

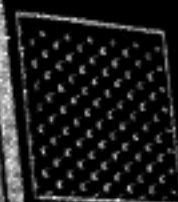
Sash

Vol. 27 No. 3 November 1984 R2.00



UDF's first birthday

Legal & General Volkswagens



NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY DEMONSTRATION
Saturday August 11

Photos: Gill De Vlieg

This year women's groups on the Reef picketed central Johannesburg on the anniversary of the 20 000 strong women's protest march on Pretoria.

Howlers

In case you haven't noticed —
Sash Vol 27 No 2 August 1984:

Page 25 para 8 (3 lines from bottom of page) should read 'Germany united *under* the state of Prussia' (not *with*)

Page 1, heading and article:
DIFFUSE should be DEFUSE!

With indignation we report the detention of our member Barbara Creesy, a valued Johannesburg Advice Office worker.



With great joy we congratulate Bishop Desmond Tutu on winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

Left, Bishop Tutu and Jean Sinclair at Sash party for Raymond Louw two years ago.



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It might be that street politics, and all the misery they entail, have come to stay in our country — if not continuously, at best intermittently and for increasingly long periods.

A number of perfectly obvious factors have caused this situation to develop, and at base is the principle of black exclusion from the old and the new constitution. One result of denying the vote to the majority of our citizens is that there are no popularly accepted structures for the expression of discontent or bargaining or management of day-to-day living. But now we are glimpsing signs of a more ominous, less recognized consequence, which is the potential for dictatorship that exists among the disenfranchised masses: for when leaders are not elected they are freed from responsibility to their constituencies and even from the necessity of having constituencies. When in addition in times of stress or especial discontent (such as when removals or rent rises are imminent) the government is so foolish as virtually to proscribe all meetings whether by direct banning, the withholding of permits or refusal of permission to use halls, then you are asking for a situation where any determined group can order masses of people around by means of posters, leaflets and strong-arm tactics.

That this sort of thing didn't happen long ago was due to the phenomenal passion for justice and democracy of generation upon generation of black leaders many of whom were members of the ANC.

This democratic tradition continues in the structure of today's black organizations. Of especial interest to the Black Sash (because of our close association with the organization on which we have observer status) is the United Democratic Front's aim to give extra substance to the democratic discipline by dedicating itself to the principle of internal democracy within and between its affiliates. If the organization, acting responsibly in the face of government irresponsibility, can hold onto this discipline in the meticulous way it has from the outset attempted to do, it will contribute something unique in the history of liberatory struggle — and might succeed in allaying the white public's image of 'a landscape filled with dark lurking forces,' which Jeremy Cronin mentioned in his Feetham lecture.

But some disconcerting straws in the wind, set in motion by many disparate factors, need to be looked at and discussed very carefully, not only by the UDF, of course, but by all opposition organizations.

Firstly, there clearly are substantial numbers of people who want now to get on with their lives and schooling, who do not see what is being achieved by endless boycott and who do not seem to have the means to express themselves in a non-threatening environment. It is true that since the ban on indoor meetings has been lifted community discussions have begun to take place all over the country. A lot depends on the way these meetings are conducted in the next few months and whether all sections of each community feel unafraid to attend them. In this connection the kind of rhetoric which routinely invokes 'the wrath of the people,' together with statements that collaborators have only themselves to blame for violent attacks upon them, do not exactly create a suitable climate for frank and free discussion.

Secondly, long periods of schools boycott, the possibility of future stay-aways from work, together with mounting unemployment, will all combine to keep mobs of people on the streets and will invite panicky repression. Strategies must surely be worked out whereby the government is presented with demands that it can meet. The consequences of the all-or-nothing ethic need to be properly looked at and in particular, as Laurie Schlemmer pointed out, whether the disinvestment campaign can or desires to 'avoid the looming danger of over-reaching itself and doing more harm than good.'

Thirdly, creative debate is further inhibited by the widespread anathematizing of people like Laurie Schlemmer and John Kane-Berman who do no more than confront romantic assumptions with the truth of human limitation and who seek to encourage the search for strategies that have realistic objectives. Equally disconcerting was the angry muttering in left wing circles when David Welsh argued the case for freedom of speech after Buthelezi had been howled down at a recent UCT meeting.

When one reads articles such as Graeme Bloch's in this issue of Sash one can be hopeful that problems like the above can and will be ironed out, at least within the ranks of the UDF. Let us hope so. Let us hope that in the end the strongest force, which will override all present difficulties, will be a commitment among all opposition groups to the democratic habit, which requires not only internal democracy but also tolerance of all viewpoints — as Joyce Harris has forcefully pleaded in her article, also in this issue.

The exercise of internal democracy within opposition organizations, by giving disenfranchised people the feeling that they are nevertheless in control of their own destiny, can create strong constituencies able to organize, negotiate and compel change.

This will never happen, however, if leaders allow themselves to be guided by self interest or ideology rather than the needs and aspirations of ordinary people. It also won't happen if the government continues to destroy by detention and banning our rich heritage of able and dedicated community leaders.



photo: Ingrid Hudson

*Were it possible to say,
Mother, I have seen more beautiful mothers,
A most loving mother,
And tell her there I will go,
Alexandra, I would have long gone from you.*

*But we have only one mother, none can replace,
Just as we have no choice to be born,
We can't choose mothers;
We fall out of them like we fall out of life to death.*

*And Alexandra,
My beginning was knotted to you,
Just like you knot my destiny.
You throb in my inside silences
You are silent in my heart-beat that's loud to me.
Alexandra often I've cried.
When I was thirsty my tongue tasted dust,
Dust burdening your nipples.
I cry Alexandra when I am thirsty.
Your breasts ooze the dirty waters of your dongas,
Waters diluted with the blood of my brothers, your
children,
Who once chose dongas for death-beds.
Do you love me Alexandra, or what are you doing to
me?*

*You frighten me, Mama,
You wear expressions like you would be nasty to me,
You frighten me, Mama,
When I lie on your breast to rest, something tells me,
You are bloody cruel.
Alexandra, hell
What have you done to me?
I have seen people but I feel like I'm not one,
Alexandra what are you doing to me?
I feel I have sunk to such meekness!
I lie flat while others walk on me to far places.
I have gone from you, many-times,
I come back.
Alexandra, I love you:*

*I know
When all these worlds become funny to me,
I silently waded back to you
And amid the rubble I lay,
Simple and black.*

Mongane Wally Serote

ALEXANDRA

ITS HISTORY

by Glenda Webster

Today, some 60 years since its original conception, Alexandra township is being razed for redevelopment as a 'garden suburb' of Johannesburg. Since it is a slum, this may appear to be a progressive step of its 100 000 inhabitants. (This is the figure given by the Town Clerk of Alexandra and is supported by a senior WRAB official at Alexandra.) But as it was in Alexandra's original development, the have's benefited from the possession of houses at the expense of the have-not's.

Alexandra township started its battered existence in 1905 in the same way that many of Johannesburg's present white suburbs began. Originally a farm (Cyferfontein), it was sub-divided and developed by its owner, Papenfus, into a township for sale to whites. The township, allegedly named Alexandra after his wife, consisted of some 2 500 stands each approximately 1 100 square metres (a quarter of an acre) in size.

But, in 1905, Alexandra was a far flung suburb, some 11/12 miles from the Johannesburg municipal boundary; too far even for speculative buyers. The Alexandra Township Company to which the stands had been transferred, applied to the government for permission to sell the land to blacks. Permission was granted but specifically only for 'natives' and 'persons of colour'. 'Asians' and 'Europeans' were precluded from owning ground in the area. Eventually, in 1912, stands began to change hands from the Alexandra Township company to black and a lesser number of coloured residents in a freehold suburb on the edge of Johannesburg. But, unlike other freehold areas, Alexandra's development was destined by the conditions surrounding its existence, to become a slum.

By 1939 it had a population of some 60 000, with each stand housing an average of 22 people. It had become known as a 'health hazard', a centre for crime, prostitution and gangster warfare. On the strength of its infamous reputation its white neighbours had formed themselves into the North Eastern District Protection League for the sole purpose

of having it demolished and its inhabitants moved.

What were the conditions that led to Alexandra's development as a slum?

Basically these —

- * a vicious circlly of poverty and exploitation
- * ineffective local government with insufficient funds
- * an exceptionally high level of unemployment
- * over-crowding due to un-planned slum clearance in other parts of Johannesburg

The first two are perhaps the most significant and the only two that need elaboration here.

Average household income in Alexandra was low, transport costs were high and, as a result, about 85% of the homes in Alexandra were bonded to a building society or white financier such as the Alexandra Township Company. In an effort to maintain instalments at relatively high interest rates, property holders started the practice of 'over-building' — that is putting up back-yard rooms and lean-to's on the walls of houses to accommodate tenants for extra income. This practice increased to such an extent that by 1958 Alexandra had a population of some 980 000 people, with an average of 39 people per stand. The value of stands in Alexandra rocketed disproportionately to the actual value of the land. For instance, in 1942 an acre of land in Alexandra changed hands at £1 000 while in neighbouring Kew the same size ground could be bought for £150.

The second significant factor in Alexandra's unhappy existence was the lack of local government and a limited amount of funds for urban development. Up until 1958 Alexandra was controlled and administered by the Alexandra Health Committee which comprised half nominated and half elected members. (Braam Fischer was once a member of this committee.) The committee was hampered by a lack of funds and authority. There was no police station and the central state and its departments did not exercise any control over Alexandra; it was considered to be 'nobody's baby'.

Being outside the Johannesburg municipal area, work seekers were unable to obtain permits to work in Johannesburg. Unemployment was exceptionally high and with the lack



Glenda Webster

of influx control, unemployed people from other areas were drawn into Alexandra.

In the early 1950's a regional planning committee recommended that Alexandra, whose fate was uncertain, should remain to serve as a labour pool for Johannesburg's northern suburbs. In 1958 it was taken under the control and administration of the Peri-Urban Board. With a government loan of £100 000, the Board's brief was to remove residents who worked in any suburb other than a northern Johannesburg suburb, to end lawlessness, to impose influx control, to purchase properties, impose higher taxes and, in the end, to reduce the population to 30 000.

This brief suited certain exploited tenants living in back-yard shacks. Many moved voluntarily to new accommodation in townships such as Meadowlands and Diepkloof. But there were many instances of people being stopped in the streets, their papers taken, endorsed and their owners then being told to move. By March 1963 the Peri-Urban Board had reduced the population of Alexandra to 52 000 and had taken over 472 properties at an average cost of R2 700 per property.

In spite of the apparent success of the Peri-Urban board in carrying out its brief, a committee was convened in 1961 to re-assess the future of Alexandra. Following a decade and more of popular resistance — the Defiance Campaigns of the 50's, Sharpeville, Langa, the Alexandra bus boycotts — the government's response had been the imposition of separate development with the emphasis on allowing blacks into white areas only for the purpose of selling their labour. In line with central government policy of separate development, the committee recommended

that Alexandra's family accommodation be abolished. Alexandra was to become a hostel city for the black working population needed to service the needs of industrial Johannesburg. In March 1963 the Minister of Bantu Administration announced that families in Alexandra would be resettled to Tembisa, Diepkloof and Meadowlands, houses would be abolished and eight hostels would be erected to replace them. The hostels would house single-sex workers only.

Members of the Black Sash are no doubt well-acquainted with this part in Alexandra's history, for the Sash, amongst others, were vigorous in their attempts to oppose this destruction of family life and individual freedoms.

Throughout the 1960's and the early 70's, resistance to the removals continued. For instance in Alexandra itself, standholders formed the Alexandra Standholders Protection and Vigilance Society. White liberals formed the Citizens Hostel Action Committee BUT the government persisted in its plan. By

August 1972, 65 000 people had been removed from Alexandra to rented houses in Tembisa, Diepkloof and Meadowlands, at a rate of 250 families a month, and these were families in which both husband and wife had Section 10 rights. Families in which either of the parents had no Section 10 rights were sent to the homelands. Those with Section 10 rights were rehoused in the single-sex hostels. By early 1973, the population of Alexandra had been reduced to 40 000. Nearly 400 houses had been demolished, another 2 100 were about to be demolished. Just less than 1 000 properties were still owned by residents.

Then in March 1979, the Deputy Minister of Plural Relations and Development explained that lack of finance was a problem in the plan to resettle and remove Alexandra's remaining 4 000 families.

Two months later, the government suddenly reversed its decision by announcing that Alexandra would be redeveloped for family housing.

Many reasons for this reversal

have been given. Opposition and resistance played a part, but more significant is possibly a general change in government policy from one in which the emphasis lay in Verwoerdian type separate development to the reforms recommended by the Riekert and Wichahn Commissions. In these, the emphasis lies on the establishment of a settled and peaceful urban black community.

Fact paper presented to 1984 Black Sash National conference

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The Now Alexandra

by Glenda Glover

Alexandra's 358 ha^A of land do not fall under the jurisdiction of Johannesburg or Sandton between which it is sandwiched. It is surrounded by the affluent northern suburbs although its immediate borders are bounded by industrial sites. It is only in the last two years that factories have quickly been built on the northern and eastern borders. Previously this land was open.

The present population is estimated at 80 000 people^B; an average of 16 per dwelling^A (refer 'History of Alexandra' to see figure quoted 100 000). The roads are unsurfaced and badly rutted and the services we take for granted and which keep a crowded urban environment clean and healthy — Water-borne sewerage, electricity and inside running water — are only available to a very few. On winter evenings it is covered in a thick blanket of smog which slowly creeps up the other side of the valley.

If we look at the history of Alexandra with insight, we might deduce that the people of Alexandra have not been allowed to progress along with the rest of the community. Through the area not being anybody's responsibility; through removals; through plans for a hostel town; through expropriation and through zero maintenance of housing, the authorities have prevented development.

Now, the government is reforming! Alexandra is to remain a family housing township. In 1979, Koornhof said that present families would remain. An extensive



Glenda Glover

upgrading exercise would be undertaken and planning would take place with full participation of the residents.^A

Surprise! This is not quite what we see happening in Alexandra.

Redevelopment plan

A seven-phase redevelopment masterplan, with detailed planning phases 1 and 2, was drawn up by a committee comprising of the West Rand Administration board, Department of Co-operation and Development, Department of Community Development and the Alexandra Liaison Committee.

The Alexandra Liaison Committee (ALC) consisted of nine members of the Save Alexandra party under the chairmanship of the Rev Sam Buti. They had been elected by the residents of Alexandra.

I do not know how much say the ALC had in drawing up the Redevelopment Plan. It is difficult to assess this plan but it appears to entail the destruction of most existing housing. There are 3 976 houses; 30% are 4- to 6-roomed single detached units and 40% are 7- to 8-roomed semi-detached dwellings.^A The present block (grid) system is to go and the roads to be completely re-routed.

This plan appears to be a very expensive option. One hears talk of a Garden City, a plan no doubt palatable to the surrounding whites but completely out of reach of the average Alexandrian.

Alexandra Town Council

In 1979 the ALC did have the backing of the majority of Alexandra residents. Today it certainly does not. All those who oppose apartheid and all the methods of implementing it, such as the Local Authorities Act, know when Dr Koornhof said that it was an historic first that all the councillors of the Alexandra Town Council (ATC) were elected unopposed^C, that it was a complete misrepresentation of the facts. To the people of Alexandra it was a sick joke. The ATC was not elected at all.

Rev Buti's co-option is evidenced in his politics of practicality^D and nobody sees the expedience of this more clearly than the residents of Alexandra. He is seldom available to his people.

Government hostels

More than 8 000^E people live in three, single-sex hostels built under the plan before 1979 to make Alexandra a labour dormitory to service northern Johannesburg, Sandton and Randburg. The last one was only completed in 1982 (three years after the decision to cease hostel development.)

Since 1979 there has been very little upgrading of Alexandra (although the redevelopment has received much publicity) to suit the needs and finances of the people. WRAB has built 79 (72m²) matchbox type houses, with services.

Private developer houses

To date, 56 private developer houses have been built in the price range R36 00 — R42 000. According to the WRAB Income Survey of 1981, 0.6% of households had a monthly income of over R1 000.

For a R36 000 house, taking off a 10% deposit and using a bond interest rate of 15¼%, the husband and wife would have to earn R1 680 per month for a bond repayment of R420 per month.

More of these houses are being built. Why is this type of housing getting priority when at best it fulfills the needs of 0.6% of the population? Two ALC members live in these houses. Four of them stand empty. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Alexandra Civic Association alleges that three-quarters of the residents of these houses come from outside Alexandra.

NOTES:

- (A) Fund Raising Brochure published by ALC/WRAB/Financial Mail
- (B) Interview with Reverend Sam Buti and the ALC August 18 1983
- (C) 'Star' February 24 1984
- (D) Public meeting. Save Alexandra party, Alexandra Stadium, August 20 1983
- (E) Ad Hoc Committee of Alexandra Civic Association

Yet in 1981 WRAB Economic Survey showed that 76% of households earned between R100 and R400 per month.

Thusong

The white business community donated tennis courts and sport facilities (Thusong) — the people needed basic housing.

Factories

A barrier of factories mushroomed to surround Alexandra, prompting a reader to write to Izwi Lase Township (a paper mainly concerned with Alexandra)

'Have you noticed that on two sides of Alexandra, factories are being built. A few months ago that ground was empty — it has been empty since I can remember, though Alexandra was crowded and needed more room. Well then why could not the township be made bigger by taking that land — why must it be factories?

Another thing is, they are built so quickly. What causes this, when it seems such a difficult thing to build small little houses for people, but factories go up overnight? I am not against factories, people need jobs so factories are welcome. But they can be anywhere, why on our doorstep, where we need land for our own township space.' (Izwi Lase Township — April/May 1983)

Finance, Phases I and II

Last year the ALC collected R16.5m in interest-free loans from the private sector (Magerman, ALC January/February 1984) for the completion of Phase I and II of the masterplan. In April last year R3.5m of government funds were allocated to Phase II (Hansard). International loans have been raised (Magerman).

All we see of Phase II is barren, dusty land the infrastructure of which was prepared by a donation.^A Last year people's life-time homes stood on this land — sturdy 5-roomed brick houses. In November they were evicted and their homes demolished.

This is when the Black Sash Housing Committee was drawn into the problems of accommodation in Alexandra.

Miss A and the buses

In August last year, Miss A came into the advice office. The ALC/WRAB had informed her that she would have to move within a week to temporary accommodation in the 'buses'. Her home was to be demolished for Phase II development.

Putco donated old buses to the ALC to be used as temporary accommodation. Fourteen were towed to an open site between 1st and 2nd Avenues in August last year. Their wheels have been removed and they are parked in rows close together. Some people have added on shacks of corrugated iron. A corrugated iron fence hides them from the main road. When we went to have a look at conditions at the buses in August 1983, Rev Buti and two other members of the ALC coincidentally met us there. They were angry that we had come to the buses without an invitation and escort from the ALC. They did not want photographs taken and did not want us to talk to the people moving in.

Miss A and her daughters did not want to go and live in an old bus. They feared 'temporary' meant 'indefinitely'. There was no guarantee that they would be able

to move into a new house when they became available — and as yet (March 1984) they have not been begun.

Miss A's expropriation

Miss A's father had owned four properties in the vicinity of 6th Avenue. He had fought expropriation and died in 1976. Miss A says that no formal arrangement of expropriation or compensation has ever been made. She says that the properties were expropriated in 1982. She says she never received any compensation but she lost the income from her tenants. The Peri-Urban Board/WRAB was charging her R9.20 per month for two rooms.

The B's

Another family in the same area, earmarked for development under Phase II, were in the same predicament. Old Mrs B came to Alexandra in 1935. She and her husband scrimped and saved to buy land and build a 5-roomed brick house. Later they built more rooms on their property to house the extended family and tenants. Her son, young Mr B, was born in Alexandra in 1941. Along with his brothers, he runs a haulage business supply the building trade with sand and rubble.

The B's were forced into expropriation in 1981 and were given R23 000 compensation. No account was taken of how valuable land in Alexandra had become even compared to the surrounding white suburbs (see History of Alexandra). The chairman of the ALC told us in August last year that there were still five black landowners. The Civic Association says at least three of those who have been able to escape expropriation are ALC members. But at the time of expropriation, the ALC advised residents to sell and says it helped landowners get a fair price.

The B's were paying R13.70 per month rent for their house. They had received the same eviction message as Miss A. Twenty two families were to be moved from the B's yard. After expropriation, they had been paying rent directly to WRAB. Mr B could not understand why the vacant land on two sides of his property which had already been prepared, could not be built on first. They could then vacate their houses and moved directly into new ones. But it seems some of these plots have already been sold or promised to others. Two separate applicants for plots of land, on which to build their own houses, have been refused information, but Mr Magerman told me there were 50 sites available (in Phase II for between R2 500 and R3 000).

When the A's and B's cases were given press publicity, they were offered alternative temporary accommodation in a derelict ex TB Hospital on the east side of the Jukskei river.

Ex TB hospital

We visited this site on September 22 1983. There was some renovation going on and we were again confronted by an ALC representative who said we should not be there without permission of the ALC office. We were appalled by the conditions of people already housed there after being evicted from other addresses in Alexandra. (On the two occasions we have met Mr Magerman, a member of the ALC/ATC with housing responsibility, he has been adamant that evictions are not ALC policy).

Three strange families were housed in a bare ward

with no partitions or privacy. Cooking was done on an open brazier in the middle of the room. Five small children slept on the concrete floor. One mother complained that she was harassed by the single mentally-handicapped man living in the room with them. One man was a pensioner and a cripple and could not reach the clinic for treatment. They had been told more people were to be moved into the room with them. They were fearful of the men's private hostel occupants close by. The river was dangerous for the small children and, when it rained, they were cut off from Alexandra. The separate toilets were communal with no privacy. About eight seats were set into a plank fixed across the room behind a low wall. The atmosphere was heavy with dependency. The A's and B's refused to move to the old TB Hospital.

I visited this area again recently. I will not deny that shelter is being provided for some people who were homeless, and this is also the case in the buses, but the fact remains that social conditions are abysmal with say 11 people in one room. The hazards of fire and disease are ever present.

Pre-fabs and rising rents

On November 7 1983, the A's and B's were moved to new temporary pre-fab housing units erected by the Schachat group and their house was demolished. This accommodation is infinitely better than the two other alternatives but the temporary housing permit sets the rent at R25.00 per month (presently R20.00 per month until electricity has been connected) compared with Miss A's previous rent of R9.20 per month and before that remember it was free; in fact she had an income from tenant's rent as she had owned the house. They have been given no indication how long they will remain in this temporary accommodation (they have been there three to four months already). They were given a vague statement that they would have priority in the houses to be built. But I am told clearly by Mr Magerman of the ALC that the rents of the new houses will not be less than R125.00 per month. (They are asking for a government subsidy).

These expropriated landlords are understandably disillusioned about their future in Alexandra and sceptical about the government's 99-year leasehold offer.

Mrs C

One of Miss A's tenants when she was a landlord, was Mrs C and her family. Mrs C's husband had been a tenant of the A's since 1971. When the Peri-Urban board took over Miss A's rooms, Mrs C and her family were evicted because although Mrs C fulfilled the conditions for urban qualification, she did not have a stamp in her book. Other tenants were installed and the C's sought shelter with relatives in Tembisa. But things did not go well and they returned to Alexandra, where they belonged, and lived in appalling conditions on the site of the WRAB 'Breweries' in Alexandra/Wynberg.

Here people live in a large warehouse where they have partitioned off corners with cardboard, trying to obtain some privacy. It is difficult to put into words just how awful conditions are at the 'Breweries'. But the C's were able to obtain their urban qualifications and have now been housed in a corrugated iron hut, approximately 10 metres by 6 metres.



photo: Ingrid Hudson

Corrugated iron huts

There are 12 of these huts at 62, 3rd Avenue, with space for six more. There is one tap and six portable toilets. The huts have no floor but are merely set on the stony ground. When it rains, water pours in from the top and the bottom. Two families are allocated to one approximately 6 metre by 10 metre hut, so an average of three adults and three or four children live in half a hut. When the temporary housing permits are issued, the rent will be R20.00 per month for half a hut from the beginning of February. No indication of the time they will have to remain there or future housing, is given.

Mrs C's situation had deteriorated as a direct result of the authorities' actions. She is a nervous, frightened and insecure person now.

Private hostels

During one of our visits to Alexandra, we investigated private hostels. These are hostels provided by private companies for their migrant employees. We were shocked by conditions in the two we saw and ashamed of white private enterprise.

Both had padlocked gates. Large, leaking galvanised huts on concrete slabs housed 12 or more workers in dormitory fashion. About all each worker had was his metal bunk. One hostel had no cooking facilities at all. One had no showers or washing facilities except for two outside taps. Toilets were leaking, broken and communal in both.

One worker we spoke to was having R20.00 per month deducted from his R192.00 monthly wage for this accommodation.

Conclusion

It is clear that Alexandra desperately needs upgrading. It is also clear that the majority of residents cannot af-

ford the middle class housing that would be favoured by the surrounding white communities, especially if Alexandra is to have more land. It should surely be the priority of the administering body to improve housing conditions for the majority of the present population. Besides the 79 WRAB houses, we see no progress in sub-economic housing. Temporary housing/shelter, both official and independent, is mushrooming everywhere (ie the slum is worsening). People living in these newly-created slums know that other slums in South Africa are being demolished and wonder at their fate.

Surely the energy and resources would be better directed towards providing permanent housing now? We puzzle over the priority given to upper income housing. Looking after those who can take care of themselves seems a strange starting point.

And we wonder what will happen to those in temporary housing if the new Koornhof Bill linking housing/approved accommodation with permanent urban residence, becomes law? Is it possible that the poor and unemployed will be sent away?

It seems working from within the system, however good the original intentions were, does not work.

Co-option

The ALC/ATC works hand in hand with WRAB and the Department of Co-operation and Development. It is impossible to separate their responsibilities and actions. The ATC will administer the Department's will.

We see the division widening between the haves and the have nots and a fostered division between those who toe the line and those who wonder what is happening and venture to ask questions and voice their opinion. Time and again we have found people nervous of talking, fearful they might be evicted from the meagre accommo-

dation they have.

We think the WRAB masterplan is an unattainable option for the present residents of Alexandra (if indeed it is meant for them).

There are alternative options; far less costly; more importantly less emotionally destructive in their progress and feasible for the people.

An alternative

An architectural dissertation was done by Simon Ratcliffe, improving Alexandra by renovating, extending and servicing brick structures; keeping the grid system and improving the small communal yard spaces; an attempt to foster a harmonious community rather than a divided one as the present plan is fast doing.

At the same time, we do not accept finance as an excuse for the snail's pace redevelopment of Alexandra. The speed at which 'to hell and gone' townships like Kyalitsha and Motherwell are developed, contrasts with Alexandra's proximity and comparative stagnation. The climate for obtaining private finance for appropriate accommodation projects is suitable.

POSTSCRIPT

Repression

In the past few months while we have been involved with the Alexandra people, we have learnt of repression.

Putco increased their bus fares by 12½% in January. The commuters thought this unfair, formed an Alexandra Commuters Committee and the people began to boycott the buses. It was an issue between Putco (a private, heavily subsidised transport company) and the commuters of Alexandra. The numbers attending the Alexandra Commuters Committee meetings grew with each meeting.

The authorities stepped in. A campaign was launched against the taxis. Every rule in the book was brought out to harass them and keep them off the road. One day there were only eight taxis left operating out of the 64. One driver got 32 tickets (R840.00)

The leaders of the Alexandra Commuters Committee were detained and are to be charged with intimidation. The chairman was removed from his bed at 1.00 in the morning! The Methodist minister's house, in whose hall the meetings had been held, was searched and he was briefly detained.

The boycott was called off.

So we see people's lives controlled by the authorities whether it be urban qualifications, the type of housing provided or more obviously by showing force and instigating fear in order to break community organisation and unity.

Fact paper presented to 1984 Black Sash National conference.

● ALEXANDRA UPDATE, OCTOBER 1984

Bus boycott

The chairman of the ad-hoc bus boycott committee had his charge withdrawn with others on May 22 after four months of reporting to police stations and appearing in court five times without ever being asked to plead.

It is rumoured that Putco are to increase their fares by a similar percentage again in the near future, but have met with the now disbanded bus boycott committee.

Schools boycott

The Student unrest in Alexandra followed a pattern similar to other townships with initially the parents, some students and the community trying to reach a compromise. But the prefects elected by their fellow students at the Minerva High School were accused of not doing their job and dismissed. Then the principal was accused of misusing student funds and his car was burnt during the unrest. Classes at the Minerva High School are suspended.

Pre-fabs, tin shacks, flats

At the pre-fab village there is still no electricity but the rent remains R25 per month and the accommodation still appears pleasant by Alexandra standards.

Tin shacks like Mrs C's erected by the ATC are appearing on all open lots in Alexandra.

In Phase I, 13 blocks of one and two bedroomed flats are being erected by the ATC. Ten blocks are well under way with three very close to completion.

The ATC say that people from the buses and other temporary accommodation will have priority occupation but, although the ATC won't commit themselves, figures of R140 - R160 per month are mentioned as likely rentals. It is unlikely that the people presently living in the buses and shacks are going to be able to afford these.

Flats are not a popular form of accommodation in the black community. One of the reasons strongly voiced is the inability to erect marquees in yards for funerals

Phase II

In Phase II on the north side of Roosevelt Avenue at 5th and 6th Avenues where Miss A's home was, foundations are being prepared for small houses. There are 88 stands. Again the ATC say that these will be allocated to people who had their houses demolished, but they won't estimate the rentals.

Schachat Macullum have been allocated 30 stands on which to build owner specified houses. These will be on 99-year leases and Schachat will develop the entire infrastructure — electricity, water, sewerage, street lighting, tarred roads etc. Unfortunately this puts the cost of a stand at about R10 500. The smallest house they will build is a two-bedroomed house with kitchen, living room and bathroom for about R13 000 making the total cost R23 500.

It is believed that about eight stands were released to businessmen to build their own houses.

Development

To a visitor there is obvious development taking place in Alexandra but it is questionable whether residents can afford the houses that are being built without huge government or private sector grants.

Some private sector projects have emerged. A rotary chapter has created a haven for a small number of the Alexandra aged and has a long term commitment to their welfare in addition to big plans to turn the old TB hospital on the eastern bank of the Jukskei into a much larger fully-fledged old-age settlement.

There is the Alexandra nursery school in very pleasant premises and nearby Thusong, a recreation centre, has been opened. There is the Thabisong creche in 8th Avenue and a new school for the mentally handicapped next to the clinic, and there are new school premises.

Wired out

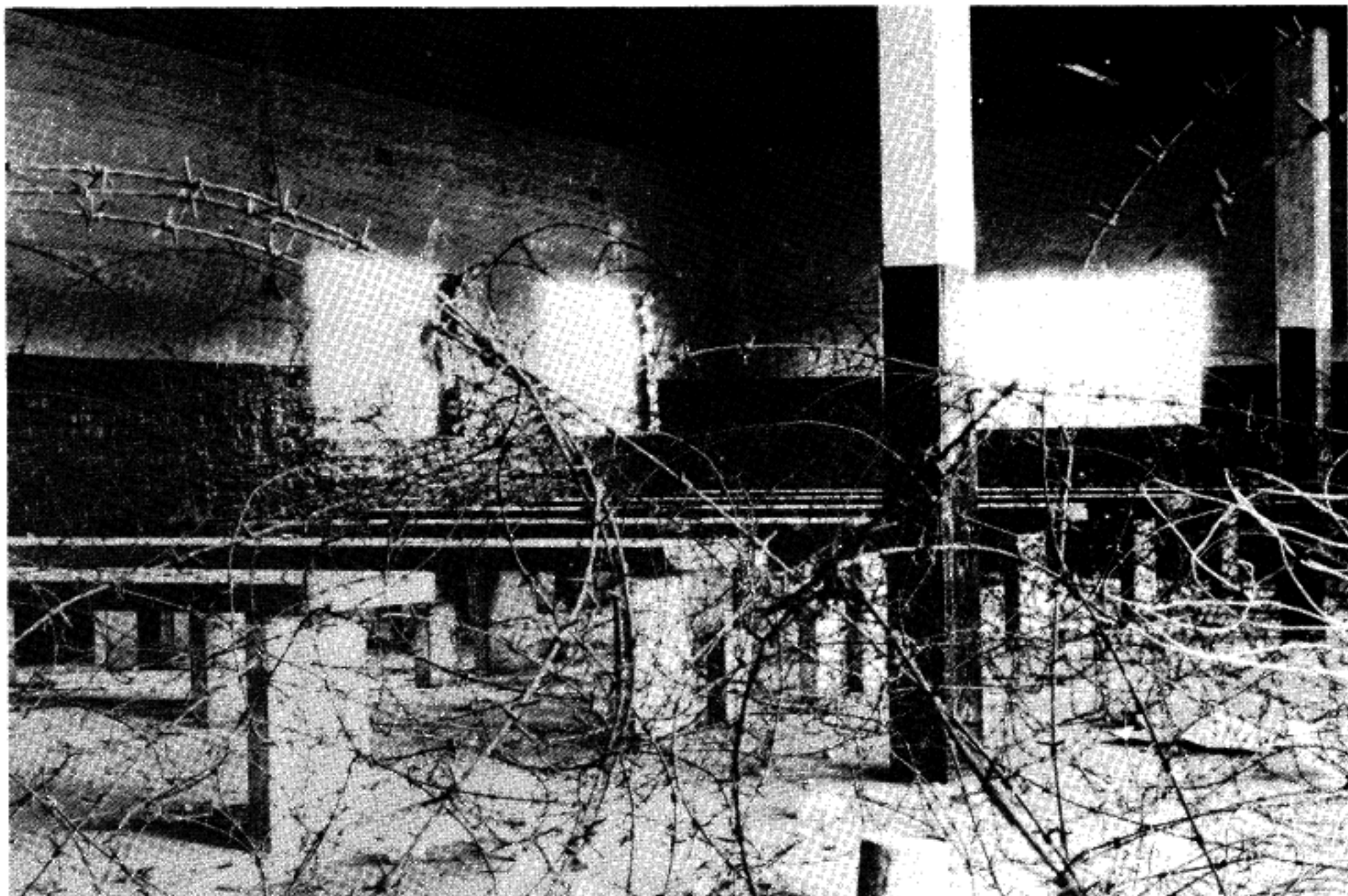


photo: Anna Zieminski

No doubt you saw the striking photograph in the *Argus* recently of a Nyanga hall rendered useless by coils of barbed wire packed into the *interior* space. This highlights a concern we have felt for a long time about the almost total lack of venues in black townships for legitimate meetings of residents.

Outdoor gatherings are illegal unless officially sanctioned by permit. The use of township halls is granted by permission of Community Councils only. Our information is that permission for venues is simply not given to those who dissent from official policy. It is well known that the Community Councils themselves cannot be regarded as representing the community's views seeing that they are elected on very low polls, have relatively little power and tend to support government policy.

How are people to find a peaceful way of formulating and expressing democratic opposition? How are they even to acquire factual and accurate information on topics directly affecting their lives (e.g. Khayelitsha) to enable them to judge well and make rational decisions?

One problem, we understand, is the fact that state leases for use of church premises include a prohibition against certain meetings that could be widely interpreted to include those described above. It seems that the local rector and parish council carry an unfair burden in making decisions about the use of their churches and halls.

The worst aspect, we believe, is the allegation that individual clergy are harassed by secret visits from Security Police to reinforce warnings, if not threats, of dire consequences if premises are 'misused'.

The above abuse of power seems to be widely acknowledged as the unchangeable order of things in the black townships. It must have a devastating effect on the role of the church, the ministry, and the life of the community.

We believe that a thoroughgoing airing of these matters in public is a sensible course and in fact a duty. In our opinion, the best protection for black clergy involved would be publicity and highlevel representations to Cabinet ministers responsible.

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized.

This letter is being sent to several influential individuals. We would value suggestions or advice you may be able to give as to how to take this matter forward.

With thanks,

Yours faithfully,

Keith Gottschalk
Chairman, Civil Right's League
Box 3807, Cape Town



Joyce Harris

The controversy between advocates of participation or non-participation persists ad infinitum, escalating in intensity with the passage of time and the influence of events. Yet it is indeed a strange controversy, stemming from the circumstances in which it finds itself.

The 'participation' under discussion is participation in the establishment, the government, the infrastructure of society. That there is controversy at all casts doubt on the legitimacy of the establishment itself. If legitimacy were recognized by supporters and opponents alike, as it is in any western democracy, then the controversy would be of a different calibre. There would be differences over policies, very strong differences even, but all would be participating in an effort to promote their particular requirements.

In our country the argument between participants and non-participants exists only within the opposition spectrum. Those in power have no doubt about their own participation, or about their determination to retain power. Their efforts to achieve this have caused the widening divisions within the opposition.

Large constituencies within the opposition believe that the establishment lacks legitimacy because it has been designed unilaterally and undemocratically, and denies representation to the majority. This is a valid interpretation of the situation because it reflects the truth of the

Strategies of opposition

National Vice-President JOYCE HARRIS, pleads for tolerance from all sides

matter. Blacks were excluded from participation in the design of the 1910 constitution, as they have been from the planning of the 1983 constitution. Coloured and Indian people have been given representation in the new tri-cameral Parliament, but with powers rigidly circumscribed. Blacks have again been totally excluded. And the planning is the brain-child exclusively of the ruling white minority.

There are therefore sound reasons why large sections of the opposition should question the legitimacy of the establishment and, having done so, come to the conclusion that there is nothing in it for them, or for the country as a whole, thus opting for non-participation.

However there is insufficient clarification regarding the status of a policy of non-participation. Is it a strategy, or a matter of principle? Is it a means of opposing the establishment by exercising sufficient pressure on it to force it into real reform, or is it non-participation for its own sake, a principle to be observed irrespective of its effectiveness in a particular context?

I incline to the belief that it is a strategy of opposition, not a principle, and on that premise contend that it is only one strategy, one of a number of potentials. The real difficulty has arisen because the controversy between those who will participate and those who will not, even in a given context, has escalated to such a degree that non-participation has taken on the clothing of a principle and it becomes increasingly difficult to denude it in the eyes of its supporters.

The result has been a growing animosity between the two schools of thought, proponents of the divergent views have become real adver-

saries, accusations have been made and insults exchanged, and the argument has spiralled to such an extent that it has almost taken the place of the real object of opposition — the establishment.

There have probably always been divisions within the extra-establishment or extra-parliamentary opposition, just as there are within any political movement. There have been different and differing constituencies and their adherents. But they all shared a common goal — the achievement of a just society in which all would participate. There have been, and still are, differences regarding the actual form such a society should take, but this has been left largely for eventual resolution by a national convention of one kind or another. These common goals probably still pertain.

The specific question of participation or non-participation became very pressing with the development of the government's homeland policy. This was rejected by the majority of black people, both urban and rural, but while urban blacks by and large rejected any form of participation in this policy, rural blacks either found themselves foisted with it or voluntarily chose to participate in it. It was obviously easier for urban blacks to reject the policy because for very many years their daily lives were not really influenced by it, but rural blacks were caught up in it willy-nilly, for they were living in the middle of it.

The initial reaction of all the homeland leaders was to reject the policy in terms of its eventual goal — independence for the homelands — but for one reason or another some of them were persuaded to take independence, thus apparently becoming part of the system. Yet even

they have had their arguments with Pretoria and have voiced their dissent.

Other homeland leaders have resisted independence and continue to do so, having chosen to use their government-created platforms to voice their dissent. Some of them favour federation, others a unified South Africa, but all apparently oppose the system. However the very fact of their accepting the authority recognized by the government has either caused them to act in a manner unacceptable to their non-participating brethren, or to look as if they do. And there is scant sympathy among non-participants for the pressures to which their participating brethren might be subjected.

This was the beginning of an ever-widening schism in the black community, in which energies have been frittered away and animosity fostered, so that to-day there is open and undisguised antagonism, and an every-diminishing possibility that their differences can be resolved in order to oppose what must surely still be their common adversary.

The introduction of the new constitution has spread this schism to the coloured community, the Indian community, and even the white community. Each of these constituencies has been riven down the middle over strategies for contesting the constitution, and once again these hinge on the question of participation or non-participation. Once again, then, the legitimacy of the establishment is called into question, for these elections have not been run on differences in policy between the contesting parties but on whether or not they should be contesting them at all. They have turned out to be an extension of the white referendum, which, in its turn, split the white community. The reason for all these divisions is the same as that which split the black community — that a unilaterally devised constitution is being foisted by a minority on an unwilling and unconsulted majority.

But what a pity it is that dissent, which is so widespread, is being dissipated by the inability of the opposition to find complementary strategies, even if it cannot find common ones.

Black consciousness denigrates homeland leaders; anti-SAIC battles SAIC; the Labour Party decries

National Forum and UDF, UDF at its outset qualifies whom it will be prepared to talk to and co-operate with and whom not; the PFP opposes the constitution in a strong NO vote campaign and then is unable to clarify satisfactorily to the electorate and its disenfranchised brothers why it is now adopting a strategy of participation.

The government has brilliantly succeeded in plunging the entire opposition spectrum into a no-win situation. If it decides to participate it runs the risk of being insidiously sucked into the establishment, there to share responsibility for the acts of the establishment, whether or not it agrees with them. If it opts for non-participation it is left on the sidelines, outside the establishment, with seemingly little chance of achieving change and reform in the final analysis except by the use of force, even though it is opposed to violence.

There are assets and liabilities to both strategies. Participants will have an officially recognised platform with the ear of the media. In order to justify their participation they will have to fight for their constituents, and the government, in order to give the constitution some legitimacy, will have to make concessions, which for a while at least will seem to justify participation.

The participation — non-participation argument has spiralled to such an extent that it has almost taken the place of the real object of opposition — the establishment.

In addition the mere fact that people of different skin colour are occasionally meeting together in joint sittings, or are sharing discussions on the standing committees or even in the Cabinet, may gradually alter attitudes as a precursor to encouraging real reform. When there is change of any description there is no knowing where or when or how it will end. Neither is there any real control over the course of events. So that even though this constitution is undemocratic, rigid, exclusive, and a step in the wrong direction, no-one can foretell with any certainty its eventual outcome. It seems unworkable and designed to retain power in

the hands of the Nationalists, but there is an argument for participation, providing participants have a bottom line.

Non-participants have a valid argument in not wanting to have anything whatsoever to do with so flawed a constitution, and retain their integrity with their constituents with greater ease than do the participants, who have a need to explain their actions. The campaigns they have been organising have politicised their constituents and given them an understanding of what is at stake. They are not hamstrung by the rigidity of operating within the constitution, though they are obviously at risk from the government, as the spate of detentions has clearly indicated. If extra-parliamentary political activity can remain non-violent, then it remains possible that sufficient pressure can be built up to bring about reform peacefully.

The opposition finds itself in a most unenviable situation which is tearing it to shreds. I would like to make an appeal for tolerance from all sides; for an appreciation of the validity of differing viewpoints; for recognition of bona fides amongst opponents within the opposition at least until they have proved the contrary; and for sufficient accommodation to make dialogue within the opposition spectrum possible. It is also desirable to redefine the opposition and to include within it those who are presently being excluded as punishment for their participation.

It is heartbreaking to see so much dissension within the opposition. This holds out scant hope for the future stability of our country. Recent violence in the townships is tragic evidence of this. We are faced with a constitution we all reject. We choose to fight it in different ways. Let us respect each other's strategies and try to accept that they are complementary and not antagonistic. A failure to do so can only result in the emasculation of the opposition.

Building unity — the UDF campaign in Cape Town

Economic History lecturer Graeme Bloch, who was banned for five years from 1976 to 1981, says he believes that months of grass-roots campaigning has enabled the UDF to build structures and links that can make possible the democratic liberation of our country.



Graeme Bloch

It was above all the consistent, grassroots work of UDF committees that ensured the overwhelming stay-aways in the recent tri-cameral elections. This work, exhausting and exhilarating, is low-profile and does not get extensive press coverage.

Yet, the experiences of UDF organisers on the ground provide a powerful reply to many who ask if the boycott was not simply a negative action. This article is based on the experiences of working in the Claremont area committee of the UDF, which spans a number of middle-class white suburbs in Cape Town. It is hoped that the article gives an added insight into the significance of the recent anti-election campaign.

Eight-thirty on a cold Sunday morning. We squeeze into Mrs D's 'lounge' waiting for people to arrive from Grassy Park, a densely-packed working-class suburb on the other side of the mountain from Hout Bay. Mrs D is in her forties, quiet, a solid stalwart of the action committee that has been working in Hout Bay for the last few years. In the coming anti-election campaign her daughter, Karen, on a disability grant, is nonetheless to go out virtually every day, organising, talking to people, explaining the meaning of the coming elections.

On another visit I discover how poor the family is when Mrs D gets a child to slip out and borrow some tea from the neighbours so that she can offer me a cup.

By about half-past nine, there are some 70 of us in the backyard of a friendly shopkeeper, hanging from the steps, sitting amongst the washing, listening as a member of the Hout Bay youth group explains to us some of the problems in the area.

The village is small, dependent on seasonal fishing, cut off from other parts of Cape Town by high transport costs, though some do get work as labourers for the Council or in factories in town. Unemployment is high, wages are low; and there is a chronic housing shortage fuelled by high rentals. People are angry and frustrated by recent evictions.

The area has been mapped into manageable zones, and we are assigned to teams. We go out in two's and three's to knock on doors and talk to people. We are there to listen; but also to explain. Have they heard of the UDF? Do they know of the New Constitution? Trying to link people's day-to-day problems to their powerlessness under apartheid, we explain how the new deal will entrench inequality.

Some people are suspicious of politics. Yes, some have heard of the UDF: they know Boesak, a cousin was at the launch, they signed a UDF form at a table in Claremont. Many have no time for Hendrickse. The Labour Party and management committee have never done anything for them. They are angry at the salaries the new MP's will be getting. They show us their doors that are cracked, where water blows in when it rains, the cement floors.

We talk about politics and how it affects their lives. We are linking them to the struggles of other communities. A young worker from Steenberg compares notes with a City Council worker whose union is engaged in a wage dispute. Our presence from the white areas is met with interest, sometimes curiosity, always a willingness to discuss.

We leave behind literature and pamphlets, and move on. At 1 pm, we meet again, over soup and rolls to exchange experiences and to assess the comments on her team's work, of Mrs Johannesen, a fiery working-class 'auntie' from Grassy Park. The team were in one of the squatter camps overlooking the harbour. She had thought conditions in Grassy Park were bad. Now she

wishes she could bring more people through with her to see the terrible conditions under which others live.

'How can apartheid force human-beings to exist like this, right here in Cape Town?' she asks. Another person tells of being chased out of a house by a slightly-drunk man who thought she was a Labour Party canvasser. A third is worried: people are scared of being involved. Pensioners are being threatened if they don't vote. We will have to go back to people a number of times. The area should have a meeting. Residents have many questions and want to hear more about the UDF.

This process is to be repeated, refined and adapted over the next few months. We work in a sub-region (Southern Suburbs) that consists of some seven areas. These areas vary from fairly wealthy rate-payers in Wynberg; to Ocean View where many work in the Naval dockyards and all have been moved under the 'Group'; Grassy Park with its solid tradition of militancy and door-to-door organising and Retreat where the burly figure of Mr Marks — hawker and UDF vice-president in the Western Cape — towers over the community and whose name is an immediate warm introduction into almost any household.

In Claremont we have developed a good core of 25, growing in experience and confidence. There are teachers, libraries, two town-planners, computer programmes. Solid and hard work has built a strong unity and camaraderie. We have worked with organisations such as the Black Sash, and two successful public meetings have indicated a substantial degree of support and interest.

Now we have restructured to gear up for the election boycott. Teams will assist each of the other areas, meet with them, plan and work. In the coming months, people are to go out three, four times a week, rushing out after work to slog from door to door. Weekends involve workshops and joint regional activities. Occasionally we meet up with activists from all over Cape Town as when 200 UDF members went out in Elsies river or the exhilarating experience of Crossroads, where thousands of squatters streamed forward to sign the UDF signature forms. There are pamphlets to write, skills to share, rallies and Church vigils to organise and attend.

There are also our own area activities. A general meeting of about 100 people hears from Jonathan De Vries, UDF Publicity Secretary, about UDF's reasons

Sketches by Anne Pogrand at UDF meeting in Jhb



for rejecting the unjust and divided tricameral system. A young scholar from Lavendar Hill explains the door-to-door work in his area, the direct contact they are building.

In the schools, pupils are interested, and want to express their fears at how the new deal will affect their future. He urges whites to join in the work in the area committees.

Was the boycott a success? Nearly 96% of Cape Town's eligible voters refused to vote. For us, in the area committees, we KNOW that it was mostly a conscious stay-away, a refusal to join in the exclusion of Africans, a desire for a single parliament, a refusal to trust the Labour Party, or its ability to change people's daily lives of poverty and struggle. We have seen their political awareness change and grow as information was made available. We learned to listen and, in area after area, saw for ourselves the grinding effects of low wages, high rents, overcrowding, transport costs, rising prices.

Our own understanding of apartheid and the meaning of the new constitution has been deepened. We have shared experiences across Group Areas and developed friendship that will last long after our country is free. We have begun to realise the capacities of ordinary people to organise themselves, the wealth of talent and strength in deprived working-class communities. We have begun to see too, the power that unity can bring. The anti-election campaign was not simply a negative stay-away: We have built links, have seen the growing skills of local leaders and ordinary members who come forward to work, have felt the creativity and interest, and sometimes surprising militancy from the people.

UDF has a long way to go, and many problems. The election boycott itself will not change things. It has moved people; now the task is to go forward. In the areas, intensive discussion is occurring on how to build on what has been achieved. How will people be mobilised to put forward their demands, how do we win our goal of democracy in a non-racial South Africa?

For Claremont, the boycott was a unique period. It has strengthened us, made us more determined. We have a message to carry across in our own areas, of the realities of people's lives and the need for justice.

The boycott period has convinced us of the need to play a part in liberating our country, and has helped in significant ways to build the structures and links that can make this possible.

One life

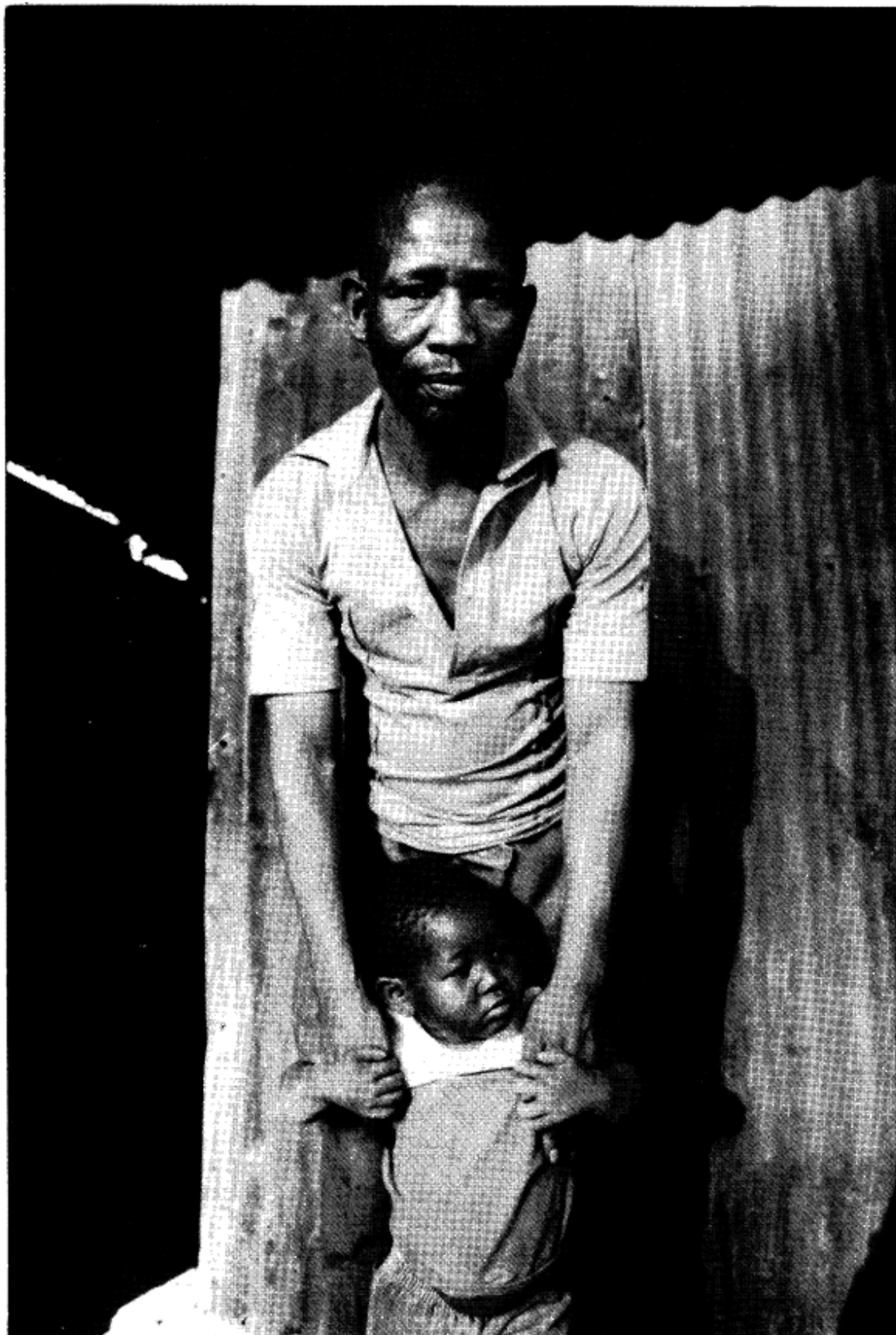


photo: Paul Weinberg

One life

Mr N worked many hours with JOSIE ADLER and SUE SHER in order to present his story to the Carnegie Poverty Inquiry. He did so, he said, because 'it would be for me and the others afterwards.'

Mr N had a headstart in life. His grandparents had some land, and his parents had sufficient cash to invest in a mission education for him, limited, but compared with others, substantial. They, and he, espouse with deep conviction the ideals of family, education, savings, working skills.

However, his story is not one of a man whose opportunities increased since his grandfather's time; they have, rather, been radically diminished.

He tells how, in the Transkei, where he is directed to live, he and his family cannot survive — he has no land on which to grow food, there is no work, he gets no cash. In those places where he can survive with his family, (first in the Cape and now in the Transvaal) he is not allowed to be. He is always a fugitive from the police, hiding his family in one place then another.

He values family life highly, but in order to protect his family and to be with them, he has consciously had to bring them into danger and an intolerable daily existence where there are none of the supports of stable community, friends and relations. The people they live with are like themselves, victims, and any relationships are random.

He cannot save: the costs of his existence are high. He cannot realise any aspirations for himself and his family. His children will not be able to go to school in the Transvaal, so his wife and children must sooner or later return to the Transkei, without him, because he knows his family cannot survive if he goes too.

His education and skills — those of a good labourer, loyal and hardworking — mean that he always finds work, keeps the jobs he gets (albeit illegally), and earns the confidence of his employers. But he gets none of the rewards of society for these values. He finds no security in the form of a home and community, normal employment, savings, credit/borrowing facilities. In fact, his money buys less for him than the same amount purchases for 'ordinary' members of society. In addition he pays a heavy financial price for being outside society's framework, in the form of bribes, fines, extortionate rentals and interest on money borrowed, extra-burdensome transport costs.

His account is of a man who holds all the values which are nominally those of the society that dominates him. That society, however, marginalises him, physically and psychologically, and makes precarious his very existence.

Background to interview

Mr N came to the Black Sash in July 1983 to ask for assistance to register in his employment. He is a labourer, aged 41 years, whose home is at Lady Frere in the Transkei. He is married, to Eunice Liziwe, aged 22, they are living in a portion of a stone outbuilding on an expropriated farm near Ennerdale. They have with them their two children, Monde (a boy of 2) and Mandisa (a little girl born in April 1983). The little boy was delivered at Baragwanath Hospital and the baby was born at the previous shack occupied by the family. Mr N is presently employed as a labourer with a construction firm, where he earns R105 every two weeks.

On each occasion that we interviewed Mr N we were struck by his awareness, in a broad political sense, of his situation. At the Sash offices, when he was told that nothing could be done to help him, but that he would be assisting us by giving us his life story, he said he understood the survey would not help him, but 'it would be for me and the others afterwards', including, ultimately, his children. At the second interview when the raids on the squatters at this site were discussed, he told us 'I ran to the woods. They were shooting — they have got guns. They were trying to frighten us but I ran. I am not worried. I know that I can't be shot because it is not a crime. A reference book — you can't be shot for a reference book. It's not a crime.'

He was deeply angered and upset by the fact that the police hit his wife. He said 'I am going to injure that Dutchman because he hit my wife. He can't be happy when I hit his wife. Maybe he can shoot me. Now, when he hits my wife . . . what can I do? And I am going to be in jail, then who's going to look after my kids?'

He said that the men who talked about it and decided that 'If they can come again we were going to fight against them — we were going to hit them; we were going to throw them with stones and with sticks. If now I can go the municipality office looking for a house, nevermind that I am going to pay for it, they won't give it to me; now where I am hiding myself, now they come and chase me out of here, but if I can go and say "Give me a house", they won't. That's why we say that if they can come again we are going to hit them.'

In his concern for his wife and family he insists that they must live together here in the Transvaal rather than in the Transkei. He says 'they' will tell them to go to the Transkei, 'but now it has got no life' — there is no possibility of them surviving there where 'we will die of starvation', and they must rather die together here, where at least he can try to earn money for them. When asked how Eunice feels about this, he says 'She wants to be where am I', and although she would rather be at home than here, in the present circumstances — she does not like it that her husband has to run away from

the police and that she gets hit by them — she will do what he decides. 'She knows that our children are going to die in the Transkei.'

The children do not grow up with their grandparents, but '... my triplets died while I was with and among my parents, so that's why I want my children near by me (here where I am working).'

The N family is one of 15 families paying R20 a month to the Indian man who presently occupies the old Kenhardt farmstead at Plot 2 Hartebeesfontein. This property was apparently expropriated more than 10 years ago by the Department of Co-operation and Development, who let it to the Indian, who in turn, probably unlawfully, lets out the outbuildings to squatters. One of the families there is reported to have been there many generations, their ancestors having been born there, and family members having worked for the former white owners. The farmhouse and outbuildings, although in general disrepair, bear testimony to the once gracious existence. A highway runs immediately next to the property, and a new road is being built alongside. Other squatter shacks can be seen across the highway, on other property. We understand some of the squatters might qualify but are unable to prove their birth in the district. Some, like Mr N, are from the Transkei. There are many small children on the site, some with visible symptoms of malnutrition.

A news reporter told us that the area has been declared coloured and falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Community Development; the area is apparently scheduled for development of Mid-Ennerdale Coloured township. The Indian landlord, however, believes it might be declared for Indian occupation. Officials have apparently warned the landlord about his tenants, and that he should not supply them with water. Consequently he cut off the supply for some three weeks, during which time they had to use water from a spruit. The existing forests on this farm and those next to it provide fuel for the squatters, shelter for the men when they sleep there to avoid police raids, and also toilet facilities.

Family history

Mr N's grandfather, who was born outside Lady Frere, had been a preacher in the Anglican Church. He had his own house. He died in 1952, 'before they said we must build the houses in lines.' His grandmother is still alive and living with his parents. Mr N recalls how, after Transkeian independence in 1976, the family had to demolish their home and re-build it in a new place, with compensation money: 'My grandfather's house was not on the line. They said the houses must be (re-)built... they must be on the line. So they shifted us from where I am born. They sent us to another place, but not very far. They gave us money for that house.'

Mr N's parents are both alive, and built a 5-roomed brick house outside Lady Frere, at this time. His father, aged 66, and his mother, aged 60, do not work, but have not applied for pensions. Mr N does not know why. His father was a bus-driver, who, in about 1962, earned £6 (R12) per month. He had a Standard 3 education, and had served in the South African army (at the time Mr N was born). His mother passed Standard 6. They do not own any land, but rented about two morgen of ground on which they grew mealies. They had seven children,



Sue Sher at Grasmere

Mr N, a second boy (now living and working in Cape Town — his circumstances and occupation are not known, but he does send money to his parents — three married sisters at Lady Frere, one sister with a child, who lives at home, and one sister, also at home, who is a polio victim. With the exception of the last (who gets a disability grant), all went to school.

Mr N met Eunice at her home town, Sterkspruit, in the Ciskei. Her parents are both dead and she has brothers and sisters older than herself, all married. Eunice never worked in the Transkei.

When the couple lived in Mr N's parents' home at Lady Frere, Eunice helped to grow the mealies, and with the houswork.

His childhood, working life and adulthood

Mr N was born in Bellville in January '42. The family moved to Elsie's River, where his father was a truck driver until 1953/54, when his mother took the children back to the Transkei. She said the children would become tsotsis in the town. His father returned home two years later. Mr N began schooling in Elsie's River, and continued in the Transkei.

He relates proudly how his mother taught him to read, from the Bible, before he went to school. His wife, although she passed Standard 8 in the Ciskei, is reluctant to speak English, probably more from shyness than inability. Mr N attended St Cyprian's Anglican School, and passed Standard 6. His education came to an end in 1962 when he was 19 years old, because his father could not afford the £33 (R66) for his Standard 7 and 8 schooling. He attributed much to his education, e.g. when the water supply at the property was cut off by the landlord three weeks before, the squatters were forced to draw water from a river, and he, from his hygiene classes, knew that he had to teach Eunice to boil the water for drinking, although the family dislikes the taste of boiled water.

Because he could not have further schooling, he was recruited in 1963/64 on contract by NRC* to Daggafontein Mines, near Springs. He did not like working underground; it frightened him. However, he completed the nine months period, and stayed on voluntarily. One

* NRC — Native Recruiting Corporation

night he had a drink with a friend from Bophuthatswana, who was going on night shift. The friend said that Mr N would probably not see him again. That night seven men, his friend included, died in a rock fall underground. The day his contract ended he discharged himself, and vowed never to do mine work again. He had been there 18 months. Life in the Transvaal, while he was under the control of the mines was not bad: 'I was still young and not married. I was 21 years old. I was kept by the Chamber of Mines and so there was nothing bad for me — everything was right for me — everything was on a good condition.'

Between 1967 and 1970 he was in Cape Town unlawfully, and did piece jobs or temporary work. He lived with his father's sister in Nyanga. While there he boxed, professionally. He had a job in a transport firm for eight months, carrying cement — and then he left because of police harassment of squatters. He told us that he was not yet married and not worried by responsibilities to earn money for children then.

In December 1970 he returned to the Transkei, where he met Eunice, whom he married in 1971. In 1971/72 he found piece jobs on the buses at Sterkspruit, Ciskei. He also tried for vacancies again at the NRC. He recalls 'One day when I went to look for a vacancy at the NRC there was a fellow — he stood in front of me — he stood for a long time and he says nothing to nobody. He kept his mouth shut . . . I think I stood about half an hour and the fellow fell upon the ground. He fell (he snaps his fingers sharply). When we went to him we want to look what's taking place so that no, this chap, it's not that he ill or he's dying, he says that he's hungry. He said that that day it was on his fourth day he couldn't get something to eat in his mouth. Ever since he came from his home he went to look for a vacancy he is hungry. I asked my father to give this man 15 cents — half a loaf was 15 cents at the time — so he went to buy food. I saw I had enough of this place. You can't make a credit for your stomach.'

So in 1973 he came to Johannesburg to look for work. He found employment with Power Lines, to earn to pay for lobola which he couldn't earn with piece jobs. He says he was registered, but that he lost his reference book with this registration in, and was issued with a Transkei document in replacement. 'When I went to report it they gave me this Transkei travel document. When I must take it (to get it registered) to the Administration Board, they told me I must go back to Transkei. That is why I hate it.'

He had accommodation in the company's own 'barracks' where he did his own cooking because Eunice was in the Transkei. (His father helped him with eight of the 14 cattle he had to pay for lobola; he still has to pay two head of cattle, which he says Monde will pay by working for Eunice's family.) But he felt quite secure being registered, and the salary — 'It was not bad. I was getting enough salary.'

He worked for Power Lines until 1975 when they said he must go to SWA, which he decided not to do because it was too far. In 1975 'I was hanging around', unemployed, staying at Sebokeng, until his aunt told him to leave her house: he went 'to the plots' for approximately six months. At this time Eunice came to Johannesburg, and during this period she found work, for about three months, as a domestic servant in Kempton Park. The police came, however, and she absconded in

order to avoid arrest. She had been earning R50 a month at this time. This was while Mr N was working at Lenz.

When Eunice became pregnant in 1975 she returned to the Transkei, where she gave birth to triplets, in September 1976. Mr N remained in Johannesburg in 1976, although the Soweto troubles resulted in his not finding work. 'That time the life was very difficult. Luckily they (his family) were not here in the Transvaal; she and our children, they were at home.' He wrote to her, and sent money, sometimes by telegram.

From 1977 to 1979 he worked for builders, Fell Bros Construction, Vereeniging. 'In 1979 I could afford to go home — in December. I wanted to see my family.' He looked for work in the Transkei but found none.

They all lived with his parents, who tried to support the enlarged family, but the food was short. The children got sick and weaker and their hair got thin. Mr N took them to a doctor, 'who told me it's malnutrition. It had been caused by hunger . . . we ate only stamp mealies. They were not getting meat . . .'

By February 1980 all three children had died, within a fortnight. Mr N recalls this time, his voice slow and deep and full: 'Ever since I was born, that year was the very last bad treatment I had on earth . . . I nearly became mad . . . If I could have worked, this tragedy would not have happened.' Eunice was 18 years old that year.

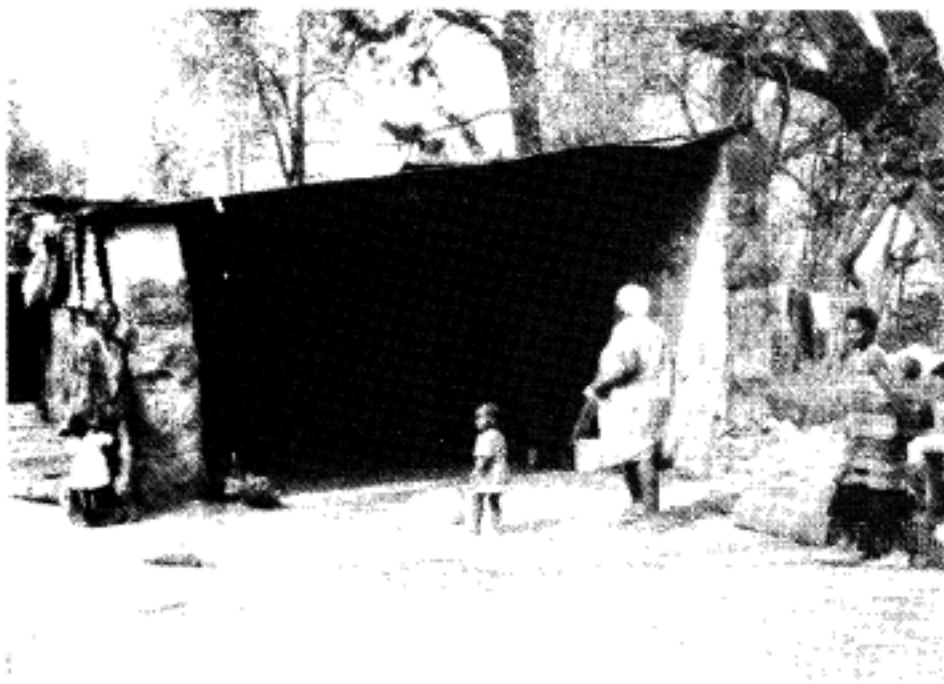
He had been aware of the dire danger to the children. Despite the fact that he had left the mines from fear and had vowed never to work there, he decided 'it is better to die working for your children.' So, again, he joined the crowd of workseekers trying to be recruited by the Native Recruiting Corporation at Lady Frere for the gold mines. Mr N. describes with bitter despair: 'You'll find out that there are maybe about 400 people and they're going to employ maybe 17 of those 400, they'll take 17, or 10 . . . I was one of those 400 people. I tried this all the time . . . 1980, it was January, February, March, April, May . . . (I came to the Transvaal on the fifth month) . . . each and every day, going to look for work. My children died at that time, so I left the Transkei.'

He had a return ticket to Vereeniging, and his cousin, who had come home from Benoni, lent him R3 for bus-fare to get to the station. He was able to save money in three weeks in Johannesburg and sent the R15 ticket to Eunice to join him. He worked on a site building houses at Lenz, where they lived. Thereafter he did piece jobs until March 1981, including working on the police station at Protea.

In June 1981 the boy, Monde, was born, at Baragwanath Hospital. Although she was told to come back to register his birth, his mother has not done so. She has no documents herself (she lost her reference book), so she will not be issued with birth certificates for the children (since she cannot produce her identity document and proof of lawful accommodation).



Josie Adler at this year's Black Sash conference



Grasmere

After his job at Lenz finished, Mr N built a shelter (of corrugated iron someone gave him, and poles from the forest) at a plot in Grasmere, where other squatters also lived. It appeared to Mr N that the property was 'Mr Nobody's', but the police raided and hit Eunice, so they fled. He says that the other two squatter families there stayed on, because they could afford to bribe the police. The police came every week or twice a month, he says.

Mr N found a room at another property in the district, where he paid the Indian landlord R40 a month, for three months, but he felt that this was outrageously high, and when this man demanded rent at the rate of R40 a fortnight, they left and came to their present 'apartment', where they have been for about one month.

Each time they move, Mr N carries the family's goods piece by piece, along the road, 'up and down'. When they came from Lenz, he hired a van.

When he looks for jobs Mr N walks from place to place asking people for work. He is a labourer, 'not qualified', but he 'takes a chance' if someone needs a wall built. Since March 1983 he has been in one job, building schools in Grasmere, Kliptown, and presently at Orlando. He does not know how long the present job will last. He is confident that his work is satisfactory, that he holds all the jobs he gets, and says his relationship with his present employer is a good one — he felt there was no problem about his taking a week off to try to fix his papers, nor any danger that he would lose the job. He says his employer likes his work, and if his book could be registered he would be in a good job. 'I'll take a chance till the last moment of my life' to stay in work, even though he can't be registered.

In the 10 years he has been in the Transvaal unlawfully he has been arrested several times, but, never on a work site. The last time he was caught he was at the farm of the previous Indian landlord. Eunice went to collect his pay and got him out; he was fined R40 or two weeks in jail.

How he lives

The present lodgings of the N family are in a stone building, the back section of which has been partitioned off with cardboard to form a square room. The only window space is boarded up to keep out cold, so the room is nearly dark, except when this board is removed. The floor is brick, and the room is cold. There is a gap of some half metre on one wall, between the top of the wall and the overhang of the roof, stuffed partially with bits of board. There is a wooden door. The furnishings are

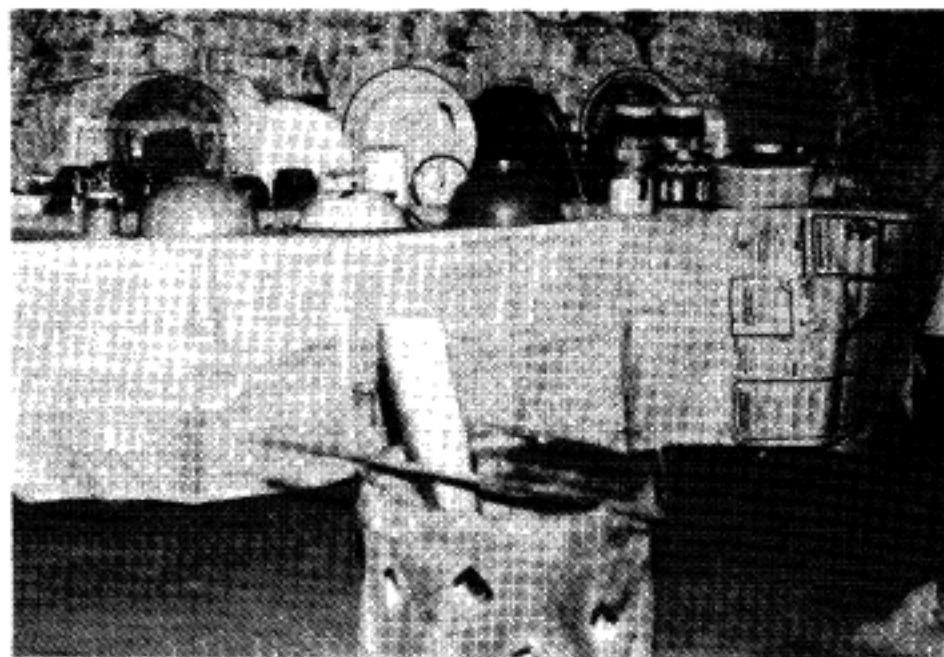
less than sparse. As we entered and the window was opened to let light in, we saw the new baby asleep on bare bedsprings on the floor. In the middle of the room a brazier burned with wood collected from forests on surrounding properties.

Against one wall was a second set of bedsprings. There are no mattresses. The boxes stored against another wall belong to the woman who worked for the Indian landlord, but has been dismissed. Seating is a polystyrene chair frame, some tins and wooden boxes, and a couple of plastic milkbottle containers. A shelf covered with clean folded newspaper is the kitchen dresser, with plates propped neatly against the wall. Underneath the shelf is a primus stove, and plastic washing basins. The family's clothing and effects are in a couple of cardboard boxes.

Mr N says that he buys second-hand clothes for himself but new clothes for his wife and children. However, he has insufficient warm clothes; Eunice and the babies have 'all the right clothes' for the cold weather. He has only the one pair of trousers and shirt that he wears, both very worn. 'I can't afford to buy me a new pair of trousers. Look how my mattress looks.' (There is no mattress, only springs covered with cloth.) He dons an overall (his own) for work. Monde seemed to be better dressed than the other little children he was playing with — he had on trousers and a shirt; they, for the most part, wore only tops.

Daily life

Mr N earns R105 every two weeks at present, which may be supplemented, irregularly, by some R5 — R15 from



Mr N's home at Grasmere

piece jobs such as gardening, laying concrete stoeps, mostly in and around Lenz. He has never had trouble getting paid for work he's done, but the pay is little. He says that the pay he gets is never enough — 'there's nobody who can say that the money makes him satisfied' — but that is not what matters most; what matters most is that he should be able to work to keep the family.

He tries to send R75 a month home to his parents in Lady Frere, but sometimes this is impossible (like when Monde was in hospital). He has sent money to them four times since January. The 'rent' for the room is R20 (although the landlord now says he has never taken rent from the squatters, only payment for water). If he has to pay rent, the money for his parents will come out of the second fortnight's wages.

His weekly transport ticket costs R3,60. When, as happened with the two weeks of the interviews, he has no money left for this, he 'takes a chance', by catching a train from Grasmere to Lawley at 4.20 am, because there is no ticket examiner on the train at that time, up to Lawley. Then he travels on foot the remainder of the distance, for about one hour, to Lenz, where company transport picks him up. Normally, however, he leaves for work at 5.30 am and comes back at about 7 pm. In April 1982 he joined the Building Construction and Allied Workers Union, when they canvassed members at his job to attend a meeting. He thinks that union membership is a good idea — they were told that if they were chased away from work the union would make trouble with the employer, even if the employee was not properly registered. Union fees are R1,50 per month, and if he cannot afford it one month, he is allowed to pay double the following month.

Budget for fortnight July 22 — August 5 '83

Received		R105
Sent to parents, Lady Frere	75,00	
5 nappies	12,00	
½ bag potatoes	6,00	
Washing powder (49c pkt Omo), cabbage, onions, tomatoes, candles, mealie meal, dried beans	12,00	
Tobacco — BB (29c pkt at local shop; 27c at Lenz)		

Mr N says the most important item is the R3,60 for his transport, but he did not go to work for this two week period, hence the absence of this item from the budget above.

- Note 1** In the week July 22 - 29, '83 first grade potatoes were available on the Jhb market at R6,50 per pocket
- 2** Nappies cost R8,75 for 5 at Pick 'n Pay, Rosebank, that week
- 3** On Saturday July 30, when the family was interviewed again, they had already spent their last money for the fortnight, R1,35 on a 2½ kg packet of mealie meal, which was two thirds finished on that day.

Mr N usually shops once a fortnight for supplies at the Spar shop in Lenz, which means he and his wife pay R1,20 for transport, there and back. Sometimes he buys tomatoes and onions at the Lenz bus rank, from hawkers, 'not cheaply'. There are shops in the coloured

township of Ennerdale, the suburb immediately next to where they live, but Mrs N does not go there, because she says 'naughty' coloured boys attack women as they walk back from their shopping, and steal their supplies.

Because he has no cash for the period from Sunday July 31 to Friday August 5 '83, Mr N will try to borrow R10 from a moneylender at work on Monday. This he will have to repay by R10 capital and R5 for the loan period of five days, on Friday. 'Whether he gives me (money) today and I'm going to pay it tomorrow, I'm going to pay like this.'

Mr N did not go to work from Monday to Friday (July 25-29) because he had become desperate about his situation following the recent night raids and was trying to find a way to fix up his pass. So on August 5 '83 he expected to get paid for only one week, a sum of R52,50.

Projected budget for fortnight August 5 to August 19

To be received		R52,50
Rent (if taken by landlord)	20,00	
Loan repayment	15,00	
Transport (2 weeks)	7,20	
Union	1,30	
Balance for food and everything else, for two weeks	9,00	

As a rule they don't eat bread, and Monde does not get milk. He drinks tea and coffee when they have it, and 'when there's nothing, he gets nothing.'

When he has cash in the first fortnight of the month, i.e. if that is not the period when R75 is sent to his parents, Mr N confided how 'sometimes I used to buy something that is going to keep the money here, like those beers . . . that is the way I try to protect my money . . .' He spends R10,10 'investing' in a box of 12 quarts of beer. These he can sell for R18 during the week, making a profit on his investment of nearly R8. But he says he does not often have the R10,10 to spare for this. He himself does not drink — 'alcohol makes my face swell.'

On August 7, '83 the family was interviewed again. Mr N had been sick the whole week with stomach trouble and had not been able to work. So there was no income for the period projected above — August 5 - 19 '83. The old man they have known for two years lent them R5, and a woman friend of Eunice's had given them food e.g. a bowl of mealie meal, during the week. Mr N will replace what has been loaned them.

Mr N was baptised and confirmed, and he and Eunice are members of the Anglican Church at Sharpeville. In the Transkei they attended services regularly. Now that she is 'at home' with a new baby, she does not attend, and he does not go so often. Besides, there is not money for the transport (44 cents each, each way.) When he attends he is not able to give to the collection. If he is not at Church he finds 'piece jobs' over the weekend, or chats to friends and neighbours. Mr N's aunt and two cousins live in Sebokeng, but he has not seen them for about two years; Eunice has no relatives or friends here. He can earn R5, R8, R10, or, rarely, R15 a day at a piece job.

Eunice spends her time with the children. When the water was cut off she first collected water from the spruit, in a 20 litre bucket. But she and others then found a public tap in the coloured township of Ennerdale, which they then used, without interference. 'If I'm not

present, she must go with Monde . . . she can't leave him. She carries the 20 litres on her head and she's got the baby on her back and she must pull the little boy.' The distance was 45 minutes there and then 45 minutes back. When the family was forced to use the spruit water, Mr N taught her to boil it carefully, but they did not like the taste. Lately Rev Begbie prevailed on the landlord who has permitted each family to have 40 litres of water each day.

Eunice spends the day washing, cleaning, cooking and collecting wood. Although they have only been at the farm a month or so, they say they are on good terms with the other people there: Mr N had told them about being interviewed, and a number of them came in to listen. They had not known anyone at the farm when they first arrived. They say that each time they come to a new place they must make friendships with new people: they all have the same problems and 'they are not funny to me'. Although he would not find money to borrow from people here, Mr N says that they do on occasion borrow food, or candles, and sometimes others borrow from them, when they have such items. Mr N showed us a radio he is presently holding as a pledge for a loan he made of R6. He can't afford a battery to play it while it is in his possession.

Earlier this year Mr N found Monde ill when he came home from work — the child's neck was swollen and distended and he could not support his head. The following morning they took the child to Baragwanath by train, where he was admitted and kept for three weeks. During the first three days of the child's illness they spent about R80 on food and transport — it cost 75 cents for a single bus trip to the hospital. After that, they only visited him about four times until he was discharged. Mr N says that he felt he could have 'committed culpable suicide' because the child was crying so much.

On other occasions when he or Eunice have needed medical attention, they have consulted an Indian doctor Mr N knew from when he worked in Lenz. He charged R5 for a consultation. This man called the ambulance for Mr N when Eunice went into labour for Monde's birth, and when Monde was burnt (while they were living on 'nobody's farm') this doctor treated the child without fee, because Mr N did not have any money to pay.

Mandisa was born at the property of the other Indian where they had stayed — there were no difficulties with her birth. If there had been, Mr N would have asked the landlord there to take her to Bara by car. 'At that time we were friends with him, but now we are enemies because I refused to pay him R40 every fortnight. He tried to cheat me.' Otherwise, someone else on the property had a van, and he would have paid him to help. He doesn't know if the present landlord would help in a crisis.

Both children have been vaccinated at Ennerdale Clinic. Mr N says he knows about the importance of them being immunised, and wants the children to be 'under (health) care'. He does not know if other children in this community are vaccinated.

Current crisis

People at this farm knew about the Black Sash member Mrs Merle Beetge, and went to her for help when one of the men was arrested. The squatter 'community' is in an apparent state of tension about all the at-

tention from outsiders as a result of the recent spate of raids there — as we arrived numbers of people came out to see, and to ask Mr N about our purpose. On the second occasion the Indian landlord spoke to us about his position and how vulnerable he and his family feel in the situation. While we were there press reporters arrived to find out if anything further had happened since the last raid, and we learnt that Rev Begbie has also been there. Mr N says that a 'lady from welfare' said they must be allowed to stay till they get another place. This was after the Indian had told the 15 families on a Sunday night that they must leave the next morning.

On Friday July 22, '83 Mr N was arrested, along with all the other men on the property, and taken to the Aid Centre at Sebokeng. Some were fined R20 and released; others, including Mr N, who did not have money, were kept and then released the following day. He was not sentenced — all the Grasmere people were told to leave the area. Since then the police have come regularly.

One night when the police raided, at about midnight, the man in the room next to Mr N's was caught. Mrs Beetge paid for his release. Mr N jumped though the window in his room, and ran to the forest where he and the other men hid, one and a half hours, waiting for them to go. The police were shooting, but he had nevertheless run away. The police came into their room, and that was when Eunice had been hit with a sjambok — 'it was very bad.'

Between July 30, '83 and August 7, '83 the police raided three times, at night, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The police on some occasions have also released dogs to chase the squatters. 'If they see you don't want to run away they say 'Run away, run away', and they hit you, and if you run they let the dogs get you.' Eunice had woken him when she heard the vans arrive and he tried to alert others to run as he escaped — one old man had not been arrested because the police said 'he is madala (old enough)' to leave alone. Three men were arrested.

Mr N says that although the women get hit by the police, the police do not arrest those of them who are pregnant, or who have babies.

He says that the police who raid the squatters are sometimes in uniform or 'floral overalls'; other times they have been municipal police in blue.

'If I want to be safe I sleep outside, in the forest.'

He speaks bitterly about the dead-endness of his situation — that he cannot get a house even if he can pay for it: he will be caught and told to go to the Transkei.

Feelings about himself and his family and his life

If it were possible to find work in the Transkei, he would return there. He does not like being in the Transvaal, away from his parents: 'It is not that I am feeling all right but . . . through my children, just because my children they can eat and they can be dressed because now I am working. The only problem of the Transkei was that I had no work. So I didn't like it. I have never found a job there, ever.'

If he did find work there, far from his parents' home, he would try to find accommodation close to the job; he would like his own property. Otherwise, he would like a place of his own, but close to his family — 'I would try and get my own apartment'.

When he was there, he looked for work constantly, in the Transkei, mostly in building, going around contracting sites. He once heard of a tea-planting farm, but he didn't go there — 'there were too many people who were hungering for the job'.

In the Transvaal he finds other men like himself, from Transkei, some registered, some not. Some bring their wives with them, but not many who are not registered. If you are registered you are able to send money home every month or every fortnight, and it is safe to leave your family at home, because you know they will have food to eat. But if you are unregistered, then your family starves, because, since you may not work every month or even two months or three months, you can't send money all the time. If your wife is with you here and you are out of work, there is at least still the possibility that your wife can get a piece job and earn one or two rand to buy something; but in the Transkei there are not even piece jobs now.

He says that 'Ever since I was born I have never been in a good life. I have been poor. I am born of poor people and have been poor from my childhood until now. I am still poor'. But in his father's house there was always food for everyone — 'there was not a night when we couldn't eat. My father was a bus driver. He earned £6 a month, but we could afford to buy us food. We were at our own place.' He did not have his own land, but he hired a piece of land from somebody to grow food on.

'And the good thing was this in my life. My parents sent me to school. That was the only good thing in my life. And fortunately I could pass my Standard 6. I knew that if I could be educated further I could become a teacher or something and my family would starve no more.' In the Transkei, he says, if you have money or are a teacher or a nurse or in a profession, life is good. For someone like him, however, there is no life in the Transkei.

Independence in the Transkei has been good for those with money, he says, but for people like him it has made things worse. For example, he must have travel documents now, which cannot be registered; so he cannot get work, which makes life difficult for the children.

He does not contemplate the future of the family. When it is time for Monde to go to school he will have to see what happens then; he may be poorer or he may be richer than he is now, and he will think about this then. He says fervently: 'My aim: I want the children that they must be educated. And they must be well educated.' He would like Monde to be a doctor or a lawyer, and Mandisa a nurse. 'I am a labourer. If I had passed Form 3 maybe I would be something . . . a clerk . . .' He himself taught his crippled sister to read and write, 'first vowels and then the consonants.' but he believes education today is 'very useless'. He has Std 6, whereas his brother, who has passed Form 3; speaks English badly — for example, he says 'I am go to town' and is ignorant that in this construction he must end the verb with -ing. Pupils don't learn this nowadays, properly, as he was taught.

'As far as I am concerned, I used to (record) each and everything that happens to me. I write it down, the date and the time, in my memory. I have got a good memory.' He is proud of his memory, which was already acute when he was a pupil.

He is trying to make Eunice and their family happy.

He says Monde and the baby are growing and eating better here than they would in the Transkei — 'that's why I ask the Black Sash to try to register me.' He read *You and the New Pass Laws*, and is frightened when he thinks of the future — 'How am I going to feed them when they are in the Transkei?'

- At the end of 1983, with builders' holidays approaching and the recession deepening, Mr N took his family home to Lady Frere, finally defeated by a combination of the continuous police raids at Grasmere and the impossibility of finding even casual unregistered employment.

But after a few months in the Transkei he realized he would have to return to the uncertain life of a homeless 'illegal' in an urban area.

Dear Sir

Unfortunately that very same date my grandmother passed away and she will be buried on the 20th of this month so that's why I took a long time to reply. Sir I want to come to work. I can be glad if I can receive the form immediately because before the ending of this year I have to build my own house.

Please tell Miss Star that Mandisa is not totling but she is walking and she can run and Monde has been discharged from the hospital he is now here at home and they are growing up nicely.

I decide to come and work as usual. I mean as I use to work unregistered.

Goodbye I remain with kind regards yours sincerely.

Shortly after the family left Grasmere the site where they had been living was cleared of its occupants.



Cedric Nunn

Jacklyn Cock

Your editor cheered when our member Jackie Cock confronted women's elitism at the 1984 Womens National Convention.

There was no point, she said, in making more room at the top for a privileged few.

This historic conference, attended by 51 women's organizations, brilliantly organized by the Women's Legal Status Committee and the Union of Jewish Women, was held in the Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg, on September 10 and 11.

On the opening day many people had to be turned away from the huge conference hall where 450 delegates met.

The under-used franchise

Jacklyn Cock, senior lecturer, Department of Sociology
University of the Witwatersrand

I believe that as women we have the potential to transform the political process. In the 15 minutes allotted to me, I'm going to try and show what that potential is based on and point to what I see as a serious impending danger, in how we use that potential.

In my mind the danger is rooted in a shift that is occurring in the predominant image of woman in our society; a move away from the image of women as 'domestic' beings to an image of the so-called 'liberated' woman. The domestic woman was viewed as primarily a wife and mother. The home was women's authentic place, the base from which she lived vicariously through her husband and children. This view implied a woman's economic dependence on a male breadwinner, and her exclusion from the public spheres of economic production and political participation. However in the social transition we're living through right now, the image of the domestic women is being overtaken by an image of the liberated women.

The 'liberated' woman is expected to move beyond the private domain of the home, and involve herself in some kind of career. She works both outside the home as well as within it. She is expected to combine the demands of a career with her domestic responsibilities. Fair Lady's 'the woman you want to be' or 'the woman you are' is expected to demonstrate incredible levels of competence, a kind of sugar-coated marzipan-frosted iron woman who can cope effortlessly with two jobs. The danger is that in order to compete with men in the world of work, women are joining the masculine hierarchy and cultivating a masculine sense of themselves.

The same danger of women being duped into competition with men, lies in our involvement in political struggles. The danger is that women will imitate men in the process of gaining power. The nomination of a woman as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate in the USA is a limited victory if that woman closely resembles those in the existing power structure, on whose approval and support she is dependent.

Women's exclusion from the public sphere of economics and politics has meant that we have developed nurturing qualities that are extremely valuable. I'm thinking of the tenderness, patience, sensitivity to the needs of others, warmth, insight and gentleness that our responsibility in caring for others has generated. As women it has been our responsibility to care for the very young and the very old, the sick and the dying. We have done so as ordinary women; as mothers and daughters, and as nurses and as teachers. The challenge facing us now is to transfer these qualities into the public sphere; to extend our creativity beyond the home, not to become 'more like men' but to transform the nature of political struggle.

In this process of transforming politics we are entering a new and uncharted territory, but we do have some impressive campaigns in our own history to look towards for guidance and inspiration. I'm thinking of the Greenham Common women, and the fact that women are everywhere the majority in the struggle against nuclear armaments. In South Africa we have the impressive record of the white women in the Black Sash who have for 30 years been in the forefront of the struggle for a more just and democratic society. Among black women we can look to the anti-pass campaign of the 1950's. All of these campaigns demonstrate the enormous strength and vision of which ordinary women are capable.

We can also look to certain political insights and styles of organising that the contemporary women's liberation movement has developed. For example the feminist slogan that 'the personal is political' has important implications.

Much of the oppression of women takes place in 'private' — in areas of life considered personal. The equation of the personal with the political also means that many individual problems on the scale on which they're now occurring, requires a structural solution. This is particularly relevant to us in South Africa where so many of the problems of the majority of women — who are black — are caused by state instruments such as influx control and the migrant labour system.

The structural changes required in South Africa cannot be brought about by atomized, isolated individuals. We need to work together to deepen our understanding and develop our collective strength.

The forms of organisation that the women's movement has developed are democratic and non-elitist. They involve a stress on shared, collective work. This presents an alternative to the traditional forms of political organising — of large meetings and platform speakers which intimidate and silence people and fail to generate any active mass involvement. Our alternative is different political forms which overcome rather than reproduce existing hierarchies — forms which are truly democratic, egalitarian and supportive, which build the confidence and participation of all involved.

Of course feminism is a threat — not to all men, but to those in power who want to retain their privileged position and who are resistant to change.

The political mess we find ourselves in has resulted in a crisis which is threatening every aspect of our lives. It is a crisis that surfaces not only in political repression, inflation and rising unemployment, but also in the disintegration of personal relationships. Social relationships have become so brittle and precarious that establishing stable, loving and non-manipulative ways of relating to other people, is increasingly difficult. The reality is that in South Africa most people are engaged in a desperate struggle for daily survival, on either a physical or an emotional level.

The forms of organisation that the women's movement has developed are democratic and non-elitist. They involve a stress on shared, collective work.

It is in this context of crisis that we women have to mobilise our energies and use our potential to transform the political process. Dr Helen Caldicott, one of the most active campaigners against nuclear war, had this to say in a recent lecture, 'Do you know the Jungian archetypes, the Positive and Negatives, Masculine and Feminine principles? Well, the negative masculine principle has the world in a stranglehold: competition, war-like games, death and ego and power. And what I'm saying is that the positive, feminine principle, both inherent in men and women has to take over. If it doesn't of course, we are going to die, and we're going to die soon. And not just us, but the trees and flowers and everything.'

This is the urgency of the task facing us. By overcoming the passivity rooted in our sense of ourselves as powerless victims; by drawing on the caring and nurturing qualities that ordinary women display every day of their

lives, by refusing to imitate male styles of competition, and adopting male models of 'success' and 'achievement', we have the potential to transform the political process and bring about meaningful change in South Africa.

What is needed in South Africa is not only equal pay for equal work, but the provision of work for the increasing numbers of unemployed; not only the equalisation of professional salaries, but living wages for the mass of our people; not only separate taxation for husbands and wives, but a shift in state expenditure towards health and education, and away from defence and repression; not only changes in our divorce and marriage laws, but the abolition of the migrant labour system and the disruption of African family life it entails.

All of these changes suggest a vision of a society in which power is more equally shared, relationships are more stable and trusting and human beings, both men and women are more complete, and able to experience the full range of human alternatives. I believe that's a vision, that as women, we have the responsibility and competence to struggle for.

Maeve Thorne



Foundation member Maeve Thorne, the first of three generations of active members — her daughter and granddaughter are Mary and Erica Jankowitz.

Maeve Thorne was a most lively member of Cape Western Region for very many years and a regular worker at the Athlone Advice Office from 1962 until she left Cape Town in 1974. She was the mainstay of the Simonstown Branch for many years and was very much missed by her Branch and by the Advice Office when she moved to Johannesburg to live with her daughter.

The many Sashers who knew and valued Maeve, and those in the Advice Office in particular, offer her family their deepest sympathy in their great loss.

August 14, 1984

R N Robb

INKATHA replies to UDF while Peter Brown comments on APDUSA's attitude to Liberals

It is clear from Mr M 'Terror' Lekota's statement that he thinks that Inkatha wants the UDF to give Inkatha due. This is political childishness. Inkatha knows it clearly that it is history that is going to judge all of us in terms of our track records ranging as they will from principle, strategy and tactics, not even to mention our achievements and our failures.

The black masses of South Africa have long recognized and acknowledged Inkatha's strategy of non-violent, democratic opposition to apartheid since 1975, hence the swelling numbers of card-carrying members which grow from strength to strength day by day. Inkatha is the largest single organisation ever to have been founded in the history of our country.

The recognition and acknowledgment of Inkatha by the black masses of South Africa is proved by the more than one million individuals who have taken out membership of Inkatha, and the Arnold-Bergstraesser Institute's 1978 survey that proved Chief Buthelezi to be the number one leader in terms of uniting black people in their hundreds of thousands across the ethnic lines, more than any other single organisation ever in South Africa.

The black masses of South Africa flock in their tens of thousands to prayer meetings called by Chief Buthelezi in Soweto, Kwa Mashu, Umlazi and other places. In fact so far Inkatha is the only organisation that calls its prayer meetings in the Jabulani Amphitheatre in Soweto.

The internationally acknowledged social scientist, Professor Lawrence Schlemmer, has proved beyond any shadow of doubt that Inkatha's strategy of investment as compared to disinvestment was supported by an overwhelming 54% in Durban and 14% on the Reef. For your information your UDF got 11% on the Reef and 23% in Durban and the ANC 27% on the Reef and 11% in Durban. Your affiliate Azaso got 1% and 1% respectively. Total support therefore is Inkatha 68%, UDF 34% and ANC 38%. This should definitely reveal the profound acknowledgement of Inkatha by the black masses of South Africa.

*Mr Z M Sibanda asks
Terror Lekota to 'publi-
cise the exact figures of
each affiliate'.*

*Mr Lekota cannot reply at
the moment because he
is still in prison*



My brother Mr Lekota is a black man in South Africa. In terms of the law of the country he carries a 'booklet' created by the Nationalist government which is called a passbook. This booklet determines where he can reside and work and where he cannot. He did not opt for it. It was imposed on him by the government. He carries it not because he pays allegiance to the Nationalist government. He resides in Claremont which is created by the government for the bantu and therefore it is a bantustan. He does not live there because he pays allegiance to the government. It is all against his will.

Let Mr Lekota stop his political childishness and start maturing. He uses rands and cents and pays income tax to the social system that denies him his humanity. He travels in third class trains and buses — unless he is petty bourgeoisie and travels in an official UDF vehicle.

My advice to Mr Lekota is that he should read speeches by Dr M G Buthelezi — particularly where he reflects the view of the black masses on international platforms. This will give him an insight into Chief Buthelezi's steadfast and earnest rejection of apartheid.

He has thwarted the Nat Government plan by rejecting independence 'a la Pretoria.' This is known and cannot be wished away either by those who close their eyes to it or the South African government. The Black masses of South Africa find solace under the banner of Inkatha, hence the swelling membership.

The matter of the UDF affiliates needs only one ques-

tion. Since Mr Lekota is publicity secretary of the UDF let him please publicise the exact figures of each affiliate. We are tired of self-styled and politically empty-handed leaders who speak without any mandate from the grass roots. Organizations such as Cosas, Asaso and Erapo don't have identifiable constituencies.

It should not be made public that 400 organisations met in Mitchell's Plain without factual public announcement of these organisations' political curriculum vitae. Inkatha is a true united front. Its command of more than one million card-carrying members who march in unison to liberation is proof of a politically strong people's front.

The black man's struggle is his and his alone. After

radical statements by the Hurleys, Cronins and Ramgobins of this world blacks who align themselves with them come back to their squalid living conditions in Mogopa, Crossroads, Mgwali, Driefontein, Daggakraal and other areas.

Mr Lekota, Sir, are you not going to answer questions on Cusa and Erapo? But these are your affiliates and, Sir, if you required their political curriculum vitae before you accepted them you would today be in a position to respond to questions about them. Sir, the UDF is non-existent without them. You've got to respond.

Z M SIBANDA

Information Officer, Inkatha



Peter Brown

Peter Brown, Chairman of the Liberal Party, who was banned for 10 years, was invited by Sash to reply to APDUSA'S attacks on liberals in (an interview with *Work in Progress* an edited version of which appeared in our last issue.)

APDUSA AND THE LIBERALS

APDUSA sees a liberal conspiracy at work in South Africa. In its time it has acted as an imperialist agent and subverted the Congress Movement. It now threatens to do the same to the UDF and even the National Forum, leaving only ADPUSA uncontaminated. What a marvellous thought, to be possessed of all that hidden capacity for intrigue and seduction! The truth is a good deal more humdrum than that, but the propagation of such myths makes it possible for Apdusa, and others, to blame the influence of liberals for everything that has gone wrong in the past in the struggle for a just society here, and anything else which might go wrong in the future. Scapegoats are convenient, particularly for ideologues who would rather blame them than re-examine critically their own preconceptions and programmes every now and again.

Liberals shy away from dogmatic, ideological positions. They see South Africa's problems as immensely complicated, and suspect that a simple, ideological formula to explain what has already happened, or what might happen next, is just as likely to prove wrong here as it has so often in other parts of the world. To be stuck in a hard and unchanging ideological position in a world and country which is in a constant state of flux, doesn't make sense to them.

Like APDUSA the Liberal Party was committed to the view that a non-racial organisation was the best vehicle to achieve a non-racial society, and it regarded that principle as non-negotiable. Like APDUSA it was committed to full civil liberties for all. Unlike APDUSA it was an organisation undergoing continual change. Between 1953 and 1968, when the Improper Interference Act closed it down, it reformulated its policies from ones heavily influenced by the old Cape Liberal quali-

fied franchise tradition, to a much-radicalised Liberalism based on universal suffrage. I have no doubt that this process would have continued and that Liberal Party policies in 1984 would be more radical than they were in 1968. APDUSA, on the other hand, still seems to be committed to the Unity Movement's Ten Point Programme formulated more than 40 years ago, and is only now beginning to think that it might do with a few changes.

Liberals have certainly failed to come anywhere near achieving their aim of a non-racial, adult-suffrage democracy in South Africa. In this respect their record is no worse than that of anyone else opposed to apartheid, for none of them has come anywhere near achieving their aims yet. The Liberals' failure is not because, as 'imperialist agents' at heart, they really want things to stay much the way they are, but because of the reality of the Nationalists' power and their willingness to use it to the full. And so it is with everyone else, including APDUSA.

It was always the policy of the Liberal Party to work with other organisations on agreed issues, whatever differences they might have with them on other matters. This continues to be the attitude of Liberals to-day. They will work with and in organisations whose aims, in any particular instance, are the same as theirs.

Such cooperation would obviously be totally unacceptable to APDUSA, which would regard it as tainting. APDUSA, we are told, does not want 'to rub shoulders with liberals whatever their colour'. Are they afraid they might be seduced by their views? Or are they afraid the Liberals might not fit the stereotype they have allocated to them?

Tami Mthethwa

— killed by detention

Ann Colvin

In the early hours of Saturday August 25 the lifeless body of 22-year-old Ephraim Thamsanqa Mthethwa was allegedly found hanging in a cell in Durban's Central Prison.

A casualty of South Africa's security legislation, Tami's death in captivity brought the number of such victims to 57.

Waves of anguish, shock and sadness swept from the stricken family to the wider community in Lamontville and beyond, while white South Africa responded with characteristic apathy and unconcern.

Colonel Leon Mellet, a police Public Relations Officer, is quoted as saying that because Mr Mthethwa was classified an awaiting trial prisoner he was therefore 'not our detainee'.

The circumstances and suffering that drove this young man to such an extreme measure must have been beyond endurance.

It was from the Reverend Otto Mbangula, Tami's spiritual mentor and lifelong friend, that I learned something of his background and of the influences that shaped and nurtured his character.

Tami was the fifth of seven children born to an Estcourt couple, Mrs Minah Mbhele and Mr Bhekeni Simon Mthethwa. Born in Lamontville on April 1, childhood was little different from that of any other young man reared in a peri-urban working class environment with all the rigours and joys, the hardships and happiness of an oppressed, if cohesive, community.

He received his first formal education at the Gijima Lower Primary before graduating to the Vukani Higher Primary from where, his intelligence and industry rewarded, he earned a place at Umlazi Commercial School where he matriculated.

Anxious to help augment the family's income — Mr Mthethwa senior was an employee of the Port Natal Administration Board — Tami engaged in piece-work tasks whilst still at school. But whatever employment he needed to take he never lost his keenness to further his education.

It was the Methodist Church, however, that increasingly for Tami became the centre and focus of his life. He involved himself in all its related activities, enrolling in the Youth Guild, on which body he served as treasurer, and participating in Youth Camps. He took an active interest in the scout movement and joined the Church Choir that, in 1983, won a much prized first award at a festival in Bloemfontein. He was also an acknowledged if untutored, flutist.

Perhaps the greatest stimulus to Tami's mental and spiritual development was his own research and religious enquiry amongst the literature in the parish office library and in conversation with the Rev Otto himself,



Tami Mthethwa

who had watched Tami grow to manhood and who had himself come to love and admire as his own this friendly, charming fun-loving young man.

On the more serious side of Tami's nature there was, in his quiet determination, a natural reserve that had made him less desirous of leadership than to want to serve, in a supportive role, his fellow human beings.

All this would indeed appear a far cry from the harsh world of political resistance.

Certainly the violent eruptions that had shaken Lamontville the previous year could have left no single inhabitant, Tami included, unscratched. It was, even so, a terrible shock to Tami's Minister and more distressing still to the family when, in the early hours of March 13 'they' came for Tami — seven police cars in all and 14 Special Branch, black and white. It was the last journey Tami was to make.

The two ominous words 'for interrogation' meant, effectively, that Tami and the six charged with him were to be held under the indefinite solitary confinement Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

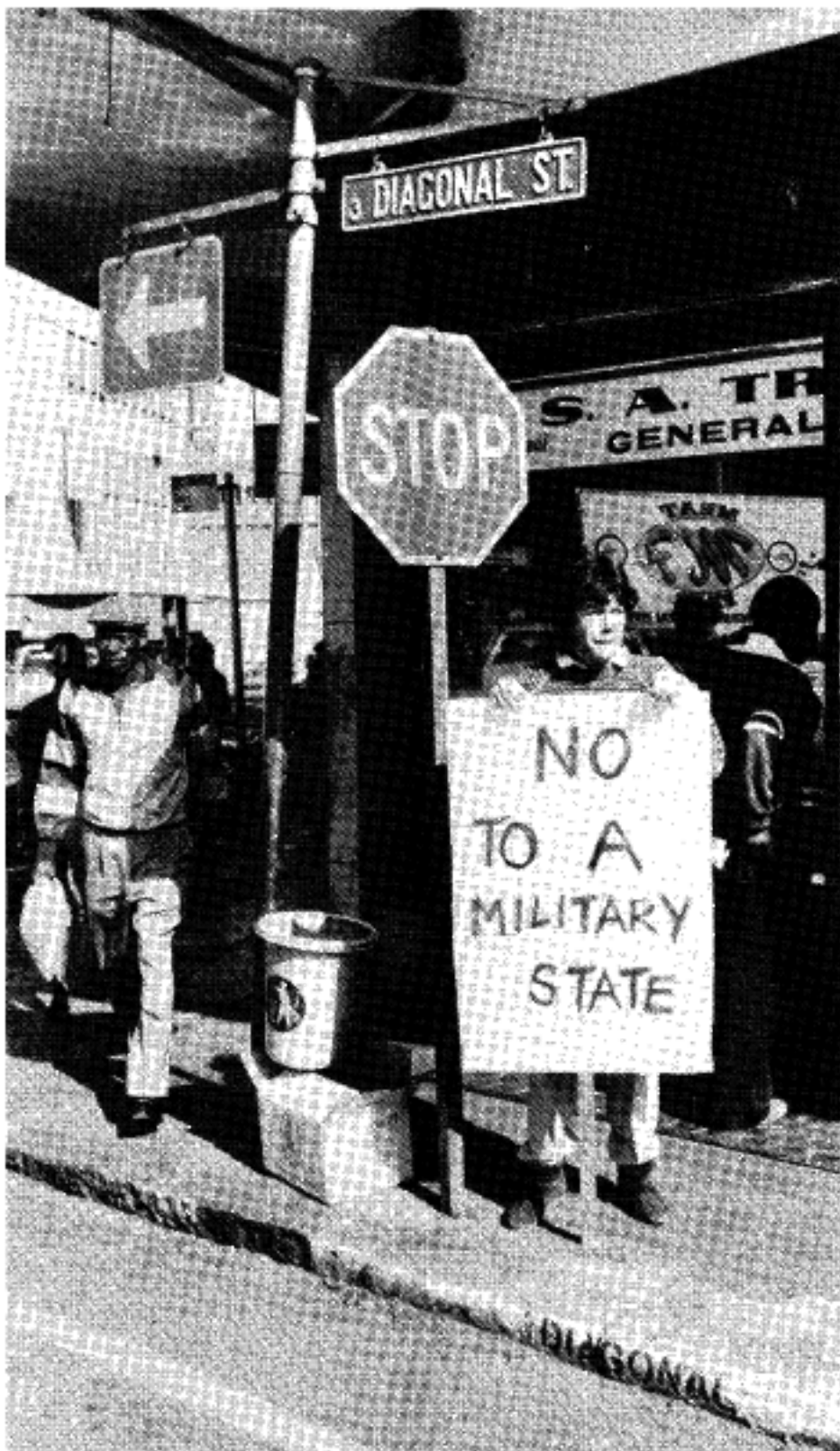
On July 20 the trial of the seven accused began on charges, inter alia, of attempting to leave the country for military training for purposes of overthrowing the State.

Symptoms of nervous strain and of a potential breakdown that Tami had once experienced during the course of his scholastic career, re-appeared. By Thursday of the week that he died the signs of instability in his behaviour were such that his legal representatives pleaded for the case to be adjourned. They made a further plea that Tami be hospitalized and given appropriate medical attention by an independent psychiatrist. This was refused. Instead, the authorities chose, as always, to deal with the matter their own way.

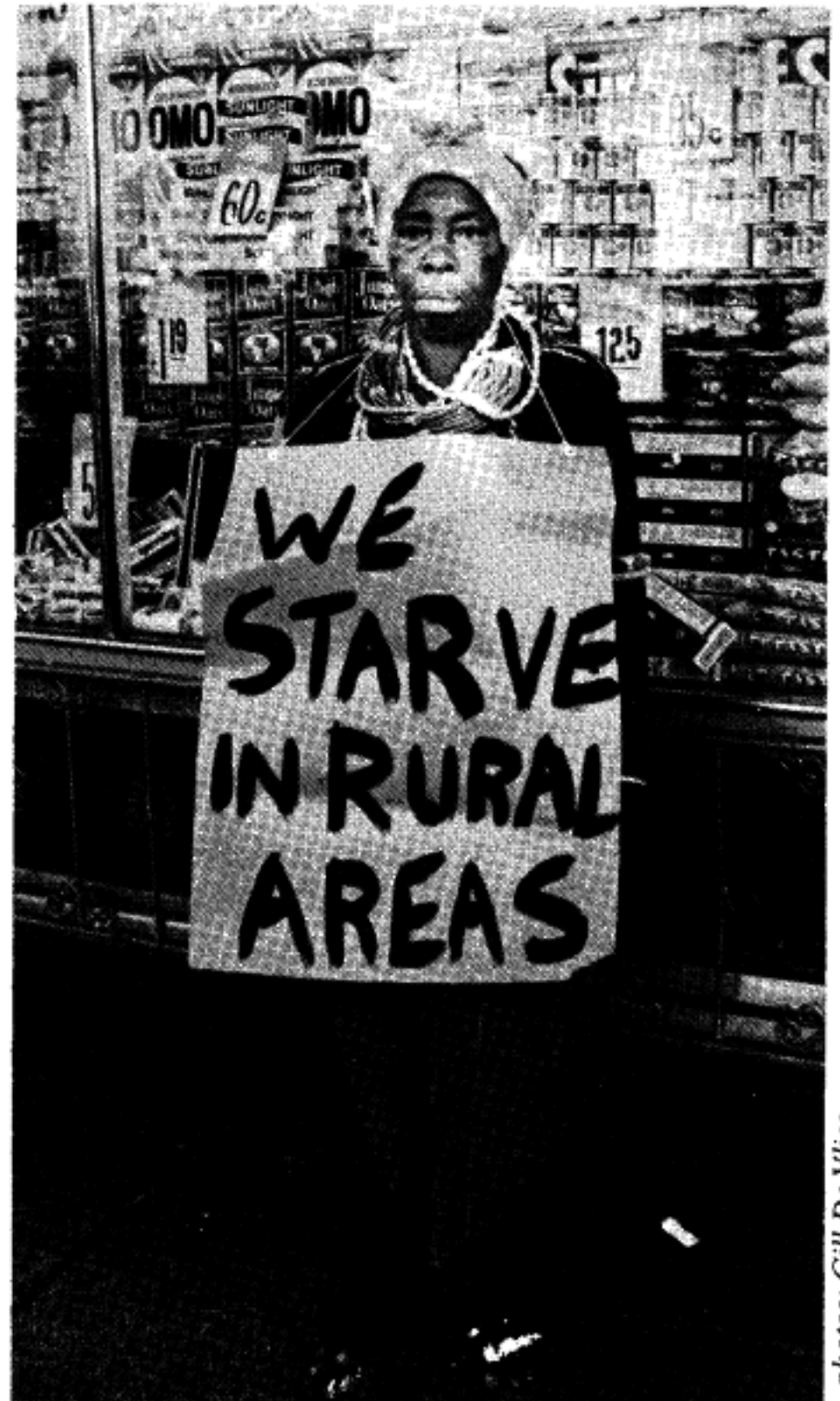
The full extent of the torment that Tami Mthethwa must have suffered for those few days, maybe weeks or even months of his confinement will probably never be revealed. They are secrets Ephraim Thamsanqa Mthethwa will have carried with him to his grave where, at the moving ceremony, thousands came to pay their last respects.

'Die in peace, son' *Hamba Ndodane*, they said, 'God be with you' *InKosi ibenawe*.

The trial of the six remaining — Thembinkosi Wellington Marrand (23), Sibusiso Richard Mathebula (23), Phelaelani Petros Mshengu (24), Lucky Welcome Maphumulo (19), Frederick Siphon Themba Msomi (22) and Alex Chirwa (20) — continues.



Glenda Glover at the National Womens' Day Demonstration



Rural poverty highlighted at the Womens' Day stand

photos: Gill De Vlieg

PEACEFUL CHANGE NOW, HOW?

Peaceful change now,
How?
Time runs faster than human minds
are capable of changing.
Time dictates the beat much faster
than pulses throb.

Time will slash them open
to free the sap of life.

Peaceful change now,
How?

Many chances missed,
changes outvoted.
Many petitions rebuffed,
pleas ignored.
Many enactments established,
rights abolished.
Hate created — Trust exterminated.
Peaceful change now,
How?

Ellinor Herrmann

• Ellinor Herrmann read this poem at Mrs Luthuli's 80th birthday celebration

Threats and mailed fist solve nothing

Minister Le Grange's performance at the Transvaal National Party Congress and on television on October 7 is a prime example of the despicable use of smear tactics. It would seem that the Minister, having studied certain evidence, the nature and source of which are undisclosed, has taken it upon himself to condemn the UDF and find it guilty of being a front for the ANC and responsible for all the unrest in the country.

There is no way that the validity or otherwise of these accusations can ever be tested, unless the Minister himself so chooses. The UDF is given no opportunity to defend itself, no time on TV, no specific charges to refute.

It has publicly and frequently stated that it seeks change through peaceful means, that it is opposed to violence, that it wants to achieve a democratic South Africa.

It conducted a perfectly legitimate campaign for a boycott of the coloured and Indian elections. It held public meetings where it stated its case whenever it was able, whenever such meetings were not specifically banned or banned under a general order. It has never sought to conceal its principles and objectives.

Yet its leaders have been detained, its offices raided, and now the Minister utters scarcely veiled threats and publicly states his findings — that the UDF is guilty though not charged and that the sword of Damocles hangs over its head.

There may even be some truth in his accusations. It is possible and even probable that among its affiliates and members there are ex-

Joyce Harris, national vice-president of the Black Sash, urges the Government to talk to the UDF instead of accusing it and using smear tactics.

members of the ANC. What are such people to do, which avenues may they explore, if their once peaceful organisation is banned, if it turns in desperation to violence, and if they still seek peaceful means of change?

In addition to giving a home to some ex-members of the ANC, some of its affiliates might have been involved in some of the violence occurring in so many places. Not even the Government, with all its might, is able to control totally the behaviour of all its minions. How much less can the UDF be expected to do so with all the restraints placed upon it and with its leadership immobilised by detentions?

But to use this as an excuse mercilessly to attack the entire organisation makes a mockery of justice. It merely serves to demonstrate that the Government is determined to scotch any opposition to its policies with whatever weapons it has at its disposal, irrespective of whether they are reasonable or just or democratic.

It is still using the arbitrary powers with which it armed itself throughout the years of its pursuit

of apartheid because of the need to suppress and contain all the opposition which it generated. Nor is this surprising, because the new constitution continues to generate opposition through its exclusion of the majority of the people.

The Government seems incapable of understanding that banning opposition does not destroy it, that it does not simply disappear, and that its only alternative is to surface wherever else it can — either in violent eruptions or through new and different constituencies such as the UDF.

Nothing indicates more clearly than the smear attack on the UDF and the detention of its leaders the fact that there is no change, apart from the co-option of some members of the coloured and Indian communities. As a demonstration of reason, tolerance and understanding, the Minister's performance was shameful. As a pointer to the shape of things to come it hit home unerringly.

How incredible it is that the Government talks in self-righteous fashion of the widespread violence and unrest, but apportions the blame for this anywhere and everywhere but in its own court. If it had had any regard for the rights and liberties and hopes of all the people of our country and had behaved accordingly there would have been no violence. If it could only acquire that regard now and act accordingly the violence would stop.

Ruling with threats and mailed fists accomplishes only the growth of discontent and seething opposition which, if it is banned, will simply surface elsewhere. For goodness sake let the Government talk to the UDF and stop accusing and smearing it. Let all the recognised leaders of all the people get together to solve our problems, instead of aggravating them by closing minds, drawing swords and seeking scapegoats.

BLACK SASH PUBLICATIONS

Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC) newsletters:

R5 per annum locally, R7 overseas, R20 airmail overseas

These are occasional publications, probably six per annum

The myth of voluntary removals — a TRAC publication — 50c

The law in South Africa — Predator not Protector, an overview of Sash conference, 1984 — R1

You and the Rikhoto Case — 20c

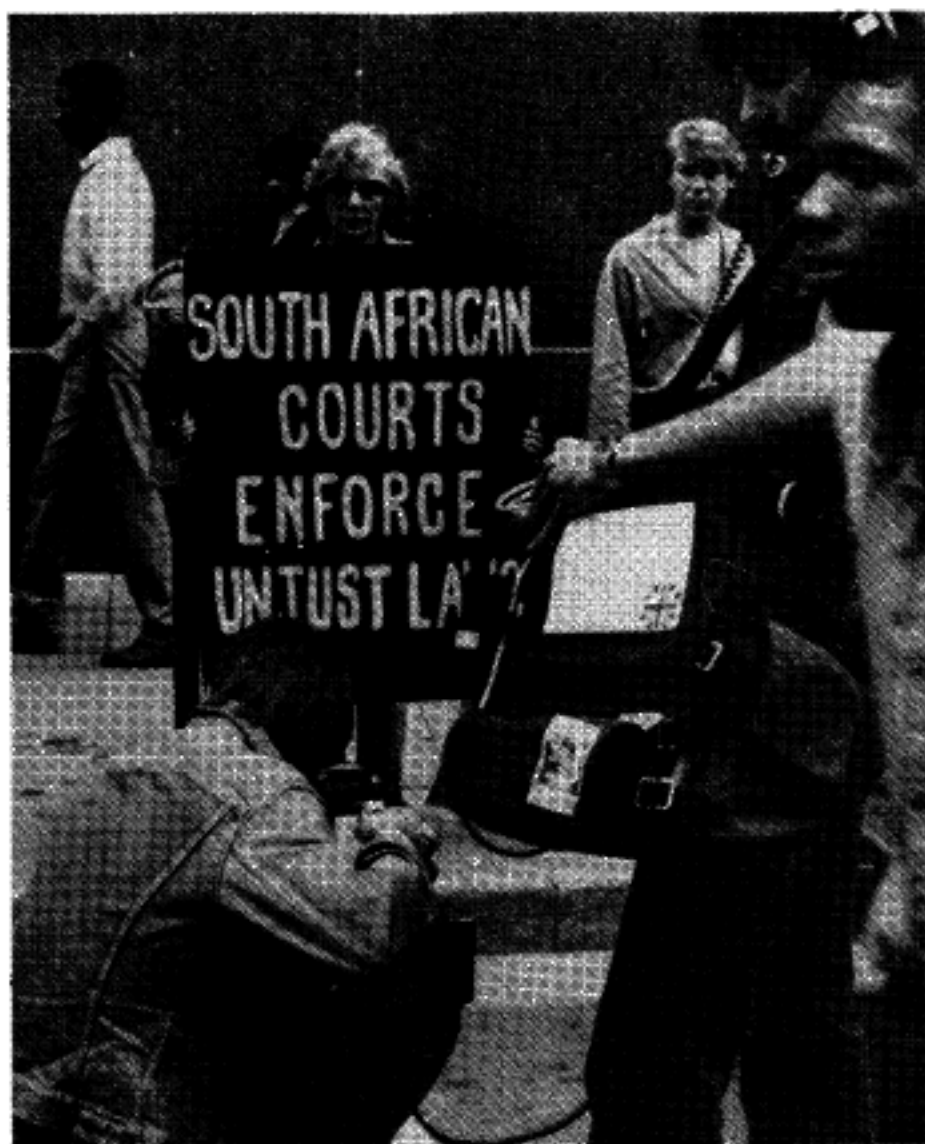
Preventive detention — published in conjunction with other organisations

Dossier chronicling recent unrest — published in conjunction with other organisations

The Black Sash — two leaflets explaining Sash aims and objects — no charge

All obtainable from the Black Sash, Khotso House, 42 de Villiers Street, Johannesburg 2001

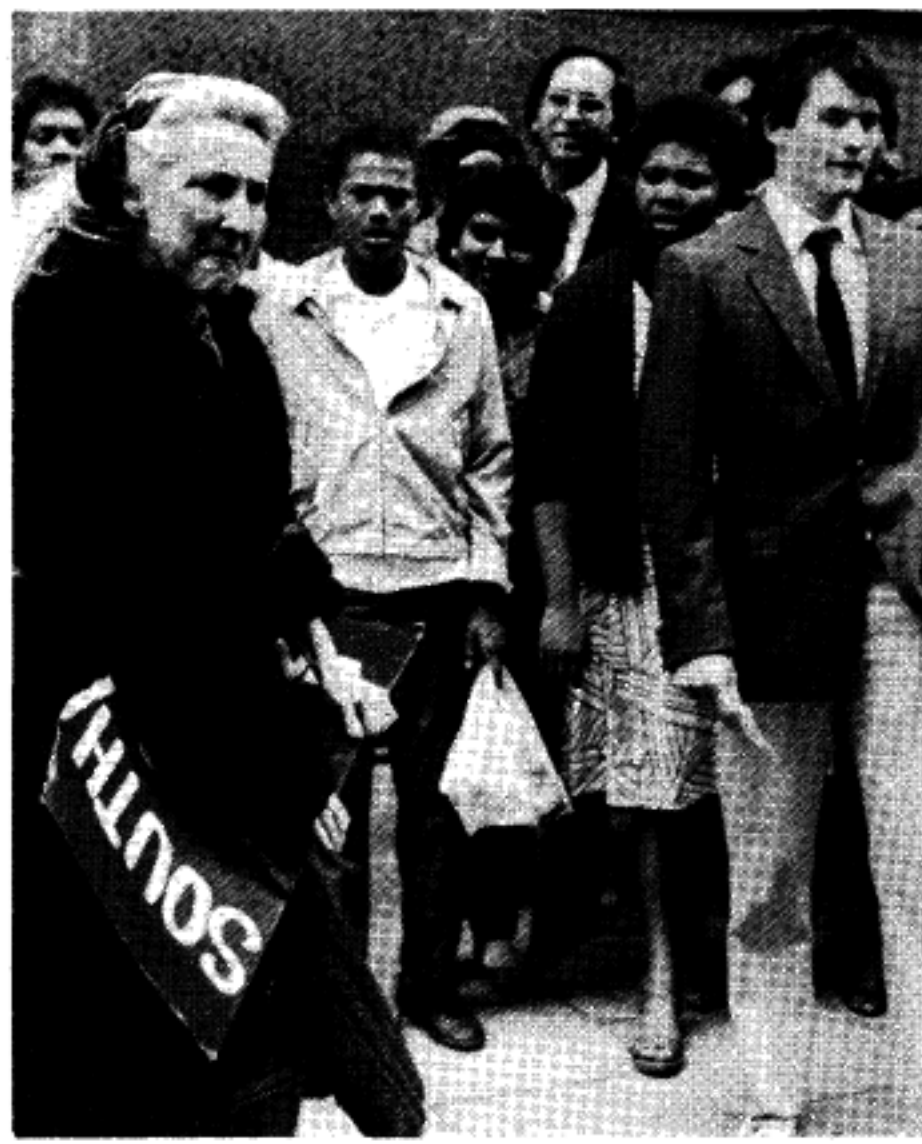
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Demonstrating at the British Consulate in solidarity with the UDF's 'sit-in', Ann Colvin has her poster snatched off her — Durban, October 11, 1984

When UDF leaders were rounded up just before the coloured and Indian elections were held in August, the Black Sash sent the following telegrams to Rev A Hendrickse (Labour Party), Mr A Rajbansee (National People's Party) and Mr J N Reddy (Solidarity):

'Many people are now being held in preventive deten-



photos: courtesy of Daily News

tion for exercising their legitimate rights to oppose the tricameral parliament.

We call upon your party members not to take their seats at the opening of Parliament unless all detainees have been unconditionally released.

Your silence is being interpreted as consent.'

LETTERS

The Editor, Rand Daily Mail,
Box 1138, Johannesburg 2000.

Sash sympathy with victims of violence

AS TOWNSHIPS and campuses simmer throughout the country, the Black Sash sympathises deeply with all victims of violence, with the families of councillors who were hacked and burnt to death, with the families of those who were shot by the police, with people who are now ruined because of the destruction of their homes and businesses, with those who were severely wounded and those who have struggled for years to pay for their children's education who now face community violence if they want to get to work or if they want their children to attend school.

The Government's responsibility for the present situation is obvious. At the same time we cannot be blind to the horrors of reactive violence which, however understandable, can only lead the country deeper into the mire as it develops its own impetus, ideology and vested interest.

When human rights organisations become too timid to confront this type of violence this

is an ominous sign that society is doomed.

Historical reasons for reactive violence do not in any way lessen the miseries it causes for the masses of people living in closed off ghettos where they cannot adequately be protected from mob violence and where they suffer equal hardship from indiscriminate police batons and bullets.

Furthermore public threats to "collaborators" or statements that black councillors have only themselves to blame for murderous attacks upon them contribute nothing to the search for peaceful solutions.

They help create an atmosphere of retribution and community witch-hunting which can set off a spiral of violence and cruelty which, if not checked now, will destroy the fabric of our society for many years.

Instead, anti-apartheid groups should work out non-violent strategies to compel change in an atmosphere of tolerance among those who wish to work outside this framework of Government-created institutions and those who wish to work inside this framework. — JILL WENTZEL, Editor, Black Sash Magazine, Johannesburg.

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SA ISSN 0036-4843

This Magazine, as the official organ of the Black Sash, carries authoritative articles on the activities of the Black Sash. The leading articles adhere broadly to the policies of the organisation, which does not, however, necessarily endorse the opinions expressed by the contributors.

Published by the Black Sash, Khotso House, 42 De Villiers Street, Johannesburg 2001, and printed by Pacific Press, 302 Fox Street, Jeppestown 2094, Johannesburg.

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All political comment in this issue, except where otherwise stated, by J Wentzel, Khotso House, 42 De Villiers Street, Johannesburg 2001

LAYOUT: Joyce Brown