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# SASH

**The Black Sash magazine**

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*Conference edition*

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# Twenty years on

## Presidential address

by

**JEAN SINCLAIR**

Looking back on the life of the Black Sash I have been amazed by the fact that the organisation has changed so radically in the last 20 years. Considering the character of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League, as the Black Sash was named when it was formed, the most surprising achievement of all is that it is still alive and active.

The Black Sash was formed in 1955 when the Senate Bill was introduced in Parliament. Its formation was precipitated by the public anger aroused by yet another attempt to deprive the Coloured voters of the Cape of their franchise rights.

After a march to a public meeting called by the Mayor of Johannesburg, a group of women met the following week and the Women's Defence of the Constitution League was formed. A constitution for the organisation was drawn up and the aims and objects defined.

They were to uphold the principles of political morality and parliamentary democracy in South Africa; to strive to secure human rights and liberties for all, and to educate ourselves and others politically.

At this time we were, on the whole, a conservative group of women, very naive and politically uninformed, but our lack of political knowledge was certainly compensated for by enthusiasm.

Mrs Foley, the first National President, flew all round the country organising regions and forming branches. The membership grew rapidly and within a few months we had 10 000 members.

During the first year we concentrated our protests on the Senate Act. Two petitions were organised; marches were held; a sit-in in Pretoria for 48 hours was organised. Demonstrations against the dissolution of the old Senate and on the election of the new Senate were mounted. Women wearing black sashes "haunted" Cabinet Ministers wherever they

went on official business. This long campaign against the Senate Act culminated in a convoy to Cape Town with cars coming from every province converging outside the Houses of Parliament during the debate on the South Africa Act Amendment Bill, when the packed Senate and the House of Assembly in joint session, destroyed the South African Constitution and the Coloured franchise rights.

From July to December, 1957, four women went daily to Pretoria during the Parliamentary recess and stood vigil at the Union Buildings during working hours.

When Parliament was in session members of the Cape Western Region took over the task and stood outside Parliament. This was a constant reminder to the Government and the public that the Coloured franchise was destroyed by a political trick.

Throughout this period it was righteous indignation which was the driving force. We took our stand on moral principle. Our main concern and our main protest was directed against the rape of the South African Constitution and the erosion of parliamentary democracy. Many members were less concerned about Coloured voting rights than they were about the violation of the Constitution.

As was pointed out elsewhere, in 1936, after the merging of the South African Party with the National Party to form the United Party, the new government had a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament sitting in joint session. It was therefore perfectly constitutional to amend the entrenched clause of the South Africa Act which protected the franchise rights of the African people of the Cape.

This was done and the African voters lost their voting rights on the common roll of voters. They were given four Native representatives instead. Did this lawful amendment

make the African deprivation any more moral or just? I think not.

The fact that this point was not recognised by us in 1955 was an indication of the thoughtless disregard and ignorance of the needs and feelings of the majority of South Africa's people.

When the United Party tested the legality of the Senate Act in the Appeal Court and when the judgment found the Senate Act to be legal, the Black Sash called a meeting to decide whether there was still a need for a pressure group or whether we should disband.

The meeting agreed unanimously to carry on and decided that:

"There was one standard and one standard only of morality. A thing is either morally right or it is morally wrong. It matters not what section of our population is threatened with discriminations, injustice or lack of liberty, we shall protest on moral grounds".

This was the first tentative step to becoming a more liberal organisation. This resolution was too radical to be accepted by the bulk of our membership and by the White public in general. The membership melted away from about 10 000 to approximately 2 000 women.

The official opposition did its best to force the organisation to disband — even the English-language Press deserted us for a time. We were alone and in the wilderness.

Despite the fact that we had become decidedly "non-U" we never considered giving up, we soldiered on regardless. We started off as an organisation of women voters which meant that we were all White. Perhaps this was an excuse for not having the courage to open our membership to all South African women.

Whatever the reason it was hardly logical taking into account the decision to oppose discrimination where ever it was to be found.

For three years the Border Region campaigned relentlessly to persuade the annual national conference to open the membership to all South African women over the age of 18 and normally resident in South Africa. The decision was finally taken to do this in 1963 and the Black Sash grew up.

One of the main prongs of our activity has always been the political education of our members. Throughout the years we have informed ourselves on much of the discriminatory legislation and on the effects of its implementation by means of lectures from experts on particular subjects, the organisation

of symposia, summer schools, multi-racial forums, brains trusts and by our own investigation and research.

From time to time we have produced publications, sometimes special issues of Sash.

In 1959 we published the first of the special issues on the pass laws as newly applied to women. Then came "Education for Isolation" in 1960; "Let No Man Put Asunder" in 1964 — a report on a two-day forum on the adverse effects of migratory labour on family life.

In May 1967 though not a special issue, the magazine devoted its pages to justice and the erosion of the rule of law in South Africa. The Memorandum on the Pass Laws was first published in 1966, revised in 1971 and again in February 1974 and came out as a special issue of Sash. The May issue of 1974 was a special issue on migrant labour.

A booklet "Who Cares?" was published in 1970 with articles illustrating the deprivation of African women and a pamphlet giving facts was published in 1970 and republished last year together with a new "Who Cares about Migrant Labour?" pamphlet.

In 1960 Hildegard Spottiswoode compiled a book of essays by prominent political thinkers called "South Africa — The Road Ahead". It was published by Howard Timmins and was partly the work of the Black Sash.

The book was received with acclaim in most quarters. Cape Western was instrumental in the production of a documentary film "Notice to Quit", showing the effects of the Group Areas Act.

In 1968 Mrs Barbara Willys of Cape Western prepared a booklet: "Preliminary Information for Those Affected by Group Areas Proclamations".

In the same year the Border Region came out with a booklet "This is our City — East London" which was updated in 1973. It comprised all the facilities East London provides for all its citizens of all races. It is a study in contrasts.

On our behalf Dr Helen Suzman handed in a petition to the House of Assembly in 1971. The petition incorporated a Charter for Women and was a feature of our campaign to relieve the plight of African women.

There have been innumerable pamphlets and Press handouts used to publicise demonstrations and other activities of the Black Sash.

The English-language Press for the first year of our existence and again after we had been

able to establish our sincerity and integrity have given us most valuable support. They publish our protests and our articles; publicise our campaigns and are always sympathetic and helpful to our cause. We extend to them our heartfelt gratitude.

The Press in South Africa is threatened with further controls. We have always done and always will do all in our power to fight for the freedom of newspapers to report and comment on public affairs.

We now turn to our activities which I think are an indication of how successful our programme of self-education has been. It is a source of great pride to me to realise that the Black Sash was in the vanguard of those pressing for a National Convention in co-operation with the Covenant Movement in 1955, and again in 1961.

As early as 1957 the Black Sash agreed to assist in the organisation of a multiracial conference, and at our National Conference that year we decided to protest against the curtailment of the individual's right to freedom of speech, whether the written or the spoken word; to protest against the separation of English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking children in the schools; against the insistence on mother-tongue education and the removal of parental choice.

The conference objected to the indoctrination of children in the schools; to the Bantu Education Act (designed to keep a Bantu child a Bantu child) and to the manner in which the Bantu Education Act withholds full educational opportunities from both adult and young Africans.

It is true to say that we have protested against all the discriminatory and unjust apartheid legislation and all the legislation which abrogates the rule of law; against bannings, banishments, house arrest and detention without trial.

We protest and demonstrate against all these issues year after year and we will continue to do so. We have always tried to persuade the Government to return to the rule of law, to restore habeas corpus and to stop legislating to exclude the judiciary.

June 1965 was the 750th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta. The Black Sash demonstrated on this occasion to remind the public what the Magna Carta was all about. Articles XXIX and XLV are appropriate and I quote them:

"No freeman shall be arrested, or detained

in prison, or deprived of his freehold, or outlawed, or banished, or in any way molested; and we will not set forth against him, nor send against him, unless by the lawful judgement of his peers and by the law of the land".

Article XLV reads:

"To no one will we sell, to no one will we refuse or delay right or justice."

How far the South African Government falls short of these injunctions 760 years later.

The Black Sash has organised a number of campaigns in an attempt to rouse the White electorate to bring pressure on the Government to change its policy. Our continuous campaign is to expose the evils of the pass laws.

These laws are the cornerstone of apartheid. They are the most bitterly resented and feared laws and they cause more misery to more people than any other legislation.

In 1957 the Black Sash in Cape Town started the Cape Association to Abolish Passes for African Women. It was an ad hoc committee composed of African and White women's organisations and its purpose was to work for the abolition of passes for women, on the grounds that these laws would destroy the family life of Africans. This is exactly what has happened.

Cape Western Region were the first to open an advice office. This office began as a bail fund when it was discovered that large numbers of African women were being arrested for being in the prescribed area of Cape Town without permission.

It soon became apparent that there was need of an advice office to give practical advice in helping Africans — both men and women — to establish what rights they had.

In 1963 Johannesburg opened an office and later so did Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban.

The Athlone Advice Office is run in co-operation with the Institute of Race Relations. For some years the offices in East London, Port Elizabeth and Durban closed down, mainly because of security police harassment and lack of co-operation from the authorities. I am happy to say that in East London, Grahamstown and Durban advice offices are again in operation.

Our experience in our advice offices has given us an in-depth and detailed knowledge of the pass laws and how they work. We see at first hand the devastating effects which they have on the lives of the urban African. We

believe that no conciliatory statements by cabinet ministers, or relaxations of petty apartheid mean anything as long as the pass laws — the single most serious example of discrimination — remain on the statute book.

We have a thorough knowledge of the effects of the enforced removals from Black spots, from White farms, from one rural area to another and from the urban areas. In 1968 the Black Sash formed the Citizens' Action Committee and it launched a national campaign to protest against the wholesale uprooting of thousands of Africans from their homes and moving them to ill-prepared resettlement villages which at that time often amounted to a bare plot of land with water within walking distance.

In 1959 the Transvaal assisted in the exposure of the iniquitous Farm Labour Scheme. One of our members, Mrs Majorie Blaine had witnessed three young African teenagers being arrested in front of their parents.

Instead of being brought to court they were "induced" to volunteer for farm labour. The husband of another of our members, Mr Joel Carson, an attorney, was collecting evidence on the scheme. In his court work he had come across lorries taking Africans who had been "induced" to volunteer to go to the farms.

The "volunteers" used to refer to this term of farm labour as the three-to-six months sentence because the months were calculated in working days, and the labourers did not work on Sundays, public holidays, rainy days or when they were ill.

For this reason the sentence often dragged on for six months. On investigation many abuses came to light in the treatment the men received. There were several deaths as a result. These revelations caused a public outcry. A departmental inquiry was set up to hear evidence. The Black Sash submitted a memorandum and gave oral evidence before the inquiry.

The outcome was that the "volunteer" Farm Labour Scheme was declared ultra vires and was withdrawn.

In 1960 after the pass law disturbances and the shootings in Sharpeville, the Transvaal Region established an emergency fund to help the victims and their families with food and clothing. Cape Western said their offices were besieged with people in dire distress after the Langa and Nyanga disturbances and they too gave advice on all sorts of matters as well as giving food and money for rents.

All through the years much work has been done on group areas, particularly in the Cape. Protests are continually organised. Black Sash women attend meetings of the Group Areas Board to try to prevent the removal of the Coloured people from their homes.

In Simonstown the first proposal for Group Areas was first advertised in 1959. A public meeting was called and a liaison committee was formed which consisted of representatives from the churches, the Mosque Trustees, rate payers' associations the Chamber of Commerce and the Black Sash local branch.

From that day this committee worked to try and prevent the Coloured people and the Indians from being turned out of their homes and out of Simonstown. Two public inquiries were held by the Group Areas Board in 1959 and 1965. Not one person at either inquiry came forward to give evidence that he objected to his neighbours or traders.

The axe finally fell in 1967 and the whole municipal area of Simonstown was declared a group areas for Whites only. There were Black Sash demonstrations and protests against the proclamation of District Six as an area for White occupation as there were against the removal of the Coloured fishermen from Kalk Bay and in many other areas in the Cape. These protests are in fact endemic.

In Natal and the Transvaal the Black Sash protested about group areas proclamations in many places such as Johannesburg, Rustenburg, Pretoria, Durban, Ladysmith. Over the years until 1971 38 180 Indian families had been disqualified to live where they were and 24 388 families had already been moved.

Of the Coloured people 70 889 families were disqualified and 37 616 had been moved all over the country. All this misery is caused to satisfy the Government's own design of the map of South Africa.

The Government would appear to be bent on keeping Black and Brown South Africans on the move. In the urban areas there does not appear to be a single place where any person who is not White can have any feeling of security.

There are Coloured and Indian people who have been moved not once, but twice; for instance in Ladysmith. The vast pool of oscillating migrant workers have no settled home, and no home life. Not only is the Black Sash concerned about the general welfare of the migrant worker, but about the families of these men, who suffer great deprivation.

The evils of the migrant labour policy are constantly brought to the notice of the public. The adverse effects — both mental and physical — of hostel life are disastrous.

The plan to build hostels in Alexandra Township to house 60 000 men shocked the people of Johannesburg. A Citizens' Hostels Action Committee organised a petition and presented it, with authoritative dissertations on the effects of this policy, to the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Education. To date only one hostel for men and one hostel for women have been built in Alexandra, but all family accommodation in that township is being destroyed, causing great distress for many families.

In 1974 the Black Sash and the Programme for Social Change organised a Consultation on Migrant Labour to which many authorities on the subject were invited.

Memoranda on a variety of matters have been prepared and submitted to the appropriate minister or departmental committee of inquiry. The legislation or policies concerned were the Farm Labour Scheme; the Publications and Entertainments Bill and the amendment to the Act in 1974; on the Coloured Cadets Bill; on the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill of 1964; on the break up of families in Alexandra Township; on resettlement villages of Limehill, Sada, Illing and Dimbaza.

Natal Coastal with the assistance of Professor J. O. V. Reid and the co-operation of Dr Anthony Barker and professors and lecturers of the University of Natal, initiated a study among infant patients admitted to the Charles Johnstone Memorial Hospital at Nqutu in KwaZulu to determine the relationship between poverty and ignorance, and malnutrition. The facts were revealed in all their starkness and a summary of the findings is published in the last edition of Sash.

This is a very brief and far from complete story of the activities of the Black Sash since 1955. One has to come to the reluctant conclusion that the more the restrictions imposed on us all and the tighter the noose gets round our necks, the more apathetic the public becomes.

In the early years we may have been euphoric; we certainly were hopeful that with constant pressure we would be able to rouse the White public to take action of some kind.

In the late fifties there was excitement, even fun at times. I well remember at a meeting of the Executive Committee discussing in all

seriousness what form of demonstration we should organise when the new Senate was elected. It was suggested that we should get 88 black sheep and lock them up in the Raadsaal the night before the election. It would be spectacular, we thought, when the doors were opened in the morning.

When the debate on the removal of the Coloured voters from the common roll took place we thought we would put a horse on the steps of the Senate to emulate Caligula. We enjoyed the day when the Minister of Justice on his way to open a new police station on the Reef, jumped over a wall with his bodyguard after him rather than walk between the lines of Black Sash women who had come to "haunt" him.

I can remember the very first meeting of representatives from all over the country who came to Johannesburg to discuss our policy and to try to restrain the "irresponsible" women from the north. Two members from the Western Cape, happily still very much with us, sat knitting like Madame Défarge waiting for the guillotine to fall.

As the years passed so did the lightheartedness we once had. Life became grim and we were absorbed in helping Africans through the maze of the pass laws and trying to make White South Africans realise what it would be like to be Black.

These reminiscences make one realise the extent to which all South Africans have lost their civil liberty and how far authoritarianism has encroached on our lives, but most seriously on the lives of the Blacks. The following are just a few rights which have been removed:

Until 1962 citizens did not require permission to demonstrate, but with the passing of the General Law Amendment Bill, (Sabotage Bill) of that year trespass was defined as sabotage in certain circumstances, such as being on public or private property for political reasons — attending or organising political meetings or gatherings, without permission.

From that date permission has had to be sought to demonstrate and the wording of any posters has to be submitted to and passed by the local authority. There is no real choice of venue. The Minister of Justice banned the steps of the Johannesburg City Hall to all political meetings and there are a limited number of venues for which it is possible to obtain permission to hold a demonstration.

The Riotous Assemblies Act amended last

year provides that any official can stop any gathering or any person from attending any gathering. Permission to march first has to be sought from the local authority and then from the chief magistrate. Few, if any marches have taken place since this edict.

The Affected Organisations Act prevents any organisation declared "affected" from obtaining or receiving funds from overseas.

The Publications and Entertainment Act and its amendments determine what you may read, what you may write, and what you may see and hear.

The Extension of University Education Act restricted education by closing the open universities to all races, destroyed academic freedom and now with the Van Wyk de Vries Commission's report before it, the Government is threatening legislation which will destroy utterly the National Union of South African Students and any modicum of academic freedom which still remains.

The ever hardy annual is the threat to the freedom of the Press — like the poor it is always with us.

Then we have legislation which flouts the rule of law and usurps the function of an independent judiciary. There is the Suppression of Communism Act which excludes the courts from hearing actions from people banned and house arrested without trial.

The 180-day detention law and the Terrorism Act the latter providing for indefinite detention without trial with the detainee having no access to anyone other than a magistrate. The most recent example of the use of this Act is the incarceration of an undisclosed number of people in September 1974, some of whom are still not charged or released.

Courts have been excluded from hearing appeals against the decisions of the Censorship Board.

The Prohibition of Interdicts Act denies an African the right of recourse to the court to appeal against his enforced removal from an urban area until he has been removed and is existing, possibly stateless, and in limbo.

The Improper Political Interference Act put an end to non-racial political parties. The Liberal Party chose to go out of existence and the Progressive Party, at the request of its Black members, chose to carry on as an emasculated party with its Whites-only membership.

The Coloured and Indian people are now

saddled with toothless representative councils, which neither group wants.

The laws and regulations which control the lives of the African people are the most restrictive of all. Their whole lives are fenced around with permits. The Urban Areas Act, the Labour Act and the Regulations provide for permits to reside in an urban area, to lodge, to rent a house, to work, to seek work, to go to school, to live as a family.

When the Urban Areas Act was amended in 1964, it provided inter alia, that African wives and children of men qualified in terms of Section 10(1)(a) or (b) could only live with their husbands if they could prove that they entered the area lawfully.

Immediately after this amendment a total embargo on the entry of women into the metropolitan areas for purposes of residence or employment was imposed.

In 1968 new regulations for labour bureaux at Bantu Authorities were gazetted. These regulations make all workers coming to the common areas permanent migrants. They can never acquire rights to remain in the urban areas and for the whole of their working lives they are employed on yearly contracts and must return to their rural homes at the end of each contract.

Job reservation is still with us though it has been relaxed in certain fields of employment.

Time does not permit of a complete list of restrictive laws but the above are an indication of an ever increasing totalitarianism.

For almost 27 years there has been a steady erosion of our civil liberties and our basic human rights. For all these years South Africa has become more and more isolated. For years the Black people have steadily become more frustrated and more bitter and for all these years the Government has felt itself becoming more and more secure in the seat of power. Then the day after the National Party successes in the General Election of April 1974, the entire situation has changed overnight.

No longer is the Nationalist Government as secure as it was. Suddenly the White electorate is becoming more tolerant; suddenly the status quo is at risk; suddenly South Africa is on the threshold of change. Suddenly Mr Vorster has shown his skill as a statesman in his response to the new situation in Mozambique and Angola.

We must acknowledge his achievement in



bringing about detente between Rhodesia and her neighbours and we sincerely hope his efforts will be successful. However, all that he has done so far will count for nothing unless he and his Government will bring about meaningful and radical change in South Africa.

Mr Pik Botha made two astonishing statements in his famous United Nations speech. Firstly he said "My Government does not condone discrimination purely on the grounds of race or colour". Secondly he said: "Let me put it very clearly. The Whites of South Africa as well as the Government of South Africa, are as much concerned about the implementation of human rights, human freedoms, human dignities and justice as any other nation or Government in the world". This is saying something for a nation which refused to sign the Declaration of Human Rights.

We would like to know if the Government means to move away from discrimination or whether it will once again adopt the sophistry of changing nothing but the word.

Is discrimination to become differentiation? The moving away from discrimination in the field of what is euphemistically known as petty apartheid, such as opening the parks, libraries and the Nico Malan Theatre to people of all races; allowing Blacks to eat and stay in five-star hotels, by permit, is a step in the right direction.

It was also necessary to order officials to extend the same courtesy to Black people as they would to White people — not that this

directive has been universally carried out. But, in the final analysis, it does not matter to an African woman who is told to leave her husband and home within 72 hours whether she is told politely or otherwise.

While one is entitled to expect courtesy from everyone and in particular from servants of the public, courtesy is no substitute for a change of policy. It is the law which has to be changed.

The Government cannot go on denying the African freedom of movement by imposing influx control; denying a man the right freely to choose his category of employment and his employer; the right to found a family and set up a home in the place where he works; denying him the right to freehold tenure and most important, denying him his dignity and political control over his own destiny.

The time has come for Whites to admit that if the Black man's labour and skill are essential to the White economy, then by the same token he is entitled to his freedom of movement and to his civil and political rights.

South Africa does not belong to any one group to the exclusion of all others. Its citizens are Black, Brown and White and none of us has any moral claim to privilege or prosperity at the expense of others. We are called upon to share political and economic power and with no further procrastination. If we do not our future will be too ghastly to contemplate.

## Bedtime stories

MR MARX'S home was raided twice by East Rand Bantu Administration Board officials. The first visit was about 3 a.m., the second two hours later, when officials asked to enter the house. As Mr Marx watched dumbfounded they went into all the rooms, shone torches into the eyes of his family and stripped the bedding off his wife and son. His small daughter needed medical attention after the shock. When asked, the officials said they were searching for an African woman and her two children who were allegedly living there. **Rand Daily Mail.**

'I HAVE been ordered to send my child away. They have come in the night three times to find him in my house. I hide him under the bed behind boxes and they have not found him yet.' **Mrs H. M., Johannesburg Advice Office.**

'THEY COME in the night between half past one and four o'clock. They knock on the door and, when you open, one walks in and lets the one at the back door in. Then they order you to get out of bed and check all the reference books against the list they have from the superintendent's office. If you are not on the list they put the hand cuffs on and you must walk with them while they raid the other houses in the street until the sun comes.' **Mrs H. M., Soweto.**

'I GOT a terrible shock yesterday. Suddenly at eight o'clock the bell rang loudly. Of course, I thought that someone had come: you'll guess who I mean. But I calmed down a bit when everyone said it must be some urchins or perhaps the postman.' **The Diary of Anne Frank.**

# Happy birthday to you

DAVID WELSH

*DAVID WELSH was chairman of a brains trust held during the Sash National Conference in Cape Town in March.*

**I**t is a great pleasure for me to wish the Black Sash a happy birthday: to congratulate you on your survival and, indeed your vigour, after 20 years.

May you go from strength to strength and may your ideals — which are shared by many millions of South Africans — be realised.

It has not been an easy time for any of you. It has required an increasingly courageous spirit to stand up and be counted, as you do in your dedication “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.”

Your most noticeable achievement has been that you have never given up trying.

You have not allowed your principles to be eroded away or watered down. It may well seem that you have achieved none of your goals — but I don't believe that you have had no effect.

You have stood for justice and for conscience with a wholly admirable consistency and I am sure that even your sternest opponents recognise this even if they dare not say it.

By refusing to allow yourselves to be overcome by despondency and a sense of futility you have given hope to many on both sides of the colour line.

I wish you many happy returns. All South Africans are going to be faced with the challenges of new and demanding times. The kinds of issues that are your daily concern will change as this society changes, as it inevitably must.

I wonder what kind of questions I shall be putting to which distinguished people if you are kind enough to invite me to chair a brains trust at your 40th anniversary in 1995?

South Africa will then be a completely different society but it will still be a society in which the vigilance and doggedness of a group like the Black Sash, with a clear vision of justice and compassion, will be needed.

No society is perfect, although some are demonstrably more imperfect than others. All wielders of power, whatever their colour or policies, have to be watched closely lest they abuse their positions. All societies require groups to do just this.

The spirit of your conference and of this brains trust is a forward-looking one. You and we are seriously looking for a road ahead — and with the aid of the panel we will try to show the way.

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## Dr Du Toit

In a report on one of the Maurice Webb Memorial Lectures published in the last edition of Sash, the speaker, Dr André du Toit was referred to as Andrew. He is a member of the Department of Political Philosophy at the University of Stellenbosch.

The quotation on page 19 should have read “The essential factor is that no-one wants the break-up of the resilient economy of South Africa”.

Sash apologises to Dr du Toit for any inconvenience caused by the errors.

# A lesson to be learned

HELEN SUZMAN

Last November South Africa was saved from expulsion from the United Nations by the Security Council when the three great powers — US, France and UK (Faith, Hope and Charity) vetoed the motion. Shortly afterwards Mr Pik Botha made his speech undertaking to remove race discrimination and Mr Vorster made his "six months" pronouncement.

(In the event, the General Assembly voted to refuse to accept South Africa's credentials and South Africa departed for that session of UN.) Unwise move to my mind. But we were committed.

What was the reason for the change of front? A sudden loss of faith in the efficacy of separate development? A sudden burning desire for detente with Black Africa? Much more likely the latter has been the motivating force: and it has been engendered not by mere good neighbourliness but by the dramatic events in Southern Africa over the past nine months which have highlighted the urgent need for the Republic to come to terms with Black Africa.

The major event of course was the sudden collapse of Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique and Angola.

No longer could South Africa enjoy the cosy protection of buffer states to East and West. And to the North, the position of the White regime in Rhodesia overnight became far more precarious. A solution to the South West Africa question also was urgently needed.

Time was the commodity Mr Vorster hoped to buy — time to reassess a situation vastly changed since April last year.

In this he has received help from unexpected quarters — from Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia who also needed improved relationships with South Africa and Rhodesia for economic reasons and from Presidents Nyerere and Khamama who want peace in Southern Africa.

Hence much comings and goings — envoys, secret meetings, mysterious forays to the North, between the Governments of South Africa and Black Africa, culminating in the much publicised visit of Mr Vorster to President Tol-

bert of Liberia. Just where it will all end, is anyone's guess.

Let me speculate for a moment on South Africa's relationship with the former Portuguese territories; on the Rhodesian situation and that of South West Africa.

I think it unlikely that the Frelimo-controlled Mozambique will be hostile — economic interdependence between Mozambique and South Africa is too great though it is always possible that political considerations will override economic factors.

Angola's South border is contiguous with the South West Africa territory of Owambo. This line was one of those arbitrary boundary-lines drawn by the European powers in the 19th Century when the scramble for Africa was on.

There is no doubt that the settlement of the South West Africa question cannot be left to drag on much longer.

The trouble is Vorster talks of the peoples of South West Africa being left to determine their own future and he hopes that several independent little states will emerge, with 90 000 White South West Africans opting to join with South Africa.

The UN of course envisages something quite different. It wants one independent country — Namibia — ruled by the Black majority which will encompass all the ethnic groups.

It seems Vorster can more readily shed Rhodesia than South West Africa and I have no doubt that disengagement there was a very important factor in negotiations with Kenneth Kaunda.

I'm not much given to saying "I told you so" (not half) but I couldn't help reminding the Prime Minister during the No Confidence debate — as he sat there receiving eulogies right left and centre for his detente moves — that I'd warned the Government 10 years ago that support of Smith would do Rhodesia no good in the long run; that there is a vast difference between brinkmanship and statesmanship; that his continued support of the Smith regime had very nearly resulted in South Af-

rica's becoming involved in a Vietnam situation.

I also took the opportunity of advising the Prime Minister — as one golfer to another — that now that he'd taken his backswing, he'd better follow through.

The point I was trying to make was that he had roused great expectations — at home as well as abroad, with his "give us six months" — and there would be a very considerable backlash if those expectations were not fulfilled.

Everybody — at home and abroad — has interpreted the Prime Minister's "give us six months" speech to mean much more than détente with Black Africa. The interpretation is change — meaningful change in racial policies at home.

Unless that takes place the Prime Minister would have been advised never to have made the promise to show the world a different South Africa in six months time.

Have any meaningful changes taken place at home?

The desegregation of the Nico Malan and Johannesburg Civic Theatre spring to mind, and the concession to pick a mixed team to play the French rugby team. These are changes certainly — the first of more psychological importance to Whites than Blacks. The second of value to White spectator sportsmen who otherwise would have been denied the pleasure of watching an international match.

But neither concession surely, of any significance whatsoever to the average South African Black man. And to the outside world used to mixing of all races, of no real significance at all.

I attach rather more importance to the desegregation of parks and libraries and to the dismantling of the trappings of petty apartheid as exemplified by the removal of "Whites only" notices in some of our metropolitan centres. And to the declared intention to include Blacks on boards that make decisions affecting Blacks.

But the massive framework of segregation and the discrimination inherent therein, remains virtually untouched except insofar as economic forces have disrupted it and this has nothing to do with any change of heart on the part of Mr Vorster and his Government.

It is a continuing process. It is the result of the long term operation of the simplest and most fundamental economic law — the law of supply and demand — the supply of skilled

White labour does not equal the demand therefor, and economic forces have been stronger than political theories.

The Black Sash is perhaps in the best position to assess whether there has otherwise been any meaningful change in the lives of Black people over the past four months. I think they would agree with me there has not.

Of course it is unrealistic to expect really radical changes within a relatively short space of time.

I do not underrate the problems Mr Vorster has with his *verkrampes* — the Treurnichts and others who remain in the Nat caucus, but whose spiritual home is with Dr Albert Hertzog and the HNP — not, let me hastily add, that I am one of those who thinks that Mr Vorster is a frustrated liberal longing to introduce radical changes.

I assess him as a pragmatic politician who would maintain the status quo if he could, but who realises that it is just not possible for South Africa to isolate herself from the rest of the world or from the continent of which she is part.

But if it is too much to expect a complete volte face in policy, it is surely not too much to expect the Government to *refrain* from doing certain things that hit the headlines and infuriate people fast losing patience with South Africa.

For example:

- The Government can call a halt to the Black spot removals that create such misery and re-emphasise the inhuman aspects of separate development — call off the Doornkop and the Mayen removals.
- Stop bull-doing the shacks of Black people who have nowhere else to go.
- Leave what is left of District 6 and restore it to the Coloured people.
- Cut out Group Areas removals and instead catch up on the housing shortfall for Coloureds and Indians.
- Rezone the beaches so Blacks have a fair share of these public amenities.
- Better still, take down all those offensive "Reserved for Whites only" signs along our shores.
- Instruct the police to be less zealous about Immorality Act arrests.
- And to devote less energy to enforcing the pass laws.

● Reduce expenditure on defence by one-half week's allocation and provide African children with free school books.

● And stop using draconian measures like detention without trial — presently employed by the Government against about 26 people — making the civil rights question a disaster area in the eyes of the Western nations.

None of these things would be impossible to do, even within the framework of separate development.

They would be only a beginning — but they would provide a visible sign of a change of direction; and this is what is so urgently needed.

It was the major demand of the 13 African states that signed the Lusaka Manifesto in 1969 — a change of direction of policy in the White dominated states in Southern Africa — leaving the pace of change to be determined by the countries themselves, setting no time limit.

For Portugal in Africa the time limit has in fact expired. For the White regime in Rhodesia it is nearing expiration.

And for South Africa, who still has time, the lesson to be learned from Portugal and Rhodesia is that demands which are rejected today are always greater tomorrow.

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## **The Coloured Persons Representative Council Amendment Bill, 1975.**

**CAN YOU STAND BY WHILE YOUR GOVERNMENT LEGISLATES TO DESTROY EVEN THE REMNANTS OF A POLITICAL PLATFORM FOR THE COLOURED PEOPLE?**

**THIS BILL** allows the Minister of Coloured Relations to take over all the powers, functions and duties of the Coloured Representative Council.

### **THIS BILL MUST BE WITHDRAWN**

**BECAUSE:**

- There are 2 250 000 Coloured people in South Africa;
- They share the language of four million Whites;
- They share our cultures and traditions; and
- They share our ancestry.
- They are rightly demanding direct representation in the Central Parliament — a right they enjoyed for 106 years — a right we took from them when the National Party Government removed them from the Common Roll.
- Their Parliamentary representation was abolished.
- Their direct representation in provincial and municipal councils was abolished.

The Coloured people have demonstrated their total rejection of the White Government's policy of separate and parallel development.

This Bill demonstrates the Government's cynical determination to enforce its policy against the expressed wishes of the Coloured people.

**SOUTH AFRICA CANNOT AFFORD TO ALLOW THE DEEP DIVISION BETWEEN THE COLOURED AND WHITE PEOPLE TO GROW ANY WIDER.**

# Dimbaza — the other side

CINDY MALHERBE

On December 12, 1974 the BBC-TV show "Man Alive" was devoted to two films about South Africa followed by a panel discussion. One film was "Last Grave at Dimbaza", a secretly-made documentary, which was cut to half its length to make time for the Department of Information's rebuttal, "Black Man Alive — the Facts".

The panel consisted of six men, three representing each point of view, chaired by the BBC man in charge of general features.

Very little appeared in either the local or British Press about the actual content of the films or the opinions expressed by the panel. British commentators were more concerned with the alleged mockery made of BBC policy concerning "equal space and time" for opposing views, while local accounts were too skimpy for drawing conclusions.

This is too bad from the point of view of those who would like to know what allegations were made and how the Government set about its rebuttal.

There is available, however, the Department of Information publication Report from South Africa (Vol 12, No. 4) in which the Department had a crack at framing a reply to "Last Grave" (and also a booklet titled "A Place Called Dimbaza") for dissemination overseas.

Condemning misrepresentations in these accounts, the editors promise "a few salient facts without having to resort to techniques bordering on *suppressio veri, suggestio falsi*". Unfortunately, they have relied on these very methods, as the following excerpts from the editorial and cover report show.

First the editorial:

● **The drift of persons "usually unskilled and unemployed" from rural to urban areas is, we are told, a problem widely experienced not only in South Africa but throughout the world and particularly in developing countries. This movement "adds to shantytowns, unemployment and crime".**

There is a fundamental fallacy here: the drift of *unemployed* persons to the cities *does not add to unemployment*.

In South Africa there is severe unemploy-

ment in rural and especially in "homelands" areas. At the same time, potential employment in urban areas is subject to a variety of artificial and oppressive restrictions affecting Black workseekers.

As a result, many jobs are filled by Africans whose White employers know that they are residing "illegally" in urban areas. Many Blacks who were in employment by commerce and industry have been forced to go to homelands (possibly to reappear as migrant workers) and employers have repeatedly begged for a permanent, legal, urban-based work force.

As for shantytowns and crime, many factors must, to avoid *suppressio veri*, be taken into account. Impoverished people, whether urban or rural, may live in shanties in slum conditions and may be more prone, as well as more vulnerable, to crime. Too often, resettlement to prevent "shantytowns, unemployment and crime" in urban areas has resulted in massive unemployment elsewhere and the creation of rural slums.

● **The Republic of South Africa is referred to as a "developing country", needing sympathy with its problems as do other developing nations (N.B.: In his Senate speech of October 23, 1974, the Prime Minister said the Republic was probably Africa's "most developed country").**

In addition, the reader is asked to judge unpopular policies fairly on other grounds; "ask any government confronted with the problem of controlling immigration, rehousing people or stipulating conditions of employment for foreign workers if their rules and regulations are popular".

Here a misleading attempt has been made to have things two ways, by neglecting to define the existing relationship between "Black homelands" and "White South Africa".

South Africa might only be termed a developing country if the homelands are considered integral to it and even then "an unevenly developed country" would be more accurate. An appeal for understanding on these grounds has no foundation whatever if homelands are seen as severed from the Republic and homeland dwellers are regarded as "foreign work-

ers", and subject to "immigration" as well as other controls.

In fact, the homelands are not independent and these controls are being applied to South Africa's own nationals.

● **South Africa, it is said, has tackled its problems "according to measures best suited to South Africa's own nationals."**

The reader overseas is unlikely to know what these "measures" entail: pass laws, affecting the African population only, which result in 1 700 arrests per day; a migratory labour system which separates families; forced removals under the Bantu Urban Areas and other acts, to mention a few.

● **The Government is "Committed to a policy of independence for the traditional Black homelands".**

Though the Government's commitment to independence has recently been confirmed (M C Botha, Cape Times, Nov. 19 1974), this was in the face of rejection by all but one homeland leader.

As for the "traditional" aspect of projected Black homelands, history, too detailed to cite here, refutes this. KwaZulu, consisting of 188 fragments which (after 132 000 or so Blacks have been moved) will be "consolidated" into 10, bears little resemblance to the traditional Zulu homeland and the Transkei, which looks best on the map from the point of view of size and contiguity, still excludes much territory "traditional" to the Xhosa.

● **"Nothing," it is stated, "is ever popular with the angry radicals and do-gooders".**

This is not the only example of perjorative language in this editorial, which makes no mention of the many ordinary — not "radical" — critics of the situation at Dimbaza and other places like it.

The chief demand of these critics has been that basic amenities — water, sanitation, schools, health facilities, shops — and the possibility of employment should be provided *before* people are resettled (if this policy is adhered to) and not months or years after the event.

In the Cover Report it is stated:

● **"The South African Government has been tackling the problem of unemployable migratory labour for many years — generating hostility among a certain type of White cleric whenever the resettlement of Blacks takes place in the Republic".**

In this context the three words "unemployable migratory labour" all require definition but, short of that, it may be pointed out that *employable* migratory labour consists of able-bodied men who work in "White South Africa" as contract labourers.

The term "unemployable migratory labour" includes in many cases the wives, children or parents (i.e. the normal dependants) of these men, who are prevented by law from living with them in, or even outside the "White" cities.

This is just one aspect of the situation which generates hostility in some White clerics.

Dependants of African workers who qualify to live in townships in White areas (i.e. who are not "migratory") may also become subject to resettlement when an employable husband/father/son dies, is imprisoned or deserts his family.

● **Of Dimbaza itself it is said: "Dimbaza is a 'properly planned' township."**

When the first settlers arrived in 1967, and for some time thereafter, water was brought once a week to Dimbaza by tractor. Later it was piped from a dam to taps in the streets — it was not led onto the sites. Regarding schools, shops, clinics, jobs, the situation was desperate. Dimbaza was *not* properly planned, improvements were slow in coming, and only recently have there been signs of effective planning.

● **A quotation is taken from Race Relations News in which an officer of the Institute of Race Relations comments favourably on the appearance of Dimbaza's cottages.**

The officer concerned, when shown this item, protested against the lifting of his comments out of context to give an erroneous impression, saying: "I take the strongest exception to this gross misuse of my report to support arguments which conflict with the true facts".

Adverse comments which he made concerning unemployment and lack of amenities had been ignored. His letter has been forwarded to the South African Ambassador in London.

● **The fact that women outnumber men at Dimbaza is alluded to and it is stated: "Of the 2 851 women resident at Dimbaza, 1 160 call themselves widows. So far not one of these "widows" has produced a death certificate of their husband nor a marriage certificate."**

No significance is given to this statement and it appears to have none beyond innuendo.

It is not clear whether the women have been asked to produce such certificates at any stage. Nor is the reader overseas likely to know that the policy of the Government which separates African families is a leading factor in the destruction of family life and the multiplication of women who live as "widows". Many "widows" have husbands employed as contract workers in White areas, where they are called "bachelors".

● Reference is made to the former existence of many Dimbaza residents in "unimaginable squalor" in areas where "less than one-quarter of one percent had residential rights". A case where 26 families shared "one toilet" and a water source "a mile away" is cited.

Evidently in the eyes of the Department of Information, local authorities in "White" South Africa are not to be blamed for such conditions: they may be exonerated because those affected are persons without legal right to reside there.

The matter of "residential rights" may puzzle the overseas reader but no explanation is made of residential restrictions as they apply to Blacks.

● It is stated that "The Church's contribution to the development of economic-supporting centres has centred round the Dutch Reformed Church while Anglican contribution appears to be restricted to Dimbaza gaining 'considerable notoriety in South Africa' and also in overseas countries."

Numerous churches, some through an inter-denominational body called Inter-Church Aid, have given life-saving assistance to Africans resettled at Dimbaza. This has taken a variety of forms: the provision of food, clothing, firewood and seeds, as well as the "development of economic-supporting centres". As regards these, the DRC project is not the sole example.

The attempt to denigrate the Anglican contribution while singling out the DRC for praise is a crude attempt to mislead. In general, "The Church's contribution" has been grossly understated.

● "Nothing", it is stated, "prevents anyone leaving Dimbaza and going elsewhere."

The degree of freedom of movement suggested here deserves careful examination. If it is true that for two or three years Africans

have not been forcibly resettled at Dimbaza, it is also true that many places where they might prefer to go are barred by Government decree.

The fact that there is now a waiting list to enter Dimbaza must be regarded in the same light.

● In addition to the editorial and cover report there are six photographs. Four show the type of shanty from which Dimbaza's residents are said to have been rescued, one shows "proper housing" under construction, and the last shows a street of clay-brick houses complete with power lines and full-grown trees.

This last is *not* Dimbaza for, according to the Cover Report itself, electric power lines merely "pass close by" the township; newer houses are of cement, not clay-bricks (the first were one-roomed houses of wooden planks — "amaplangeni"); and the township itself is treeless and exposed.

But the caption reads: "To resettle Black people from their tin shanties in rows of houses such as pictured here is evil in the eyes of South Africa's detractors for it means mass removal from places of squalor".

The dissemination of material about its policies and institutions — information or propaganda, as you like — is a normal function of governments. But the public may ask: on what basis do its official image-builders set about their task? Report from South Africa is hardly confidence-inspiring.

In this instance the Department of Information's cover-up job would have been less reprehensible if actual improvements had simply been reported. Schools, a clinic, and better housing have been provided at Dimbaza and increased job opportunities have been announced. Nevertheless, even here a number of questions should be asked.

Recent Press publicity has given Dimbaza a new image. This best known of "resettlement centres" is now a permanent township where industrialisation is taking place and jobs are being created.

This is good news for Dimbaza where lack of employment has been the most urgent problem. But what, in fact, is happening at Dimbaza and what does this development mean in terms of homeland employment needs?

Headlines such as "R3m factories for Dimbaza" may convey the idea that Dimbaza's employment problem is already solved. Instead, recent figures (Rand Daily Mail, Oct. 5) show



only 200 presently employed at Dimbaza, in what are described as "enlarged homecraft industries".

The great majority of those who have jobs are employed outside Dimbaza, i.e. 800 commuters to King Williams Town 29 km distant, a further 800 dispersed as roadworkers throughout the Ciskei, and 360 classified as migrants.

In two years time, if plans now "in the pipeline" go ahead, there will be employment for an additional 1 300 persons in Dimbaza itself. These signs of hope for Dimbaza are warmly welcomed. But it would be erroneous indeed to imagine that improvement at Dimbaza means that unemployment has been dealt with.

According to reports, the most important single venture at Dimbaza is a shoe factory which may ultimately provide jobs for 700. Initially this factory will employ 62 workers, following an investment of R700 000. In other words, 62 jobs will have been created at a cost of R11 290 per job.

It is important to note that the additional cost of providing the infrastructure for industrial development is to be borne largely by the Xhosa Development Corporation which is to provide roads, water, electricity and a railway connection for Dimbaza. (These projects will, of course, also provide employment for a period.)

If the initial investment in the shoe factory is successful, the plant will be extended with a projected additional investment of R800 000. Approximately 638 new jobs will then be created at a considerably cheaper cost per job.

When this comes to fruition, Dimbaza's employment problem will be eased. But what of the wider picture?

Prof. P. J. van der Merwe of Pretoria University has calculated R6 000 as the cost of each industrial job created in decentralised areas (i.e. border and homelands areas) in the period 1960 to 70. This figure must be seen in relation to the *total employment needs* of the homelands.

Each year an *additional* 59 000 African males (figures for females are not available) enter the labour market in the homelands (another 53 900 enter the labour market in White areas). Thus, to employ males alone coming into the labour market each year almost 120 000 *new jobs* must be created annually.

Of the 59 000 homelands males, few can be absorbed by the agricultural sector which is already crowded. Many will begin their working lives as migrant workers: over one-third

of African males of working age in the homelands are employed as migrants in White areas.

The majority must find industrial work in the border and homelands areas, or remain unemployed. It is in this connection that the cost of creating such jobs is of interest.

It is economically sound to create new jobs at what are natural growth points. Dimbaza is not a natural growth point, nor are most of the other towns, old and new, in the homelands.

The fact is that natural growth points have been systematically reserved for White South Africa and the attempt to promote industrial development in the homelands as presently constituted can only be artificial, inefficient and prohibitively expensive.

Mr Franco Maritz, managing director of the XDC, is quoted as saying: "My own view is that Dimbaza can only be a limited growth point taking at most 20 to 30 industries. More would mean there would be a labour shortage.

"The XDC is not in favour of people coming to work in Dimbaza from other areas. We are most anxious that in the factories we establish the workers should live within walking distance of town".

If Dimbaza could be considered in isolation with a small number of similar communities this might be an ideal plan. Light industries may be dispersed in this way since the question of the transportation of workers may be of greater importance than that of transportation of goods.

However, simple arithmetic, using the figure R6 000 quoted above, demonstrated the unfeasibility of creating anything like all the new jobs required in this way. It is absolutely out of the question to solve the homeland employment problem by the infinite multiplication of light industry such as planned for Dimbaza.

Without natural growth points where heavy industries can be concentrated and all requisite services such as transportation, marketing services, maintenance facilities and so forth are available, the homeland unemployment problem will get worse and not better.

There is a growing fund of expertise round the world concerning underdevelopment and unemployment problems. In South Africa the experts in this field are prevented from making their contribution because it is impossible to do so within the confines of prevailing ideology.

# Women and the coming crisis

SHIRLEY TURNER

During the past year I have spent 10 months travelling round the world with my family. As I travelled I had a very specific theme in mind — the role of women in various countries.

I was able to learn much about Greek women after a two month stay on Myconos, then we went to Canada, the United States and Australia.

In particular I had discussions with women of the United Nations Organisation who are involved in the planning for International Womens' Year, but perhaps the most interesting contact came through my being invited to the "Sexism in the '70's" conference in Berlin.

One hundred and sixty women from 49 countries met to explore the whole issue of discrimination against women, dealing specifically with the areas of education, theology, partnership, economics and politics. The conference became divided between those basically interested in their own growth as women and those who, while wholly supporting the search for individual freedom could not separate themselves from the political structures in which they found themselves saying "I can never be free till all my people are free". And I think the keeping of the tension between these two issues is crucial.

I think of those women around the world who are laying themselves on the line for what they believe — Shulamit Aloni forming a new political party in Israel; Kathy Kelly working in danger of her life in Belfast, the women from South Korea — released from prison to attend the conference only after tremendous pressure by the churches; the suffering spoken of by the South Vietnamese; Julia Campos of Paraguay receiving word not to come home because her flat had been raided and her flat-mate arrested; M Santa Ana of Uruguay bearing the marks of torture from six months imprisonment and the sorrow of a husband who has been castrated.

These are women in crisis situations.

Are we on the road to these kind of crises?

Will we as women have to face what those women face?

Or are we already in crisis, but, particularly for White women, crisis in a more subtle form?

Let us remember as we look at the role of women in the coming South African crisis that what we are doing about the present situation will determine how we behave in any future crisis.

Time allows for only a few short remarks and I speak as a White South African woman to White South African women. I am well aware that the Black Sash is a political organisation and that you will be formulating new policies, programmes and thrusts as an organisation but I speak to you as individual women.

I believe South African women need to become more conscious of the way in which the system dehumanises them as women. We have a very special role to play in life — a feeling, empathetic, relating, reconciling role — we operate out of a "diffused awareness" of a situation.

Unfortunately here in South Africa we cannot allow ourselves to feel too deeply and thus cut off a large portion of the role we play as women. We tend instead, to work out of the area of "focused consciousness" — the studying of laws, the documentation of statistics, the publication of facts — very important — but they can be a form of self-preservation against feeling the pain of others — of really being aware of where "they" are.

Take migrant labour for example: you can give me the statistics and facts and I could respond about the migrant workers in Europe and the very difficult situation of the Chicanos in California — we could have a good discussion and agree that it is a very bad system.

But help me to empathise with just one Black woman — let me allow myself to feel what it would be like to be without my husband for 11 months, that because of his physical needs he is most probably having a sexual relationship with another woman; being separated from my children; not having enough food to give a crying baby, and you have reached me at an entirely different level.

We tend to fight the male-ordained structures in male "focused consciousness" ways instead of offering our own innate qualities as women to the situation.

There are many of you who will say that this is not where you are — you have spent a large portion of your life in service for others — whether in church, voluntary social work or the Black Sash.

Many women in South Africa are sincerely and passionately involved in working for those in need. But service which perpetuates dependence, is ultimately not service at all. It is a form of domination. This is not new, but it now takes on urgency as we look to the future. Letty Russell has said that service has traditionally taken three forms:

*Curative*: the healing of the wounds of those who have become victims of life. Providing help to the sick, the hungry and homeless.

*Preventive*: attempting to ease developments which might easily lead to curtailment of full freedom for life. Working through social action to provide vocational training centres etc.

*Prospective*: attempting to open the situation for a future of free realisation in life. Helping those who are outcasts from the dominant culture to participate fully in culture and in shaping their own future.

For a long time we have tended to work in the curative field and need to move more and more into the preventive and prospective areas of service. Let us think for a moment of the advice offices (and here I tread on sacred ground). Immense help has come through those offices and I feel it is the place where the Black Sash has kept most in touch with the situation.

But let us ask ourselves how many Black people we have trained during the 17 years of existence of those offices. How many Black people have we trained to help their own people?

The cry is always "but Black people would have to be paid while we do the work voluntarily". Such response angers me. We are only able to do it voluntarily because of the inequality in the distribution of wealth which allows me as a White woman the opportunity to have children at school and pre-school, a domestic worker to look after my chores, a car of my own — these privileges also buy time — time to invest in service.

In the coming crisis we are going to be called

on not only to give time but also to give of our personal wealth if we are to be seen to be genuine in our efforts.

While I was overseas someone said to me "but you're a member of the oppressor group aren't you?" I didn't like being called an oppressor but realise that if I am to be truthful I must admit that yes I do belong to that group. How do I as oppressor relate to the oppressed?

Detente (easing tense relations) is just another word — its forerunners were communication and dialogue. I prefer the last — it seems to be more personal. I believe that women and men, Black and White, poor and rich have to move into a new relationship with each other in which oppressor groups are not only *advocates* of the oppressed but also willing to come to a new understanding of how their access to power perpetuates the old social order.

Oppressed groups are not in a position to dialogue with the oppressor groups because the process of dialogue only functions where there is a situation of equality and trust.

"If you want to talk with me, take your foot off my neck." Dialogue does become possible, however, when members of both groups begin to see a new shared task in which they have some form of equality in working together. Around a specific action in changing a particular social structure or custom, it is possible to have dialogue — but *only* if the oppressor groups see that the way to accomplish change is to respond to the leadership and initiative of the oppressed and to work *together* in transforming the situation.

To sum up then, seeking to identify her role in the days and months ahead, I suggest that the White South African woman needs in the first place, to avoid becoming involved in work that is merely curative, to get beyond work which aims at being solely preventive, and to seek to find ways of opening doors for those who are powerless so that they may participate fully in shaping their own future.

And in seeking to humanise the system under which we presently live, let us be aware of the way in which it has been dehumanising us as women.

Let us reclaim our empathy, our feelings and our reconciling power. I know we must work for constitutional change but changed laws will have little meaning without changed attitudes and attitudes can only change as we enable people to meet each other as people.

# Thank you, Madam

*JEAN SINCLAIR, one of the founders of Black Sash, has retired from office, the Black Sash Conference. Public tribute has been paid to her. Letters she has received from all sorts and conditions of men and women. Had she worked in any Western country she would have been called upon to pay tribute to her contribution to the life of the people — perhaps she would not have been called upon to do so. Without her we would not exist and without her we would not exist and without her we would not exist and JOYCE HARRIS pay tribute to this remarkable woman.*

## DEAR JEAN,

Three years ago I joined the Black Sash in the hope of becoming involved with South Africa's realities. Shortly afterwards, without any qualifications at all, I was appointed "official dogsbody" to the Regional Committee.

Initially I was overawed by your knowledge of laws and regulations, past and current events — and by your ability to do the most intricate embroidery while presiding over meetings.

Gradually though, I became more and more aware of you as a person. Your original commitment to action 20 years ago, at an age when most women involve themselves less and less with politics, struck me in all its magnitude.

You ignored innate shyness, dislike of public speaking and the likely withdrawal of friends. You did not shelter behind your duties as wife and as mother of five children. You committed yourself uncompromisingly to fighting legalised injustice. Almost naively you took up this fight in hundreds of practical ways. And by the time I joined



# n President!

*Black Sash and National President of the organisation though not from participation, at this year's National Conference, she has been mentioned in the columns of the Press and in the many tributes of men on the occasion of her retirement. She would long ago have received national honours for her work had she worked in any other Western country. It is a pity that she has not had the opportunity to give so much. Our tribute must be inadequate. For her we would not have survived. MILA ZILLA*  
*Remarkable woman.*



the Black Sash a nation-wide, highly intricate and sophisticated organisation was in operation.

How often must you have felt depleted and defeated when it seemed that almost all your efforts were futile.

Let the apparent absence of success not deject you. What matters is the love, care and dedication you have put into life in general and particularly into the lives of so many helpless and voiceless South Africans.

This sort of involvement is rarely crowned with tangible success. All of us, your friends, foes and future generations will be the richer — for you cared deeply.

Now that you have stepped down as National President, I presume your husband is both relieved and proud of you. I would like to thank him sincerely on behalf of all of us for his generosity in not only sharing you with us but in giving you his wholehearted support and encouragement in your dedicated work during the past 20 years.

It is good to know that you will continue to plan and work with us.

**Yours,**

**Mila.**

It is 20 years now since I first met and became associated with Jean Sinclair.

In those early days, when I was one of the many who marched behind her through the streets of Johannesburg, or heard her speak from public platforms, or attended meetings at her home — which were so crowded that there was seating space on the floor only — she was, in my eyes, one of a small coterie of women who had suddenly acquired an extra dimension that set them apart.

They were politically aware — true. But there were other women just as aware, if not more so. No — what set them apart was that they became the instigators of action; they broke the bonds of their frustration and *DID* something and in so doing they gave the opportunity to so many other women to join them and to become participants rather than frustrated onlookers.

The Women's Defence of the Constitution League, soon to become the Black Sash, acquired a mass membership and spread like wildfire throughout the country, and Jean Sinclair quickly became its recognised leader.

Ruth Foley, its first leader, played a vital and prominent role in the very early days of the organisation, but when she was no longer able to continue Jean was there to step into her shoes. Although she has not been the National President through the entire ensuing period, she never ceased to be a prime mover in all the organisation's activities, and for the last 14 years she has been unanimously re-elected as National President at every National Conference.

The Black Sash has now been in existence for 20 years — no mean achievement for a protest movement in a country with a political climate hostile to criticism and protest.

Much of the credit for this achievement belongs to Jean. There have been difficult times, times when the membership sloughed off; crises within the organisation resulting from growing political awareness and the necessity to define principles; attacks from opposition political parties who resented the existence of an extra-Parliamentary organisation, cold-shouldering by the Press. But Jean has ridden them all. Her dogged determination to carry on and her refusal to be intimidated have been an inspiration and a spur to all members to carry on with her.

"I'm absolutely furious," are words which are so very often on her lips, and the anger they express has been the motivating force

behind her drive. She cannot abide injustice, feels totally compelled to take some sort of action against it, does so, and inspires others to follow her. This has been her great quality of leadership.

There is no room for slackness or slackers in Jean's life and her own total dedication to the Black Sash, her untiring energy, her capacity for hard work and her willingness to tackle any task, however menial, have set an example that we lesser mortals have been too ashamed not to try at least to emulate.

She has always been prepared to do anything at any time, and although some of her schemes and ideas have been a bit too much for many of us to fall in with, nevertheless it has always been Jean who has involved us and inspired us to participate in some of our more unpleasant — from our point of view — but most effective exploits.

I refer to 24 hour stands in the heart of winter at the exposed and windy university fountain; 24 hours fasts and meditations; even living on Dimbaza rations for a month as she herself and a few other hardies did.

Her imagination is stimulated by the need for the Black Sash to find novel ways and means of putting across its views to the public, and she has been the prime instigator of many of our most successful programmes.

But underneath this driving force is a flesh-and-blood woman — a warm, friendly, charming lady whom I am proud to call my friend. My pen portrait of her might make her seem like a tyrant — and indeed she can be one at times when her ire is aroused — but she is in reality a modest, humble, unassuming person, with a not very high opinion of herself, who has had to gird her loins and call on all her very considerable resources every time she has given a public address.

Maybe there are some leaders who are totally confident, totally sure of themselves, totally convinced of their ability to do what their position demands of them. But Jean is not like that. Throughout all the years that she has carried such a heavy burden of responsibility and been in the public limelight she has had to fight her own misgivings about herself. The fact that they have not been shared by others has not made it any easier for her. And this takes true devotion to a cause, true courage and true selflessness.

Jean Sinclair has been the Black Sash, and her so well-earned retirement leaves a gap it will be very difficult to fill.

# Students and that Commission

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

The second interim report of the Van Wyk de Vries Commission deals with students' non-academic activities in general. It is "favourably impressed with the way in which students' representative councils are discharging their responsibilities" in connection with what it calls "ordinary non-academic activities."

Similarly, it finds that Nusas adequately provides inter-university services such as overseas tours, loans, and meetings on matters of common administrative interest. The Commission devotes most of its attention to "out of the ordinary non-academic student activities", and so will this summary.

The Commission reports on an "unhealthy spirit" in the English-language universities, in that "students, teaching staff and universities have actively entered the country's politics . . . plunging the student communities concerned into a condition of constant political unrest."

This unrest consists of "conduct that resulted in disturbances mainly off the campuses in which the public and the police became involved, and irregular conduct on the campuses such as the occupation of buildings and the boycotting of lectures."

The Commission identifies three causes of this unhealthy unrest.

The first is that the English-language universities have dedicated themselves, as institutions, "to action in connection with one ideology, academic freedom, which is however, inseparably bound up with the greater ideology of total integration." It is a "natural consequence" of this commitment of their universities that students will also be oriented in that ideology. Moreover, since the action is directed "against the existing social order", student organisations "will rally outside organisations and individuals round them in their opposition to the so-called violations of human rights and freedoms."

Another cause is that "certain staff members, principals and other representatives of the university authorities concerned act in such a manner in connection with student unrest in South Africa that it is tantamount to condonation."

For example, "the facts leave no doubt that

there are principals who publicly associate themselves with their students' political campaigns that are directed against the Government."

Teaching staff defend student actions in letters to the Press; they "sometimes make speeches in public on the subject of the issue which hardly deserves to be called scientific; even in scientific journals some of them write about such issues in a vein that can only be described as pseudo-scientific."

"Moreover, it is true beyond doubt that there are members of the teaching staff who are directly or indirectly involved in these out of the ordinary, non-academic student activities . . . for such staff there is no place in our universities."

The third cause of unrest is the role played on the English-language campuses by "Nusas and its constituents, the students' representative councils," which together form "an extra Parliamentary and therefore unconstitutional political opposition."

The Commission claims that Nusas "has forged a steel ring, established a hegemony over student activities on the campuses, which cannot be broken by the initiative of students holding different views alone."

The "steel ring" is mainly forged by means of Nusas' leadership-training seminars into which first year students are drawn "by psychological shock tactics" and there "exposed to sophisticated psychological manipulation, a terrorism of the mind".

The following are among the examples the Commission gives of material propagated:

● Aquarius (one of Nusas' subsidiary bodies) is pro-peace and anti-war; pro-freedom and anti-censorship; pro-permissiveness and anti-authority.

● "Apartheid is the root of all evil; it has disrupted education, sown distrust and suspicion."

● "We live in a shocking and violent society which we shall have to deal with; we have the greatest contempt for students and lecturers who have no wish to become involved in the problems of the country."

The students whose minds are thus terror-

ised get involved in SRC and Nusas activities, and in turn influence others. It is obvious to the Commission that "with this method of organisation it is possible for a small minority of students to keep full control of all student activities."

There are other factors which facilitate this control. For example, Nusas head office consists of several ("modestly") paid officials with clerical staff support, making it "a powerful organisation occupying a dominant position." Moreover, a student brought up in contrary beliefs would be confronted at an English university with, inter alia, "student newspapers and publications which incessantly propagate the Nusas point of view only . . . ; academic staff and university authorities who take part in public in Nusas orientated activities; the phenomenon that the university as an institution is committed to a political ideology that differs from . . . views; and the fact that some of the mass media continually propagate the Nusas lines of thinking."

The Commission considers the contrary submission that the SRCs which constitute Nusas, and from whom Nusas draws its office bearers are democratically elected. It rejects this, moving from the fact that "there has been general apathy in regard to the 1972 SRC elections" to the conclusion that "the voting percentages in SRC elections at universities are often very small".

Further evidence in the view of the Commission, against the representativeness of SRCs and Nusas is that "the ideologies advocated . . . are in conflict with the view and social patterns of the various communities and of society as a whole (sic)."

Examples of this "ideology" which the Commission finds in Nusas policy resolutions, include: opposition to Government sports policy; equal pay for equal work; a call on all parties to the Vietnam war to make peace; a call for a settlement in Rhodesia; opposition to censorship and the restriction of the Press; and censure of the Government for the sorry state of Bantu education.

Other activities which characterise Nusas are its proposals for a national newspaper and magazine, "which will serve as the forum for the evolution of ideas and their propagation . . . provide an alternative to the establishment media in SA and serve as a catalyst for change"; and a research department "to research in detail the effects of apartheid particularly as these relate to malnutrition, poverty,

literacy, crime, education and urban and rural conditions, etc.

The Commission stresses that Nusas works for change on the basis of its findings. The net effect is that "on virtually every point Nusas is in a situation of conflict with the communities in which the universities concerned are situated, the society as a whole (sic) and the Government".

The Commission also notes Nusas' emphasis on active social involvement since its reorganisation in 1970. It finds similarities between the student unrest in America in the sixties and the way the 1972 protests over segregated education escalated in South Africa. On the strength of this it concludes "it must be assumed" that Nusas had the American pattern "in mind."

As for the suggestion that in the South African case the escalation was caused by "the alleged brutal actions of the police", the Commission considers that "whether this is true or false is irrelevant." What is important is that Nusas policy is "concentrating on the streets as the arena for political action."

Even so, "there are some university authorities that publicly support Nusas and its activities. The Commission assumes that these universities would not be willing to take any kind of action against Nusas". The Commission finds that this "is an abnormal state of affairs" and that "legislation is necessary to rectify matters."

In the Commission's view "the university's essential aim is the pursuit of knowledge and this is the determining factor that limits its sphere of competence". It has "no legal capacity to act lawfully beyond that sphere." However, "the dedication to academic freedom of our English-language universities . . . in effect . . . constituted the commitment of a university as a corporation to an ideology which is in conflict with national policy . . . and academic freedom in this sense must therefore be seen as the tip of a political iceberg."

Since the Commission denies that this "active participation in politics could be regarded as the 'pursuit of knowledge'", it follows that such participation by universities in politics is illegitimate and irregular, if not unlawful."

The Commission further argues that "whatever the university cannot do lawfully, cannot be done by the student qua student either", so "political action by students" is not merely to be described as "undesirable or deplorable."



Rather, it "follows logically from our stand on principle that such action is illegitimate and irregular, if not unlawful". The same applies to "teachers *qua* teachers".

The Commission believes that "the solution of this problem lies squarely in the university field", so that "police investigations and trial by the ordinary criminal courts should therefore be replaced with something else."

It therefore proposes an amendment to the Universities Act of 1955. In terms of this proposal, university councils would be empowered "summarily and without giving reasons, to bar a student or a member of the teaching staff, or to suspend or dismiss a member of the teaching staff" if the council is satisfied that they have taken part in a demonstration or pamphlet campaign, which even if lawful, was deemed by a magistrate to have "turned into a political demonstration".

In some cases, however, "such conduct would appear to be fully supported by the university authorities." So the Commission recommends a "persuasive measure" i.e., "the principle of forfeiture of State subvention where councils fail to take effective action where students and/or teaching staff go beyond the sphere of competence of the universities."

"This should not be regarded as a penalty or fine"; rather, "the State's function of mak-

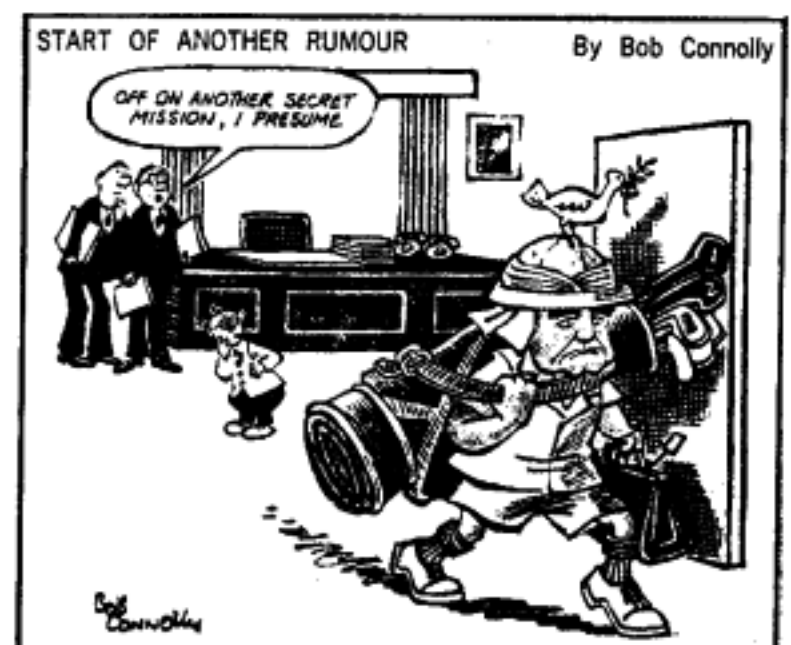
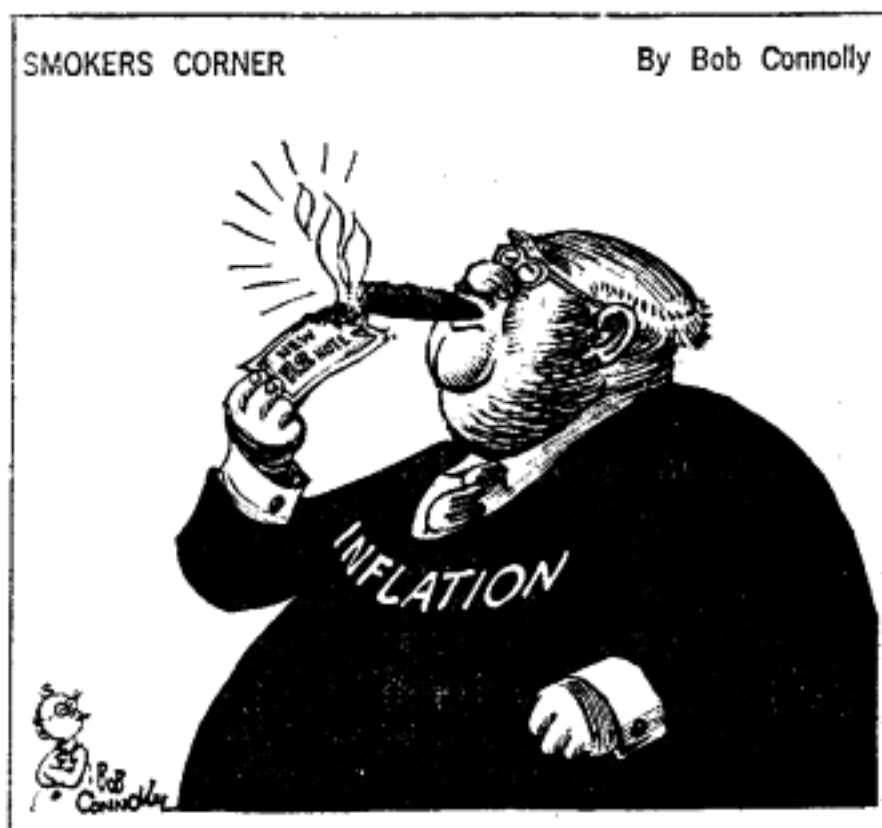
ing financial contribution lapses," to the extent of R1 000 per student and the equivalent of a year's salary for a member of the teaching staff. The automatic forfeiture is subject to review by a non-judicial tribunal, and "would be withdrawn altogether if the university authorities acted correctly in every respect." At the same time, the Commission recommends that councils be empowered to recover any forfeits from the staff and students concerned.

As regards Nusas and its support by "some university authorities", the Commission recommends another amendment to the 1955 Universities Act.

This would empower the Minister of National Education to declare "undesirable" any inter-university organisation or student organisation which he is satisfied "is engaging in political activities". Then the University would forfeit R10 000 of its subvention each time it or the SRC or any students' society paid money to, or participated in, such an "undesirable" organisation.

If the university can convince the tribunal that this had occurred "inadvertently", the Minister could "reduce the amount forfeited or condone it in its entirety."

"No university need fear any forfeiture of State subvention if it keeps improper and unlawful actions of students and staff in check."



# Housemaking for the masses

BABETTE KABAK

One of the great unsolved problems of the 20th Century afflicting South Africa equally with the rest of the world is the lack of housing for millions of low-paid and under-developed people.

Where South Africa is almost unique is that all our low-income urban population is dependent on government to provide their shelter, and the large Black majority is banned from home ownership in the urban areas.

Coloureds and Indians, although permitted to build and purchase their own property, are severely restricted because the central government controls land allocation.

Nowhere in South Africa are the poorer or racially classified permitted to move into residences vacated by people who are moving up the economic ladder. These groups have no part whatsoever in decisions about where they can live, about land, and very little voice about standards of housing or their community needs. Our townships are also pathetically barren of what makes real communities, i.e. commercial and recreational development.

Low cost housing is recognised world wide as the responsibility of government because the private sector wants a richer return on investment. But nowhere is it truer than in South Africa that he who pays the piper calls the tune.

All these realities have to be faced but alternative solutions exist which should be considered even in the present political situation. If discrimination must end, as the Prime Minister suggests, then providing sufficient housing is where we can start.

The population explosion that the rest of the world is so cognisant of has hardly penetrated the consciousness of the average White South African. And Black and Coloured South Africans believe that any attempt to reduce their birth rate is an attack on their racial group instead of an attempt to improve their family life and prospects.

Our population of 22 000 000 is expected to jump by two and a half times in 25 years. Industrial Western countries enjoy stabilised population growth and can forecast their housing needs.

Our population forecasts of less than a de-

cade ago predicted 40 million. Now the forecast has leaped to 52 million. For each of the next 25 years we need shelter for roughly one million more people annually.

Every year we must build the equivalent of a city the size Johannesburg is today.

We must remember that housing is not just dwellings. It means infrastructure, transport, sewerage, water, electricity, roads and all manner of community facilities, neighbourhood shopping, schools, creches, clinics, places of worship and relaxation. There is no evidence that the Government is planning for our massive population expectancy.

In Soweto, outside Johannesburg, for example, official figures put the waiting list for homes at 15 049 families. This takes no account of women who are not permitted to rent, nor of contract workers, or the thousands who believe waiting lists are an exercise in futility.

In 1972, the authorities put up only 954 houses and in 1973 only 1 137. In 1968, family housing in urban centres was discouraged as official policy. Hostel beds are supplied as homes away from home.

Recently, a municipal official put the Soweto population at one and a half million. It's probably closer to a million. There are 104 000 houses and 60 000 hostel beds. The shortfall in Soweto alone appears to be 300 000. At six per family, this is 50 000 dwellings.

There are now five teams of workers putting up 30 houses per week, hardly a number calculated to breach the massive housing backlog. We lack houses *and* we lack trained artisans.

Many of the 892 232 migrant workers (excluding minors and domestics) who work in urban centres can't find room in hostels. They lodge in houses built for township families. These families who need the money are glad to take in lodgers but the little dwellings are crammed to bursting. This density leads to slum conditions. What we need are houses for married migrant workers so that they can live as united families near their work.

The Government states that 62 400 dwellings for Coloured people are needed throughout the country. In 1973-74 they built 12 029. The private sector built less than 1 000. In

Durban, where the majority of Indians live, no reliable estimate exists of the considerable shortage of housing.

South Africa is not alone. The entire world, both developed and developing nations are suffering from a critical housing shortage. Half of Asia, Africa and Latin America is homeless or lives in grossly overcrowded dwellings.

Before these lands developed industrially, they didn't know what housing problems were. Industrialisation and urbanisation that draws millions from the rural areas to participate in the opportunities of city life are what produced vast housing needs.

In the decade of the fifties, 200 million swarmed to the cities. In the first 50 years of this century, the population living in Asian cities of 100 000 or more rose by 44,4 per cent in Africa by 82,7 per cent.

Millions of people are working yet only a small percentage are paid enough to afford a decent place to live. After paying for food, clothing, utilities and essentials, pay packets can stretch to transistor radios, TV sets, and even cars, but decent living space costs too much for the average industrial worker anywhere.

Even highly competent technological societies such as the United States and Russia, who have pierced space, have not been able to develop housing cheap enough for their low paid workers. The whole world, including the most highly industrialised countries, is poor and undeveloped when it comes to decent housing.

Rents vary widely. In the sixties in Bolivia, low rent housing cost 8 per cent of income; in India 10 per cent; Australia 8 per cent; Ceylon 3 per cent; Canada 15 per cent; the US 20 per cent. In South Africa today low rent is generally calculated at approximately 25 per cent of average income although in many cases rent is a lower proportion of income. But, inequitably, low income Whites qualify for sub-economic rentals up to higher income levels than Coloureds.

In some places there is hardly any change in the housing of a rural family of a thousand years ago and rural living today. Houses in Pakistan are still being built on the model of lake dwellings of the Neolithic period.

In our own country, many live in traditional adequate shelter. Urban houses deteriorating into slums are often worse than rural. Old slums exist because nothing superior replaces

them.

Slum is an umbrella word for poor housing. It can be cabins, shanties, dens, dugouts, sheds, stalls, single family, multi-storey, old mansions, new cardboard carton or corrugated iron shanties. Slum also means overcrowding, no privacy, squalor. And the shortage of accommodation means over-occupancy in existing shelters.

In Hong Kong, five to six people share cubicles of 40 square feet. Density can be 2 000 persons an acre with no water, sanitation or organised system of refuse disposal.

In Singapore, families of six persons live in windowless rooms 7 x 10 feet.

In Jamaica, nine occupants live in tiny huts 6 x 10 feet.

In Accra, in 1960, statistics showed 19,3 occupying a single house. And overcrowding inside is not eased by spacious landscapes outside. Slum streets are narrow, dark, rutted as they carry human beings, rain water, waste materials rushing along together.

Johannesburg has examples of this now where many members of our Coloured community live. Soweto will become a slum if for no other reason than that it is overcrowded.

As people swarm to the cities in their desperate search for work and better livelihood, their search for land and shelter is equally desperate. Squatting is the end result of urban land and housing famine.

Squatting was a grave problem around Johannesburg after the war and it was cured by collaboration of mining interests, the municipality and central government. Squatting is a serious problem in the Cape today. Where there is no shelter they can afford, no land on which to build, people appropriate land and erect shantytowns. Only sufficient land and houses can put a stop to squatting.

The actual land occupied by cities is about one per cent of an industrialised nation's total supply. But masses of people are competing for this infinitesimal land supply. Plenty of space is there but people want to live near transport, schools and places of worship.

Land cost is high because of increased demand and land hoarding by private owners, or, as in South Africa's case, by Government authorities.

In and around urban centres land is needed for industry, commerce, government, roads, bridges, highways, parking, railroads, water systems, airfields, schools, cemeteries, mili-

tary bases, harbour installations. Housing competes with all of these.

Government power of one kind or another is used in every country to control the use of land. Policies range from encouraging private investment to restricting it, to substituting government for private enterprise.

Every government controls the use of land but in South Africa we have the Group Areas Act and also the 1936 Act restricting Africans to 13 per cent of the land. It was said in Parliament recently that 80 per cent of South Africa is put aside for the White sector, which is 20 per cent of the population.

It may very well be, as a municipal official recently told me, that Group Areas protects low income groups from the ravages of the free enterprise system by reserving a certain amount of land that might otherwise be snatched up by speculators and developers.

Yet Johannesburg's Coloured population has long since exhausted its land allocation. Natural increase and migration to the city's better job opportunities is causing outrageous overcrowding.

Resettlement to conform with group areas ideology takes priority from where its needed most — to relieve slums and squatter settlements. Although 3 000 houses per year are being erected for Coloureds, shortage of land prevents the City Council from rehousing thousands of slum dwellers. The land they need is owned privately and can be purchased or expropriated only by the Government, not by municipalities.

The Department of Community Development has control of public housing for White, Coloured, and Indian groups. They have the power to build or acquire, demolish and expropriate existing buildings, but they do not implement their powers sufficiently for the benefit of the Coloured and Indian groups.

In the Transvaal, proclaiming a township and planning its infrastructure takes four years as proposals meander slowly to and from the bureaucratic provincial government and municipalities.

In Natal, large municipalities have greater control over their local needs. The Vaal Triangle represents the largest portion of industrialised South Africa.

In the Transvaal, the bureaucracy needs shaking up and reminding that in other countries it can take as little as six to nine months to plan a township.

In South Africa, central authority, which we

concede is needed for financial overview and support, dictates policy completely through the Department of Planning and Environment.

For the Black group, every locality must build according to the National Housing Commission's "A Guide to the Planning of Non-European Townships".

They wield absolute control over number, type, size, cost, design and letting of subsidised housing built with state money. This housing is administered by the new Bantu Affairs Administrative Boards.

While land and housing programmes are tightly controlled, delays and cost of land standing vacant and unproductive, plus construction costs rising annually, greatly increase overall costs for all our administrative bodies.

What South Africa needs is more flexibility. If anything, our country is overplanned. Too little use is made of local initiative and desire to get on with the job.

Local authority has too little influence on the grand design of National Party policy. Land allocation in South Africa is grossly unjust and the policy of separate development overrides all human considerations. Every inch of land is owned by either private or Government interests. The entire question of land use and title of land by the Government, by mining interests and by tribal groups should be examined.

The UN recommends that nations spend five per cent of their national income for housing. Only the US and Germany spend more. South Africa spends 1/2 per cent. In the 1950's, R18 000 000 a year, and in the 1960's R30 000 000 was spent on Black housing.

Investment in low-cost houses here, as in other parts of the world, gets low priority because some economists consider housing a durable investment that requires large outlays but that pays off very little and over a long period. It earns no foreign exchange and competes with industry and agriculture for capital.

Some economists believe it eats up labour and materials and may even be inflationary. They believe developing countries should concentrate on factories, machinery, better seed and livestock, railways, highways and power plants.

The theory behind this is if people can increase their production, they'll have money later on to build their own homes. Looking at the economy as a whole, there are hidden costs to industrialisation, such as transport,

roads, railways, community facilities. But these costs which aid industrialisation are overlooked and industrial investment alone thus appears more profitable. Housing shows no growth in the way industry does. Improved housing is considered a social good and not a necessity.

In order to find reasons to convince countries that improved housing is economically sound the University of California sponsored the International Housing Productivity Study.

The experiments covered about 1 000 families and took place in widely disparate regions: an Indian reservation in the US where there was extreme rural poverty and where a manufacturer of fishing-tackle equipment established a branch plant; a coal mining region in Korea; a Celanese plant in a Mexican town of 25 000; one of the largest iron and steel producing plants in Monterrey, the third largest city of Mexico; a steel mill in Venezuela; and at the Bata Shoe Company plant about 20 miles outside Nairobi.

New housing was built for some of the workers and groups of workers who remained in the old premises were used as controls for comparison. The study examined the effects of housing improvements on productivity, worker absenteeism, consumption of medical care.

These experiments showed that productivity benefits of rehousing are likely to be small. Improved physical housing quality is not likely to substantially affect absenteeism from work due to illness and may, in fact, be associated with absentee increases. But individual welfare may be increased through more leisure after moving into a new home and also by domestic improvements made during absence from work.

The study showed that improved housing decreases demand for health care when measured by outpatient visits and days of inpatient care. Improved housing is more likely to favour the worker's entire family, not just the worker. It may stimulate savings and also productive efforts of non-rehoused workers to be awarded new houses. Allegations that housing investment is inflationary are exaggerated.

This report showed that housing is most likely to produce measurable economic benefits where existing environment is particularly poor. Housing funds might provide the greatest returns when allocated to the population sector with the lowest living standards.

Productivity increases, where they were found, also were greatest where living standards were lowest. These findings are contrary to popular beliefs.

The question arises do we need proof of increased productivity to build houses for people or do we build because they need roofs over their heads? And if they don't get them, the danger increases of disease and of conflict and violence.

Faced with incalculable housing needs, the people concerned with the problem and those who must be housed, should give up fancy ideas and middle class standards and examine solutions.

The main problem is to build functional dwellings people can afford to rent or own. One idea hawked to the world after the war was prefabrication. We've always used prefabricated parts of houses such as roofs, ceilings, doors, windows, pipes, gutters, interior fittings to reduce costs. If it's cheaper and quicker to provide a house that is prefabricated in a factory far from the site, by all means, do so. Up to now, it's been more economic to build and assemble houses at the site and use local labour and materials than to transport a prefabricated house over a distance.

Core houses, minimally habitable, provided by the government, built at sites or prefabricated, are recommended by the internationally known housing expert, Charles Abrams, as a cheap, practical means to house masses of people.

Our match-box Soweto house almost fits into this category. When originally designed in the 1950s this four-roomed house had to be functional and the architect spent a month with his family living in one. It also had to be produced at R500, including infrastructure. Research brought the cost down to R400.

Now this house costs about R800. It is expandable on the gable side but is not expandable internally. Core houses are expandable on all sides and at the top. Interiors of core houses are made so that improvements and alterations can be made cheaply and simply, without breaking walls.

Movable walls, such as the Japanese use, might be another means to solve different family needs, dining, sleeping and family size. Our present township house is too inflexible to fulfil the requirements of growing and large-sized families.

Core housing differs from self-help. The occupant moves in immediately and makes

improvements as skill, time and income allow. Self-help requires two sites, one to live on and one to build on. Although it supplies building material, self-help impractically expects occupants lacking time, energy and know-how to build entire dwellings after work or on weekends.

The essential point is that core houses are only successful in conjunction with home ownership. Occupants will only improve property when they know they're paying it off and it will be theirs one day.

Core houses were once tried in Johannesburg but city officials claim they became slums because they were not improved. Slums are prevented by providing sufficient room for masses of people, sanitation, water, open spaces, paved roads, frequent rubbish removals, and rules plus a system of fines for failing to repair. Core houses would probably be cheaper for the government to provide. Under our present system, the completed match-box type house presently being built is an adequate solution. The problem is not nearly enough are being constructed.

Our low-income inhabitants of the cities should be informed of the magnitude of housing requirements. And the Government should come to grips with the population explosion not by building hostels, but by erecting family dwellings.

Market research could ascertain the design and price of homes low income people desire and are willing to support. We should repeal legislation that bans Black home ownership in urban areas. Tenants are not even entitled to any compensation for improvements they make.

We can not expect people to help themselves and improve their environment until they are home owners, or are assured of permanency.

In 1970, there were 86 homeland townships with a population of 582 356. The SA Bantu Trust employs African building contractors to erect housing, or local authorities near these townships act for the Trust to build houses and provide services.

The financial responsibility for developing townships is being given to homeland governments. The Bantu Investment Corporation makes loans to buy stands or plots with houses on them. In 1971, an undeveloped residential stand cost R2,20 for each 50 square metres. In 1970, R66 174 was loaned and in 1971 R228 087, to individuals.

The vast majority of homelands inhabitants

live in traditional shelter where they pay R1 annually for their sites. In the rural areas self-help might be worth trying if the Government provided basic building materials and laid down basic facilities such as sanitation, water, roads, schools, in advance. But what must be stopped in South Africa is the pitiless uprooting of thousands of people to places where little or no living and sanitation facilities or employment are provided for them.

Building homes for millions of people is a costly operation. Loans could be made to local councils in tribal centres who in turn would lend out smaller sums to individuals. These loans could be for roofs, doors and windows after they've constructed walls of their structures to prescribed levels. They can make or buy earthenware bricks or blocks from mud, compressed and dried as men do everywhere in rural backwaters of Africa and South America.

In Ghana, where the roof loan scheme was tried, it intensified building activities in villages where it operated. It led to people realising that improvements to their own villages rested very largely on themselves and their own efforts with guidance from their government.

What about finance? The middle class borrows from building societies, builds houses and pays for them in instalments out of earnings. With no available finance, low-income people have to rent, crowd into what is available in houses or hostels, or squat.

People who have little or no access to building society loans are easily led to social discontent. High density blocks lend themselves to tenancy. Single family units like those we have in South African townships lend themselves to home ownership.

South Africa has millions of underdeveloped people, but highly sophisticated financial institutions are already established. Our task is to attract the low income population into saving as much as they can.

If we held out the carrot of home ownership, we could turn hundreds of thousands of families into savers. We have untapped resources here in our own country. Besides, we have no right to frustrate normal aspirations of home ownership for these families.

Nothing establishes preservation of stability quicker and better than owning one's own home. A house is an asset useful for borrowing and puts the owner on the first step into the middle class category. Coloureds and Indians can borrow from building societies and

the Government. But the Government should widely publicise its willingness to help these groups become home owners.

Does South Africa lack capital to increase housing? When credit is from tax revenues and revolving funds the amount is not sufficient for the huge number of dwellings required. We should easily be able to raise housing capital in world markets and we could also issue tax-exempt housing bonds.

Industries should be encouraged to invest in worker dwellings by tax inducements, government guarantees and help in acquiring land.

Although company housing has a poor reputation in some countries like the United States, in others it's one of the primary housing sources.

About 700 000 dwellings were built in Japan by employers after the war. In India and Latin America private companies build for their employees. Most objections to company houses can be overcome when the workers themselves can buy them.

Most underdeveloped countries are crying out for planners. But planners in Western countries are middle class technicians isolated from the very people who will occupy the planned communities. This applies to South African planners who are often thoughtless as they move around.

In the case of Indian Muslim communities, the centuries old custom is to live and work within 15 minutes of their place of worship. But in Lenasia, outside Johannesburg, no religious site was set aside. To make room for a mosque and religious school, four families gave up their little homes to move in with relatives.

Planning an urban environment is a complicated process. But what is striking about our vast Black townships are their dormitory character — places to sleep and eat — and drink! Soweto has 13 beer halls, an unknown number of shebeens or private drinking clubs, but it has only one superintendent and one cinema.

Housing is not just houses. Housing is community and sociability. Lower income people compensate with strong social relationships for their poor environment.

Streets and shopping places are as necessary for meeting each other as homes. Good access to neighbourhood shopping is one of the basic essentials of housing.

Since ancient and mediaeval times, the market place has been the centre and stimulus of

town life. But there are no real shopping places in our townships except for the occasional dark miserable little places.

People have to go to the centre of the big White cities to buy. The township folk themselves don't make home-made articles, crafts or operate small one-man businesses. The whole bazaar atmosphere where life vibrates is missing from our townships. What is the reason? One might be the tight restrictions on township trading.

When planning vast housing tracts why is there no provision for arcades where people could erect stalls and sell home-made articles? Small business enterprise, instead of springing up freely, is squashed at the start. More than one business to an individual, companies, partnerships, financial institutions and wholesalers are prohibited in urban townships. Why are shopping centres and the natural development of commerce so severely discouraged? Because our centralised planners are protecting business interests in the cities nearby.

On February 10, 1975, the Star, a Johannesburg evening newspaper, reported: "Rapidly becoming one of this country's major export strengths is her reputation for the best, fastest and cheapest low-cost housing in the world. Construction experts are already engaged in projects in many Black African countries."

It would be better if construction experts stayed at home where we need housing for one million people per year for the next 25 years. We cannot spare our experts for export. We face a severe crisis if we don't begin establishing viable, all-round communities for masses of people now.

The Government could invite all segments of our society to co-operate in finding realistic economic and political solutions. Financial and research institutions, building societies, economists, sociologists, real-estate developers, trade unionists, parliamentary leaders and Black and Brown leaders should consult together.

If the Government continues to rigidly reserve to itself all decisions concerning housing and community development, then the universities and particularly architecture and town-planning departments, could formulate pilot plans and encourage Press and public to debate them.

Our institutions must persuade the Government to get on the move now with its enormous responsibility.

# From the Advice Offices

## JOHANNESBURG

During the year October, 1973 to September, 1974 the numbers of people coming to the Advice Office increased from 4 505 in the previous 12 months to 5 225 and the average number of interviews conducted each day from 24,9 to 29,9.

It is clear to us that this increase is not only due to the fact that we are better known but is a result of the increasing rigidity with which the pass laws are being applied.

Of the people who came to the office in the 16-month period covered by this report, 533 were wives who have been unable to get permission to live with their husbands in the prescribed areas of the Witwatersrand. We are sure that for every one of these women who know about our Advice Office there are four or five others who have been refused permits and who do not know where they can seek assistance.

Unfortunately we have been unable to help the vast majority of those who have come to us. If a woman has no legal right because she did not come to Johannesburg or surrounding areas legally before March 1959 or with a permit to work (seldom granted) her application to be allowed to live with her husband is inevitably refused even in cases where her husband is the registered tenant of a house of his own and even if she has no other place in the Republic where she may legally live.

In January 1974 we wrote to the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, Mr Punt Janson drawing his attention to the break-up of Black families caused by the influx control regulations and the embargo on the entry of African women into the prescribed areas.

We asked him to receive a Black Sash deputation to discuss this matter. He agreed to receive us and a meeting was eventually arranged for July 1974. To our great disappointment the Deputy Minister refused to discuss the 26 individual documented cases we had sent to him in a memorandum of the principle involved and the hour-long meeting achieved nothing.

In all the cases sent to the Deputy Minister the husband had a permanent right of residence in the prescribed area and lawful accommodation. In all cases small children were

involved and in all cases the wives had exhausted all the administrative channels open to them in their attempts to get permission to live with their husbands.

MRS LETSELA is typical of the young women who find themselves separated from their husbands. She was born and grew up in Lichtenburg. Her husband qualifies to be in Johannesburg in terms of Section 10(1)(b) and has accommodation for his wife in his father's house where he lives with his parents and one sibling so the house is not overcrowded.

Mrs Letsela was married in December 1973 and was ordered to leave Johannesburg in August 1974 and her appeal against this order was disallowed by the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner.

We wrote to Mr Janson drawing his attention to her plight and asking him to intervene on her behalf. We pointed out to him that his predecessor, Dr Koornhof, had said when he was Deputy Minister that qualified men who had accommodation could bring their brides from the platteland or the homelands to live with them and asked whether this was still the policy of his department. To date we have had no reply apart from the acknowledgement that our letter has been received.

Six hundred and forty-two people have come to the office during the past 16 months with housing problems. For most of these no file was opened because nothing could be done to help them. Many of those coming with other problems have an accommodation difficulty as well. Nearly all those seeking to have Section 10(1)(a) and (b) rights recognised wished to do so in order that they could qualify to go on the waiting list for a house.

Many of the people who were endorsed out or who had difficulty in obtaining reference books were in this position because they had never been able to find lawful accommodation. This also applies to those people seeking permits to live in the area.

Many people have come to us because they have been on the waiting list for a house since 1971 or before. There are 1 504 families on the waiting list for houses in Soweto and there is no building programme to give these families any hope of being allowed to rent a house in the near future.

The slow rate of house building is shown in



the figures published in the Institute of Race Relations Survey for 1974. In 1972 954 dwellings were built and 1 137 in 1973. These houses are not even sufficient for the families who are to be resettled from Alexandra because their existing homes are being demolished. The Deputy Minister said in Parliament in August 1974 that there were 4 800 families still waiting for resettlement from Alexandra to Soweto or Tembisa.

It must be remembered that the figure of 15 049 families on the waiting list in no way reflects the true shortage of accommodation. There are thousands of other families who do not even qualify to be put on the waiting list because of the stringent requirements of the Regulations. There is a critical situation in Soweto and the overcrowding and hopelessness of people with no security of tenure is one of the greatest causes of the growing anger and frustration of the Black community.

In only one area has there been any relaxation of Government policy. A widow who is 10(1)(a) or (b) who has minor children and who earns enough to pay the rent can now reasonably hope to be allowed to remain in her deceased husband's house as the registered tenant until her children grow up anyway.

The Administration Boards are now well established.

The Black Sash Advice Office in Cape Town has commented: "By the dawn of the era of Bantu Administration Boards, so little room was left for personal considerations that the only remaining question was, could the law possibly be applied more rigidly? The answer which has become apparent during the year is yes."

There is nothing in our experience in the Johannesburg office which makes us to wish to modify that opinion.

The West Rand and East Rand Administration Boards are vast impersonal structures with so many different departments that it is possible for people to be batted backwards and forwards like shuttle cocks, unable to identify the official responsible for taking a final decision in any matter.

In spite of the relevant regulations which say that meetings of the Boards should be open to the public unless the chairman closes the meeting while a particular subject is discussed the West Rand Board discusses all subjects behind closed doors and only opens the meetings at the end to announce the decisions taken.

The Board, being an appointed Whites-only body, is not sensitive to public opinion as were town and city councils with their elected representatives with oversight of the workings of the municipal Non-European Affairs Department.

The fact that the Boards have also to be financially self-supporting is inevitably leading to a further deterioration in the quality of life for Black people. The West Rand Board has announced an estimated deficit of almost R3,5m for the 1974-75 financial year.

The Board increased rentals by R2 a month for houses and R1 a month for hostel beds in 1974 at the same time cutting subsidies to welfare organisations. Black people are expressing increasing resentment that they must pay for the instruments of their own oppression.

In spite of Mr Janson's frequent public statements, red tape and technicalities continue to complicate all aspects of life for Black people.

In order to apply for a late registration of birth, people must submit affidavits of two witnesses to the birth. In Johannesburg at present if the applicant has a reference book which shows his tax area to be elsewhere than Johannesburg, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner refuses to accept his application for a birth certificate and tells him to get his tax place changed first. When he then goes to another office of the Bantu Affairs Department to apply for the tax place to be changed in the records of the Central Reference Bureau in Pretoria, he is told that this cannot be done until he has a birth certificate.

In 90 percent of cases the fact that the recorded tax place is different from the place of birth, is due to errors made by officials of the department when application is made for a first reference book.

If a person cannot get a birth certificate he is unable to have a 10(1)(a) right recognised and is therefore prevented from getting on the waiting list for a house.

It must be remembered that every visit to an office of the Bantu Affairs Department or of the Administration Board entails a day away from work. These offices are not open on Saturdays or after normal working hours.

The Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner for the Witwatersrand has decreed that when a Black person lodges an appeal against an order to leave the area he or she must produce three copies of every document of proof.

The documents required by him are an affidavit accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- a certified copy of the birth/baptismal certificate;
- confirmation of school attendance with dates quoted;
- sworn statements by both parents, guardians or other close adult relatives;
- if previously employed in the prescribed area, certified copies of testimonials from employers, quoting exact periods of employment.

"The Bantu Affairs Commissioner will not make photostatic copies of documents but the appellant must himself make the necessary arrangements for such copies."

It seems administrative procedures require three copies of every document. Commercial firms offering photocopying facilities charge 10 cents per copy. Once more it seems that people are required to pay for the instruments of oppression.

We wrote to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in July 1974 asking him to reconsider this directive. He eventually replied on December 5, 1974 that "in reply I have to request that all Bantu seeking advice and or assistance in respect of appeals be referred to the office of the Bantu Affairs Commissioner."

At the beginning of August 1974 we wrote to the Deputy Minister about this matter. On January 22, 1975 the Administrative Secretary to the Ministry replied that "as such an appeal is a quasi-judicial proceeding and that the same rules apply as in the case of civil actions namely that the onus is on the plaintiff to provide the necessary documents or proof. The appellant must therefore supply the necessary proof at his own cost."

Our contention is that the only provision in law made for the procedure for an appeal is that an appeal must be in writing in the form of an affidavit and must be lodged with the Bantu Affairs Commissioner within seven days of the decision or order of the Labour Officer.

This is all the law says and in the words of the Chief Commissioner for the Witwatersrand, "it is left to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner to frame his own rules of procedure".

We maintain that it is grossly unjust to expect people who are of necessity unemployed because of the endorsement out, to pay for the cumbersome administrative procedures designed by the Department.

It is incredible how ridiculous procedures can be. One woman whose affidavit clearly stated that she had no birth certificate and had never been baptised was repeatedly told to bring a baptismal certificate. In the end she went and got baptised — one way of converting the heathen to Christianity we suppose.

The Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner is also absolutely rigid about the appeal being lodged within the stipulated seven-day period. If it is not he will not even consider it.

But he is not very consistent in this. An appeal will be accepted when lodged and the appellant is usually issued with a temporary permit to remain in the area pending the outcome (but is rarely given permission to work while he waits). Months later he will be told that because the appeal was lodged late "there is no appeal properly before me" and "you are warned to take immediate steps to remove from the prescribed area within 72 hours. With greetings".

MR RAPUDUNGOANA lodged his appeal two days late on May 16, 1974. On January 23, 1975, he was told it was too late. As he has nowhere else where he can legally be, he went to the Aid Centre who referred him back to the Commissioner who told him to go and get endorsed out again.

He did this. Identical appeal documents were then lodged with the Commissioner, and he is once more awaiting the outcome of his appeal. What an incredible waste of time, energy and money this is. The mills of God may grind slowly but not as slowly as the Bantu Administration Department.

In four separate cases in January 1975 people were informed that their appeals had been lodged late when in fact they have documentary evidence that their appeals were lodged and accepted well within the stipulated seven-day period. These cases have been handed over to an attorney.

JOHANNES MOSELANKWE is a young man who has a right in terms of Section 10 (1)(a) to be in Johannesburg and has absolutely nowhere else to go but because his father walked out on the family years ago and his mother is a drunkard he has never been on a house permit.

He was endorsed out on July 19, 1974 and lodged his appeal on August 2. His appeal was "pending" for six months until on January 20 he was told he had not lodged it in time and must remove himself from the area immediately. To add insult to injury he had pre-

vously been endorsed out in 1973 and had on that occasion submitted all the necessary proofs, won his appeal and was registered in employment. It was when he left his job that he was endorsed out again.

This happens over and over again to different people. It is iniquitous that people who have once submitted all the required proofs that they have a right to be in the area should have to do so repeatedly again.

One wonders what happens to all the records of previous appeals. Does the Commissioner have a bonfire at regular intervals or will the Department one day be swallowed up in an ocean of photostat copies?

Meanwhile people wait unreasonable periods for incomprehensible decisions.

## DURBAN

1974 was a somewhat haphazard year one way and another, because of differences of opinion with the authorities, which resulted in the Advice Office twice having to close down, one of the periods being for over a month.

Any break in continuity is not good and each time we had a struggle to re-establish ourselves — especially as people having been to the Advice Office were often harassed by the authorities.

Another reason, perhaps, is that our percentage of known successes was very low, maybe one or two cases a month, and this doesn't exactly encourage confidence in our ability to help people. However, the very fact that they did still come to us at an average of about eight a day justified the existence of the Advice Office.

In June, all the Advice Office workers were "invited" to a meeting with the senior officials of the Port Natal Bantu Administration Board, which has now been in operation since August, 1973. This meeting was the result of a number of rather unpleasant "clashes" with the authorities owing to a series of misunderstandings and misinterpretations on their part concerning our activities.

We spent three informative hours together and the end result was a clearer view of the entire structure of the Board and the functions of its various sections. But we were left in no doubt as to the sceptical attitude of the authorities towards the Advice Office — in fact the general feeling was that we were wasting our own and everyone else's time, especially as the

Port Natal Aid Centre was about to open.

Regardless of the continual assurances that all the officials appointed to these Boards are experts in their own fields and all interested people and dedicated to Bantu administration, we find very little concern or consideration is given to the African who does not fall under the category of being a "Durban native". In fact the function of the Board is not to change the legislation of the pass laws as such, but to review the legislation and perhaps improve it where necessary.

The Advice Office closed over the festive season from December 12, 1974 to January 13, 1975. In the new year we were approached by the Benefit Fund and asked if we would consider taking on all the "cases" of people needing advice and assistance with which the Benefit Fund used to deal.

The reason for this was that the Benefit Fund had been prosecuted under the Friendly Societies Act for operating illegally. The case was concluded in January 1975 and the Benefit Fund was found guilty of not being registered.

However, the presiding judge was against the Benefit Fund closing down as a result of the prosecution, and advised them to continue operating, registered under the Friendly Societies Act.

Still the majority of our cases are people desperate for work permits. The authorities are well aware of the malfunction of the tribal labour bureaux in the Bantustans surrounding the Port Natal area, but nothing is done to improve the situation, the main concern being only for the urban "native".

We were told in June 1974, that at any given time there are 4 000 to 8 000 unemployed Durban "natives". So the work-seeker from outside the area has very little hope of employment. (This number must run into hundreds of thousands — contrary to Dr Diederich's statement recently that there is no unemployment.)

However, we still try to assist those from within the Port Natal area by corresponding with prospective employers concerning the procedure for requisitioning a contract worker.

Some tribal labour bureaux are even refusing to register work-seekers without first having proof of pending employment. And there is still little evidence of any recruiting ever taking place at the majority of the Bantustan labour bureaux in Natal. Yet the officials at influx control are emphatic that no recruit-

ment can take place other than at these bureaux.

Contract workers may still only come into Durban in one of the three restricted categories, viz. domestic, flat workers or builders' labourers and, once so classified, may definitely never change.

A drastic change in the attitude of employers to Black employees is very necessary. Contracts are disregarded at will, and this insinuation that Blacks are dispensable because of the numbers needing employment, must go.

Why should labour relations differ according to colour? Long loyal service means nothing, pensions and bonuses are virtually unheard of. This is something we must do, it has nothing whatsoever to do with the laws of the land. However, the plight of the contract worker seems as hopeless as ever.

There has certainly been no noticeable improvement in the housing situation for Africans, Coloureds or Indians in Durban.

People who applied for houses in Umlazi in September 1970, and in KwaMashu in March/April 1971, are *NOW* being given occupation in those two areas. Raids are being carried out frequently around the clock, and people are being evicted from their homes for the slightest misdemeanour. It is a case of out first, appeal later.

The waiting lists are getting longer and people more desperate and impatient. A man cannot be "unmarried" for any length of time whatsoever, otherwise he loses his house instantly. Even if he gets divorced or widowed in say January, and remarried in February, the period as a single man qualifies him for bachelor accommodation and disqualifies him from having a house.

## EAST LONDON

**O**ur successful cases are rare. The work is depressing because so many problems are utterly hopeless but the variety is a never-ending source of fascination.

We do not have endorsement-out problems like Cape Western and Johannesburg. We are the place to which people are endorsed. Our main recurring, hopeless problem is housing. We keep insisting that we cannot arrange or supply housing — but they come nevertheless to complain of unfair treatment or eviction.

We think there are about 4 000 families on waiting lists for houses at Mdantsane. We

cannot verify this. We cannot see the situation ever improving and the position is serious. There are nine units or zones in Mdantsane and each unit is controlled by African superintendents and councillors who are in complete control of housing. The more we listen to housing problems the more sickening it is to hear of the intrigue and bribery that goes on.

We do write letters to the unit superintendents, but without much hope of their efficacy. The biggest problem here is that if a person is neither a house-owner nor on anyone's lodging permit he or she cannot obtain a precious pink or white work-seekers card. There are many who work illegally but most reputable employers will not accept anyone whose papers are not in order.

Mdantsane is a Ciskeian homeland and the houses are for Ciskeians. A Transkeian may come freely to visit, but he can never own a house or get onto anyone's housing permit. To change his citizenship (which many would like to do) is virtually impossible.

Constant cases are those who come to us after having lost their employment and complain that they either were not given pay in lieu of notice, or leave pay or sick pay and here we tread on extremely thin ice. Our labour office which handle these complicated legal problems has a reputation for being extremely fair and will always right a worker's wrongs if it can, so where possible we refer these cases to them.

For pauper's rations, disability grants, hire-purchase problems, pensions and for the infirm we can usually help. We write letters for some, we listen patiently to them all and hope that, if we cannot help in any other way, by listening sympathetically we can offer some solace.

## GRAHAMSTOWN

**A** municipal bus accident in 1972 brought us some of our first clients, for a number of whom we were able to obtain State legal aid when they would otherwise apparently have lost all rights to any legal action.

A report in the Sunday Times last year stated that "considerable disquiet is being caused by complaints that some insurance claim consultants in South Africa are pocketing more than 80 percent of the money paid out to them by insurance companies on behalf of their clients. There is little that can be

done to stop them!"

In the Government Gazette, No 4467, October 25, 1974, a proclamation announced the appointment of a State Commission of Inquiry into certain aspects of compulsory motor vehicle insurance. Of particular interest to the Grahamstown Advice Office were two of the terms of reference:

whether special tariffs should not be fixed for legal and medical costs of the handling of claims and the treatment of third party patients

and whether claimants are exploited by their representatives and, if necessary, whether control should be introduced.

The Grahamstown Advice Office compiled a memorandum, supplied a list of the victims and details of "compensation received by some, and appended copies of affidavits made by victims to the location superintendent acting as commissioner of oaths. We have just received a notification from the secretary of the Commission stating that the memorandum will be placed before the Commission."

One of our saddest pieces of news was to hear of the death, in September, of Mrs G.K, the second of the 36 people who came to us to seek assistance in this matter. Mrs K was paid out R28 by the "agent." The accident left her totally disabled and a disability grant was applied for. Eighteen months after the accident she had not yet received the grant.

The Bantu Affairs Department informed us that a "reminder" would be sent to Pretoria and "she should receive notification within the next two months, together with any back payments which might be coming to her."

Mrs K was disqualified from receiving assistance from GADRA because her husband received an old age pension of R7,50 per month and one son earned R14 per month as a gardener. Their rental was R3,22 per month. They had three children at school.

She was the first person involved in the bus accident to be granted State legal aid by our Chief Magistrate, Mr Maritz, who after some initial scepticism regarding what people stated their salaries to be, has given us unfailing assistance and co-operation since his transfer to Grahamstown.

Latest information from the attorneys handling her case is that "action was instituted in the supreme court for damages in the sum of R13 360. The pleadings were closed during August and the plaintiff died early in September. In consequence the claim for damages is

transmissible to the plaintiff's estate. Application has been made for trial dates and it is anticipated that the case will be set down for trial during the latter half of 1975."

Others involved in the bus accident only came forward after the date of proscriptio had expired — they were working in Port Elizabeth and only heard about the help available too late. Our MP Mr Bill Deacon actually had to make representations to the Minister of Transport for an extension of the proscriptio date because matters had been left in abeyance for so long by the municipality.

Most of the victims will eventually gain in one respect only — they have learnt that it is not the law to sign a piece of paper for any White man who demands it.

The section of our work dealing with state pensions has perhaps caused us the most concern. We are hesitant to apportion blame. The co-operation of the Chief Magistrate has naturally affected the attitude of others in his orbit. We must agree with the Athlone Advice Office that ". . . Anger in the manner of an official could sometimes be recognised as in fact being pain over his unpleasant duty disguised as annoyance with the person concerned."

The answer is because behind the person concerned is another person concerned, and another, and another, and another, and another.

We have had disquieting indications that the administration of payments may be open to abuse and are following the matter up.

● "Mothers" or "widows" pensions as they are known are payable to mothers of minor children (under 16) whose fathers have died or disappeared, provided the mother earns less than R10 per month, regardless of the number of children.

RINAH M, a Rhodes University employee earning R23 per month, was attempting to support three children at school following the death of her husband in 1960. She was disqualified because — despite the advice of a sympathetic official — she insisted on stating her true salary.

SOPHIE M, also a widow, received maintenance for her four children which ceased completely when she reported to the official of the Bantu Affairs Commissioner's office that the eldest girl had dropped out of school. Eighteen months elapsed before any maintenance was restored and she received no back pay.

These grants are made under the Children's Act of 1960, No 33, and are "just to keep the family alive". If the family manages to stay alive for 18 months without maintenance, it is argued, they actually probably do not need the grant. If they can produce affidavits to show that they have had to borrow money to stay alive, the magistrate *may* be able to make representations and some arrears *might* be forthcoming.

Incidentally, Sophie's eldest son was head boy last year in a Port Elizabeth school and wishes to study medicine. He worked hard, his headmaster said, but was often tired because he had weekend gardening jobs, and did not always do as well as he could in exams.

#### ● Old Age Pensions.

JAMES M and his wife were destitute. He had been employed by the health department of the Grahamstown Municipality for 30 years when a domestic accident crippled his leg. He was paid an annuity of R300 but the municipality took no steps to ensure that a disability or pension application was made on his behalf.

Eighteen months later he was being locked out of his house for failure to pay rent. Miss Phindiswa Jali, then social worker for the Grahamstown BAAB was approached and set the machinery in motion but as usual months elapsed before the pension actually began to be paid.

The City Council 'very kindly' gave MR M a "long service award" in November (R20). A further approach to the City Council in January when the pension had still not arrived resulted in a "loan" — also of R20 — for which the Advice Office has had to undertake the repayments.

MAGGIE MTH came to see us in November, with the request that we ginger up the authorities regarding her old age pension

which had been applied for in June. We had to tell her that this would only succeed in annoying the authorities. She was entirely without support except for R2 sent by her granddaughter who worked in Uitenhage, to cover the cost of her rent.

The members on duty were so shocked by her emaciation and air of hopelessness that they decided to give her rations out of their own pockets. On the second visit to her room the landlady informed us that she had been taken to hospital, seriously ill. She died just after Christmas, never having received an old age pension.

● The six-monthly review of disability grants in the case of illnesses such as tuberculosis or a broken leg is understandable, but *WHY* in the case of a man who has lost his leg? We have every admiration for Black people for their tenacity and determination in defeating obstacles but we did not know that they were capable of growing new limbs.

● Maintenance orders are something the Black Sash could take up in this "Women's Year", for both Black and White mothers. To get them is hard enough, to ensure that they are regularly paid is hell's own job.

"The poor father might have been sick this month, or lost his job, or after all it's Christmas" is what we are told.

The father is always given a month's grace, then a warning.

"No point in sending the man to jail — he won't be able to pay a bean then," says the man at the magistrate's court. Unwed mothers have to report to the police that the fathers of their child/children are not paying, or have disappeared. The police are supposed to look for them. Child Welfare cannot help until the police confirm that they have been unable to trace the father. The police usually tell the mother to trace the father.

## **WOMEN WITHOUT MEN** By Liz Clarke and Jane Ngobese.

The lives of families of migrant labourers in the "Homelands". This book of 96 pages is beautifully illustrated with 45 pictures by Dorothy Mclean and Anthony Barker. Booksize: 9½ x 6½. Paperback price: R3,25 each. Hardbound (collector's piece) 100 copies only, R4,50 each. This is the first publication of the Institute for Black Research.

THE INSTITUTE for Black Research is a fact-finding and fact-analysing organisation. Its work is concentrated in the Black communities of South Africa. The services of the Institute are available to all subscribing groups and persons who want to understand the present South African "reality" and who are dedicated to improve its future image. The Institute aims to bring together the people's concerns from the townships and the rural areas for scientific comment and meaningful community action. In the process, it is geared to train researchers and to stimulate writers particularly in the Black community. Order by cheque/postal order from: The Institute for Black Research, 17 Cornelius Road, Sparks Estate, Durban, 4001.

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## Dedication...

**I**N 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.

## Toewydingsrede...

**M**ET trots en nederigheid verklaar ons ons gehegtheid aan die land van Suid-Afrika, ons wy ons aan die diens van ons land. Ons belowe plegtig die ideale te handhaaf van onderlinge vertroue en verdraagsaamheid, van die onskendbaarheid van beloftes, van moed vir die toekoms, van vrede en regverdigheid teenoor alle persone en rasse. Ons beloof plegtig om ons te verset teen enige vermindering hiervan, oortuig dat hierdie plig ons opgelê is en dat die geskiedenis en ons kinders ons sal regverdig.

Mag God ons help, op Wie se krag ons ons verlaat.