available, cattle herds had been dispersed and natural game had been almost shot out. The Xhosa themselves had been debilitated by small-pox, and the stability of their society undermined by interaction with Europeans. How had this happened?

Hunting and trading

Dutch hunters and traders, escaping the restraints of the Cape government and looking for profit from cattle and ivory, were the first to penetrate the region, and by 1760 there was a regular trail from Swellendam to the Great Fish River. Rivalry between Ndlambe and his nephew, Ngqika, who had been less senior when he inherited his chieftainship, resulted in turmoil over the paramountcy of the Gcaleka clan. This in turn meant that there was little control over minor chiefs, who took the opportunity in the 1780s and 1790s

to move westwards, accompanied by large numbers of cattle. Confrontation with the white farmers moving eastwards was inevitable.

Dutch commando raids increased, precipitating a war in 1793 when the Xhosa seized about 50 000 cattle from Dutch colonists who had settled as far as the Gamtoos Valley and Somerset East. This fiercely independent group of whites operated a network of production and trading, and attempted to replicate the social life of the Western Cape, particularly the master-servant relationship with "tied" servants. These serfs, many of them Khoi, revolted against their Dutch masters. In alliance with certain Xhosa they waged a series of campaigns (1799 to 1803) in an unsuccessful attempt to reclaim their independence and their land.

Religion

A second form of interaction between black and white in the border region was religious. In 1799 the London Missionary Society had sent a Hollander, J. T. van der Kemp, to the Eastern Cape. Initially he spent 18 months with Ngqika, and later set up a mission station at Bethelsdorp. A spate of missions followed on the Kat and Tyhume rivers, and a string of Methodist missions sprang up from Salem to Pondoland.

Missionary activities included preaching, learning and writing the indigenous language, printing the gospels, and establishing mission schools. Mission education was aimed at "civilis-



Z. K. Matthews



Tiyo Soga



Cecilia Makhiwane

ing the natives" as a prerequisite for conversion. It included educating girls, and so created a labour and professional force of women who were to have a strong impact on this frontier society. Institutions such as Lovedale, and later Fort Hare University, produced an impressive register of past students who have led the way in southern Africa: Tiyo Soga, Z. K. Matthews, Govan Mbeki, Robert Mugabe, Cecilia Makhiwane and Nelson Mandela, among others. The missionaries nurtured a peasant society of cultivators and craftspersons who were literate and adopted Western housing and clothing.

However, many Xhosa resisted education throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, probably because white religious ideas challenged and undermined the traditional Xhosa universe. It was mainly the marginal people – the Khoi and Mfengu who had moved into the colony in about 1836 – who were initially drawn into the orbit of the missions.

Xhosa resistance was broken only after the crushing military defeats of 1850–53 and the subsequent cattle killing. By then, they had lost much of their land, and morale was low. The seeds of African nationalism were germinating.

English settlers

The arrival of the English settlers in 1820 was the third key element in the frontier crucible.

After the Napoleonic wars the authorities at the Cape, under the rule of Lord Charles Somerset, deliberately determined to ensure the British character of the colony and provide for its defence by promoting British settlement, particularly in the Zuurveld. Colonel John Graham had been brutally clearing the area of most of the Xhosa living there, and when, in 1819, the Xhosa prophet Makana retaliated with an attack on the small village of Grahamstown, the settler plan assumed some urgency. Poverty-stricken, unemployed and redundant workers in post-war Britain responded enthusiastically to the proposed scheme. From the 90 000 letters of enquiry, 4 000 were accepted for Somerset's "living wall".

The story of their settlement and the extraordinary difficulties they encountered on small farms ravaged by flood, drought, locust and rust

is well recorded. Very soon after landing, many of these new "farmers" left their rural locations in a mass exodus to the towns where traders and craftspersons fared rather better. The sprinkling of teachers and clergy who set up schools and missions were people of enterprise and moral courage. Although they were not renowned for their liberal views, the settlers came from a society in which public issues were keenly debated, and they quite openly criticised the colonial system, so attracting the antagonism of the colonial authorities. Undaunted, they won the battle for press freedom in 1823.

Repeated Xhosa cattle raids, and counter-raids by both civilians and the military, made life dangerous and fragile and inevitably hardened race attitudes in this frontier society – a legacy still evident in the area today.

Unlike the Huguenots, the 1820 settlers managed to retain their culture because the Somerset regime insisted that English replace Dutch in all spheres of life. Later it became the sole language of the legislature. British schools and their contribution to commerce made a deep impact on all the frontier towns, especially after the Great Trek in 1836 which saw the departure of many of the Dutch settlers from the Eastern Cape.

Unrest and resistance

The Fish River remained the official boundary until 1847, when it was moved to the Keiskamma. There was a continual state of unrest in the area. Settler commandos retaliated against Xhosa cattle raids, and the British military, superior in arms, encroached on Xhosa lands in a succession of wars.

By the 1850s, military defeat, loss of land, growing population, penetration by the missionaries, and Western education had undermined the fabric of Xhosa society, and they turned desperately to their rainmakers, diviners, and prophets. With the onset of lung sickness among Xhosa herds the climate was ripe for belief in prophecy, so it was not surprising that during the time of chief Sarhili, the Xhosa believed the promises of a young woman, Nongqause. Her visions predicted that if the Xhosa people slaughtered their cattle and burnt their crops, the Xhosa dead would

A two-chamber parliament gave political power to blacks by granting a qualified vote to all males who earned more than £50 per annum, or who occupied a house worth £25.

arise and the white people would be driven into the sea. The prophecies aroused bitter controversy among the chiefs; the missionaries desperately stockpiled grain against the self-inflicted famine, and tried to prevent the massive slaughter of cattle. By February 1857 an estimated 150 000 to 200 000 head of cattle had been slaughtered; about 20 000 people died of starvation and a further 30 000 moved to the colony to seek employment. Later, Nongqause herself moved into the colony. She is buried in the Alexandria district.

Ironically, this dramatic attempt at resistance only served to weaken the power of the chiefs, and finally and irreparably damaged the structure of Xhosa society.

Until the end of the 19th century, the Eastern Cape's economy depended almost entirely on the production of wool and cattle. During the 1860s, wool accounted for over 70 per cent of all exports from the whole colony. The success of the wool trade exacerbated the hunger for land and created a growing demand for suitable labour. Inevitably, wool growers cast their eyes in the direction of Xhosa land and the defeated Xhosa people to satisfy their demands. Their powerful lobby led to further inroads into black independence and freedom.

The thriving wool trade also resulted in improved roads and postal services, and later in the building of a railway – changes which in turn led to the development of towns, particularly Port Elizabeth. The industrialisation at the beginning of the 20th century stimulated the migration of whites and blacks from the platteland to the motor industries of Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth, and resulted in burgeoning urban developments. But, because of lack of water and other resources, the stark reality is that the Eastern Cape is not economically viable, and is characterised by escalating unemployment, poverty and deep distress.

Political representation

After 1825, both the Eastern and the Western Cape pressurised the central government for more political representation. The then growing economic importance of Port Elizabeth and the booming wool trade fuelled a campaign for a resident government in the east. This pressure intensified after 1853 when there was an elected government for the first time. The separatists of Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth felt there was an unfair allocation of funds, and the region was only once, in 1864, given the privilege of hosting the parliament. The event served to show delegates from the Western Cape how inconvenient it was to travel to Cape Town for parliamentary sessions!

A two-chamber parliament gave political power to blacks by granting a qualified vote to all males who earned more than £50 per annum, or who occupied a house worth £25. Although there were by this time many professionals who had

been trained at the mission schools, black participation in the vote developed slowly. Nevertheless, several white parliamentarians gained majorities thanks to the black vote: George Wood beat Robert Godlonton through the Mfengu vote in Grahamstown, and James Rose-Innes was successful in Victoria East largely because he was backed by Tengu Jabavu's editorials in *Imvo Zabantsundu*, the first African newspaper in South Africa.

Gradually interest in becoming voters gained ground among blacks, especially since several successful petitions and representations to government (such as one for the withdrawal of a new pass law in 1889) showed the force of political involvement.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the non-white vote (composed of "coloured", Malay and African) represented 24 per cent of the electorate. Blacks were in the majority in the electoral divisions of Aliwal North and Victoria East, and were significant in at least three other Eastern Cape districts. The qualified franchise created a political elite among the Africans of the Cape and set in motion the inevitable processes of change that would eventually overcome both regional and societal divisions. Out of the Western education, Christianity, industrialisation and urbanisation absorbed by that elite, the beginning of a broad African nationalism emerged, a nationalism that bridged the gap between traditional African culture and that of Western Europe.

Between 1910 and 1936, the government systematically eroded African political rights. The South Africa Act itself denied the vote to Africans in all but the Cape, thus minimising black representation. The Native Land Act of 1913 reduced Africans access to land, and 1936 saw the removal of Cape Africans from the common roll. Small wonder that the seeds of African nationalism, sown by Eastern Cape men such as J. T. Jabavu and A. K. Soga and culminating in the South African Native National Congress in 1912, would flourish, and with the passage of time grow into the ANC.

Frontier and crucible

Today the crucible of the Eastern Cape still contains all those elements which, subjected to the pressures and temperatures of racial, economic and political differences, produced people and ideas which have had a tremendous impact on the shape of South Africa. With a dearth of all other resources, it is fair to say that the Eastern Cape's chief resource is its people – and their qualities of endurance, independence and optimism. □

Betty Davenport was a long-standing member of the Black Sash Albany region, and is currently a member of the Cape Western region.

The Cape of poverty

Aiming to construct a profile of the Eastern Cape, Barbara Orpen interviewed Bill Davies, professor of Development Studies at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, and Janet Cherry, political studies lecturer at Rhodes and a member of the Black Sash. The verdict: hopes lies with the people of the region.



SASH: Professor Davies, what makes someone like you choose to live, work and do your research in a "backwater" like the Eastern Cape?

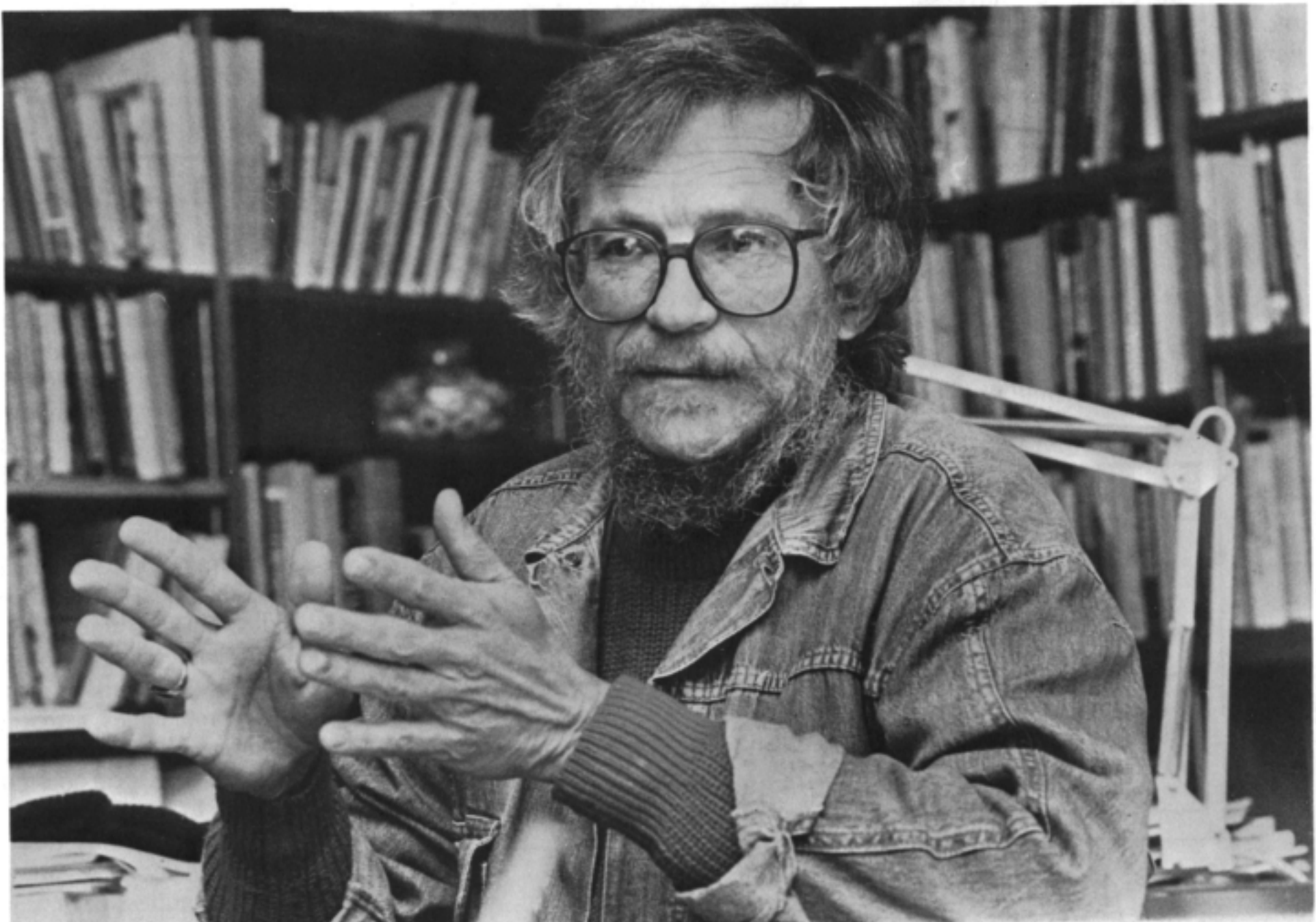
Davies: Working in this environment is extremely stimulating and very frustrating at the same time. The Eastern Cape is one of the most interesting social science laboratories in the world, let alone South Africa; it is complex, it is an anachronism, it is a totally neglected region. I would not like to be anywhere else.

For your purposes, what constitutes the Eastern Cape?

Research makes a clear distinction between the Border/Ciskei/Transkei region, and the area stretching west of the Fish River to south of Mossel Bay. It is partly a distance factor, but also one of internal cohesion. Socio-economic circumstances are completely different, and in the ANC's new map of development regions it is clear that they believe this as well (*see map*).

The rural dimension of Border/Ciskei/Transkei, for instance, is

Bill Davies



Photograph: Esabe van Tonder

characterised by black subsistence farming, with black farmers owning the land; west of the Fish, rural blacks live on white commercial farms as workers, with no other right to existence.

How homogeneous is the environment or milieu of the Eastern Cape?

There are four different kinds of environment in the region: the metropolitan area of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage; non-metropolitan country towns with populations of up to 100 000 like Grahamstown, Graaff-Reinet and Cradock; small towns like Paterson, Patensie and Hofmeyr; and the rural areas.

But superimposed on this division is the basic, chronic, endemic problem which creates the pervading milieu of the Eastern Cape: poverty. In Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage, some 45 per cent of people are unemployed or underemployed; 60 per cent of people in Grahamstown share this lot, while a small town like Hofmeyr is saddled with a staggering un(der)employment rate of 70 to 80 per cent.

What accounts for such depressing figures in the non-metropolitan and small towns?

The small centres all have small and static to declining white populations, with relatively large and grow-

ing black populations. In the traditional scheme of things, whites are the investors and creators of jobs, so the job-creating capacity of these towns is gradually being eroded.

The future scenario for places like these calls for radical lateral thinking and restructuring. If we insist on keeping them all as towns we will have problems of unprecedented dimensions. The so-called urbanisation problem will not be a metropolitan one, but dozens of little problems scattered throughout the region, which is much worse.

Would you spell out what you mean by "the urbanisation problem", particularly with reference to Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage?

It begins with the farm labourers – one of the most severely deprived groupings of people in the region. With the drought, many farmers have their backs to the wall, and one of their first steps is to cut down on labour. The extent to which people are being shoved out on to the road is a source of great concern.

By a process of step-wise migration, these people move to small towns, and ultimately to Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage, where there is no housing, nor land for housing, and the chances of getting a job are minimal. The Urban Foundation last year estimated that 15 families a day were

moving into Port Elizabeth; at a conservative estimate, this means 20 000 people a year!

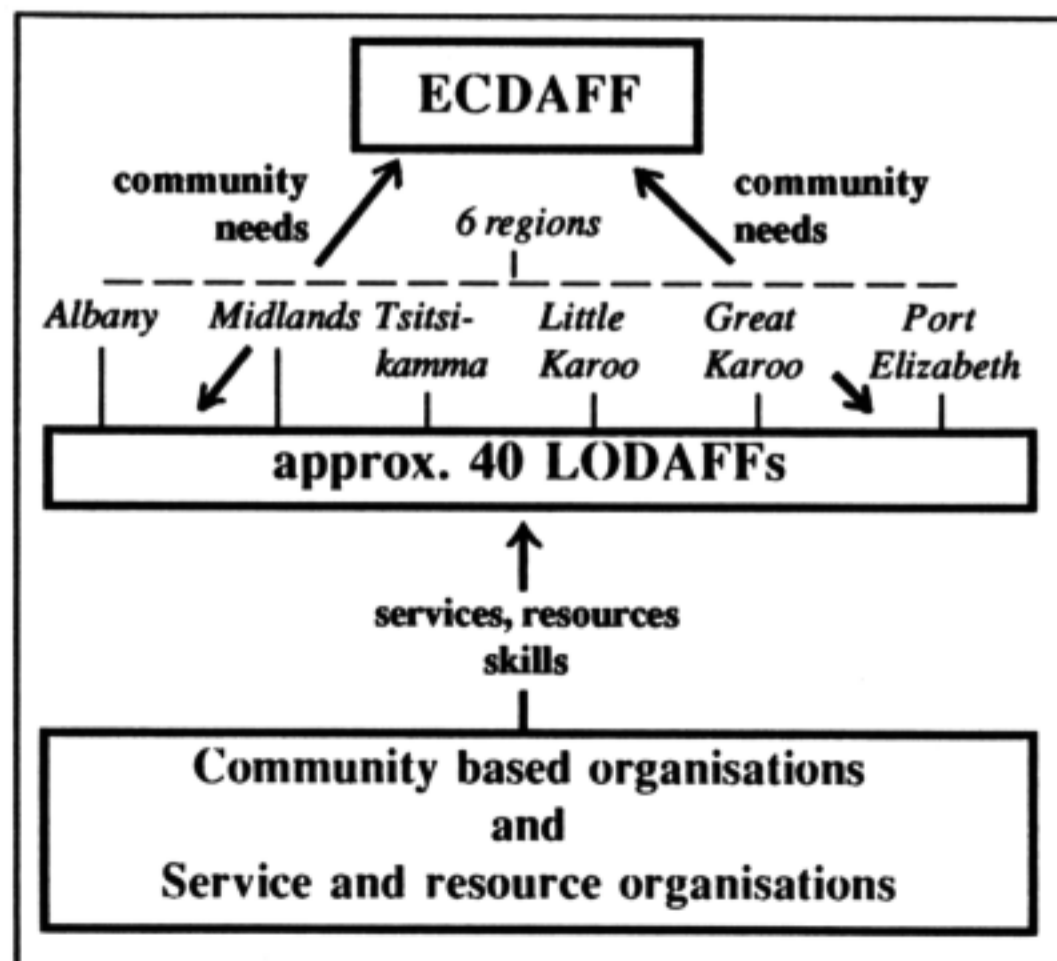
Poverty and unemployment are not rare phenomena in South Africa, but they do seem to be more severe in the Eastern Cape than elsewhere. What are some of the reasons for this?

Certainly one reason is that the Eastern Cape has not received the kind of development funding the rest of the country has. It has been a neglected region.

Between the early 1960s and the late 1970s the state was preoccupied with industrial decentralisation, and many resources were being spent on "encouraging" people to go back to the homelands. In the Border/Ciskei/Transkei area, for example, ten growth points were declared. Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage, on the other hand, was excluded from this, and received no subsidies.

So it was more than just a case of neglecting the Eastern Cape; it was also a case of total misallocation of resources in pursuit of an ideology.

The big crunch for the region came when the motor industry (Ford and General Motors) left the area in the mid-1980s, leaving some 5 000 to 6 000 people in Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage without jobs, as well as thousands of others working in the wide



ECDAFF: People-centred development

The Eastern Cape Development and Funding Forum (ECDAFF) is a capacity-building organisation which empowers people to initiate and control their own development processes. Through various Local Development and Funding Forums (LODAFFs) it not only arms people with organisational, technical and management skills, but also trains them to do their own research and needs analyses and to tap existent resources in their communities, so that development projects truly arise from the needs of each local constituency.

The LODAFFs embrace all local organisations that are involved in any way with development, regardless of their political ideologies. These may include

range of motor component industries.

The only thing that could have "saved" the city was another large investor to take up the slack. But there was no chance of that happening. The area was not getting decentralisation concessions, and was not an attractive place in terms of perceived labour stability.

In the light of this bleak scenario, do you perceive any cause for hope in the Eastern Cape?

I am cautiously optimistic about the future. The newly established Development Forum Movement may be on track to ameliorate poverty and some of the worst effects of unemployment (see insert). They are trying to overcome the sense of apathy and desperation that has characterised most of the Eastern Cape communities because of the repression and exclusion they have suffered over the past 40 years.

But to accomplish this will be extremely difficult, and it will not happen overnight.

Nevertheless, there are good people here, and I believe we can pull it off. I have certainly met enough people who have confidence in the region.

We are rather like new owners moving into a run-down shop. We have to think of new ways of doing things, and learn from the lessons of the past.

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church bodies, sports organisations, burial societies, and many others. The LODAFFs are supported by various non-governmental service and resource organisations such as the Black Sash and Sached (see diagram).

Directed by Gugile Nkwinti and staffed by a team of seven, ECDAFF is located in Grahamstown, from where it co-ordinates the work of the organisation. In about 40 Eastern Cape towns, LODAFFs have either been fully launched or are being planned by interim committees. Initial projects in some of these have included community surveys, a para-legal workshop and a vegetable gardening scheme.

The *LODAFF Voice*, published in Grahamstown, reports on the work of the development forums. Arising out of a national UDF initiative in 1990, ECDAFF is the only regional development forum that has become a viable reality. □



Janet Cherry



SASH: Janet Cherry, you moved to the Eastern Cape to set up a literacy project in Port Elizabeth, after having done similar work in the Western Cape. Why did you choose to put down roots in this region?

Cherry: Port Elizabeth was a very exciting place to work in the early 1980s; there was so much dynamism and motivation. There was also a sense of unity and co-operation, and it was this political atmosphere that attracted me to the Eastern Cape. Among those involved in the struggle there was a sense of accommodation and openness which allowed one to get involved whether one was vaguely liberal, or communist, or educationist, or Christian; whatever one's persuasion, one could get absorbed. Even now there is a lot of tolerance, even if you are part of the political opposition. There is not

the same intellectual rivalry as in the larger centres.

How do you account for this spirit of co-operation?

Because things were much more repressive here, with a very conservative white community, the struggle was perhaps much starker, and very clearly defined. And the black community was very well organised. This exceptional unity is still a characteristic of political organisation today, and can largely be ascribed to the long tradition that the region is a stronghold of the ANC.

What are some of the factors that fostered this tradition, and nurtured this loyalty and comradeship?

The entire African population of the Eastern Cape is Xhosa-speaking, and this gives them a unity. But the history of the area points to a very strong tradition of resistance which dates back to the frontier wars. Resistance is the heritage of the region. The influence of the mission stations, and later the formation of Lovedale College and Fort Hare University, also gave rise to a group of African intellectuals who were to become the leaders of the resistance movement.

Does the fact that the ANC has not really been faced with any sustained challenge from other political influences explain why the Eastern Cape has been relatively free from the factional violence which has characterised parts of Natal and the Transvaal since 1990?

The absence of factionalism may certainly account to some extent for the relative calm of the region, but the occurrence or non-occurrence of political violence is not to be explained primarily in ethnic terms. An equally significant factor is that the metropolitan areas of the Eastern Cape did not grow industrially on the basis of migrant labour, as did Johannesburg and Cape Town. The labour force in Port Elizabeth is not hostel-based, many workers have lived in the area for generations, which gives a consistency and continuity to politics.

Because the local authorities were less relentless in implementing pass laws, African people had a sense of permanence which others perhaps did not. They regarded themselves as residents, with some stake in the city, its politics and its institutions.

And yet, this political cohesion also had its downside, of which you were yourself a victim.

Yes, it was precisely this united front of political organisation that led to the Eastern Cape being hit by some of the worst repression during the states of emergency in the 1980s. Thousands of people were detained in a clearly systematic way for periods ranging from three months, to one year, to three years, depending on the "rank" of leadership they belonged to.

At street level this repression was very damaging, but the striking thing is that it did not succeed in being divisive. At some levels, in fact, it rather had a binding and strengthening effect – certainly among the leadership, many of them ex-Robben Islanders of the 1976 generation who were now all detained together in St Alban's prison in Port Elizabeth.

Does the presence of such a weathered political infrastructure provide cause for optimism in the future of the region?

The Eastern Cape may have strong political traditions, but it is in deep economic trouble. The whole country is in recession now, but Port Elizabeth has been in recession longer, and while the workforce is expanding, no new employment is being created.

Nevertheless, our hope lies in the commitment of the people who live and work here. There are not enormous skills, but there is an enormous amount of political experience, flexibility and goodwill. And while we may not have economic clout, politically the Eastern Cape may well make faster progress than other areas torn apart by violence. □

Barbara Orpen is a freelance journalist and a member of the Black Sash Albany region.

South Africa, including the self-governing homelands and "independent" TBVC states, is divided up into nine development regions. The Eastern Cape forms part of Development Region D. Hilary Southall presents a statistical profile of the region.

Development Region D comprises the Eastern Cape/Border, Ciskei and southern Transkei (Map 1). The people are relatively poor, unhealthy and ill-educated, and unemployment is rife. The region is not insignificant, however, for it is the third-largest of the nine regions, and has the third-largest population (some 5,5 million in 1992) after regions E and H (Map 2). When the development regions were demarcated in 1982, Region D was singled out as the one most in need of development.

The area also has political significance. Many of the present-day African National Congress (ANC) leaders emerged from here and two-thirds of the ANC's national paid-up membership is in the Eastern Cape, Ciskei and Transkei.

More recently, the ANC has proposed ten regions which would enjoy a certain degree of autonomy. Its proposals follow the existing demarcations fairly closely, except that two regions would replace Region D.



Development and prospects in Region D

A north-south boundary would run along the western Ciskei border, separating the Ciskei, the entire Transkei, and Border from the remainder of the Eastern Cape centred on Port Elizabeth (Map 2).

Whichever way the map is drawn, data is sparse and somewhat out of date. Nevertheless, it is possible to create a fairly accurate statistical profile of Region D relative to other parts of South Africa. Health and health care are stressed, in the belief that quality of life is as important as economic considerations.

General features

Region D is one of the most heterogeneous. It includes three principal urban areas (Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage, East London and Umtata) as well as rural Transkei and extensive areas owned by white farmers. Population densities vary widely: 16 persons per km² in the Eastern Cape but over 99 persons per km² in Ciskei. A high proportion of

these people are urbanised in both the Eastern Cape and Ciskei (89 and 85 per cent) compared with 15 per cent in Transkei. Port Elizabeth and East London are growing rapidly due to intra-regional migration, as is Umtata, mainly because of a particularly high birth rate.

Only 4,2 per cent of the total land area is cultivated and 4,9 per cent is

used for forestry. Crop farming occurs in the coastal areas. The interior is pastoral with angora goats, sheep and cattle, but it is being depleted by rapid encroachment of the karoo due to drought.

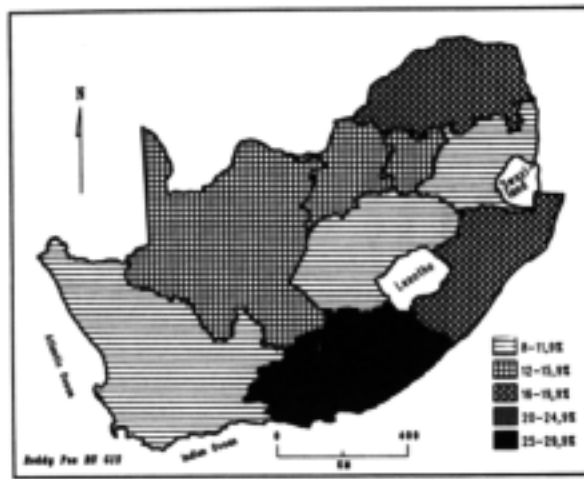
Region D has few minerals. Sand, salt and low-grade kaolin are the main products. Several areas are potentially suited to a modest level of tourism.

Map 1
South Africa and Region D



Map 2
Development regions of South Africa and the ANC's proposed amendments





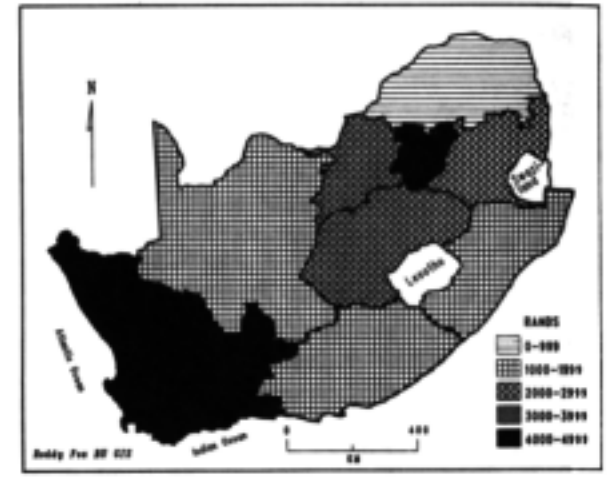
Map 3
Percentage unemployment 1989

Approximately 25 per cent of the de facto labour supply (men and women) in Region D in 1989 were unemployed – by far the highest rate in South Africa with 15 per cent overall. This was so even though nearly a quarter of the men were absent, having left to seek work elsewhere. If these men were to remain, unemployment would be higher still.



Map 4
Dependency ratios 1989

Region D has a high dependency ratio. For each potentially economically active person, whether employed or not, there were 3.1 other people to be supported in 1989. These dependants are mainly children under the age of 15, persons over 64, or students. In some Transkei districts the dependency ratio was as high as 10.



Map 5
Personal income in rands per capita 1985

At R1 630 per person per year, Region D's personal income was well below the national average of R2 206 in 1985. Further, the region was characterised by an uneven distribution of household expenditure: R8 139 per capita for whites and R948 for blacks in the Cape portion, and R727 per capita in Ciskei and Transkei.

Economic characteristics

Some 43 per cent of the population is under the age of 15 – the highest proportion of any region except Region G. The rate of population growth will increase as these children reach child-bearing age. Existing economic problems of high unemployment, high dependency ratios, and low personal income (maps 3, 4, 5) could well become much worse in the future.

The Development Bank of Southern Africa uses a compound index (which takes account, for example, of employment generated as well as actual size) to assess the relative importance of economic sectors. On this basis, the community and social services sector contributes most in Region D, followed by agriculture and construction. This indicates a structural problem in the regional economy: community and social services is mainly a government-supported sector; agriculture (for reasons of poor soils, mountainous terrain, frequent natural disasters and water scarcity) is not dependable; and construction depends on activity in other sectors.

Tax incentives generated economic growth at 3.1 per cent per annum over the past twenty years – well above the

national average of 2.5 per cent. However, it declined in the 1980s (2%) compared with the 1970s (4.1%), mainly due to the stagnation of the motor industry in the Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage area.

The region is a net exporter of goods and services. Transport is the largest net exporting sector, reflecting the importance of the Port Elizabeth and East London harbours.

Education and training

Region D's literacy rate (as the percentage of people of all ages who have some degree of formal education) was 65.5 per cent in 1989. Around two-thirds of these had primary education only. A trifling 7 per cent of the economically active population (white and black) had the benefit of tertiary education.

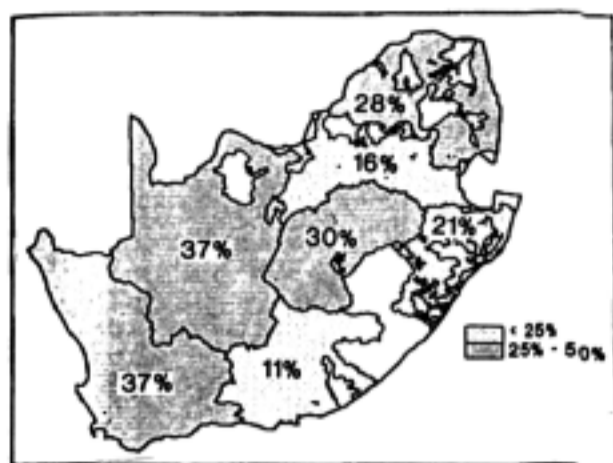
Vocational training lags behind the national average, while training of the unemployed has recently decreased sharply. These factors, together with the 35 per cent illiteracy rate, have grave implications for the future availability of skilled labour and employability of workers. Moreover, literacy is a crucial factor in determining health status and in the development of society as a whole.

Basic subsistence facilities

It has long been recognised that basic subsistence facilities such as drinking water, sanitation and housing have a greater impact on personal health status than does individual behaviour or the provision of health services. According to a survey in 1991, latrine facilities in the Eastern Cape/Border portion of Region D were the worst in the country (Map 6). Only 27 per cent of rural residents occupied housing which is not overcrowded and is structurally sound. Some 53 per cent had access to water of sufficient quantity and safe quality within 1 000 metres of the point of use.

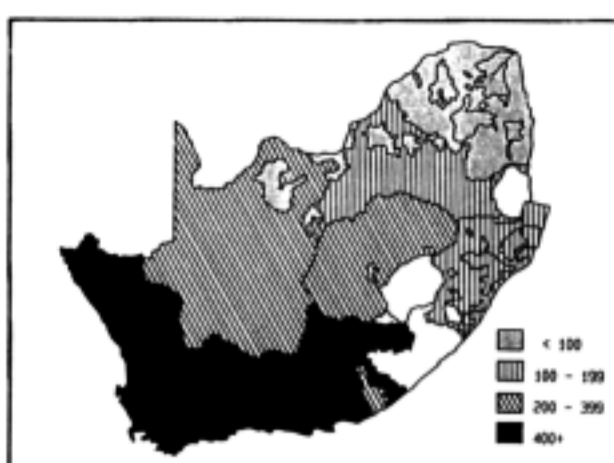
Quality of life and health status

Quality of life includes such factors as health, education, environment and living conditions, pollution, and political freedom. Life expectancy is often used as an indicator of quality of life, and of health status *per se*. Average life expectancy in South Africa is just under 64 years – 63.7 years in Region D – compared with 68 years in other upper-middle income countries. (In high-income countries the average is 76 years, compared with about 70 for white South Africans.)



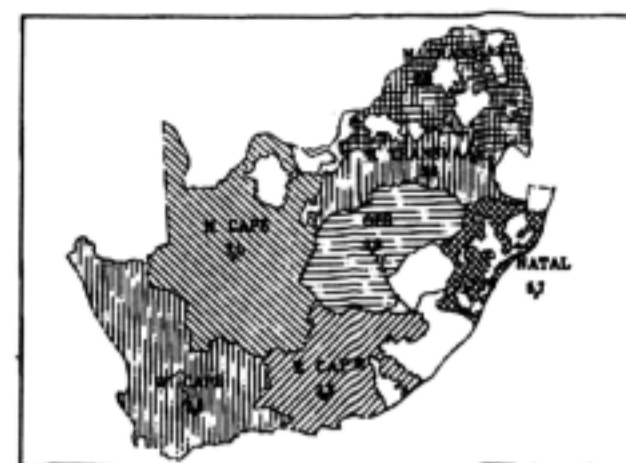
Map 6
Percentage of rural population with adequate latrines 1991

A Department of National Health and Population Development survey of rural areas (excluding self-governing areas and TBVC states) found that Region D was poorly developed in terms of clean water, housing and sanitation. Only 11 per cent of the rural population had access to effective domestic latrines in 1991.



Map 7
Incidence of tuberculosis (all forms) 1989

TB represents one of South Africa's major health problems, accounting for over 60 per cent of all notifications of diseases. This map, which includes the self-governing territories and "independent" states – but not Transkei – shows that the Eastern Cape is part of the worst affected area. Ciskei is not quite so bad.



Map 8
Public-sector hospital beds per 1 000 population 1990

With 3,3 beds per 1 000 population, Eastern Cape/Border fell in the middle range for hospital beds in 1990. Ciskei equalled the national (excluding TBVC states) average with 3,7 per 1 000, while Transkei fell well below with 1,9. These figures relate to public-sector hospitals only.

The infant mortality rate (IMR) is the other most commonly used indicator of the health status of a population. IMR is the number of infant deaths below the age of one year per 1 000 live births per annum. The World Bank cites an IMR of 70 for South Africa in 1988, the fourth-worst rate among comparable upper-middle income countries where the average is 42 per 1 000. Government estimates of IMR were 46 to 48 for the Republic of South Africa, 73 for Transkei and 43 for Ciskei.

Diseases in Region D typically result from the poor economic conditions and basic subsistence facilities. TB is often regarded as a sensitive indicator of poverty levels (Map 7). AIDS is in its infancy in South Africa, hence the geographical distribution tends still to reflect the early routes of transmission of the epidemic. The low rates of HIV prevalence for the Cape (0,37% of the population of child-bearing age), Ciskei (0,94%) and Transkei (0,49%) – in comparison with the republic's figure of 1,49 per cent – bear this out, and reflect also the lower rates in rural areas observed elsewhere in the world. In time, Region D may well catch up with other

parts of the country, and high migrancy in this country will lead to rural rates reaching urban rates.

Health-care resources

In terms of health-care resources, Region D does less badly than in other respects. The World Health Organisation suggests an acceptable level of 10 000 people per clinic. Ciskei is comparatively well served with around 8 000, but Transkei has some 14 500 people per clinic. Transkei is also poorly served with hospital beds (Map 8). The region has fewer doctors (0,4 per 1 000 population) and nurses (3,9 per 1 000) than South Africa as a whole (0,6 doctors and 4,5 nurses), with wide variations within the region.

Conclusion

Whatever way one looks at it, Region D is in a sorry state. Rates of employment, income, literacy, housing, water and sanitation, and health-care resources and health status, are low. All these problems are linked, and Region D does not come out well on any of them. It is not possible to improve one aspect of people's lives without upgrading all the variables which to-

gether determine the circumstances in which people live and work.

The fundamental problem facing South Africa remains the unequal distribution of economic activity across the country. Region D reflects this problem: urban areas face squatting and inadequate infrastructure while rural areas contend with poverty, inadequate health care, migrancy, high population growth, and a lack of jobs. All face a low quality of life.

Strong political will is needed to boost the region. Perhaps a future ANC-led government will remain faithful to its roots and do more for this region than the National Party has in the past. □

Hilary Southall is a research fellow in the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University, and co-chair of the Albany region of the Black Sash.

Roddy Fox of the Rhodes University Geographic Information Analysis Unit drew several of the maps and located some of the data.



The (*bricoleuse*), says Lévi-Strauss (In *The Savage Mind*), is someone who uses "the means at hand", that is, the instruments (she) finds at (her) disposition around (her), those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogeneous – and so forth.

Jacques Derrida, *Structure, Sign and Play*

"Husbands cause too many problems"

Between 65 and 70 per cent of households in Bathurst are headed by women. The reason, says Sean Jones, is not the absence of migrant husbands, but rather that the majority of women choose not to be married. (Names have been changed to protect the identities of people interviewed.)

It is common cause that rural women have borne the brunt of the migrant labour system. Wives anxiously await remittances, visits, or just a word from absent husbands who, all too often, abandon them for city women. Girlfriends, pregnant or with infant children, are left with promises of support which never materialise. Mothers watch their offspring disappear, one by one, into the throng of urban life. Aged grandmothers, often with only the meanest of resources, rear four, five or more grandchildren.

Far less attention has been given to these women's creative responses to this decimation. What kinds of lives are women building from the social rubble left them by rural apartheid? What social forms and ideologies are emerging among them as a result of decades of neglect, both by their menfolk and society at large? What order are rural women imposing on their world?

The women of Bathurst provide some insight into these dimensions of contemporary society in the South African countryside.

A township of women and children

Best known for its historical links to the 1820 British settlers, Bathurst is situated in the heart of Eastern Cape pineapple and chicory country,



A Bathurst woman preparing a meal

some 15 km from Port Alfred and 40 km from Grahamstown. Its township has a population of between 5 000 and 6 000, just under a third of whom are recently displaced farmworkers and their families.

Bathurst is typical of small communities throughout rural and peri-urban South Africa. Unemployment and underemployment are dire. Recession and prolonged drought have exacerbated the paucity of full-time employment in agriculture, while Bathurst village itself – little more than a farming outpost hosting some five hundred or so “whites” and a smattering of small enterprises – affords few employment opportunities. Consequently, less than 20 per cent of the township’s permanent adult population is employed full-time, with an average income among those who do work of a meagre R120 per month; a further 20 per cent, who are very much the economic elite, receive state pensions or grants. Many folk have little choice but to leave the area. Labour migration of men and women has been part and parcel of life within the older and better-established households for many years.

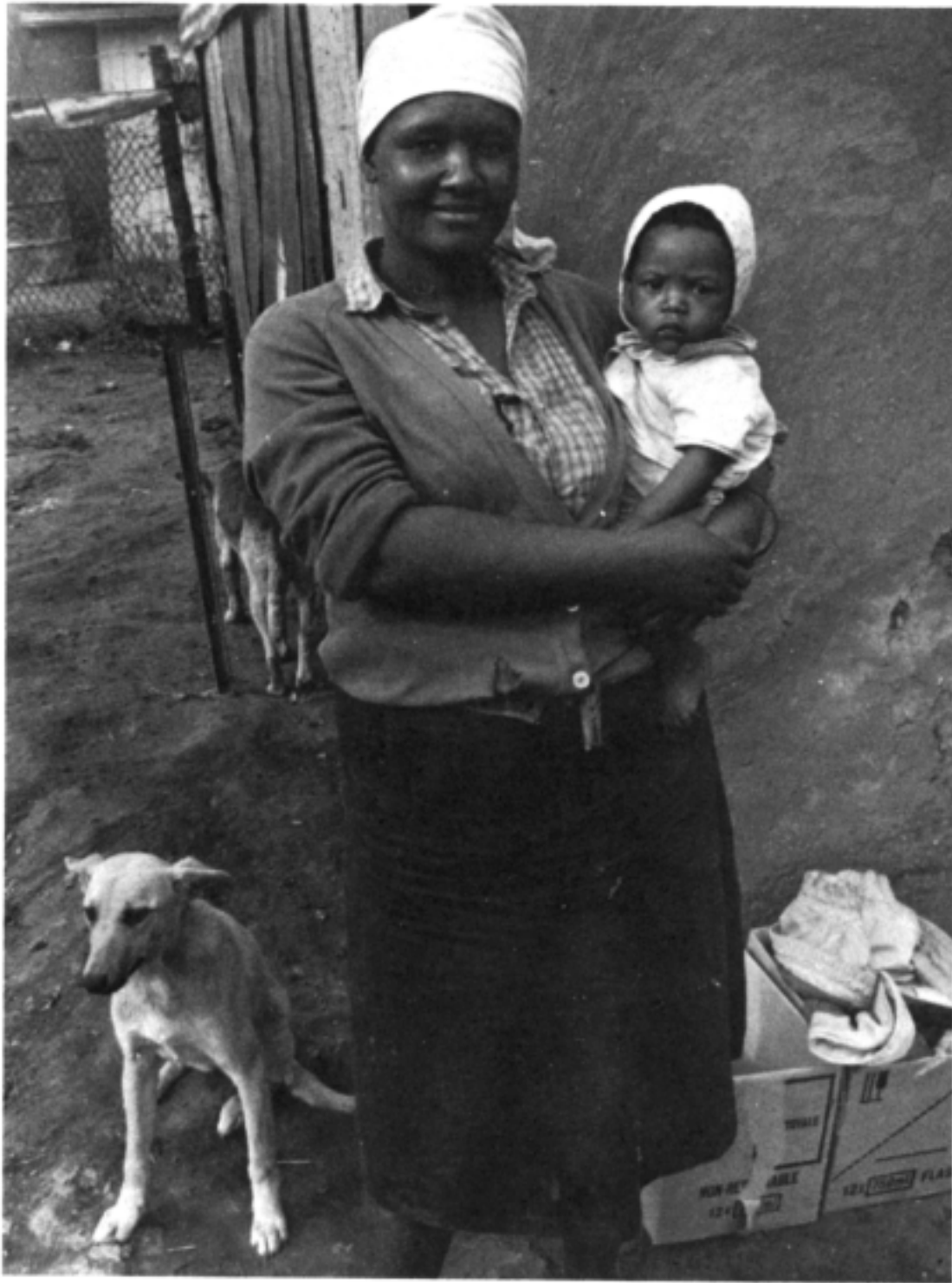
Women constitute almost 70 per cent of the permanent adult population, with a mean ratio of women to men of between 2 : 1 and 3 : 1. The

disproportion is most pronounced in the age group 30 to 60 years, where the ratio is in excess of 5 : 1, but tapers to below 2 : 1 among older and younger adults. Children under the age of 18, more than 70 per cent of whom are illegitimate in civil and traditional terms, make up just over half the total population.

Given these demographics, it is not surprising that between 65 and 70 per cent of households are female-headed. This figure rises to over 80 per cent if the recent arrivals from the farms are excluded from the reckoning. Although a small number are so by virtue of the absence of migrant husbands, the majority are headed by unmarried women, divorcees, and widows. Most of the divorcees, and a significant number of widows, have been single since early middle-age.

The important inference to be drawn is that the predominance of female-headed households is not immediately linked to the absence of migrant husbands but rather to the widespread absence altogether of marriage among the majority of women. The following cases illuminate the variable character of these households, as well as something of the dynamics and attitudes which entrench them as the favoured mode of domestic organisation in the township.

“Women constitute almost 70 per cent of the permanent adult population, with a mean ratio of women to men of between 2 : 1 and 3 : 1.”



Bathurst woman with child

Singlehood for posterity: Tenjiwe Mkoko

Tenjiwe Mkoko's father left Bathurst for the Witwatersrand in the late 1940s when she was a toddler. He never returned, leaving his wife to rear their six offspring. Mrs Mkoko bore three more children, all by the same man, whom she refused to marry. She ran her own household until her death in her late sixties.

Tenjiwe bore her first child when she was 17. Two years later she married a Bathurst man and, as is the custom, left her pre-marital child in the care of Mrs Mkoko. When she was pregnant with the couple's first child, her husband went to the mines. He visited Tenjiwe and their daughter Lumka regularly for a while. After their son, Mandla, was born, Tenjiwe's husband came home twice but then his visits and remittances ceased. By the time he returned from the mines, six years later, she had given up on the marriage, moved their children to her mother's house, and taken work as a live-in domestic in Port Elizabeth. Her husband remarried and moved to East London.

After ten years, Mrs Mkoko became ill and Tenjiwe moved back to Bathurst to care for her. When her mother died, she took over the house. She found work as a part-time domestic and also as a casual labourer on surrounding farms. Tenjiwe bore two more children during this time.

Although their father is still her lover, she refuses to marry him. She said that she is now too old and, when she was younger, "I did not want to leave my children. A husband is not good to your children from another man. He will not love them and he will not give them the same things as his own ... When I was divorced I decided I would never marry again. I decided to stay by myself. Men give only problems. You get nothing in return from them."

Tenjiwe's household presently consists of herself, her two younger children, Lumka's two pre-school offspring, and the teenage daughter of her deceased sister. Lumka, now 30, has not married. The household is supported by remittances from Lumka and Mandla, maintenance payments from Tenjiwe's lover, and a number of small business enterprises which Tenjiwe has initiated.

Although both older offspring remit to the household, Mandla's contributions are less regular and substantial than Lumka's. Tenjiwe and Lumka are planning to replace the present dwelling with a more permanent structure. Regarding who will inherit the house upon her death, Tenjiwe was quite definite that it would be Lumka: "Daughters love their mothers. They always work for them and look after them when they are old. You never know with a son. Maybe he will run away one day, maybe he will not care if I am hungry ... Also, Lumka will not marry, she already has two children. Her children belong to my house ... My son is good, but nobody knows what will happen in the future. It is safer to leave the important things of the family with your daughter."

Cooperative householding: The Mbewu sorority

Ncediswa, Thembeke, and Nontobeko Mbewu are sisters aged 34, 28, and 25. Their mother abandoned them when Nontobeko was a baby. Because their father was crippled, they went to live with their maternal grandparents on a farm near Bathurst. When Ncediswa was 18 she found employment as a domestic worker on a smallholding. She and her two young sisters left the grandparents and moved there together.

Thembeke explained: "Ncediswa was 12 when she started to work on the farm. She needed to work so that we could go to school. The farmer paid R4 a week, and she always gave the money to my grandmother ... My grandparents were not good to us. When Ncediswa gave the money to my grandmother, she bought clothes for herself instead of the children. We left as soon as we could find another place to go."

From 1972 until 1983, Ncediswa worked on the smallholding, singlehandedly supporting



Bathurst women going about their daily chores

Thembeke and Nontobeko. In 1979 she had a child. A year later Thembeke, then 16, fell pregnant. Lobola was agreed, but the "marriage" lasted only three months. According to Thembeke, her husband "was a drinker. All he wanted was drink and sex and girlfriends. He did not care about me. He did not even care about his child. There was never any money."

In 1983, Thembeke and Nontobeko each had a child. The smallholding was sold and the sisters moved to Bathurst township. They boarded in various houses over the next few years, and Thembeke had her third child. In 1987 the sisters acquired a plot in the township and erected a three-roomed wattle and daub dwelling, which is still their home.

A *modus operandi* had evolved by which one sister stayed home to care for the children while the other two took jobs in nearby towns. When interviewed, Ncediswa was working as a domestic in East London, returning to Bathurst for a weekend every month. Nontobeko worked at a hotel in Port Alfred, visiting a day or two each week. Thembeke stayed home and acted as mother to the sisters' total of eight children. Two of the fathers contribute monthly maintenance payments of R50 and R20.

Asked about marriage, the sisters were adamant that it is out of the question: "We will never marry, not to anyone. Husbands cause too many

problems. They sleep with girlfriends, they drink the money, and they give nothing for the children. Marriage is worthless. That is why we built this house. The house belongs to all of us. We pay for it together, and we look after our children together. We built it so that we will always have a place for our children."

To this, Ncediswa added: "I am a householder. If a man wants to marry me, he will have to live in my house. I don't think any man will do that."

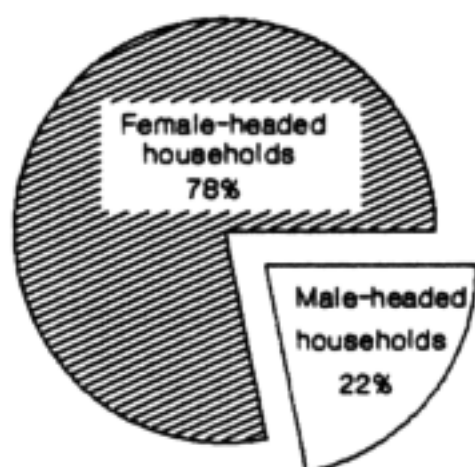
Autonomy within marriage: Nokupumla Memani

There is a handful of dwellings in Bathurst township which are the equal of many in middle-class South African suburbia. Shimmering grandly amidst the mud shacks, tin shanties, and CPA-built abominations, each is the outward manifestation of some or other story of remarkable success. One of these belongs to Nokupumla Memani.

For 20 years, Nokupumla has been married to a man working as a labourer in Port Elizabeth. He returns home occasionally. For the rest, she is alone with their two teenage children and the six-year-old son of her husband's brother. Her experience of marriage to a migrant has been fairly typical: infrequent visits or lengthy disappearances, failure to remit money, adulterous relationships with women in Port Elizabeth – three children of these liaisons are known to her.

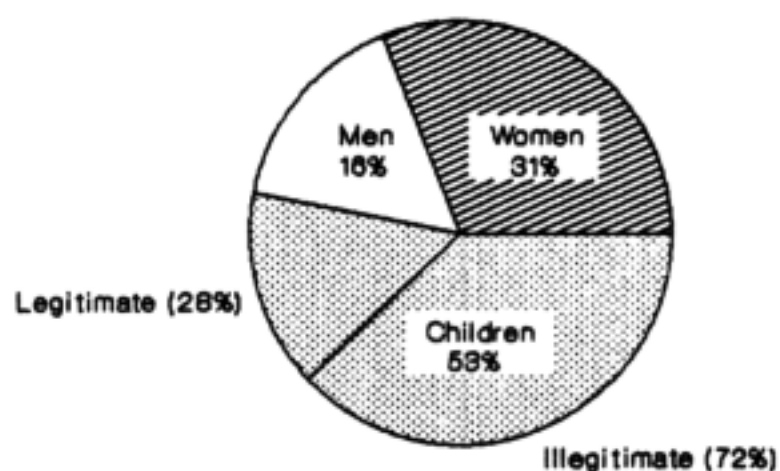
"... one sister stayed home to care for the children while the other two took jobs in nearby towns."

PROPORTION OF MATRIFOCAL HOUSEHOLDS [-]



[*] Excluding farm-worker families arrived in the last five years

BASIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN



Fourteen years ago, Nokupumla took a job as a domestic worker on a nearby farm. With her first Christmas bonus, she made a deposit on a knitting machine. By knitting jerseys in the evenings, after work, she paid her debt and managed to purchase a further two machines. Nokupumla's enterprise produces 15 to 20 jerseys per week, which she sells for R80 to R130 each. Recently she was able to afford to tear down her old mud house and build a four-bedroomed modern dwelling. She continues her domestic job, saying she owes much of her success to her employer whom she could never leave.

Her husband no longer remits to Nokupumla, or contributes to the education of his children. She professes to be happy with this arrangement: "The other wives have to squeeze their husbands for money. They must tell them what they want, and then their husbands must give it to them. Usually, they refuse. If it is my money, I do not have to answer questions."

In most ways, Mr Memani is now a peripheral figure in the family, an appendage who drifts in and out of their lives and whose continued place in the household is conditional upon his wife's acceptance. Asked who is *umnini wendlu* – head of the house – Nokupumla was unequivocal: "It is me. There is no doubt. I am the owner, I am *umnini wendlu*. My husband knows this. He cannot say what must happen in this house. If he does not like it, he can go. I have told him – he can go at any time, it is no problem to me. I do not need my husband."

Bathurst's social bricoleuses

In many ways, Tenjiwe Mkoiko, the Mbewu sisters, Nokupumla Memani, and others like them are social *bricoleuses*. They are building, from the rubble of the past, a new order which includes only what works for them. For the most part, marriage and the conjugal experience do not fit this scheme.

Women aspire to singlehood and the independence it permits. They acquire or build their own houses, support and aid one another in rearing their children, and perpetuate their independence by passing on their property to their daughters. The men have become marginalised. Although some do settle into stable marital relationships, most who remain in Bathurst end up as domestic nomads, or dependent for residential security on female kin.

It might be argued that this interpretation sees social rejuvenation where there is really only disorganisation. Certainly, the domestic forms which are evident in Bathurst arose in the first place from decades of migrant labour and rural apartheid. Certainly, too, there are instances in which these forces still apply – some women do still marry, and the marriages of some are still wrecked by the same set of factors which has operated for decades.

But what is crucial to recognise is that the kinds of domestic formation evident in Bathurst arise now for the most part by design and not by default. While the decimation of African family life took place historically due to circumstances beyond their control, women now actively perpetuate, and augment, the domestic structures and modes of organisation which arose as a result.

In contemporary Bathurst, it is thus no longer so much a case of what women must endure in the absence of men and male support, as it is of what men have lost and, judging by the attitudes of most women, have little hope of regaining. □

Sean Jones is an anthropologist engaged in post-graduate research at Cambridge University; his field work has been in the Eastern Cape.

"They are building, from the rubble of the past, a new order which includes only what works for them. For the most part, marriage and the conjugal experience do not fit this scheme."

Back to "Xhosaland"?

Wolfgang H. Thomas looks beyond the oddity of personalities and happenings in Ciskei and Transkei to unpack the history of the region and construct alternative scenarios for its future.

When Ciskei celebrated its independence on 4 December 1981, the flagpole in the Independence Stadium at Bisho broke just when the new flag was to be raised. This bad omen haunted the fledgling "state" throughout the decade of its shaky "independence": it was in the same stadium that Ronnie Kasrill was to lead a few dozen Ciskeians to their death on the day of the Bisho massacre.

Transkei's 15 years of "independence" have also been characterised by strange events and personalities, most striking of which is the contrast between staunchly conservative and traditionally pro-Afrikaner Paramount-Chief Kaiser Matanzima, the first leader, and the present General Bantu Holomisa, a young military leader, sympathetic to the African National Congress (ANC) and critical of Afrikaner politicians.

The sixteen years since Transkei's "independence" started the process of homeland independence have been so rich in ironies, bizarre events, futile initiatives and broken promises that this in itself would justify an article or two. Yet, to understand the current and likely future position of Transkei and Ciskei within the political, social and economic transformation of South Africa calls for a different perspective – one that links wider historical as well as contemporary forces and looks beyond the oddity of personalities and happenings.

Within such a broader perspective the formation of these two independent states – recognised by no other country outside South Africa – and the process of reintegration are just two manifestations of a turbulent process of development and conflict in and around the Eastern Cape. If we want to assess the likely nature of the forthcoming reintegration process, we have to reflect on some of these underlying forces.

As far as early black-white history of South Africa is concerned, the Eastern Cape is probably the most blood-stained and complex of the three major frontlines, the Zulu-Voortrekker encounter in Natal and a range of less dramatic encounters in the Transvaal being the other two. Not only did the Eastern Cape conflict last longest, but it also ended least conclusively, given Transkei's special status as a semi-autonomous region within the British-controlled Cape.

The Cape government artificially split the Xhosa region, while early developments around Lovedale, Fort Hare and some of the rural settlements strengthened black leadership and nationalism within a broader, white-controlled society. No wonder, therefore, that Eastern Cape-rooted black leaders – including the founders of the ANC – dominated black protest politics and black nationalism during the first decades of this century.

Due to the lack of a strong resource base of the Eastern Cape economy, educated and skilled blacks had to leave the region, settling in the Witwatersrand and in other expanding metropolitan areas. In fact, the proximity of Port Elizabeth as a secondary metropolitan area and the isolated nature of East London–King William's Town in the Border region prevented any significant metropoli-

tan economic development momentum during the first half of this century.

By the time the National Party took over in 1948 the divide-and-rule principle underlying the later homelands had already been well established. Not only was it in the interest of whites to keep the two major language groups – the Xhosa and the Zulu – distinctly apart, but in the Eastern Cape the idea of two separate Xhosa regions evolved logically out of the apartheid planning process of the 1950s. After all, Verwoerd's blueprint did not envisage any incorporation of white-owned land into black homelands, and he overruled the Tomlinson Commission's earlier proposal of large-scale white involvement in the black states. In fact, too little attention has been given to basic demographic ratios as the rationale underlying early government policies with respect to the Xhosa regions in the Eastern Cape. It seems relevant for our understanding of current conflicts between Inkatha and the



The "flagpole incident" on 04.12.1981 in Bisho

ANC to get this dimension into clear perspective.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Xhosa-speaking blacks in the Ciskei-Border-Transkei area were about equal in number to the Zulu-speaking group in Natal. Given the fact that Xhosa speakers also played a major role in black national politics, as well as in the metropolitan areas of Johannesburg and Cape Town, it was no surprise that government targeted the two Eastern Cape areas as the first independent homelands. This was relatively easy in the case of Transkei, given its more or less consolidated land area and its history of limited regional self-government. At the same time, demographic considerations demanded that Ciskei and Transkei had to be separate, to prevent one single, numerically dominant black homeland-state evolving, which also had strong ties with the dominant black groups in two major metropolitan areas.

The actual process of persuasion, intimidation, collaboration and political scheming leading up to the "acceptance" of independence by Transkeian leaders is not relevant here. Suffice it to say that this phase of recent history looks much like an early, preparatory phase of the Civil Co-operation Bureau initiatives of the late 1980s, when much more was at stake for the white political establishment. As the last four decades of political manoeuvring in southern Africa have proven, it is not difficult for economically and politically dominant powers to manipulate local African elites and sway public allegiance towards the acceptance of some type of "independence" – given the lack of political participation of blacks inside "white" South Africa and the natural attraction of "worldly independence".

The present tension between political elites in Transkei and Ciskei was also cemented at that stage. All too often we forget the early manoeuvres initiated by Transkei before and after 1976, to get an independent Ciskei-part of Xhosaland incorporated into Transkei. Yet, once again, the subtle interaction between white political intervention and black local and regional striving and jealousies succeeded in the creation of a second Xhosa state. This had two major advantages for key actors in the South African political scene. It created a two-state rivalry within the Xhosa-nation, which took

up a lot of the political energy that might otherwise have been directed against Pretoria or whites in general. Secondly, it split the Xhosa demographic power into three elements: Transkei, Ciskei and those resident in the "white areas".

This satisfied not only the white power elite, but also the Zulu elite, who suddenly felt no further need even to consider the independence option (which was far more difficult to implement in their case, due to the scattered nature of KwaZulu landholdings). With one stroke of a pen the Zulus evolved into the demographically dominant group among black South Africans, even though Xhosa-rooted blacks dominated the exile movement of both the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), as well as black metropolitan leadership in the Witwatersrand and Cape Town.

Until 1984 rigid influx control barred a rapid flow of Xhosa people into the Western Cape, while the urbanisation process and the influx of blacks from all over the country into the Witwatersrand diluted the role of Xhosa leadership in the Reef area.

Thus, by the end of the 1980s the formation of independent homelands seemed to have "solved" the demographic dilemma of white South Africa's search for continued political domination. But, alas, the final political dimension is only *one* of the key spheres. Success of the homeland strategy was also determined by the degree of progress made in the economic sphere as well as the relative stability and success of the new leaders in the respective black states.

Compared to the other regions the Eastern Cape has only a weak resource and market base, which is further dampened by the fragmentation into three subregions. Efforts to overcome these impediments through generous industrial relocation incentives, special tax concessions and large infrastructure projects, linked (*inter alia*) to the capital-city character of Umtata and Bisho, helped considerably during the few years of relatively high economic growth in the 1980s, but could not really counter recessionary trends. What is more, most of the development efforts affected only a small – though politically significant – civil service elite and a number of other beneficiary cliques, with a very limited internal multiplier or redistributive effect.

East London expanded rapidly during the 1980s, but still lacked a broad and expansive economic base. Tense labour relations in the region and frequent phases of unrest around Fort Hare, Dimbaza, Duncan Village and in some smaller towns discouraged new local as well as outside investments.

Spurred by this vicious circle, black political awareness in the Eastern Cape remained as sharp as ever before, focusing on national rather than local issues and challenges. Frustration about independence further increased when, after the first few post-independence years, leaders as well as rank-and-file citizens in both states realised that their "sovereignty" was not conducive to the funding and implementation of sound development programmes. Ample evidence of this were the multitude of white-elephant projects initiated in both states – notwithstanding budgetary dependence on South Africa and controls by the Development Bank – which wasted scarce resources rather than fostering grassroots development.

This dilemma of fragmented and distorted development paved the way, during the early 1980s, for a slowly evolving regional development stance in Pretoria's overall development strategy. Thus, within a new system of "development planning regions" Ciskei, the Border area and much of Transkei became part of "region D", which also incorporated Port Elizabeth as the region's core metropolitan area. An intricate system of committees was to help co-ordinate these "multi-national" development efforts. Some progress was made, but none of it spectacular, given the dominance of agriculture, administration and social services as the growth sectors of the region.

While these slow changes were under way, most of the political attention during the late 1980s and early 1990s focused on national politics and the liberation movements. With the release of political prisoners and the unbanning of black organisations Eastern Cape-rooted leaders figured prominently within ANC and PAC executives. As the process unfolded, the reintegration of the homelands gained general acceptance, but old rivalries between Zulus and Xhosas reappeared on the surface. With the rising spectre of regions as key elements in a quasi-federal system of elections and political leadership, it became critical to

ascertain who dominated the regional political machinery. In fact, Pretoria was already active in this field, even before the ANC was unbanned. Attempts to create a political leadership in the Eastern Cape, loyal to Pretoria and more efficient and locally acceptable than the preceding governments, only succeeded partially. In Transkei, the new military leader established close links with the ANC establishment and further distanced himself from Pretoria. In Ciskei, South Africa's direct and indirect influence eventually led to the rise of General Gqozo, a person closely linked to the South African security establishment.

Coalition manoeuvres between the National Party, Inkatha and other conservative black political groups during much of 1991/92 caused the ANC to look very carefully at its power and voter base in the different regions of the country, especially after April 1992, when the spectre of national elections started to enter the day-to-day awareness of Codesa negotiators and other politicians. Thus, it should not surprise us to see that, with the recent reappearance of mass action as a prominent tool in the political process, this was to be applied by the progressive alliance in an attempt to institute a pro-ANC leadership elite in Ciskei. Naturally, Pretoria wanted to counter such moves in order to prevent yet another change of government and to forestall a consolidation of Xhosa grassroots leadership sympathetic to the ANC/SACP alliance. The government also alleges that by excluding Transkei's homeland leadership from their attacks, the ANC are practising double standards.

The power-political reality underlying all these efforts is really very simple. As long as the National Party-dominated conservative alliance in South Africa has a chance to actually win a one-person-one-vote election – or, as long as it poses such a possibility – it is only natural that the progressive alliance will try all out to mobilise its voter power. This entails two aspects. First of all, it wants to consolidate its Xhosa-rooted power base, hoping to achieve very high support inside these areas. As long as a Pretoria-linked political elite is in power in Ciskei and can utilise Pretoria's election support machinery, the ANC feels threatened even on its home turf, as do Buthelezi and Mangope when threatened by a march on Ulundi or Mmabatho.

In the second place the progressive alliance tries to mobilise support in all the other areas, utilising the combined loyalties of the ANC, the trade unions and the SACP.

What can we expect to happen in the Eastern Cape during the next two years? While the reintegration of the two states into South Africa is virtually a foregone conclusion, the critical questions now relate to the nature of this process of reintegration. In the light of recent developments in the Eastern Cape as well as in KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana we can briefly sketch three alternative scenarios, which would have a profound effect on developments in the political, economic as well as social sphere.

1 A return to Codesa, followed by step-by-step negotiations of new regional boundaries, a national constitution based on strong regional governments as well as a broadly-based central government, and the phasing out of homeland governments through a series of interim regional and national governments. Much of the political attention would then fall upon the allocation of powers and responsibilities between the national government and the seven to 10 regional governments, each with elected legislative assemblies.

In the Eastern Cape tentative proposals by the ANC, reconciled with the existing system of development regions, might result in a new "Kei/Border" region encompassing Ciskei, the Border area and Transkei – that is, the original "Kaffraria" or Xhosaland. This region would be flanked by the Eastern Cape region with Port Elizabeth as metropolitan centre to the west, and a Natal/KwaZulu region to the north-east. The East London/Mdantsane–King William's Town/Bisho–Umtata triangle would constitute the urban core of the Border/Kei region, with a wide diversity of agricultural subregions, considerable tourism potential and some industrial activity around East London/Berlin, Dimbaza and Butterworth/Umtata constituting the economic base of the region.

2 Should centralism gain the upper hand in the political process (either along ANC lines or through a new military dictatorship), it is quite

possible that the government might try to establish a large number of relatively small sub-regions, with very little effective devolution of power, resources and responsibilities. One would expect that in this case Ciskei, the Border area and Transkei would remain separate subregions.

3 On the other extreme one could envisage the evolution of a federal structure with distinct nation-states attaining a high degree of autonomy. In such a scenario Natal/KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana would probably be matched by a reunited Ciskei/Transkei state, also incorporating the Border area. The other, smaller homelands would probably try to integrate with one of the adjoining regions. Most of the political battle in this scenario would centre around the division of powers and resources between the federal states and the federal government, with difficult border demarcation issues likely to cause lengthy conflicts. Also included in this process could be attempts by conservative Afrikaners to establish an Afrikaner-dominated federal state.

Possibly, centralists among ANC-SACP leaders still favour the second option of a strong central government led by an elected ANC leadership. Ideally, such a government would strive very hard to overcome South Africa's ethnic legacies, "integrate" all subregions, population groups and cultural streams and apply the country's limited resources in the most effective way to uplift and develop all its inhabitants. However, this ideal may be too much of a task to achieve as the next step after the divisiveness of 40 years of apartheid and three centuries of white domination. Partial success of such a strategy could end in bloodbaths as experienced recently in Yugoslavia. From that perspective the first scenario would seem to be the only one worth striving for, with a politically and economically reintegrated Border/Kei area one of the important building stones of a regionally-based new South Africa. □

Wolfgang H. Thomas is an economist who has done extensive research on Transkei.

Fumbling for a single city

Attempts to transform Grahamstown from "a city with two faces" into a single city began in 1988, but there has been little progress, says Glenn Hollands.

In September 1988 the Grahamstown Initiative held its launching conference, identifying three broad objectives: a unified city with a non-racial democratic government; a strong local economy with free economic activity and open education, health care, and public services; and an integrated society with improved communication and trust between communities. A participant referred to Grahamstown at that time as "a house divided against itself – a city with two faces".

Now, four years later, Port Elizabeth can boast one of the most advanced single-city processes, while the Stutterheim Forum has been widely acknowledged as a model for the entire country. The "City of Saints", however, remains a city with two faces. While the apartheid order disintegrates steadily at the national level, we are stuck with a relatively intact system of local government based on separateness. Recent events illustrate this fact: for example, civil disturbances following the city council's decision in February to cut water and electricity to the township, a spate of rumours and public recrimination arising out of the mass action campaign, and a slanging match between the council and the ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance over an apparently unavoidable deterioration in the quality of tap water.

Joint administration?

With local government under scrutiny at the national and municipal levels, the Grahamstown City Council launched a Negotiating Forum in mid-1991 (not to be confused with the Joint Negotiating Forum discussed below). The forum comprises the present separate councils, namely, Rini Town Council, Grahamstown City Council,

and the (coloured) Management Committee, plus the Indian Association and the (white) Ratepayers' Association. The Grahamstown Civic Association (GRACA) is not a participant, having attended an initial meeting only.

Will this forum solve Grahamstown's administrative, development and planning problems? On the surface it seems a sound idea, particularly if Grahamstown is to tackle the duplication of functions and services and to co-ordinate and integrate planning. Deliberations take place behind closed doors, but it appears that the forum intends merging the Rini and Grahamstown municipalities under a joint administration.

However, it has encountered a major hitch, which should have been anticipated. The Rini Council has been slow to accept the city council's proposal for a single administration and stands accused of delaying the one-city process. In fact, it would be irrational for this council, having survived years of crisis and challenge to its legitimacy, willingly to negotiate its own demise.

Why, then, has the Rini Council entered the forum at all? The forum presents councillors with a number of opportunities. It boosts their failing credibility as they are seen to be "moving with the times". The forum gives them a visible role in designing an interim administration and perhaps even a future local government. Moreover, in terms of the relevant legislation they have an effective veto over the process and can therefore control the pace of the initiative.

Interim Measures for Local Government Act

Why has the Grahamstown council chosen to initiate the process? Part of the reason undoubtedly is the Interim



Measures for Local Government (IMLG) Act of 1991. This act allows for negotiating forums, with the proviso that the state remains in control through the provincial administrator, who has the power to reject or ratify any local option. Existing local authorities decide who attends, how many representatives each may have, and who shall act as chairperson.

Deputy minister Tertius Delpoort has indicated that the IMLG Act need not be strictly adhered to. In theory, however, the Grahamstown council risks financial sanction from the central government if it fails to win Cape administrator Kobus Meiring's approval for a joint administration by 1 January 1993.

The legislation would probably have been better received a decade or so ago when the most insistent calls for unified local government came from popular township-based organisations. Instead, it was introduced at a stage when local authorities were already engaged in negotiations with representative black organisations like the ANC and the civics.

The Port Elizabeth One City Forum was one of many that came close to ruin when the bill was enacted. Rory Riordan, Democratic Party representative on the forum, pointed out that the act "put the discredited black local authorities back centre stage, and in a position more advantageous than that enjoyed by legitimate black political movements". Criticism was levelled by all parties in the forum with the exception of the National Party (although the NP member of parliament for Newton Park, Sakkie Louw, had privately criticised the bill and attracted the wrath of its sponsor, deputy minister Delpoort).

Fears of manipulation and abuse by discredited black local authorities

were well-founded, as a few examples show:

- The Queenstown negotiating forum threatened to collapse in June 1992 when the white municipality was accused of supporting the participation of the black local authority.
- Fort Beaufort made little progress until July 1992 when the Development Bank of Southern Africa sponsored a workshop. The powerful and obstructive Bofolo Town Council was excluded, which enabled the single-town initiative to go ahead.
- The prominent Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber convened by Van Zyl Slabbert seems to have failed because, according to Riordan, it is based on a separate-city concept and has empowered rather than sidelined separate local authorities.

Another problematic aspect of the IMLG Act is the potential for unilateral restructuring. The National Party (through the provincial administrators) and the existing white local authorities acquire the capacity to pre-empt future democratic restructuring of local government.

There is little reassurance to be found in comments by the Grahamstown City Council. According to mayor Steve Birt, "We have come up with something that need not be affected no matter what transpires at national level." (*Grocott's Mail*, 16.06.1992) Alderman Pam Paton seems to share this view: "If we can get a proper, clean administration going and get the infrastructure sorted out before democratic elections are held it will be a major step towards achieving our goal."

It is understandable that Grahamstown councillors and officials may be reluctant to ignore an act of parliament. It is unfortunate, however, that an avowedly liberal council, under pressure to restart Grahamstown's stalled single-city process, has opted for a solution which offers little in the way of vision and creativity but instead seeks validity by faithfully conforming to the terms of the IMLG Act.

Grahamstown's Joint Negotiating Forum

The Joint Negotiating Forum (JNF) was set up in March 1991, due largely to the intervention of the Black Sash in

a confrontation between local authorities and GRACA over land invasion and illegal settlement. It agreed, as an initial step, to address the issue of homelessness.

The JNF comprises the Grahamstown City Council, GRACA, the Albany region of the Black Sash, the town clerk of the Rini Town Council, and officials from a number of other bodies, including the Cape Provincial Administration, Eskom, and the Algoa Regional Services Council. In discussion and debate, GRACA has found itself overwhelmed by the superior skills and resources of the officials as well as by their weight in numbers. The JNF has tended to become a rubber-stamp structure, dominated by officials, developers and technocrats.

The JNF faces a crisis of membership. In contravention of the original agreement, according to which GRACA would meet with officials (such as the town clerk) and not the Rini council itself, the names of two councillors have appeared on the letterhead of recent JNF documents. This is the culmination of a process whereby councillors have insinuated themselves into the JNF. When challenged, they have threatened to withdraw the use of their chambers and secretariat.

The control of funds has been a major problem for the JNF. A trust was set up by GRACA and the developer to manage a R15 million grant from the Independent Development Trust (IDT). While GRACA and the developers were engaged in the allocation of building sites, the crucial system of checks and balances was unintentionally suspended. The misappropriation of R33 000 in funds collected from recipients of sites has shown up the lack of financial accountability and damaged the civic's credibility.

Although the JNF secured the IDT grant, it has no resources for vital work such as publicising its objectives among township residents. Local and provincial authorities have proved unwilling to assist – despite the fact that the IDT funds would probably not have been secured but for the JNF and, without this input, they would be poorly placed to cope with mounting pressures from homeless residents. (In contrast, the Stutterheim Forum, which obtained R6,8 million from the IDT, has functioned effectively as a result of R1,5 million in bridging finance and other help from the municipality.)

The JNF has had some success in increasing community involvement in development, and defusing crises arising from homelessness and land invasion. It has no mandate to tackle broader issues and, as presently constituted, lacks the capacity to become a democratic development forum. Clearly, there is a need for new blood and innovative thinking in the one-city process.

Models

Both the Port Elizabeth and Stutterheim forums are likely to move beyond the provisions of the IMLG Act. Their decisions are unlikely to be rejected because of the momentum they have achieved, and the demonstrably broad support generated for non-racial development and administration.

The Stutterheim Forum arose out of a context of civil turmoil and economic stagnation. A breakthrough was achieved only after a crippling consumer boycott which ended in May 1990. Factors which paved the way for negotiations included the resignation of the black local authority, service charge reductions, resolution of labour disputes, goodwill gestures from the local business community, and, crucially, a forum for community input into local development projects.

The Stutterheim Development Foundation (a Section 21 company) provides the forum with a legal entity capable of receiving and managing funds. It also implements the forum's policy decisions. Patrick Tandy notes that this separation of policy-making and implementation limits the potential for corruption and abuse.

The forum's steering committee is concerned to create a comprehensive urban development plan for greater Stutterheim. Its progress has already brought rewards in the form of reduced conflict and enhanced investor interest. With this forum in place, the question of a joint administration has lost its urgency.

It would seem that Grahamstown would do well to learn from the mistakes and the successes of both Port Elizabeth and Stutterheim – and to stop worrying about deputy minister Delport's prescriptions for a single city. □

Glenn Hollands is the Black Sash fieldworker for the Albany region.

"You should have been stoppe



In June 1992 multiple murderer "Louis" van Schoor was found guilty on seven counts of murder and sentenced in the East London Supreme Court to 20 years' imprisonment.

Jenni Horn reports on the role of the Black Sash advice office in bringing Van Schoor to justice and aiding the families of his victims.

Sybrand Lodewickus van Schoor's duties as a security guard were to protect property and, presumably, life but he was rumoured to have been connected with the injury or death of nearly a hundred people in the course of his work from 1986 to 1989. After a 16-month investigation – initiated by the Eastern Cape attorney-general's office, not the South African Police – he was charged with having committed 19 murders, 21 attempted murders, and three aggravated assaults. Eventually, after a marathon trial, he was convicted of the murders of seven people.

Sharlene Crage (now Crage-Menart) was co-ordinator of the Black Sash advice office in East London at the time. In April 1989 she recorded an interview with client Vusumzi Gcaza, a 26-year-old Pefferville man, who had been shot. This proved to be the

first major lead in uncovering a series of bizarre and unexplained shooting incidents involving young black males.

"Gcaza's story was hard to believe," Crage-Menart recalls. "He had been approached by a white man who asked him to follow him to the Turnbull Park Sports Club, where he shot him. Gcaza showed us his wounds."

"Together with the Grahamstown Legal Resources Centre we laid a charge of attempted murder, and warned advice office workers to look out for similar cases, as right-wing violence had been on the increase."

Crage-Menart then received a call from Patrick Goodenough, a reporter on the East London *Daily Dispatch*, asking if the advice office had information about teenagers shot at an East London restaurant by a security guard

called Van Schoor. No mention of the shooting had appeared in the daily police crime report, and attempts by a mother to obtain details of the incident from mortuary staff had proved futile.

"We immediately connected this incident with the unexplained shooting of Gcaza," Crage-Menart relates, "and so began our investigations into one of the biggest murder cases in South Africa's history."

Goodenough and fellow journalist Dominic Jones went through the inquest files at the East London magistrate's court. They unearthed the names of 39 people who had died at the hands of Van Schoor.

In liaison with the *Daily Dispatch* journalists, Crage-Menart regularly followed up reports of housebreaking in order to ascertain whether there were links with Van Schoor. She also

your tracks in 1987 ...”

established contact with two doctors at Frere Hospital who informed the advice office whenever a bullet-wound case was admitted to casualty.

“They did what they could to make hospital staff aware of our investigation and assisted us with medical and forensic evidence,” Crage-Menart says.

In September 1989, following the fatal shooting of Sebenzile Sitwayi, a 24-year-old Duncan Village man, Crage-Menart recorded: “The police are not doing much about collecting evidence. The doctors tried to force them to take the forensic stuff as there were definitely heat marks around Sitwayi’s wound. Police said they would have to go back to the station but that they would return. They never did.”

Crage-Menart recorded further that when the doctors questioned the thoroughness of the police investigation they were told to “mind your own business”. When Van Schoor finally came to trial, Mr Justice L. Melunsky echoed the doctors’ concern. He criticised the “police ineptitude” which had prevailed, calling it “disquieting in the extreme” that they had failed to carry out proper investigations after the shootings.

Recalling the endless frustrations of dealing with the police, Crage-Menart tells of “the relevant officers who were never in; the click of the telephone when one mentioned the name Van Schoor; the missing case numbers”.

Death threats were received by a journalist and a lawyer involved in the case, as well as by Siyabonga Tom, one of the witnesses. “Tom was taken to the police office where he was told that he would be killed if he did not say what they wanted him to say,” Crage-Menart reports.

All this and more filled the Black Sash files – and Crage-Menart with frustration, that the case did not progress with greater speed. “What about all those,” she asks, “who knew about the incidents and did nothing – the district surgeons, public prosecutors, shop owners, pathologists, police? Where was their sense of social responsibility?”

After two years, the pressure of publicity finally forced the state to order an investigation into the killings. This got underway in November 1989.

Besides assisting the lawyers with legal work, and the journalists with information gathering, the advice office served as the link between victims and their families, on the one hand, and the lawyers, media, and police on the other. “We performed a supportive role for the victims and their families, reassuring them and explaining legal procedures. We also advised them on their rights and duties as interested parties, and assisted the witnesses,” Crage-Menart says.

Families had little faith in the judicial system. It could be difficult to convince people trying to cope with

the injury or death of a child that justice would prevail in the end. The circumstances of the deaths confounded people. Mothers acknowledged that their sons had been “naughty”, but in every instance the crime committed had been petty.

It was also difficult for people to come to terms with the fact that so many of the killings could have been prevented. In Judge Melunsky’s words to Van Schoor, “You should have been stopped in your tracks in 1987”. In fact, he was allowed to continue his campaign of terror for two more years.

“I wish I could have been at the sentencing,” says Crage-Menart. “Not to celebrate the punishment of Van Schoor, but to embrace the mothers – Mrs Sipolo, Mrs Soenies, Mrs Gcaza, Mrs Peters – whose grief I had shared for all those months. They were the ones who had endured so much – the endless visits of journalists wanting interviews and photographs; police questioning and threats; and hours spent in court.”

“But through it all there was always a flicker of hope and trust in the East London Black Sash, the Grahamstown Legal Resources Centre, and the *Daily Dispatch* who had formed the team that fought for justice, and won.” □

Jenni Horn is a free-lance journalist, and a member of the Border region of the Black Sash.



Part of a bumper sticker seen frequently in East London and elsewhere at the time of the Van Schoor trial.

For legal reasons we are unable to print the drawing of Van Schoor’s face which covered the right-hand corner of the sticker.

Parity and dignity: The human rights of pensioners



The delivery of social pensions in black communities in South Africa is not only inefficient and unreliable; it is also dehumanising to those who depend on the system and are subject to its vagaries.

June Crichton records the battle waged by the Port Elizabeth advice office on behalf of black pensioners.

Black pensioners are at the mercy of a bureaucratic system that is understaffed, inefficient, and often obstructive and corrupt. The delivery of money is unreliable and slow – people often queue all day – and facilities such as seating, toilets and first aid are usually grossly inadequate. Changes in the system tend to be carried out insensitively and without consultation, leaving pensioners confused, disempowered and angry.

In the Eastern Cape, extreme pressure of numbers further aggravates the

situation. Of the 140 000 black pensioners in the Cape Province, 100 000 are from the Eastern Cape, and 70 per cent of these are old-age pensioners.

Pensions payout chaos

For the advice office in Port Elizabeth, the pensions saga began in earnest in 1986/87. The already appalling conditions at pay-points were exacerbated by the transfer of pensions administration from the department of home affairs to the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA), and the mov-

ing of all data from Pretoria to Cape Town.

The change to a monthly pay-out instead of the long-standing two-monthly procedure also increased pressure on the administration. No new posts were created to deal with this, and many defects in the system were becoming manifest, not least of which was a severe communication problem between the CPA office in Port Elizabeth and head office in Cape Town.

Furthermore, corruption at pay-points and in the administration of-

fices became apparent. Vouchers registering large amounts of back-pay were being signed for (often by thumb print) by illiterate pensioners who then received only the regular amount. The back-pay thus lost could never be reclaimed. Other pensioners were told that their vouchers were missing, while clerks contrived to have them signed by unsuspecting third parties – in one case, with a toe print!

Bribery and extortion by municipal policemen at the pay-point entrances was evident too. Black Sash monitors recorded an incident which occurred at Centenary Hall, New Brighton, when a usually locked door at the back of the hall was being opened by municipal police to let people jump the queue if they produced cash.

Black Sash strategy at this time was focused on monitoring pay-points; meeting with CPA officials; pressing the department of health and other organisations for improvement of services at the pay-points; and keeping our own workers and branch informed. Our vigilance and protests helped to limit corruption, but we were unable to make a real impact.

In 1989, when pensioners were compelled to present themselves at pay-points to prove they were alive, we enlisted the support of the local press in our protests against this "march of agony". The *Eastern Province Herald* became a staunch ally, recording instances of aged and ailing pensioners being wheeled to pay-points in barrows, or carried weeping over the shoulders of relatives.

In March 1990 significant progress was made when June Crichton and Sue van der Merwe of the Black Sash met with the administrator of the Cape, Kobus Meiring, and senior officials of the CPA in Cape Town. Following this meeting, receipts for pension applications (necessary for the claiming of back-pay) began to be issued, and a special person in the CPA head office in Cape Town was assigned to deal with Black Sash queries. The adminis-

Clippings from the column, "Pensioners' Corner" in the *Eastern Province Herald*

18 June 1990

Do you know that . . . by putting your thumbprint on the pay-out voucher, you are agreeing to the amount that will be paid to you? The amount is printed in the top corner of the voucher and should always be read before placing your thumb print on the voucher.

Mr Xolile X, an old-age pensioner of Zwide was to receive R750 at the February pay-out at Daku Hall. R600 of this was back-pay due to him.

When his voucher was put into his I.D. at the pay-out desk, he did not immediately take it out to check the amount printed. He received only R150. In the rush at the pay-out desk, the 7 probably looked like a 1. His thumb print was unfortunately his mark of agreement with the amount printed.

SASH asked June Crichton for a comment on her personal commitment to the struggle for parity and dignity for pensioners:

"What keeps me going is my admiration and respect for the fortitude and endurance of these people. I ask myself how and why the old and the infirm, the widows and the grannies have continued to accept the indignities that the system thrusts upon them. Is it simply a basic instinct to survive? Is it ubuntu – such a strong sense of community that indignity loses its place to family survival? Or has creeping apathy overtaken and weighed down their spirits? Have they learnt to be content with living outside the walls?"

trator admonished us for having appealed to the press, and gave us the assurance that his door would always be open to us – a promise he would live to regret.

Further victories included the provision of seating and the improvement of toilet facilities by the local authorities; the appointment of a clerk to deal with procurator applications at the pay-point; the opening of an applications office in Motherwell; and the provision of computer print-outs for the recording of queries at the pay-point.

Each victory encouraged us to persevere. At this time, pension-related matters accounted for 32 per cent of our case work, and we had neither the resources nor the desire to become a pensions office. We were determined to get the CPA to do the work it should be doing.

We began liaising with civic groups, to inform them of Black Sash strategies in pressurising the state and to advise them of our findings at pay-points.

The 1990 publication of Marj Brown's national advice office report on the state of black pensions (*This money will be used to bury me ...*) sparked renewed press interest in the disparity of pensions. Taking Brown's lead, we began a series called "Pensioners' Corner" in the *Evening Post* "Stop Press", in which we highlighted the worst of the problems besetting pensioners, and offered some solutions (see box).

Computerisation

Early in 1991 the administration of pensions was computerised, and chaos descended again. No information was disseminated and the reallocation of pensioners to new pay-points, sometimes far from their homes, caused confusion and anger. Tension at pay-points ran so high that clerks, fearing for their safety, sometimes packed up and went home, on one occasion leaving some 3 000 pensioners unpaid. It was again left to the advice office to protest, resulting in provision for those who had not been paid.

When the dust had settled we protested to the administrator

about the general failure of the CPA to effect the change-over in an ordered and sensitive manner. The national executive committee of the CPA claimed that pensioners had been fully informed of changes, and accused the Black Sash of making impossible demands.

We decided to take the matter to parliament through our Democratic Party member of parliament, Eddie Trent. This threat produced an immediate response in the form of a document from the director general of community administration in the CPA, stating the future intentions of the department. However, it also cautioned us that the drawing-up of this document had taken an enormous amount of time and that we had "overstepped the mark of reasonability". Curiously, CPA officials in Port Elizabeth were refused a copy of this memorandum.

Suspensions and the question of "review"

On 16 April 1991 information was leaked to the *Argus* that payments to approximately 38 000 disability and

maintenance grant holders would be stopped by the next pay-day, on the grounds that they no longer qualified. Epileptics, for instance, were declared to be suffering from "controllable" diseases.

We already had in our possession a form to be issued by the CPA at the pay-points the next month requiring all disability and maintenance grant holders to undergo medical or maintenance reviews. On the advice of Graham Richards, an attorney appointed by Lawyers for Human Rights, we applied for a period of grace for those who could prove that they had already made appointments with doctors or the CPA maintenance department. An extension of six months was allowed. A second arbitrary suspension occurred in March 1992, affecting some 16 000 Eastern Cape pensioners. The Western Cape experienced the problem in even greater numbers. We demanded the reinstatement of all pensions, on the following grounds:

1 Pensions deposited in financial institutions

These pensioners had not received no-

tification of the need to review, and could therefore not be held responsible for failing to comply.

2 Pension deliveries at pay-points
Forms handed out in the March 1991 review period had been directed at disability and maintenance grant holders only. Old-age pensioners who had been suspended had received no instructions to review.

We demanded that suspended grants be restored, that this be followed by official notification, and that recipients be given three months to comply. In the meantime the Port Elizabeth People's Civic Organisation (PEPCO) arranged a mass meeting of pensioners for 19 March. After numerous unsuccessful calls and faxes to the CPA, we telephoned the administrator on the morning of the mass meeting and warned him of the volatile situation that was developing. He asked for 30 minutes to confer with the director general. The director general's proposal that pensions be reinstated the following month, was not acceptable, and we pointed out that we were not prepared to convey this bad news to the waiting pensioners; he

Pension queue in Port Elizabeth



would have to appoint local officials to do that. Fifteen minutes later all our requests were acceded to. Our part of the deal was to encourage the people to have their reviews done.

The reinstatement was effective for all suspended pensions – some 40 000 for the Cape as a whole.

Why it happened

It seemed clear to us that this abortive attempt to reduce the number of black pensioners had been a manoeuvre by the government to introduce pension parity, and so win a political coup for the National Party. Thousands of black pensioners had been penalised with no similar attempts to weed out white, coloured or Indian pensioners.

The black community was still reeling from this confrontation when the CPA sub-regional office introduced a new system of payment control: the last digit of a pensioner's I.D. or reference book number would denote the month s/he should report to the pay-point for review procedures. Once again, this was to be done without consultation.

We urged the CPA to refer the matter to PEPCO. This time our advice was heeded without delay. The improved relationship between the CPA and PEPCO has facilitated civic monitoring of and assistance to pensioners, resulting in dramatically improved order at the pay-points. Regular meetings between CPA local officials, the Black Sash and PEPCO are also productive.

New working group

The lack of uniformity between the four provinces in their policies regarding social pensions has clearly placed local government departments in embarrassing situations. Attempts by the Transvaal Provincial Administration to suspend pensions resulted in protests by the Black Sash and other organisations. This led the deputy minister of local government in Cape Town to establish a working group, chaired by Dr Chikanda, to make recommendations regarding the pension delivery system.

Such a group obviously needs to be representative. National advice office

co-ordinator Sheena Duncan, wrote to Dr Chikanda who thanked her for her proposal to this effect, but pointed out that our presence was not required at their meetings. Subsequently, Marj Brown was co-opted onto the working group.

Conclusion

The existing fragmentation of welfare and pensions into 17 administrations is unwieldy and wasteful. It is of the utmost importance that a single, efficient administration be established, and that parity be achieved for all pensioners.

The current budget allowance for social pensions is, however, grossly inadequate. Until the system of own affairs is removed, black pensioners will continue to live – in Sheena Duncan's phrase at national conference 1992 – outside the wall. □

June Crichton is the director of the Port Elizabeth advice office, and a member of the Black Sash Cape Eastern region.



In the queue with many others ...

Pension queue

For all who wait, with black eyes
in the pension courtyard –
sun shines down their fingers.
For all who wait, and the shadows count them:
old men, women's sons, in the courtyard
surrounded by wire.
The dreamers, the vendors,
those who are carried on doors,
those who have walked here
to queue since dawn.
The white women,
the cheeky boys,
the clerks, the policemen
driving up and down.

They stamp the dompasses till the sun is white,
they pay their bribes, the radios sing,
they hold their coats around them
and one granny says to another granny quietly
"If I could have all that money on the table
to buy my coffin and tombstone
to go home in a taxi, slaughter a beast
and have one big feast, then I can die.
But I must stay alive now
so they can get my pension
the grandchildren who wait for me at home."

Robert Berold: Umgqala (1984)

"Lessons from Aloes": Five profiles

The aloe has delicate cousins – the lily, daffodil and narcissus – but is itself tough and resilient. From its fibrous leaves, cords are fashioned to bind and hold and weave with. In times of famine, its flesh is used for cattle feed. Its bitter juice has healing and purgative qualities, and has been used to embalm the dead.



"FIGHTING FOR THE STRUGGLE IN THE TOWNSHIPS":

Hilda Tshaka of Port Elizabeth

Hilda Tshaka was born in 1910. She is now crippled by painful arthritis, and lives on her old age pension. Her recall of her life in the struggle is crystal clear, her devotion to the cause of democracy and freedom absolute, and her sense of humour intact.

"I started in the struggle very early," she says, "at the time of Kadalie and Mazabalala, when the people were already fighting for the struggle in the townships." In those early days she joined Mayibuye, Sons of Afrika, and remained a member "until the African National Congress (ANC) rose up" in 1951.

"In 1952 we decided to break the law," she says, recalling the Defiance Campaign. "We women all went out preaching to others. We did not sleep; we were up at 03:00 to organise people. We were the late Mrs Matomela, the late Violet Qqirana, Frances Baard, Mrs Peta, Joyce Gawu and Mrs Faku." She also remembers white women who joined the campaign, including the late Peggy Levey and Alison Pirie.

"As the campaign progressed they organised buses that were driven by white drivers. They drove us to the train station and there we would go to the 'whites only' waiting-rooms and benches. When the police came we shouted 'Afrika!' and we would be taken and arrested."

Hilda Tshaka remembers Florence Matomela as a fiery campaigner. She led the campaign in Port Elizabeth when many of the men had been arrested following the march through the "Europeans Only" entrance at the New Brighton railway station.

"Mrs Matomela marched to the New Law Court to pray when Raymond Mhlaba, Simon Mkaliphi, Dr Njongwe and others were brought to court. The police refused to let us in and tried to take Mrs Matomela from us, saying she could join the men under arrest. We fought them physically and would not let them take her."

As meetings and gatherings were banned, the campaign went underground. "We used to distribute pamphlets – but not by hand. Port Elizabeth is the windy city! We just placed piles of pamphlets at special points and the wind distributed them for us."

With the introduction of Bantu Education, the protests of the women increased. Hilda Tshaka and a colleague, Mrs Monye, called a meeting for parents and together they decided to remove their children from government schools. They formed cultural clubs, meeting in open spaces where the children wrote on the ground, and learnt to count using stones. They also held knitting and crocheting classes.

Hilda Tshaka



Many unsung lives stand like signal aloes in our harsh landscape. Among them are those of Hilda Tshaka, Peggy Levey, Shedi Magwa, Tiny Nyamakazi and Nancy Charton.

"When the government realised that the schools were empty, they brought in the police to disrupt us. When they chased us away from those open spaces, we made space in the houses and yards."

Then came the introduction of pass books. Hilda recalls that the men were quick to agree to apply for them. "The government pushed hard; they bought new ties for the men so they looked smart for their photographs."

After this, unemployed men caught in town without passes were arrested and imprisoned, to be used as farm labour. "They used to reap the potatoes with their bare hands. Their hands were so swollen, sometimes two fingers looked like one. Many men went missing and died there, so we decided not to buy potatoes because we wanted to show the government they were doing a very evil thing. We worked very hard, and there was powerful support for this campaign in Port Elizabeth."

The next campaign of these indefatigable women was for a living wage, then £1 a day. A stay-away was organised, "but some of the men were weak". It appears that many who refused to join the stay-away were from the homelands, and the women were not about to put up with their lack of commitment.

"Each and every woman organised herself an overall and a stick, and we went and lay down in the tall grass near General Tyres where the buses waited for the men as they came down from New Brighton Labour with their food cans. When they came close to us, one of the women stood up and shouted, 'Tshisa, tshisa (beat, beat)', and we hit them. They did not know we were women. We nearly died laughing as they ran back to the townships."

In the 1950s the black people of Korsten were moved to KwaZakhele. "In Korsten we were united, and we helped the few unions there were at that time. I opened a space in my house for the Food and Canning Workers' Union when they had to close their office because of harassment. The police came but I told them, 'This is my house, I can do whatever I like here.'"

"We did not want to go and be segregated in KwaZakhele, but the government was clever." Government strategy was to move those from the homelands, who were lodgers in rented rooms and had no permits, first.

Hilda was one of the last to move from Korsten.

Hilda Tshaka and Mrs Matomela also "preached" in the rural areas. "Once we went to Alexandria, but we knew the farmers there would be violent to us so we took off our dresses and wrapped ourselves in red blankets, and Florence bought us each a 'fluitjie' to play as she said that would fool the farmers. We talked and talked to those workers until we heard the truth. We knew we could do nothing, but we wanted the truth."

The 1960s brought intense repression.

"I was imprisoned after Mandela - Mandela in 1964, I in 1965. So many were arrested at that time. We used to collect the names of those taken and take them to Mrs Levey; she would find lawyers for us. We walked until our feet were raw and Mrs Levey used to buy us slippers for our painful feet. Mrs Levey was a strong woman in Port Elizabeth. She was our good friend and we made her 'Nokhaya'. My children did not even know that she was white, the way we spoke of her. We used to hear a lot about Sheena Duncan, but we never met her. I would be very sad to die without meeting her. These women showed we should love each other.

"I was jailed for three years and nine months, charged with communism, my husband for four-and-a-half years, and two of my sons also."

"When I came back I was deported to Keiskammahoeck. I came back again and they deported me to Dimbaza. Wherever I went they arrested me. Afterwards I came back to Port Elizabeth and waited for my husband who was also deported to Keiskammahoeck. I wanted to go to him but I was restricted. When I could wait no longer I hired a car and went and fetched him. Then the police deported us together to Keiskammahoeck. There we had to report to the police station every day, with the children. It took us the whole day to walk there and back."

While Hilda was under house arrest, Mrs Matomela died. She was assured by the police that she would be allowed to attend the funeral, but it was a week too late when permission finally came through.

"That upset me, because we were comrades. When I was allowed to come back to Port Elizabeth at last in 1983, the police said to me there was

no place for me here, Mrs Matomela was no longer here for me."

"The women are not organised today like we were," Hilda Tshaka muses. "They mix with men, that is why. We did not work with men; we wanted to work by ourselves. And we worked hard. We had no time to sit down, no time to eat or drink, we all just worked together. I would like to die when I think about it." □

Janet Cherry and Judy Chalmers



"WORK THAT GAVE MY LIFE MEANING": Peggy Levey of Port Elizabeth

Peggy Ellis was born in Johannesburg in 1914. By the time she got her degree in politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford University, an elegant, loving, courageous woman had emerged. Once back in South Africa, she met and married Syd Levey.

The mature Peggy looked afresh on South Africa and was appalled. Her first step into public affairs was through the National Council of Women, but when the Black Sash was born in 1955 it provided a natural home for her, and by the early 1960s she had been elected regional chair.

Peggy's children remember a particular day when she came home ashen



Peggy
Levey

and angry. It was at the beginning of the 1960s when detentions had reached a new intensity and people were being taken from their beds in the middle of the night with no recourse to law. She had been to see a woman with six children whose husband had been arrested at 02:00, leaving the family destitute. How were they to survive?

Peggy became involved with Defence and Aid, with school feeding, with support for political prisoners and exiles – with any organisation or movement that could help in some way. She wrote to the newspapers, to members of parliament, to the government. She spoke on public platforms. She became a one-person advice office, tirelessly working to prevent people being endorsed out, to help with pensions and disability grants, or to get people out of prison. She arranged for food and clothing to be sent to resettlement camps and to exiles, for whom she was often the only lifeline. And she tried to get other women and men involved too.

In 1964 Peggy was given a warning under the Suppression of Communism Act that if she did not cease her activities, she would be banned. With three children away at school and her mother dying slowly in Natal, could she allow herself to be restricted to the Port Elizabeth magisterial district?

The security branch had raided the Levey's house a number of times, Peggy was being watched, and the family was frightened.

Peggy stopped her work, and her passport was removed. Her children remember this as an agonising decision. She had to give up the work that gave her life meaning. Eighteen months later she developed cancer.

In fact, she continued to work in a low-key way, literally until her death. The day before she died, she was still dictating instructions to the family about the Kupugani food parcel for the clinic at Ilinge resettlement camp.

Peggy Levey fought apartheid because it was wrong, not because she subscribed to any particular political ideology. She cared deeply about people and had the courage to do what she could to change the conditions under which they lived. □

Susan Collin

"IT IS HARD IN A SMALL PLACE": Shedi Magwa of Adelaide

The small town of Adelaide nestles below the majestic Winterberg range. The white town echoes the colonial tone of the town's name; across the railway line lies the township, a jumble of shacks, dusty tracks and box-like houses in regimented rows, overlooked by high mast lighting.

In spite of its isolation, Adelaide saw and felt all that the apartheid years brought. Through all those years a small group of leaders, harassed by police, in and out of detention, often feeling very lonely, remained a force in the township. One of these leaders is Shedi Magwa.

Shedi lives in a house made of "roof irons" painted bright blue, with a small strip of garden huddling against the fence. Inside the ceiling sags in one corner. Juxtaposed on top of the television set are pictures of Mandela and Christ.

In October 1928 when he was born, on a farm in the Adelaide district, it was raining so much that the family hut collapsed and his mother gave birth in a farm shed. Hence the name Shedi. He has nostalgic memories of his early years on the farm and attending a farm school until Standard 2.

After the enforcement of the 1936 Natives Land Act the family had no land to plough and were allowed only five head of cattle. At the age of 20 he set out for Cape Town where he found menial and poorly paid jobs. The real excitement in Shedi's life came when a fellow worker persuaded him to go to an ANC meeting. The Defiance Campaign was being launched and Shedi heard Bunting, Camerson and Ngwevela speaking. It cost him two shillings to join the ANC, and almost immediately he was swept up into the Defiance Campaign.

Although he volunteered to defy the "Europeans Only" notices and risk being arrested, it was with relief that he found that his job would involve him in proselytising for the ANC in the township hostels.

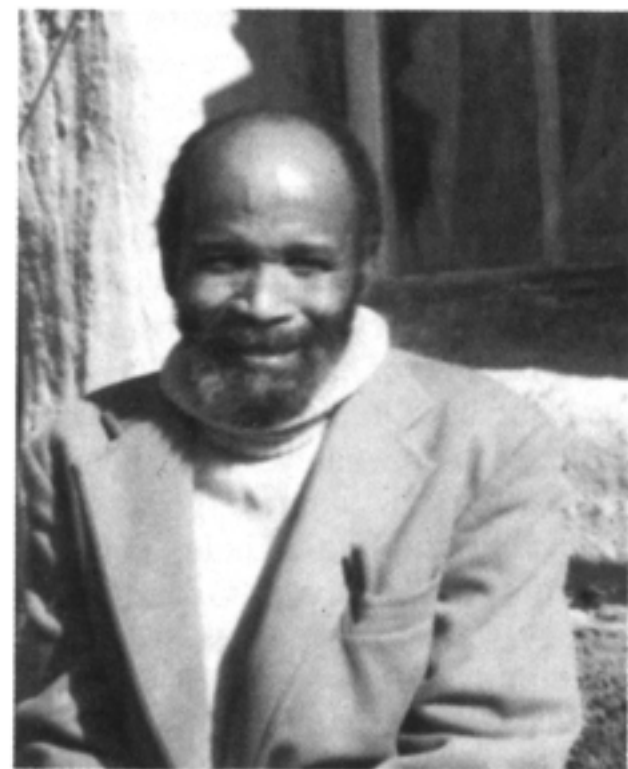
By the mid-1950s Shedi's father was getting old and he decided that he must return to Adelaide. There he married Nowandile, a quiet but articulate woman. They have seven children. Younger than her husband, Nowandile has had to contend with difficult circumstances in her married life, particularly, strong criticism and

antagonism from neighbours during the dark days of the 1980s when many people from Adelaide were detained, her husband, the "ANC ringleader", among them.

Shedi became involved in the Eastern Cape ANC before it was banned and the leaders had to go underground. "Many of our members melted away when things got hot. It is hard in a small place." For a while Shedi actively recruited for uMkontho weSizwe (MK). Inevitably, his three sons, hearing so much talk of MK in the house, begged to be allowed to go into exile. In 1980, when the boys were all in their late teens, Shedi and Nowandile reluctantly let them go. Shedi took them to Queenstown where they met the courier who took them over the mountains into Lesotho. The boys spent periods in Angola, Mozambique, Lusaka, and then Tanzania, where Xolisile went to the Solomon Mahlangu school. Shedi's younger brother had joined the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and also ended up in Tanzania, where he died.

Zwelethemba died during a 1984 mutiny in his ANC camp. But the Magwas had no news of their sons from 1980 to 1991 and did not know of Zwelethemba's death. Letters had been intercepted and destroyed by the police, and few underground returnees reached remote Adelaide. Once Nowandile heard that Chris Hani was to speak in Bisho, and she went in the hope that he might have news of her sons. In the vast crowd she could not get near him, and returned home disappointed.

Shedi Magwa



Siphiwo and Xolisile returned home in 1991, but Shedi feels that he does not know the full story of Zwelethemba's death. He thinks that Siphiwo and Xolisile give him the "official" version, and one day he would like to know the real story.

Shedi was himself active in the organisation of school and consumer boycotts. In June 1986, at the age of 58, he was detained and spent a year in Fort Glamorgan Prison in East London. When he was discharged he had tuberculosis and spent some time in hospital in Fort Beaufort. The period in detention was a politically strengthening time despite being the only "older comrade" there. In prison there was sometimes talk of the Black Sash. When Shedi was released he put his energy into getting an advice office going and linking up with the Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown Black Sash advice offices.

Shedi tells his life story without bitterness or rancour. He is hopeful for the future, but knows that transition will not be without its disappointments. "My people think freedom means that the banks will now be open and they can satisfy themselves!"

Because his own formal education was so limited, Shedi is keen on promoting education. He wants to put what energy he has left into small development projects, such as keeping chickens and making bricks. "I want to help people build their own lives," he says. □

Rosemary Smith

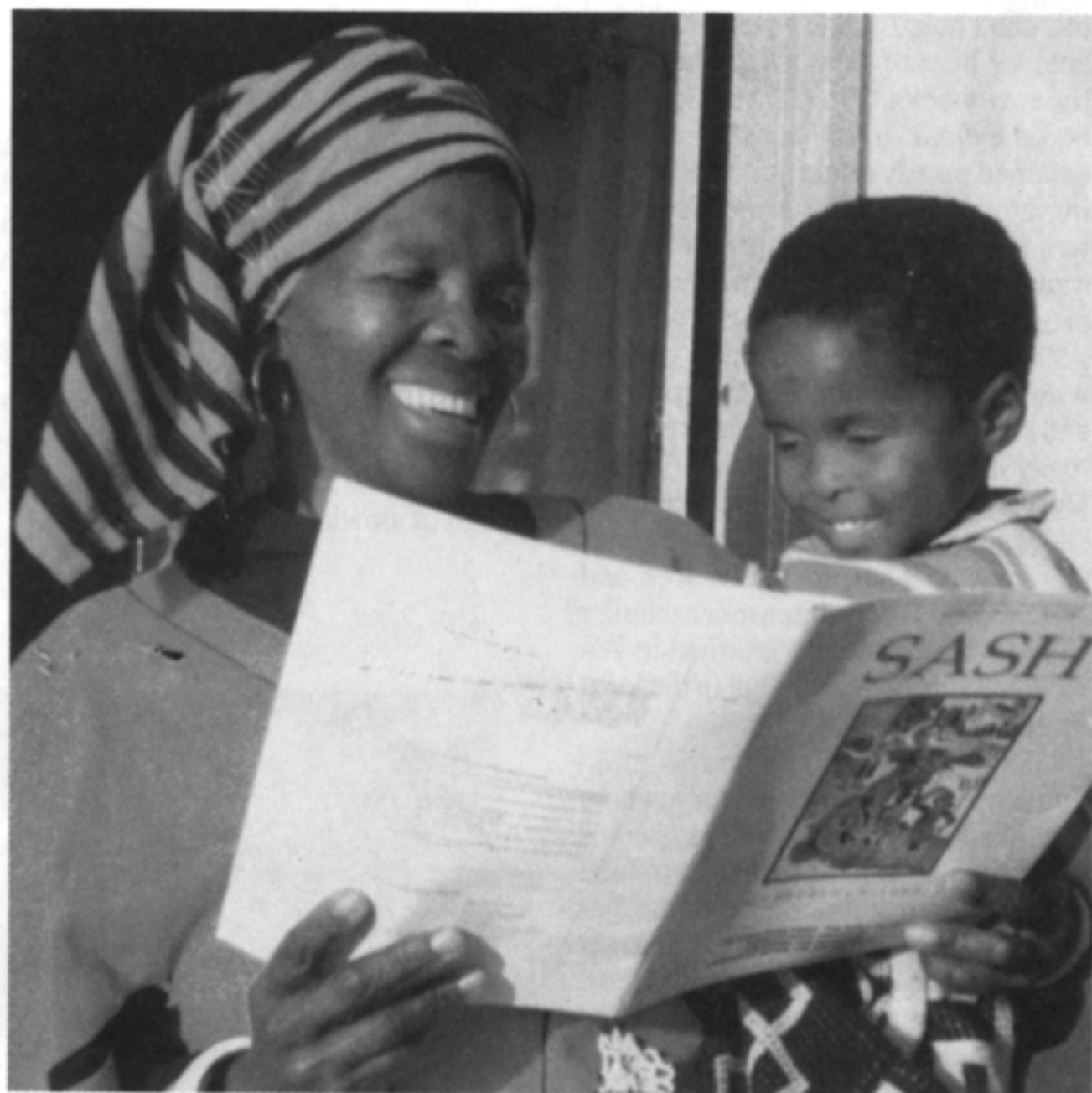
**"WOMEN ARE STRONGER
IF THEY SIT TOGETHER":**

Tiny Nyamakazi of Alicedale

Tiny Nyamakazi is a pre-school principal, head of the local ANC Women's League and an executive member of the civic association in Alicedale. After an unpoliticised youth and many years as a domestic worker, she is today, at the age of 51, a leading force in her community.

Tiny was given her name by the kindly grandparents who raised her after her mother was debilitated by mental illness. Tozi and William Nyamakazi were sharecroppers, who then moved to the old Alicedale location. "Life was easier then," Tiny muses. "Most families had gardens and animals, and were not dependent on a cash income."

The Nyamakazis' house later col-



Tiny Nyamakazi

lapsed when the river flooded, and Tiny and her grandparents were forced to become tenants.

With the advent of formal separate development, the entire black community was moved to the new location some distance from the town. KwaNonzwakazi is a typically crowded township with very little open land, yet virtually every house has its own vegetable patch. Some ascribe this to the influence of Operation Hunger who had provided training and seed during the 1980s. "Nonsense," says Tiny; "this community comes from a farming tradition; people who do not plant gardens are just lazy!"

In 1972, after her grandfather died, Tiny left Alicedale to find work in Port Elizabeth. With only a Standard 6 education, she was forced to seek domestic work. In 1977 Tiny accompanied her employer to Johannesburg, and discovered how dismal her wages were compared to those in the city. By 1985 she was earning R280 per month and had completed a course in health and first-aid training. Back in Alicedale the average wage for domestic work was still between R80 and R120 per month, as is still the case.

Although she was isolated in the white suburbs of Johannesburg, Tiny gradually became aware of the Black Consciousness movement, trade unions, and the growing mood of resistance. In February 1986 she returned to Alicedale because her teenage son, Khayaletu, had been detained. She had few political inclinations, but she returned "because I could not let my son fight by himself".

Khayaletu, a member of the Congress of South African Students (Cosas), was detained for seven months before being charged with bombing the offices of the local black authority and assaulting a policeman while in detention. He was later acquitted on both charges. At about the same time Tiny's elder daughter, Zoliselwa, was detained in Port Elizabeth's St Alban's prison for two months. "The youth and Cosas were active, but everyone was scared," Tiny recalls.

Tiny attended two meetings of the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw) in Grahamstown, but never made it to the third in Port Elizabeth. "Two white Special Branch came asking for Mrs Nyamakazi and I was so naive, I rushed forward saying 'That's

me, can I help?" She was arrested and held by herself in the Alicedale cells for two weeks. From interrogation it became clear to her that she had been detained purely on the grounds of having attended the Fedsaw meetings. She was moved to Waainek prison in Grahamstown where conditions improved, interrogation ceased and her political education began in earnest with an introduction to Ma Ivy Gcina and Ma Buyiswa Fazzie, who had already been detained for two years. During her three-month incarceration she was exposed to many other activists from Port Elizabeth, Cradock and Alexandria. It was thus a much happier Tiny Nyamakazi who returned to Alicedale to work as a spinner in the local mohair factory.

Tiny was thrust into the role of *ad hoc* shop steward in the factory, where her fluent English allowed her to communicate workers' grievances. In June 1989 the owner threatened to mechanise his factory if Operation Hunger did not close down its soup kitchens. He claimed that the soup hand-out had removed the incentive to work in Alicedale. Tiny is on record as having roundly castigated the owner for obstructing relief work.

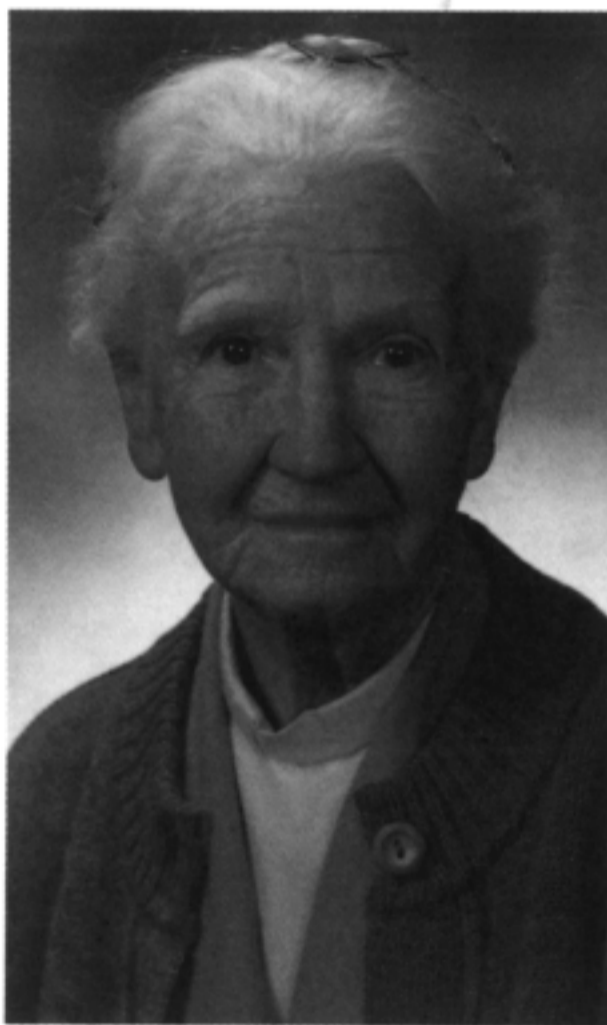
Tiny perceives a considerable weakening of women's organisations in the new political climate. "Women are stronger if they sit together," she says. "They were stronger with the United Women's Congress and Grahamstown Women's Organisation before the unbanning. With P. W. Botha people resisted, and women came in floods for mass action. Today all of Alicedale's committees and projects are dominated by men. Even the crèche committee are men!"

Tiny never married, and confesses to a measure of impatience and a spirit of independence which are exceptional in the old-fashioned community of Alicedale. "In the small towns women are governed by unwritten laws. They do not talk in meetings, and few understand sexism." Tiny's years in Johannesburg had taught her a forthrightness which often offended. In spite of this, her candour and friendliness have won her much respect, and as head of the World Vision-sponsored crèche in Alicedale, she is a leading figure in an increasingly politicised community. □

Glenn Hollands

"I CELEBRATE A MIX OF PEOPLE": Nancy Charton of Grahamstown

In September 1992 Nancy Charton became the first woman to be ordained priest in the Anglican Church in South Africa. This event was the culmination of a life of energy and passion, during which she has also been a wife, mother, associate professor of political studies, deacon, and much more. It is a passion for justice that drives Nancy, now in her 70s and showing no sign of slowing down.



Nancy Charton

Still a faithful advice office worker, Nancy resisted joining the Black Sash for many years. "I was secretary and then chairperson of the National Council of Women in Graaff-Reinet, and deeply involved in group areas fights. At one stage the government intended exporting Graaff-Reinet's three or four Indian families to Port Elizabeth, but with the help of the National Party member of parliament for Middelburg we won that particular battle."

In 1965, the Chartons moved to Grahamstown. Nancy's reputation as a fighter for human rights had preceded her, and the Black Sash was keen to number her among its members.

"Mrs Wyndham-Kelly came over almost as soon as we had moved in and invited me to join. My husband was very anxious that I should have nothing to do with the Sash, but what stopped me was the 'women only, whites only' membership. I felt that the battle for human rights should not exclude blacks and men. So I helped Rodney Davenport, who founded the Institute of Race Relations in Grahamstown. Rodney, Bob Donaldson and I headed the institute in turn, and immediately became involved in group areas issues. In particular we resisted the removal of people from Fingo Village, and won that battle after ten years!"

In the 1970s Nancy and her colleagues perceived a desperate need for an advice office. They persuaded the Institute of Race Relations to provide a grant. In 1974 the advice office opened its doors in the back of the Mission Church at the bottom of High Street, with an old fridge for a filing cabinet. "You had to be careful where you put the desk and where you put the client – the floor was so rotten!"

"Mercia Wilsworth, Marianne Roux, Iona Meyer, Shirley Moulder, Betty Davenport and I were among those early members who opened the office – just on Saturdays – and waited for clients. There were very few at first, until one day there was a bus accident and we discovered a practice among some lawyers of 'helping' clients sign away their compensation. We fought that for two years, won the case and got the clients their money."

After that, clients streamed in, chiefly with Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) claims. The advice office became a crucial catalyst in the improvement of employment conditions in Grahamstown. Pressure on the departments of labour and manpower led to pressure on employers to pay better wages and provide better conditions. "We sorted out many an official body," Nancy grins, "and we certainly taught the departments of labour and manpower with what they cannot fiddle in Grahamstown, whatever they may do elsewhere!"

In the 1980s, monitoring grew out of the Black Sash advice office, and Nancy was involved in that too. "We tried to help detainees, before the Dependents' Conference was established. That taught us skills in taking affidavits."

It was the monitoring group's activities in very hostile circumstances that

finally persuaded Nancy to join the Black Sash. What about her reservations about its membership? She feels now that the Black Sash should remain a women's organisation because it meets a need in affirming and training women, and that the time for a drive for black membership has passed. Black women are mobilising themselves, and the opportunity of attracting them has perhaps gone.

For Nancy there is an obvious overlap of interests between her work in the Black Sash and in the church. "The Black Sash, like the church, claims our personhood; it is involved in the struggle for human rights, and affirms the rights of those who cannot claim them for themselves."

The church's own track-record on issues of racism and gender is far from faultless, and here Nancy has played a determined and prophetic role. In 1971 the Bishop of Grahamstown appointed twelve people to examine and challenge racist structures within the church. "It led to what we called 'blackening up the hierarchy'. Blacks were affirmed to aspire; whites were helped to accept."

The logical second step was to tackle the gender difference, and the provincial synod's 1992 decision to ordain women was a fulfilment, not a triumph, in Nancy's view. "When I celebrate the eucharist now in the prison, with my group of young mums, or in my parish, there will be a new dimension, a sense of completeness. On the practical level, it means I do not have to go chasing a man to celebrate for me!"

Nancy sees the many and varied roles she has had, from that of a professor to that of an advice office worker, as all having contributed to the fullness of her life. In her present involvement in the local Dispute Resolution Committee, she delights in the variety of people – comrades, liberals, South African Police young bloods, South African Defence Force – who meet under one roof, grappling with the new skills of negotiation and mediation. "I celebrate this mix of people! It is a richness beyond telling." □

Helen Holleman



Redefining security

The notion that violence is an acceptable way of dealing with conflict must be opposed, says Jacklyn Cock, who outlines a ten-point programme for demilitarising South Africa.

Much of the current violence in South Africa reflects the pervasiveness of an ideology of militarism. The core of this set of ideas is the notion that violence is a legitimate solution to conflict. This notion appears to have wide acceptance among many of our young people. Dismantling this ideology of militarism is an urgent task and part of a broader project of demilitarisation.

A process of demilitarisation is already under way in South Africa. Indicators of this are the halving of the period of initial military service from two to one years, reductions in the programmes and personnel of the South African Defence Force (SADF) and Armscor, and the dismantling of the national security management system. However, this process of demilitarisation needs to be widened and deepened through measures such as those listed here.

1 Inscribing a clause in our new constitution which renounces war as an instrument of foreign policy.

2 Forming a new, small, professional, legitimate and representative defence force that is subordinate to civilian control. A new defence force should not mean, take the SADF, add some uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) and some homeland army members and stir. We have to rethink the whole institution. What are the main threats to our security in South Africa? Do we need an army to defend us at all? Clearly, South Africa lacks the small population and homogeneity that

made it possible for Costa Ricans to abolish their army, but we can learn from other nations' efforts at demilitarisation.

3 Dismantling the arms industry through a planned process of conversion of military resources to economic development and environmental protection. During the period of total strategy South Africa built up a powerful arms industry. It is characterised by smuggling, secrecy, and non-productive resource utilisation. The current special defence account is R4,4 billion of which about R100 million is for secret defence projects and the rest for the purchasing of arms. This means that the government will spend over R11 million per day, or R8 000 a minute, throughout the year on arms. Can this be justified in a society where 60 per cent of our population live in poverty? Dwight Eisenhower once said, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, represents, in the final analysis, a theft from those that hunger and are not fed, who are cold and are not clothed."

Some thoughtful economists maintain that the polarised choice between jobs and foreign exchange on the one hand and morality on the other is a false one. Perhaps we need an independent Office of Economic Conversion to develop a national policy and advise on a planned programme of conversion to more labour-intensive services which are aimed at meeting basic needs.

Disclosure

4 Opening up the arms industry to public scrutiny and debate in accordance with the modern principle of transparency (the avoidance of excessive secrecy and the concealment of information on military affairs). There were two South African signatories, Sheena Duncan and Desmond Tutu, to the June 1992 British-American Security Information Council (BASIC) call to restrain the international arms trade. This proposes that "the United Nations Arms Register should be fully implemented including data on arms production as well as trade. All governments should fully disclose their arms sales, purchases, and production to their legislatures and to the public."

5 Imposing a statutory ceiling of one per cent of Gross National Product on defence expenditure.

6 Investigating the possibility of a non-military form of national service as a nation-building instrument and minimal form of skills training in a society where a large percentage of

"My military service abundantly compensated me for the firmness of character which was lacking then."
 Wolfdietrich Schnurre

the potentially economically active population is unemployed.

7 Giving "Peace Education" a central place in the school curriculum and teaching children the importance and value of tolerance and non-violent forms of conflict resolution.

8 Paying attention to the needs of demobilised soldiers and making policy provisions to assist in the social integration of both MK soldiers and those members of the SADF permanent force who would prefer not to serve in a transformed and non-racial defence force.

9 Redefining security. This is at the core of the demilitarisation agenda. In current international debates national security is no longer defined largely in military terms. According to Maurice Strong, "our security is threatened more by environmental risk than by traditional military conflicts" (*Disarmament Times*, March 1992).

As Michael Renner of the United States World Watch Institute expressed it, "The security of nations depends at least as much on economic well-being, social justice and ecological stability ... pursuing military security at the cost of social, economic and environmental well-being is akin to dismantling a house to salvage materials to erect a fence around it."

In current debates a distinction is often drawn between the "old world order of the last half century organised around ideological conflict" and a new world order "organised around environmental sustainability". In the "old" South Africa in the period of "total strategy", security was defined primarily by reference to white domination and military power.

Current threat analyses focus on the variety of security problems in the southern African region brought about by the effects of poverty, drought, disease and social dislocation. In current debate security is being redefined to focus primarily on meeting basic needs. Defining national security largely in military terms fails to recognise many other crucial determinants of security.

National security requires economic vitality, environmental health and significant opportunities for human development. Thus, real security can only be attained by reducing spending on

arms and systematically redirecting those resources to meet critical human and environmental needs.

We in South Africa are only just beginning to learn of the evils done in the name of "national security". Our new approach to security should be rooted in meeting human needs. It should be both expanded – to think in global terms – and reduced, to include personal and domestic security.

10 Restraining, with the goal of banning the possession and use not only of dangerous traditional weapons but also private firearms.

An important dimension of the current violence in South Africa is that it involves weapons which are understood as legitimate symbols of masculinity. What links firearms and traditional weapons (spears, assegais, knives, knobkerries and sticks) are the themes of militarism and masculinity.

It follows that the debate about how to stop the violence in South Africa should involve questions about gender identity and how to uncouple masculinity from militarism. It is not a new question; sixty years ago Virginia Woolf asked, "How can we alter the crest and spur of the fighting cock?" For a start all war toys and games should be prohibited.

These are controversial issues which need to be widely debated. Our central task in South Africa right now is to create a common society; to build institutions which unify rather than divide us and which truly protect and defend our real security.

A demilitarised society is not Utopia. As Seymour Melman has written, "A roster of inequities, inequalities, and brutalities ... remains, with this difference. The very process of demilitarising – by well-designed economic conversion – institutionalises democratic decision-making and decentralisation, reinforces productive life-serving values, and frees up the resources needed for every sort of improvement in the quality of life."

This is why we should adopt demilitarisation as a road map towards the political goals of peace and social justice in South Africa. □

Jacklyn Cock is co-ordinator of the demilitarisation group of the Black Sash Southern Transvaal region.



The advice office workshop

Domini Lewis reports



The Black Sash Advice Office Workshop was held in September at the Alpha Training Centre near the Magaliesberg. Hosted this year by the Northern Transvaal region, it drew together about 50 volunteers, interpreters, field and case workers from all nine advice offices for a weekend of reports, information and skills sharing, project motivation, and forward planning.

The workshop had a varied and concentrated agenda. In the reports concerning interaction with advice-seekers in the advice offices, the issue of violence and its impact on communities and advice office work was prominent. The Southern Transvaal office, based in Johannesburg, had attempted to defuse tensions experienced by its advice-seekers by discussing the situation with them in the waiting room. This had proven successful, and other regions expressed interest in adopting a similar approach.

The paid workers met on Friday evening to discuss how best to achieve worker participation in the issues which affect them. They decided that a consultative forum would improve communication between workers and management. Phumlani Bukashe (Southern Cape), Dan Shabangu (Southern Transvaal) and Laura Best (Northern Transvaal) were chosen as representatives, and will take suggestions to extended national executive meetings of the Black Sash.

A feature of the workshop was the successful small-group discussions. The reports to plenary demonstrated the workers' creative and practical approach to problem solving, and their willingness to adapt suggestions and ideas tried in other regions to fit their particular needs.

For example, the role of the advice offices in the campaign for voter identification documents in preparation for the forthcoming elections was dis-

cussed. As the advice office workers interact daily with a broad client base, they are ideally situated to promote the campaign and to assist individuals in procuring identity books. They could also play an important part in voter education by making videos, posters, and pamphlets available to advice-seekers while they wait their turn in the queue.

All agreed on the value of focusing particularly on issues affecting women. There is a need to lobby against the laws which create problems for women married in community of property under customary law. Advice offices can provide case histories which illustrate the serious problems such women face, and can liaise with those who take up the issue and lobby for change.

Natal Coastal motivated that workers draw up a mission statement for advice offices nationally. This would help to define the goals and parameters of the work undertaken, and provide guidelines for the future. Mary Burton and Karin Chubb, representing national executive, welcomed the suggestion. As a first step, they invited those present to write down, in one sentence, what the Black Sash means to them. These responses will form part of the discussion in preparation for a separate "vision statement", which the national executive will be formulating.

Small group discussions also addressed the question of the advice offices' role in mass action and stay-aways. A consensus evolved that they should be proactive in their attitude and actions. If it is decided to close an office, advice-seekers must be told why. The advice office could be used as a crisis and monitoring centre. It was suggested that paid workers who decide to stay away, for whatever reason, should work the lost time in. Alternatively, they could work at home and monitor the situation in their par-

ticular area on the affected days. Although regional circumstances often dictate decisions, the Black Sash needs a national policy on this issue.

Other issues discussed included the impact of AIDS on advice office work, local government structures, destitution and the need for a "new deal", non-support maintenance, monitoring the small claims court, the Unemployment Insurance Fund system, and who should attend advice office training courses.

The workshop strengthened support networks and reinforced an appreciation of the role of the advice offices in the work of the Black Sash. □

Domini Lewis is one of the co-ordinating editors of SASH.



Above: David Ngxale and Tennyson "Tura" Ngcaba;
below: Patricia Mxotwa and Zacks Mbele



Abortion: When human rights conflict

Conflicts between contending human rights are putting to the test our membership's most firmly-held beliefs concerning the role of our organisation and our personal positions in it.

Should negative discrimination in the past be offset by positive discrimination (or affirmative action) which will impact negatively on privileged groups? Do rights to land and shelter exert just claims on presently protected property rights? The abortion issue is another example of human rights conflicts. Is there a middle way between the extremes of opinion on this issue?

Before discussion of conflicting rights concerning abortion could start, members asked if this is, in fact, "a Black Sash issue". Some argued (and still argue) that it is not, while others felt that a human rights organisation cannot shirk the moral and practical dilemmas which abortion presents.

The fact of being a women's organisation is clearly relevant. Abortion, more than other issues, highlights the restraints on women's capacity for moral agency where human rights – the claims of reproductive freedom and of unqualified right to life – conflict.

South Africans are in the midst of vital constitutional and bill of rights debates. At the Human Rights Lobby Group Conference in June in Port Elizabeth, the resolution of particularly contentious human rights conflicts was broached. On the abortion issue there was support for a proposal moved by Sheena Duncan (see insert on page 41).

Readers are invited to reflect on the short contributions by Dot Cleminshaw and Norma M. Wardle which follow, and to consider whether Black Sash regions can support the lobby group proposal should it go forward to national conference in April 1993.

The right to life

Norma M. Wardle

"The fruit of the womb is a gift from the Almighty." (Psalm 126)

Regardless of social, medical, financial and other handicaps, each human being, having within him- or herself a soul made in the image and likeness of Almighty God, is of inestimable worth; the deliberate destruction by man of innocent human life is totally forbidden by Almighty God. This Jewish/Christian ethic was the cornerstone of Western civilisation and Western medicine. It is a fact that any society, which intends remaining civilised, must therefore protect innocent human life from conception to natural death. Without this basic right to life, all other rights are illusory. Legal induced abortion conflicts with the right to life of the unborn child; it victimises not only the aborted child but also the aborting mother. The law has an important teaching function. Society tends to adjust its behaviour according to what is legal. Legal abortion creates its own market; more women will abort their pregnancies if this is legally accessible.

Here, as well as in most other parts

of the globe, this Jewish/Christian ethic is rapidly being dismantled and replaced by tyranny, jungle rule, where the strongest feel they may, with impunity, snuff out the lives of inconvenient unwanted unborn children in induced abortion. In the minds and practice of not a few, the "absolute respect for life" ethic has been replaced by a subjective "quality of life ethic". When confronted by patients with a so-called "poor quality of life", increasingly the doctors and society feel at liberty to extinguish such patients' lives rather than seek improvement in those impoverishing factors. Such seeking requires effort, and the spiritual qualities of courage, generosity, and the humility to submit to God's designs.

Abortion reverses the role of those mothers seeking the destruction of their own children, and also the role of the medical profession. Doctors find it impossible to confine their killing to only unborn children, but using the same principles extend the killing ethic to other categories of inconvenient people such as handicapped neonates who have escaped the abortion net, the incurables, and, hey presto, euthanasia, the other side of the abortion coin, has established itself.

Already here in South Africa the doctors and courts are over-ruling parents who refuse to consent to their minor children's abortions. This conflicts not only with medical ethics and the rights of parents to choose the safest medical option, namely childbirth, but also with the parents' Christian ethics. We are but a small step from China's policy of forced abortion for those exceeding the government-stipulated single child.

Dr Paul Marx reminds us that both abortion and euthanasia are condemned by age-old medical, moral and legal codes. Both introduce into modern-day law the principle of directly killing the innocent as a solution to personal or socio-economic problems and together they put our country on a par with Assyria of old, "a most insolent nation that will show no regard to the ancients, nor have pity on the infant" [Deut. 28 : 50].

Logic and justice call us now to be consistent and put aside our hypocrisy. We must ensure the right to life of our innocent, defenceless unborn children in the bill of rights. Induced abortion must be forbidden. □

Norma M. Wardle is a member of Pro-Life, Cape Town.

A woman's right to choose

Dot Cleminshaw

Today, 70 per cent of women worldwide have access to legal abortion on wider grounds than our present law permits.

The South African statute results in about a thousand legal abortions each year, mainly for white women (76,3% in the year ending 30 June 1989). Tens of thousands cannot get legal abortions and are forced either to the horrors of "backstreet" abortion or to bearing unwanted children.

The hidden nature of criminalised abortion in South Africa precludes accurate statistics but some 250 000 each year, with related deaths, are estimated. Most women who resort to backstreet abortions here are poor, under-educated, unmarried, and black.

If women are to be liberated from such disasters and empowered to participate in development, their human rights to gender equality and other freedoms as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women must be secured. Among these are the woman's right freely to choose a marriage partner and, on a basis of equality with her partner, to decide what number of children to have, the intervals between births, and which contraceptive methods to use. If contraception fails, the question of abortion will undoubtedly arise.

At present no contraceptive is completely fail-safe. Even sterilisation can fail. The state's family-planning clinics reach only 29 per cent of women in the fertile age group (15 to 49 years). Thus, many women reluctantly consider abortion. They have a right, not yet recognised, to information, privacy, dignity, and choice. A woman's decision should be made in consultation with a trained health professional, but the final decision – unlike the present position – should be hers.

Human rights lawyers consider this right overrides any possible notion of a legal right to life of the foetus, or of its father to compel the woman not to abort. It is her body and her responsibility. Equally, a man does not have the right to choose abortion for his partner, once he has impregnated her, and women certainly have the right to

Human Rights Lobby Group Conference proposal

Any right-to-life clause in a bill of rights must be qualified by a proviso that this must not be interpreted to deny a woman the right to choose to have an abortion.

decide not to terminate a pregnancy. In other words, the father is not entitled to force a woman to end or continue a pregnancy. This argument does not diminish the woman's moral obligation to consult the father of the foetus, if he has not deserted her.

Abortion on request (say, until the 24th week, the stage of "viability") should be legalised. The woman should receive informed, non-directive counselling. Her moral autonomy and capacity to make a responsible decision should be respected, and she should have access to safe, skilled termination. Abortion at later stages should also be allowed, subject to specific conditions.

Ethical issues arising from competing rights to life of the foetus and the mother, as well as legal questions relating to the personhood of the foetus, are subjects of intense discussion and litigation. This has increased with the advent of *in vitro* fertilisation, surrogate motherhood, and the use of foetal tissue to treat Parkinson's disease and diabetes, for example. The French abortion pill, RU486, which is more than 95 per cent effective in early pregnancy and is also safer and cheaper than surgical procedures, will enable women to exercise their right to privacy and is bound to affect the debate.

This revolves around the human right to life, which is a claim against the state that guarantees it will not take life arbitrarily, that is, without due process of law. To summarise this controversy, the question, "do the foetus and the mother have equal rights to life?" is met by pointing to the difference between the status of the not yet "brain alive" (possible only after 22 weeks) or unviable (up to 24 weeks) foetus

and the adult female. The European Commission of Human Rights has upheld the interpretation of the statement, "everyone's right to life shall be protected by law", to mean that the right to life pertains to live birth only.

The more precise moral question is, "when shall we predicate full human value to developing foetal life?" A criterion of sentient consciousness is suggested. Until about the 24th week, the foetus may be regarded as an extension of the woman's body. Thereafter there are two beings, one a foetus capable of surviving if born prematurely and therefore not to be aborted unless to save the mother's life. In that case, everything possible will be done to save the life of the normal foetus as well as the mother.

On the question of legal personhood (and therefore whether, from conception, the foetus is a bearer of human rights), the United States Supreme Court *Roe versus Wade 1973* explicitly rejected the arguments that when the constitution uses the word "person" it includes the foetus within that legal category. If the foetus were a "person", why would the law permit abortion in cases of rape or incest?

The thousands of women "out there where the carnage happens" do not enter into such esoteric discussions. As L. S. Gillis, emeritus professor of psychiatry at the University of Cape Town, has written: "It is clear that there can never be a reconciliation of medical needs with absolutist anti-abortionist views whether on ethical, religious or moral grounds. In any case, large sections of society do not seem to share these anti-abortion views as is evidenced by the number of women admitted to gynaecological wards for treatment of septic abortions, and in the number of women who travel to Britain annually for induced abortions."

Abortion is a hard choice, especially for those who place absolute value on the sanctity of intra-uterine life from conception. Those who oppose abortion are not, nor should they be, compelled to have one. But they should examine the ethics of framing the law to accommodate their opinion while denying others, in a country of many (and no) religions, the right of procreative choice. □

Dot Cleminshaw is a member of the Black Sash, Cape Western region.

"No angst whatsoever"

The dust has not settled on the uproar that greeted Marita van der Vyver's novel Griet skryf 'n sprokie. Rachelle Greeff caught the author in a quiet moment.

Griet, main character in Marita van der Vyver's first adult novel, burst upon the Afrikaans literary scene with her shrink, divorce lawyer, and a PC full of fairy-tales.

Since then, nothing has been quite the same for Marita, free-lance journalist and Black Sash member. Some 42 500 sales of *Griet skryf 'n sprokie* later, she admits to being totally overwhelmed by the unexpected snow-balling hype her book created. Afrikaans publishing history was made when the first print-run of 6 000 were sold within four days.

I talked to Marita on the Stellenbosch farm where she tries to escape the not always so welcome attention following *Griet's* publication. At the same time it provides the perfect surroundings to get her avid story-telling mind geared towards a next novel, although the equally important and arduous task of raising a ten-month-old son single-handedly limits the hours before the PC – and nogal "anders grootmaak as ons pa's en broers".

"I hope I'll give him the freedom to be his own person and know when we've reached the point where I have to let go. Even if it implies having to allow him to play rugby," she adds with her characteristic humour.

How does one feel in the space between the Afrikaans and English cultures, as a liberated feminist?

"To a certain degree I have always felt the outsider to any group, which is probably beneficial for any creative person. Feeling too snug, one might lose one's critical ability. But as far as the language is concerned, I can write fiction in Afrikaans only – in liberated Afrikaans. Furthermore, I have no angst whatsoever about die taal wat sal ondergaan. Yes, I suppose I am a feminist – my friends would call me so – but dislike being plonked in a box. [*Likewise she doesn't fancy being labelled the Afrikaans Erica Jong.*] As for the liberated, I'm not too sure ... [*said laughingly*]."

What does feminism mean to the average Afrikaner?

"Om lesbies te wees en nie jou beenhare te skeer nie. [*More giggles.*] For me personally I suspect it implies trying to improve the destiny of women." [*She chooses every word very carefully, but immediately fears sounding self-important – something we boerevroue seem to have in common.*]



Marita van der Vyver

How was *Griet* received by male readers?

"Many felt threatened, but some, thank goodness, were moved. Apparently there are already three manlike Griete waiting on the desks of different publishers."

***Griet* deals, amongst other things, with Calvinism, religion, faith, loss, politics, Afrikaner role-models and liberated sex. Does it reflect the new generation of Afrikaners?**

"Yes, probably – but then I'm never very sure of anything. Let's rather talk about 'denkende Afrikaners' as opposed to new Afrikaners."

Will your "denkende Afrikaner" ever escape the albatross of guilt

Sy was 'n vrou wat wou skryf omdat sy geglo het die pen is magtiger as die penis.

Sy het nie besef dit is die agtste doodsonde in 'n falliese wêreld nie.
From: *Griet skryf 'n sprokie*

conceived by apartheid?

"The political guilt will resolve only in the course of a few generations – not to mention the religious guilt. But I'm aware of the fact that guilt can be most unhealthy. Of importance is how I now lead my life."

In *Griet* there is much talk and discussion about the then (end of the 1980s) political struggle. With a few exceptions not much is done. You joined the Black Sash (to become one of less than five Afrikaans members locally). Do you as a writer also have a duty to bring about change?

"Yes, but doing a stand for the Sash, for instance, is something apart. Hopefully, with my writing, I motivate people to think. Certain writers work with political slogans, which is fine for them, but not for me. One, of course, has to sidestep preaching to the converted." [*In this respect, too, Griet is a success because many people, who seldom or never read Afrikaans fiction, were drawn to the book by the unusual media coverage it received, albeit under the pretext of buying an "explicit sex novel", which is only partially true.*]

Something about your next project?

"It's not a second *Griet* – later kan ek nog baie *Griete* skryf. It looks like another novel and this time against the backdrop of the 1970s. En dit gaan oor wit Afrikaanse kinders wat in 'n fools' paradise gelewe het."

Good news for those unable to follow the Afrikaans *Griet: Griet skryf 'n sprokie* has been translated into English by well-known Cape Town journalist Catherine Knox under the working title *If you go down to the woods tonight*. Negotiations with British publishers are under way. □

Rachelle Greeff is a free-lance journalist, fiction writer and a member of the Black Sash, Cape Western region.

Human voices in an Age of Iron

We asked a number of people to tell us about a book, old or new, which made a strong impression on them in 1992. We were delighted with the response, and are sure our readers will enjoy these brief comments.

*We are likely to remember 1992 as the year of Boipatong and Bisho, a year of horror and of disappointed expectations. Yet, as our contributors show, it has also been a time of striving for understanding and for reconciliation and, as such, a time of growth. May we, living through times J. M. Coetzee depicts in his novel *Age of Iron*, like his improbable heroine, "die ou kruppel dame met die kaffertjies", have the courage to keep our eyes open, and learn that compassion and love are found in unexpected places; may we continue to hope and to listen for the human voices that will bring healing to our land.*

Di Oliver:
former vice-president of
the Black Sash

The Tao (how) of Leadership by
John Heider

Dirk Marais (of the Montague-Ashton Gemeenskapsorganisasie) gave me this in celebration of the first talks between the government and the ANC in May 1990. I read it from cover to cover in one sitting! It inspires, encourages and challenges frailty of understanding in the ebb and flow of great and not-so-great events in this transitional period of our country's history.

This year, the book took on a new significance as I delved into the 81 one-page chapters of wisdom — choosing from the wide range of superbly descriptive chapter titles, such as "Polarities, paradoxes and puzzles", "Freedom and responsibility", "Doing less and being more", "The womb", depending on issues arising day by day. John Heider has produced this well of wisdom from the text of Lao Tzu's classic *Tao Te Ching* [how things work]. He writes in his introduction that his success with using Tao led him to see its broader applicability, especially to a new generation fascinated with the role of the leader and the skilful management of human resources. He believes the book has value for aspiring leaders in the family or group, church or school, business or military, politics or governmental administration.



Albie Sachs:
author, law professor and
ANC member

Ons is nie almal so nie by Jeanne
Goossen, [English translation by
André Brink] (HAUM-Literêr)

Choosing is easy — I've only read one book this year, and that was by accident. Since my life began to exceed my imagination I have found that I don't want to read. My head is too full already, so until I've written and lived it all out, I just can't absorb the ideas or fantasies of anyone else. This book, however, was thrust at me. I was asked to read it and give a quote for a possible blurb. I loved it. It's about a part of Cape Town I passed through as a child on my way to visit cousins in the northern suburbs, which to me were further away than Jo'burg. I knew nothing about the people there, the supporters of the Nationalist government suddenly finding themselves in power. Jeanne's story about her mother (probably) who fights for independence by becoming an usherette and seeing *Gone with the Wind* 35 times is so vivacious, anger provoking, funny and poignant that I feel introduced to the soul/gees of that community. This is the kind of honest story-telling that we need in South Africa if we are to discover each other, and do so in a way that gives us satisfaction and joy as well as pain. Now I will probably read the Afrikaans version, making it two books this year.



Marilyn Martin:
director of the South African
National Gallery

Black Athena. The Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization. Volume 1: The fabrication of ancient Greece 1785-1985 by M. Bernal (Free Association Books)

Martin Bernal describes *Black Athena* as "a study in the sociology of knowledge", and offers the reader a reconstruction of the history of the Eastern Mediterranean by reassessing the two models of Greek history. According to the "Ancient Model", which was accepted in Hellenistic times, Greek culture arose as the result of colonisation, around 1500 BC, by Egyptians and Phoenicians, who had civilised the native inhabitants. In the evolution of their culture, the Greeks continued to borrow heavily from their neighbours. The "Aryan Model", which views Greece as essentially European, developed only during the first half of the 19th century. It denied the Egyptian settlements and questioned those of the Phoenicians. In its extreme form, which "flourished during the twin peaks of anti-Semitism in the 1890s and again in the 1920s and 1930s", even the Phoenician cultural influence was denied. The "Aryan Model" presupposes an invasion of Indo-European speakers from the north (unreported in ancient times), which had overwhelmed the local "Aegean" or "Pre-Hellenic" culture.

For me the book is the single most important source of inspiration and encouragement in my investigation into the culturalist phenomenon known as Eurocentrism. In order to perpetuate the myth of European superiority and Europe's position as the centre of the world, the "eternal West" was invented, a dominant culture unique since the moment of its origin. The results have been devastating for the African continent, but Eurocentrism continues to pervade the daily life of every South African at every level.

If we wish to reassess what, who and where we are, if we are serious about rewriting our history and of working towards nationhood, we will have to put the lies, distortions and prejudices of Eurocentrism behind us.



Gus Ferguson:**writer, cartoonist and publisher***Other People's Trades* by Primo Levi

What can one say in two hundred words (I have already used fifteen) about a melancholic and philosophical poet, an Italian Jew who survived Auschwitz and who has written deeply moving stories of his camp experiences, metaphysical poems, science fiction and philosophical essays à la Montaigne, whose humble and unembittered humanity, despite a tragic life, ennobles us all and whose work includes comic and playful elements, but always underpinned by a sense of loss?

One revealing quote on writing for entertainment: "The first name that comes to mind is that of Lewis Carroll, the timid dean and mathematician who lived a blameless life and fascinated six generations with the adventures of Alice, first in Wonderland and then behind the Looking-glass. The confirmation of his affable genius is found in the favour that his books enjoy after more than a century of life, not only with children, to whom he ideally dedicated them, but with logicians and psychoanalysts who never cease finding ever new meanings in his pages. It is likely that the uninterrupted success of his books is due precisely to the fact that they do not smuggle anything over on us, neither lessons in morality nor didactic efforts."

**Karen Press:****writer and publisher***The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* by Gilbert Shelton (Knockabout Comics and Rip Off Press)

One of the lesser-known achievements of the South African government is that they kept large numbers of potential hippies in a state of arrested development. In the late sixties I, like many of my friends, was ready for lift-off. Much intense listening to a banned recording of *HAIR* had primed my heart and mind for the narcotic paradise of Aquarius, but I had no idea what earthly buttons to push to get there.

Now, 22 years too late, I've finally found the etiquette book for people of substance. It is a compilation of the adventures of the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, "the notorious hirsute

trio". Fat Freddy and his comrades-in-dope spend most of their time smoking, hiding, scoring or suffering the after-effects of the big green leaf; an accurate social history of pothead existence in the American sixties. There are also little extras like the comic version of that well-known musical *Little Orphan Amphetamines*, and glimpses of Fat Freddy's Cat, the most intelligent life-form in the USA.

**Denise Ackermann:**
theology lecturer and
Black Sash member*Grey is the Color of Hope* by Irina Ratushinskaya, translated by Alyona Kojevnikov (Alfred A. Knopf)

Few contemporary books merit re-reading. This book is an exception. I re-read it this year and if anything it moved me more as it speaks directly to our present context, illuminating how essential hope is in these times.

In March 1983, on her 29th birthday, Soviet poet Irina Ratushinskaya received a seven-year prison sentence for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". This remarkable account is a memoir of the three-and-a-half years she served in a work camp, defying her oppressors with almost superhuman courage and determination. For her and the prisoners of conscience with her, Solzhenitsyn's credo for dealing with jailers "Never believe them, never fear them, never ask them for anything" served as a guiding principle. This, together with the power of her religious faith, the unfailing support of her husband and the extraordinary loyal and loving bonds she forged with the community of women in the work camp, enabled her to survive the sadism of Soviet prison life, isolation cells and hunger strikes.

It is, however, not these that I want to dwell on here. Some of the most arresting passages in Irina's memoir are the descriptions of the many female ceremonies of domesticity and civility that helped her and her companions survive with hope. They celebrated birthdays with cakes of flour and oil and by making wreaths with bay leaves saved from their broth; on Epiphany they ran naked in the snow at -25°C. These festive archaic female rituals give this book an exultant tone unprecedented in camp literature.

**N. S. Ndebele:****author, chairperson of Arts for All, president of the Congress of South African Writers and vice-rector of the University of the Western Cape***Call me Woman* by Ellen Khuzwayo (Sprinsters)

This is the autobiography of a strong, energetic and resourceful woman. We are taken through her childhood in a farm environment in the Free State. Then we witness her first journey away from home to obtain education. While being educated she met many other people who were to play vital roles in South African history. It is fascinating to see how a generation of the African intelligentsia was formed through schooling and remarkable intermarrying. Then Ellen Khuzwayo describes her marriage history, showing its pains and pleasures. Finally taking refuge in Johannesburg from her first marriage, she settled down and became one of the most influential and respected members of Soweto's community. In her dedicated service to the community, she emerged as a source of great strength and inspiration. It is a measure of its importance that this book won the CNA Book Award a few years ago. It clearly demonstrates that much of the story of black women in South Africa still waits to be told.

**Michael Masutha:****advocate, director of the Disability Rights Unit, Lawyers for Human Rights and officer of Disabled People of South Africa***The Ernie Wentzel Memorial Lecture* by Albie Sachs

This was one of the most interesting works I came across this year. Sachs discussed key issues currently under debate in South Africa, such as the right to land, federalism versus a unitary state, language rights, and so on. I found more fascinating his argument for including social and economic rights in the new bill of rights, rather than leaving the responsibility of honouring them with a new government. The past has taught us to be careful about how we plan the future.

It is unwise to ignore this debate and to concentrate merely on the right

to vote when there are long lists of black disabled children awaiting admission to special schools, while schools such as Pioneer in Worcester (one of the best in the country) admit white children only.

Despite undertaking in 1986 to address the plight of the disabled, the government has never considered imposing upon itself a policy of quota employment in favour of disabled people. There is no commitment to ensuring for the disabled equal access to adequate health services; access to public transport is still a non-issue. We are therefore in a process of finalising a Disability Rights Charter which was the result of extensive consultation with disabled people in South Africa; it will stress second-generation rights. To us, a constitution that fails to address these issues has very little to offer.

(Michael Masutha has no access to books discussed in these pages as he is visually impaired and his reading is thus restricted to works made available for the blind.)



Kole Omotoso:
author, professor of English
and editor of *Southern African
Review of Books*

Decolonising the Mind by
Ngugi wa Thiong'o (Heinemann
Educational Books)

Over the years, African writers using European languages to compose their works of art, be it poetry, prose or drama, came in for criticism especially from European critics, but also from African writers themselves. Invariably, African writers such as Chinua Achebe attempt to justify their use of European languages and their special relationship with the particular language they use. They also speak of their effort to bend these languages to their own ends. Ngugi wa Thiong'o of Kenya has been greatly concerned about using what he considers a foreign language such as English for his art.

His book was published in 1984, after much agonising about the negative effect of English and the colonising role of the British in Kenya and the rest of Africa and the Third World. I was naturally interested in reading it.

I had had arguments with Ngugi wa Thiong'o about the language issue in African literature, and had told him

that English was my language, so I did not feel the same way about it as he did. The publishers then asked me if I would like to write a counter to it as an aspect of this debate. It was a challenge I could not let go. My problem was that I had no proper and adequate knowledge of southern African languages.

My academic studies were in Arabic language and literature, I speak French and my novels and plays are written in English. I had done translations into Yoruba, my mother tongue, from both English and French. I could therefore speak with some degree of first-hand knowledge of north, west, east and central Africa, language wise. South Africa was the area I did not know. If I was to write a book on the politics of language in African literatures I would have to learn about the language situation in South Africa. This is one of the major reasons for my moving to South Africa. Ngugi's work has moved me.



Gcina Mhlophe:
storyteller and author

The Dragon Can't Dance
by Earl Lovelace

I started my year with this novel from Trinidad. The cover is inviting and the title just grabbed me. The first page was very lyrical and there was movement and dance in the choice of words. I liked that, and went on to enjoy a wonderful love story that was sad as well as exciting in the way only Ghetto life can be. I could see the guys hanging out in street corners, the beautiful girls walking by with their carefully done hair and stylish dress. I could hear the music of the steel drums and see the colourful costumes at the yearly carnival. Indeed that book refused to be put down, when it was time to go to sleep it whispered seductively: "Please, not now, just read one more page or finish this last chapter and see what happens. It can only get better!"

Obediently, I let my eyes feast on and when I had read the last line on the last page I held the book to my chest for an early morning hug. Great reading!



Jane Rosenthal:
Black Sash member

*Lost in Translation (Life in a New
Language)* by Ewa Hoffman

Ewa Hoffman, born just after World War II in Cracow to Jewish (but not religious) parents, wrote an autobiography in her early forties. Far too young, one might think, but she had something more than the simple facts of her life to explore.

In this beautifully written book she records her first twelve years in Poland, where they lived in a small flat (with a country girl living in as maid) and considered themselves fortunate. The neighbours, her beloved piano teacher (Ewa was a talented musician and was preparing for a career as a concert pianist), her Catholic schoolfriends, the politics of Poland under the USSR all inspire her subtle and sophisticated meditations. Then came emigration to Canada, her father having some romantic notions inspired by a book called *Canada Fragrant with Resin*. Gradually, travelling between Poland and the Americas, she comes to terms with "life in a new language". In considerable detail she explores the profound difficulties of losing touch with one's mother tongue, the language in which one first constitutes meaning and which is therefore bound up with personal identity. This is a struggle which touches the lives of so many members of our own population, who find themselves having to live through the medium of an alien language.

Born in the same year as "Ewa", I found it particularly interesting to compare my experiences growing up in South Africa with hers, but this is a book for anyone interested in why we are who we are.



**Lionel Abrahams:
poet and publisher**

Tales of Tenderness and Power
by Bessie Head (Ad. Donker)

This posthumous compilation of stories is possibly even finer than *The Collector of Treasures*, the other small volume of Head's stories, which I have cherished for some 15 years. Like her historical works and the rest of her fiction, these stories are set in Botswana, where she spent most of her adult life as an unreconciled exile, in fact a refugee. But what a refugee! Writing was her refuge from loneliness, alienness, frustration and the dread of insanity, and by her writing she single-handedly took Botswana into the realm of literature, made it a place for the imagination and the spirit. Her life had its chaotic, squalid and even demonic episodes, but what she distilled from her experiences was a hungry sensitivity to forms of human grace (such as the grace to balance power with tenderness). These are the treasures she collects in her vigorously realistic, limpid, yet deeply thoughtful and impassioned stories, whose special testimony of humanity gives them, I think, a dimension of greatness.



**Janet Cherry:
political studies lecturer
and member of
the Black Sash**

My Friend Matt and Hena the Whore by Alan Zameenzat

I read a great many novels as well as academic works, but the novel which undoubtedly made the strongest impression on me in the past year is this relatively obscure book by an Ethiopian writer (I can't remember the publisher, but it is one of the well-known, trendy paperback publishing houses). I took this book out of the library in Port Elizabeth by chance, and was engrossed, amused and horrified from the outset.

Essentially, it is a novel about the effects of famine and civil war on children. Seen through the eyes of an adolescent boy from a small village in an African country, it traces his "adventures" as he and his two friends experience rural famine, urbanisation, political corruption and the senseless confusion of war. I know it sounds depressingly familiar, and it is indeed

a deeply shocking story; but it is told in a highly entertaining and moving way. It makes a change from our very Eurocentric reading culture, and gives a fresh perspective on Africa.



**Neville Alexander:
author and president of the
Project for the Study of
Alternative Education in
South Africa**

*Power and Money. A Marxist theory
of bureaucracy*
by Ernest Mandel (Verso)

This is a book that will become a companion for all those concerned about "the culture of democracy". Mandel's main objective is to explain the anomaly of the former Soviet Union which was supposed to be a first step on the road to a classless society, but instead produced that monstrous leviathan of a bureaucracy that finally self-destructed in 1990.

While analysing those historical events, Mandel in fact does something which is much more fundamental and interesting. He refutes, in my view convincingly, the fatalistic "iron law of oligarchy" propounded by Michels in 1911. According to this "law", democratic organisations necessarily become bureaucratic as soon as they exceed a certain critical scale. While Mandel agrees that there is an unavoidable incipient trend towards bureaucratisation in all mass organisations, he uses his phenomenal historical and theoretical skills to demonstrate that countervailing action is possible, if always difficult.

For South Africans, caught in the coils of the "transition to democracy", the question of organisational democracy in "civil society" is an existential problem. This book illuminates an important part of the road ahead.



**Linda Rode:
free-lance editor and
translator of books**

The Old Man of the Waterfalls by
Kasiya Makaka (Tafelberg)

There are books that leave you (out in the) cold, others that hit you like a hammer — and there are those that steal gently into your soul. This is such a book. Makaka's gentle tales introduce the reader to a pristine

Africa in the creation myth "Walk carefully on the face of the mountain"; they lure you along the path of Kakhuni, the little shepherd, into the Valley of the Lasting Dew; they bring you face to face with the sad woman of Gomo village ... and, finally, with little Bumbinkomo, still moulding his cattle on the banks of the great river, not knowing that "in the fullness of time he would not even know where he had come from", for soon war would be sweeping through the hamlet.

This is a book that jumps the boundaries of time, space and culture with deceptive ease. For eight- to eighty-year-olds.



**Shauna Westcott:
journalist and member of the
Black Sash**

Grass by Sheri S. Tepper

I loved *Grass* — not the forbidden weed, but a planet covered in waving grasses, home to exotic indigenes and a bizarre transplanted human aristocracy. The latter ride to the hunt, of course; a strange and tragic hunt. The central human character, the divine Marjory, ventures into the alien splendour of *Grass* and, perhaps because she truly loves horses, is able to receive the truth. One of the best of the best of science fiction — tales of encounters with the infinite Other.



**Jenny de Tolly:
president of the Black Sash**

A Year in Provence by Peter Mayle

I so enjoyed the pure, escapist pleasure of being transported to the French countryside. Peter Mayle describes a year in his life as it changes from ice-bound winter, to the end of the truffle-hunting season and the vine pruning in spring, to the hot, languid, visitor-filled days of summer, to the tasting of new wines in September, and the hunting season in the fall. Most of all I loved his descriptions of all of the eccentric, pedantic, colourful local characters. Rather like Herman Charles Bosman's writing of the Marico, also great favourites.



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Obituaries

Alba Windham

Alba Windham died on 25 August 1992, aged 93 years. She was a member of the Wynberg branch of Cape Western region until her death. Alba was an active member of the regional council in the early days of the organisation. Because of her experience as a colonel in the British Army in World War II she was asked to organise and control the march of the Black Sash in Cape Town in 1956, and of the University of Cape Town protest march against the Extension of Universities Bill in 1957, which restricted the entry of students on racial grounds. She was a very loyal member of the Wynberg branch who never missed the annual Morning Market in spite of her great age. She was a charming person who will be much missed.

Noël Robb

Joyce Michel

Joyce Michel, Black Sash fundraiser supreme, died suddenly in August. Her cheerful energy, enthusiasm and superlative organisational skills, which made the book stall at the annual morning market one of its major attractions and biggest money spinners, are irreplaceable. She was a truly exceptional human being and will be sorely missed.

Pat Tucker

Greta Lockey

Greta Lockey, honorary life member of the Natal Coastal region, was a woman of many parts.

She wrote memorable articles for newspapers, especially between 1972 and 1974, including a history of Warings Bakery in Pinetown and

"How to be a Successful Paid Companion" – written with much humour and compassion. Her account of her own experiences, entitled "Travelling by Landrover through Africa" is superb. She frequently wrote under the pen name of Mary Orchard.

After teaching in England she taught, from 1932 to 1945, in Africa. During the war she replaced a master at Glenwood Boys' High School as "English Specialist taking J.C. and Matric Classes" (when he returned he reclaimed the post!). For the next 20 years she moved about, to England and then back to South Africa where she taught in various African schools, including Adams College in Natal, and also in Transvaal.

In 1976 Greta successfully completed the Operation Upgrade literacy teachers' course and taught English to Zulu-speakers. At the age of 90 she started art classes and was told by her teacher that she made the most progress of anyone in the class. Besides English and Latin, both of which she taught, she belonged to a French circle. Six months before her death she was studying first-year varsity set books. Simultaneously she studied Zulu.

Greta joined the Black Sash about 20 years ago and became a staunch member of the Highway branch. She helped the branch to organise and judge an English essay competition for African school children. She joined in stands for as long as she could and always preferred constructive discussion of political matters to superficial chatter. Her clear, analytical mind was a great asset to Highway, as was her determination to act promptly on any injustice that came to her notice.

Greta Lockey died on her 93rd birthday in Kloof. □

Mary Grice and Eleanor Mathews

Cape Western

Regional round-up

A delegation of 10 from the region attended the National Advice office workshop in Pretoria. Several report-backs have been given and we will now concentrate on taking the suggestions forward.

Monday, 12 October, saw the opening of parliament for the briefest of sessions. We stood on the steps of St Georges Cathedral, sandwiched in-between ANC marchers and another march by SADTU. We printed a pamphlet for distribution during our stand explaining the region's concerns about the forthcoming session, and the legislation or lack thereof coming up in parliament. A public meeting and candlelight vigil was held with the WPCC to express our deep concern on the issue of a general amnesty.

Following the successful management structures workshop held in May, Cape Western hosted a repeat workshop for 20 of our members, including two from the Southern Cape at the end of October.

Since national conference is at the beginning of April 1993, our regional conference will be on 6 March.

Carol Lamb

Southern Cape

Women's workshop

In response to a request from Winile Joyi, the Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union organiser, Black Sash members Tessa Edwards, Olwyn Quinn and Sylvia Reid led a very successful workshop focusing on the empowerment of women. Sixteen women from sawmills and other businesses in Knysna and Great Brak River attended.

This was the first workshop of its kind that our region has presented. We aimed to achieve a feeling of freedom among participants to discuss issues relevant to their situations to help them to understand the extent of PPWAWU's capacity to assist and protect its members and to strengthen women's positions in the union. The sessions dealt with working mothers

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and their children (including maternity benefits), better working conditions, equal rights for women, sexual harassment at work, and other topics.

Each session was made as practical as possible: how to plan for one's future; how to build one's self-esteem and thus develop personal power; how to run a meeting and what portfolio duties entail; how to draw up the agenda and take minutes; how to balance all one's roles as a woman; taking charge of one's health; dealing with sexual harassment at work; and, lastly, coping with the problems encountered by working mothers. The discussion and hard work was interspersed with walks on the beach, sing-songs around the fire, and general hilarity.

Olwyn, in the advice office, has had valuable feedback from the participants. All agreed it was a very enriching experience. Indeed many calls have been received, requesting similar workshops for others.

Carol Elphick

Cape Eastern

Our region hit the headlines in the *Eastern Province Herald* on 10 September 1992 when we expressed "deep concern" over the detention of a 14-year-old youth. He was held in a police cell for 10 days with other men, and his parents were not informed of his whereabouts. He was also taken out in the middle of the night by police to identify the homes of other children. When charged, he and three 13-year-olds appeared in an open court.

As a result of the pressure put on the state by the Black Sash and other organisations, a working group has been appointed to look into the facilities (including *in camera* court hearings) when children under 18 are taken into custody.

Advice office training

The Advice Office Training Programme continues its work. Trainees from 13 rural and nine urban offices have received training which has been expanded now to include a voter education slot and one on local government.

Michelle Laird

Michelle Laird joined the Black Sash's Cape Eastern region in 1985 and worked in our advice office, first as a volunteer and then as assistant director. She has gone to live in Canada, and we shall miss her enormously. She says of her work in our advice office:

"I climbed the two flights of stairs to the advice office each day for 18 months, always with a feeling of anticipation, wondering what challenges would have to be met that day. There was much laughing and rejoicing with clients, and times for feeling pain and helplessness. I go away with the greatest gifts I could have received: increased knowledge, greater experience, and hopefully a little more wisdom."

Michelle is seen here during a protest against the removal of people from



Lawaaikamp in George. The inscription on the Horse Memorial (Port Elizabeth) next to her reads: "The greatness of a nation consists not so much in the numbers of its people or the extent of its territory, as in the extent and justice of its compassion."

Judy Chalmers

Albany

Bisho massacre

At the annual get-together of the Cape Eastern, Border and Albany regions in August, serious concern was expressed that "no one is listening to what is happening in Ciskei". Plans were begun for a focus on the situation, including the possibility of a massive stand in King William's Town. Events tragically overtook our planning when the ANC/SACP/Cosatu-alliance march on Bisho ended in the now infamous massacre on 7 September. Albany fieldworker Glenn Hollands was a member of the National Peace Accord team monitoring on the day and he was able to give us a first-hand report. Jenni Home and Trudi Thomas (co-chairs of Border) attended the all-night vigil for the victims on 10/11 September. They were joined by Hilary Southall (co-chair of Albany) for the funeral in the Bisho stadium the next day.

Hilary Southall

Insurance

Albany presented a report to the 1992 National Conference highlighting the unscrupulous sale of insurance policies to low-income people who had little understanding of the concept, and who were seldom in a position to keep up the premium payments.

We have since distributed the report to all the major insurance companies and have received heartening replies. All the companies have expressed agreement with our findings, and outlined ways in which they are addressing the problems. Their responses included the following:

"We found your report informative and wish to thank you for the service that you are providing. We thought your list of safety precautions before entering into an insurance contract very appropriate."

"Your concern and that of your association is justifiable as there has been in the past a tendency for unscrupulous intermediaries to prey on lower-level income groups where the understanding of our complex range of products is almost non-existent."

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"The great tragedy, of course, is that those people who can least afford assurance, often have the greatest need for cover."

"May I, at the outset, state that we are extremely disturbed at the contents of your report. Whilst saying that, we also take heart that there is an organisation such as yours, taking up the cudgels of the layman ..."

We have also met with the representatives of some companies, and feel strengthened by the knowledge that there are individuals whom we can contact when faced with difficulties. The whole exercise has given us useful insights into how these companies operate, and we believe that our ability to assist our clients has benefited. We have had a number of successes on behalf of unwilling policyholders wishing to have their premiums refunded.

We suspect that we have come to the end of what can be achieved with the insurance companies and feel that we need to move into preparing some sort of education programme that can be used in schools and the community at large. We have passed on our report to the Street Law Project, and we hope that they will include insurance as a subject in their programme.

Vivien Botha

Tea party

In August, Albany held a social tea in honour of life member Doreen Wyndham-Kelly, at which the video "Black Sash - The Early Years" was shown.

Every now and again one meets a truly remarkable person, and more often than not that person is a woman! One such remarkable woman is Doreen Wyndham-Kelly. Now 88, Doreen was born in Ceres and educated in Grahamstown and at Oxford University where she read English literature in 1923. She married Rhodes Scholar Edward Wyndham-Kelly but was widowed after 11 years. With her four children she returned to Grahamstown where she worked as secretary to Bishop Selby Taylor and later as Mothers' Union fieldworker.

Doreen's colleagues in the Black Sash always admire her keen mind, her courage, and her sense of humour.

Who can forget the posse of behatted and begloved women, led by Doreen, who bearded the Special Branch and demanded back the minute books that had been confiscated in a "raid". When a young policeman stammered, "Ma'am, we have done nothing wrong!" Doreen's quick reply was, "Wrong! I should hope not; you are the police!" She promptly got the confiscated material back.

A keen letter writer, Doreen fired off many salvos in the correspondence columns of the Eastern Cape newspapers in the pursuit of justice. She also participated in every stand until arthritis made that impossible. It was fitting that we should honour Doreen Wyndham-Kelly by showing the video of the early days, in which so many others of our very remarkable sisters appear.

Rosemary Smith

Nobel Peace Prize

We note with pleasure that, once again, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to a woman: that makes two years in a row. Rigoberta Menchu of Guatemala, the ninth woman to receive this prize, won it "in recognition of her work for social justice and ethno-cultural reconciliation based on respect for the rights of indigenous peoples".

Natal Coastal

Our region lives!

At the region's annual general meeting on 26 August 1992, 30 members agreed that there was a need and a desire to reform this region of the Black Sash. For the past year, we had struggled to find its place and purpose. Workshops facilitated by Annemarie Hendrikz and Jenny de Tolly have contributed to the region's process of introspection, analysis and decision-making. It was with a sense of common bonds, commitment and concern for the country that Natal Coastal decided to revitalise the region. Initially this will mean regular general meetings with an educative focus. A new eight-member regional committee was nominated to take this process forward.

Boipatong mourning

30 members of Natal Coastal held a silent vigil outside the Durban City Hall to mark the day of mourning for the victims of Boipatong. A large cross made of the charred beams of a burnt township house was the focal point of the vigil, and a lone drummer beat a mournful lament.

Anita Kromberg

For those who always wondered what national executive meetings in "laid back" Cape Western look like we have included this picture. Note the hardworking, serious attitude of your executive.



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Natal Midlands

Protests

The most urgent issue claiming our attention and energy during recent months is the threatened resettlement of the Happy Valley refugees. Details may differ from other similar events, but the central tragedy is all too familiar.

People who fled their homes as a result of political violence over two years ago and built shacks just outside Pietermaritzburg, once more faced the loss of shelters and meagre possessions, this time as a result of a city council decision to move them to another, less central area. The complex and painful tangle of events included insufficient negotiation with the refugees, intransigence on the part of particularly powerful council members and, worst, the repeated destruction of both the refugee shelters and the surrounding trees and vegetation.

Now, as a direct result of vigorous and persistent opposition and intervention, in which the Black Sash played a central part, there is a reprieve. Suitable and acceptable alternative accommodation is being sought and for the moment the Happy Valley refugee settlement remains intact.

There was never any question about the gross injustice of this situation, nor that the Black Sash should do all in its power to prevent the callous treatment of these people. We coordinated several groups in a wide range of protests which finally resulted in a re-negotiation of intended action.

Strong differences of opinion, however, arose over the manner of our protest. Some members were unhappy with what they felt was undignified and "unSashlike" behaviour at protest gatherings. They called for the silent stands which are so much part of our tradition. They felt that public opinion of the Black Sash is low, and that our participation with other organisations had contributed to this.

Stephanie Alexander offered to present this perspective, and Marie Dyer agreed to present an alternative view. At a well attended special general meeting, widely differing opinions were aired. While we did not

attempt to reach consensus where it was clearly not feasible, two important points emerged.

Firstly, it was agreed that the traditional Black Sash stand retains a central place in our activities and that no-one wished this to be different. A large group, however, argued for the extension of the kinds of protest in which we engage especially when we join other organisations. Here, differences of opinion emerged but the majority opinion was that it is crucial that we retain contact with others around common concerns and that the Black Sash cannot, in joint protests, impose its own style. There was no suggestion that violent forms of protest should be condoned.

Secondly, and most important, it was agreed that it is crucial, especially in the face of so much division elsewhere, to build on areas of common concern. While acknowledging and welcoming different perspectives, we must not allow these to undermine our central unity of purpose.

Jenny Clarence

- **Just published:** *You and the Constitution*. Order from: P.O. Box 732, 3200 Pietermaritzburg.

Northern Transvaal

Happenings

Our region has developed a wonderful suggestion of combining work with pleasure. We watch a video and then serve our traditional supper of soups and sherry, coffee and something sweet. On 22 July, we showed the BBC video "War on Peace", followed by a light supper. We were fortunate to have Laura Pollecutt and Safoora Sadek (the national director of HRC) to speak to it and a stimulating discussion followed.

A full programme from September to November included

- the successful jumble sale held on 3 September;
- hosting the National Advice Office Workshop from 18 to 20 September. It was a busy weekend with workers from our nine advice offices sharing information

while gaining strength and motivation to tackle the vast number of issues brought to our offices by clients. Our own advice office is developing a joint project with the Legal Resources Centre about maintenance for single mothers;

- general meetings addressed by Cathy Albertyn on affirmative action, and by Sheena Duncan on abortion.
- We look forward to celebrating the visit of Annica van Gijlswijk, a past chair of the region, who was deported in the mid-1980s for her political activities.

Isie Pretorius

Southern Transvaal

Arms are for hugging, not for killing

This slogan made its appearance recently on motor cars and on a wall in Johannesburg. Southern Transvaal co-chair Pam Lloyd forsook chair for ladder one Sunday morning to add an elegantly painted version of the region's latest campaign slogan to the collection of more or less scruffy writings on *The Star's* graffiti wall in Jan Smuts Avenue.

Behind the appealing slogan lies a serious campaign against what Jacklyn Cock terms "the ideology of militarism, the core of which" she writes, "is the notion that violence is a legitimate solution to conflict".

The Southern Transvaal region has formed a Demilitarisation Group to debate and campaign for a demilitarisation agenda. Their first salvo [oops! the terminology must be contagious] will be a pamphlet containing facts and figures on the costs of militarisation and how the money could be better spent.

Whither negotiations?

The ever-articulate Frederik van Zyl Slabbert addressed this issue at the August general meeting of the region, drawing a capacity crowd and giving them plenty to think about, including the exceedingly non-conciliatory noises emanating from all sides at the time.

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You and the Vote

The Election Monitoring/Education for Democracy Group is under way and a booklet has been published on the election process. Topics covered include what the vote can and cannot achieve for the voter; what is meant by free and fair elections; party campaigns; what the voter must do in order to vote (including obtaining an identity document); what happens on voting day and afterwards, how votes are counted and what the position is if the party the voter supports does not win. Order from: Khotso House, 25 Anderson Street, 2001 Johannesburg.

Priorities for women's rights

This is the subject of a booklet launched by Southern Transvaal's energetic women's group at a function in September which was attended by representatives of a wide range of women's organisations. The authors discuss aspects of women's rights, using the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women as a framework. It is hoped that the booklet will facilitate discussion on issues relevant to women's rights and the future South African constitution.

"Open the door we're coming through"

Southern Transvaal has gone into the T-shirt business with an eye-catching number featuring a colourful band of assertive women and the above slogan.

Alliances

Black Sash women, who initiated Peace Action, remain actively involved as monitors of the endemic violence. The region is also represented on the Coalition Against State Murder and Corruption (CASMACH), which represents a range of human rights and political groupings.

Pat Tucker

Income Tax and the Working Woman

As Sheena Duncan tells it: Some years ago Desmond McLoughlin walked into the advice office. He introduced himself as a retired accountant and said he thought we could use his skills as a voluntary worker.

Well, we never say no to volunteers, and we welcomed him, but we did not know at that time just how much we needed his kind of contribution. In no time at all McLoughlin showed us that many people who had lost their jobs through retrenchment and who came to the office for help with UIF had had far too much money deducted in SITE and PAYE by their employers. People do not query their tax deductions because it is just something which happens to all of us and we assume that it is correct.

Over the years McLoughlin has taught us and our trainees and hundreds of our clients, as well as their employers, that the tax laws are not too complicated for individuals to understand and that many people have been collectively cheated of hundreds of thousands of rands through their own ignorance and that of their employers.

Recently McLoughlin wrote a paper entitled "Income Tax and the Working Woman" which is invaluable. Photocopies of this paper are available against payment of the cost price of R1,80 from the Black Sash, National Office, 5 Long Street, 7700 Mowbray.

Women of the cloth

In September, the long and oppressive tradition of male priesthood within the church was ended when Nancy Charton, Bride Dickson, Su Groves, Wilma Jakobsen and Margaret Vertue were ordained as priests in Grahamstown and Cape Town following the decision of the provincial synod of the Anglican church in Swaziland in August. The Black Sash congratulates these women, three of whom are members of our organisation, on the realisation of the strong and courageous struggle for equality and justice for women in the church.

As Denise Ackermann said in her sermon at St George's Cathedral, Cape Town: "The church has freed itself of its

You and Income Tax

The latest Black Sash publication *You and Income Tax* was written by Desmond McLoughlin and prepared for publication by "Learn and Teach". It is hardly bedside reading but it is an essential handbook for all paralegal workers, for personnel and human resources departments in the private sector, for trade union organisers and shop stewards, for all who are involved in training programmes for workers, and, we dare say, for those in the Receiver of Revenue's offices who deal with the public. Despite this McLoughlin says he does not like the book much. He is a perfectionist and we can never measure up to his standards. Most people do not complain about their problems because they do not know that they have a grievance. McLoughlin has patiently conducted weekly tax school for our trainees for some years and we hope the ripple effect of this has been the jerking of the Receiver's regional offices to attention. It is bad enough that the majority of the people of this country have been taxed before they have the vote. It is scandalous that so many have been wrongly taxed and have involuntarily paid much more than the law requires.

The book is available from the Johannesburg Advice Office, P.O. Box 2827, 2000 Johannesburg — contributions from those who can pay are welcome.

Sheena Duncan

patriarchal bondage ... The face of the church will never be the same again." At last, in this sphere too, women are making their voices heard. □



"Women priests would mean the end of civilisation as we know it."

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,
in our hearts, in our hair:
they fly as banners
in a rising wind.

Keith Gottschalk (1986)

Published as:

"Poem for Di Bishop and Molly Blackburn
and the bereaved of Cradock and Port Elizabeth",

Emergency Poems (1992)

