



sash

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VOLUME 31

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No 2

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SEPTEMBER 1988

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Cover note



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Our cover design is a print of Sipho Hlati's lino-cut depicting a class in progress in the 'squatter' community of Hout Bay. A significant proportion of Africa's formal education is still conducted outdoors, where trees, such as the one on the cover, are a prized educational commodity.

On a recent trip to Venda, an educationist responsible for upgrading programmes asked a school principal what his school required most. 'Trees,' came the prompt reply. Interested in this response, the educationist inquired further. It transpired that insufficient classroom accommodation meant that the Sub A class – the 'lowest' on the school's pecking order – had to sit outdoors, unprotected from the glare and heat of the sun.

The principal must have thought he had a better chance of cultivating trees than of acquiring more classroom space.

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SASH magazine

SASH magazine is the official organ of the Black Sash. While editorials and editorial policy adhere broadly to the policies of the Black Sash, the views and opinions expressed in other material do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Black Sash.

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editorial

Twelve years after the watershed of 1976, when the Soweto schoolchildren's revolt sent a wave of resistance through the country, South Africa's education crisis continues to deepen.

This special issue on Education is a response to a National Conference request for an in-depth assessment of an area that goes to the heart of the South African tragedy. Years of ideologically distorted education policy have underscored the truism that the damage wrought by educationists lives on for generations.

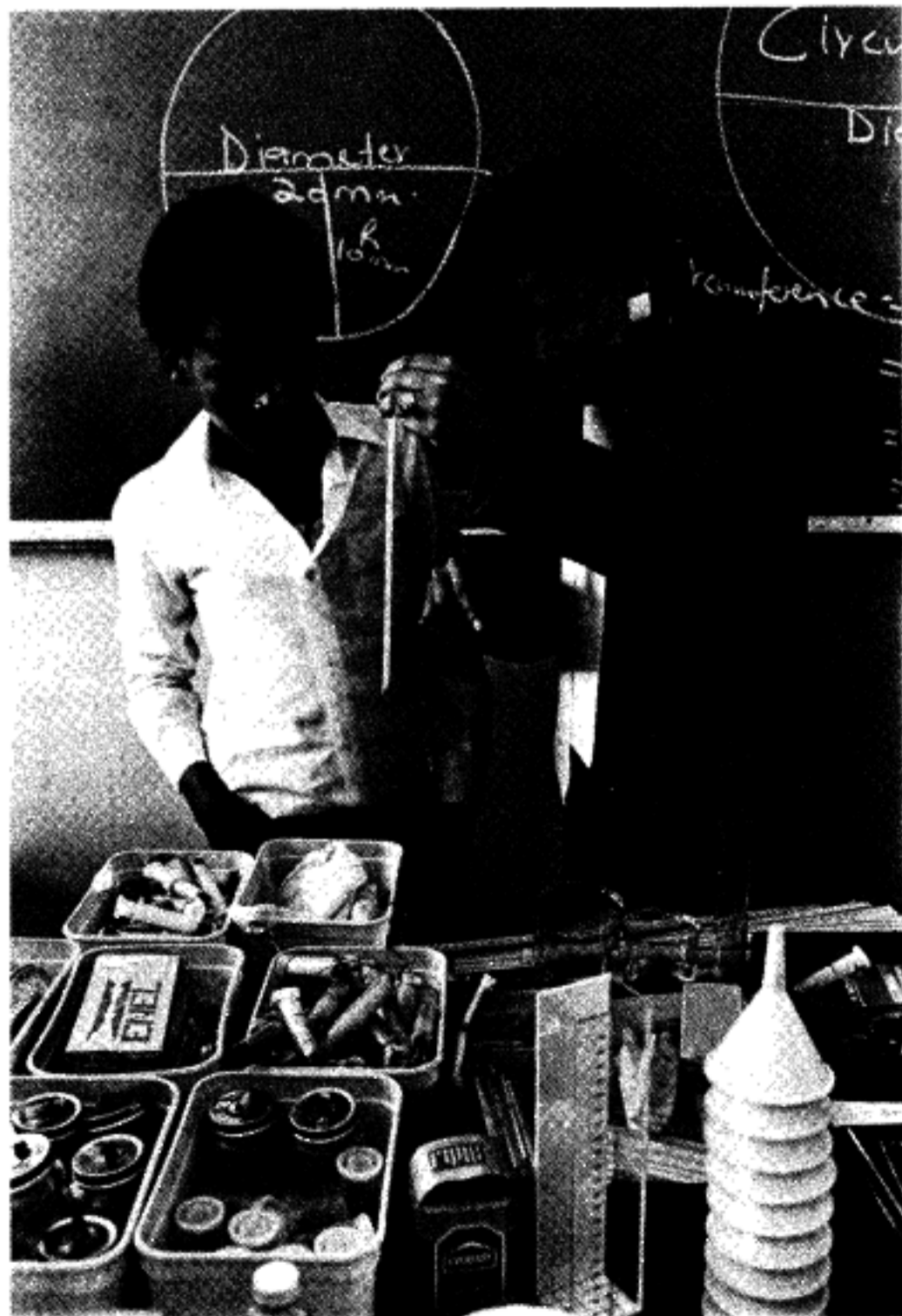
The National Education Crisis Committee, formed in 1985, was widely welcomed because its commitment to negotiated educational transformation offered the first real hope in years of halting the downward educational spiral. It was not to be. The NECC and its leaders faced the same fate as others who dare to challenge and offer alternatives to the government's agenda. The state may have succeeded in restoring a measure of control, but we are as far from a viable resolution of the education crisis as we have ever been. Ken Hartshorne's seminal article, that begins on the opposite page, tells the full story.

While the overall picture is dismal, it is leavened by the human endeavour and determination that is becoming the enduring characteristic of so many South Africans: ordinary people who like others in the world's great arenas of political and social conflict have displayed remarkable qualities of perseverance, humanity and courage that cannot be obliterated by detentions and bannings.

Apart from the NECC, we pay tribute to the End Conscription Campaign, now effectively banned. As a founding member organisation of the ECC, the Black Sash had first-hand experience of the ECC's extraordinary creativity and commitment in working for a system of genuine, non-military national service. The extent of that dedication, and the price some have paid for it, reverberate through David Shandler's article on page 40. The Black Sash shares that dream, and will continue to work for it.

education – the laboratory of south africa's future

ken hartshorne



Gisele Wulfsohn/Atrapix

One of South Africa's foremost educationists provides the most accessible and comprehensive overview of developments and trends in the educational arena today. The implications are immense for the future of our society.

The Western ideal of a liberal education is being seriously questioned in many quarters in South Africa. It is being challenged on two main counts: for its tendency to elitism and on its relevance to the present-day needs of society.

To put it bluntly: What is the use of a liberal education if people are poor, starving and oppressed?

Perhaps an even more important question as the country moves inevitably towards a post-apartheid society is whether a new education dispensation can respond to broad social, economic and political goals without continuing to be political – that is, controlled by a particular ideology not necessarily supported by all the members of the society the education system serves, which is our past and present experience.

In a country where education has been used so obviously as an instrument of control to protect power and privilege, it will be no easy task to reach agreement on the shape of education in a future non-racial, democratic South Africa.

It is relatively easy to break down the old – that process of disintegration is well on its way in black urban schools. To build up the new demands common purpose, imagination, energy and commitment.

This article is a contribution to the search for that common purpose by considering the process by which we in South Africa might prepare ourselves for that future education and contribute to it, consistent with its long-term goals.

'An official record of 80% attendance is no guarantee that learning is taking place.'

The education crisis in 1987

Where is education at present? Some indications:

Its environment is an untidy maze of interactions, volatile and often unpredictable, which differ radically from place to place, from situation to situation, often at the whim of the local security apparatus or youthful activists.

Its stakeholders are the state and its security apparatus, the education departments, black political forces, education leaders, community groupings, teachers' associations and local groupings of teachers, students and pupils in both organised and spontaneous action, young people outside the schools, the street-children, parents, churches, the business community and international forces both political and economic.

In the face of these complexities a neat analysis of the position of education is not possible; nevertheless it is possible to identify some clear indicators of broad tendencies and of the stances of some of the main actors in the drama that is being played out.

Government

In the first place, it is clear that government shows no signs of giving way on the principle of segregated education systems: this is a basic tenet that has been reiterated again and again at the highest levels. It will be more difficult for the government to change on this than to free Nelson Mandela, negotiate with the ANC or repeal the Group Areas Act, because it lies at the heart of the ideology of separate development.

Meanwhile the fact is that the present education system is rejected totally by a wide range of community organisations, conservative and radical.

Little is yet known of the detail of the government's Ten-Year Plan for education – any discussion or consultation, as usual, seems to be going on only within closed governmental structures. But certain things are clear. It is based on the principle of 'equal but separate', on the assumption of the continuation of segregated systems, and is concerned principally with issues of finance and provision. It is extremely doubtful whether the real issues of segregation, isolation, relevance and quality are to be addressed.

On the positive side there is a greater acceptance of private education, which is to be partially subsidised and allowed more freedom to experiment with forms of education not approved within the formal system.

Schools

Turning to the schools, in particular those of the Department of Education and Training, the picture is one of continuing deterioration of

relationships between the department and its teachers and pupils.

The serious fall-off in attendance at black urban schools has been amply documented. Even more disturbing, certainly for the longer term well-being of education, is the breakdown of the learning environment in the schools. An official record of 80% attendance at an urban school is no guarantee that learning is taking place: teachers are dispirited, pupils are restless and disturbed by what is going on around them and the general environment is not conducive to learning.

There can be no guarantee, and it is improbable, that even a radical change in the political dispensation in South Africa would restore a positive learning environment in which post-apartheid education could develop. As Lebamang Sebidi has so rightly said: 'There are no education coups d'état.'

A further disturbing factor is the influence in education of the young people not in school. In the urban townships there is a new and different generation of 'street children' led by young adults rejected by the education system, disillusioned by failure and lack of work opportunities, exercising pressures on those who are at school or who are using educational alternatives.

One has to ask in all seriousness whether the schools can succeed under any dispensation unless something is done to help these youngsters through second-chance, alternative forms of education and training.

Teachers

In the middle of the ground contested on the one hand by the state and on the other by pupils, parents and community, stand the teachers, at one and the same time employees of the state and members of the community. The generally negative image of the teacher, to be found even among teachers themselves, is no small contributor to the breakdown of the learning environment. Pressured and criticised from all sides often for inadequacies for which they are not to blame, treated often by departments not as professionals but as instruments of policy (as in recent instructions on security in the schools), it is not surprising that the morale of many teachers is low.

They are in an unenviable position. That so many, in spite of all the personal and external constraints, still care about their pupils and do their best for them speaks well of the teachers and the profession to which they belong.

The professional associations such as the African Teachers Association of South Africa (ATASA) and the Cape Teachers Professional



Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

This photograph of a classroom in KwaNdebele is a grim reminder of the conditions that still exist in many black schools around the country. Overcrowding, lack of facilities, equipment and basic resources such as text books and stationery still plague black schools. The legacy of 'Bantu Education' will take generations to overcome.

Association (CPTA) are under pressure, particularly from their younger members, to take a more militant stance of the kind adopted by the newer associations such as the non-racial National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA). Involvement in the NECC (National Education Crisis Committee) movement has also brought about a review of relationships with state departments, and during 1986 both ATASA and the coloured teachers' association withdrew their representatives from the SA Council of Education (SACE) and from all departmental committees.

The associations clearly are moving away from the employing departments closer to the communities they serve, in the process taking a much firmer stand on the social and political issues that are bedeviling education.

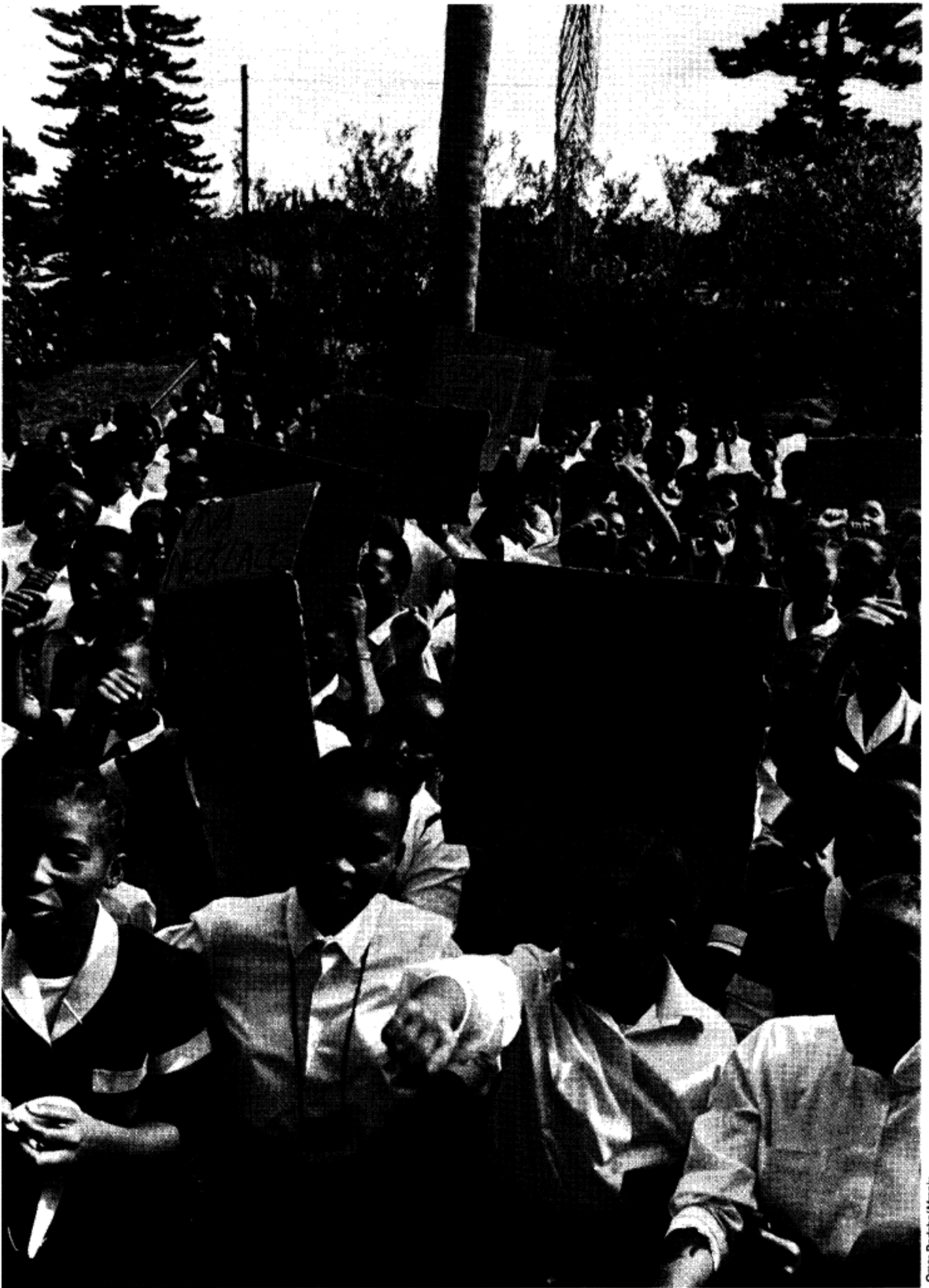
Community responses

Community responses to the continuing education crisis began to crystallise in the main around the NECC movement, which developed out of the conference called by the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC) at the University of the Witwatersrand in December 1985.

Before its effective banning in February, the NECC movement is easily the strongest initiative to emerge in the educational arena since the crisis came to a head in 1976. It is of positive significance for two major reasons:

Firstly, in bringing together community, political and educational leaders, trade unions, parents, teachers, students and pupils it has created a powerful negotiating force that government, in spite of its attempt to remove its leadership through detentions, will have to acknowledge and listen to. For as the Department of Education and Training (DET) progressively loses control of the urban schools, the NECC movement offers communities a possible alternative mechanism for running schools and continuing with some form of education.

In the second place, the NECC is examining not only present alternatives but the form and character of a longer-term post-apartheid education system. This thinking has emerged under the banner of People's Education.



The future of education in post-apartheid society

People's Education offers us all an opportunity to negotiate the future of education in post-apartheid South Africa. It is critically important factor in the creation of that future.

It is inextricably bound up with the concept of 'people's power', representing an important shift from the politics of refusal towards community involvement in transforming the education system. Indeed, one of its aims has been 'to channel the militancy of unorganised youth into disciplined action, accountable to the whole community'.

Its broad goals are the setting up of a 'free, compulsory, unitary, non-racial and democratic system of education' relevant to the establishment of a unitary, non-racial, democratic South Africa.

It is intended for 'all sections of our people', allowing students, parents, teachers and workers to participate actively in the initiation and management of people's education in all its forms. Student representative councils and parent-teacher organisations would be key structures in this.

It promotes the values of 'democracy, non-racialism, collective work and active participation'. Its educational objectives, to be reached through the stimulation of critical and creative thinking, analysis and working methods, are:

- to eliminate illiteracy, ignorance, capitalist norms of competition, individualism, stunted intellectual development and exploitation;
- to enable 'the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system' and to prepare them 'for participation in a non-racial democratic system';
- to equip and train 'all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle to attain people's power in order to establish a non-racial, democratic South Africa'.

It is important to pick up the many references in People's Education statements to 'all sectors of our people', and to argue that apartheid education, damaging and destructive as it has been for black South Africans, has also, except in the strictest sense of material benefits, failed the white community.

It has been fundamentally divisive in nature: not only has it separated white children from black children, it has also divided white children into separate camps. It has generally been authoritarian, influenced strongly by Christian National ideology and marked by strong, often arrogant bureaucratic control with little freedom

for parents, teachers or pupils to exercise much influence.

It is, therefore, crucial that the phrase 'our people' in People's Education documents should not be interpreted in the sense of 'die volk' of Afrikaner nationalism, but as all South Africans moving into post-apartheid society. If it has, or develops, a closed sectional meaning and practice, the dangers for education will be manifold.

Broad agreement has to be sought and negotiated in South Africa, a commitment found to a common purpose in education and society. Without this, questions of control, power and 'excess ideological baggage' will continue to dominate education, to its detriment and that of its users.

It is to this search for broad agreement and common purpose that the proponents of People's Education are beginning to make such an important, positive contribution. There is a growing realisation that there is no certainty that democratic changes in government and political structures would necessarily lead to democracy in education: As Franz Auerbach has pointed out, authoritarianism in the schools 'reflects ancient and deep-seated authoritarian child-rearing patterns in the homes of all sectors of South African society'.

Future learning styles will have to change from passive, rote learning, single textbook, examination-oriented approaches, to creative learning and problem solving through the active participation and involvement of pupils in the learning process. This must include hands-on experience in the laboratory and workshop, self-study in the library, and questioning, discussion and co-operative working together in groups.

Significantly People's Education statements emphasise 'critical and creative thinking', 'analysis and working methods', 'active participation', 'collective work' and 'democratic practices, both in generating and developing knowledge and in its implementation'.

People's Education has a rightful concern not only for the kind of people who emerge from the education system (and therefore for the nature of that system), but also for the kind of society in which people have to live and work, in which education systems and processes have to operate and for which education should prepare young people. These are also the concerns of many others, not all of whom would agree with everything in the People's Education position. Those who have stood for the liberal spirit in education have a hard-earned, experiential understanding of the severe problems that arise for questioning, creative thinking and the education of the critical intellect when heavy

←The expressions on the faces of these Lamontville students (left), protesting SADF raids into Zambia, contrast sharply with the messages of their posters.

'Teachers are dispirited, pupils are restless and disturbed by what is going on around them...'

ideological pressures are exerted.

This would be their main concern with the position of People's Education as it is articulated at present – the clear presence of an underlying tension between the statements on critical and creative thinking, active participation and democratic practices on the one hand and implied alternative ideological pressures, educational controls and power issues on the other.

However, given a commitment to a unitary, non-racial, democratic and just society, the common ground is so considerable that there is no reason why debate and action in the immediate future could not be cooperative, positive and productive.

The immediate future: opportunities and options

There are problems with the use of the term 'alternative education' as a working concept to embrace movement and development towards post-apartheid education. There are likely to be various forms of alternative education, ranging from those that are so defined because they are provided by a non-governmental agency and are not part of the formal system, to those programmes and educational practices 'conceived and executed within the struggle for national liberation'. The kinds of alternatives include:

- **Alternative schools**

These fall within the orbit of the private school system, with or without government subsidy. Some would be existing schools such as Woodmead or Sacred Heart in Johannesburg, which have radically changed their ethos and character. Some will be new institutions such as those of the New Era Schools Trust (NEST), initiated on a non-racial basis. Others, such as the Alternative Christian Education (ACE) schools, are being set up in reaction against the secularism of State education.

All provide a refuge for individuals in stormy times. They have limited impact on the general education situation and tend to be regarded by community organisations as enabling students from more wealthy backgrounds to opt out of the struggle. Nevertheless they have much to teach South Africa about what happens when children from different backgrounds are brought together in the classroom.

- **Alternative education programmes**

On the periphery of the formal school system, their relationships with education departments

range from close cooperation and involvement, through guarded neutrality on both sides, to the maintenance of strict independence on the part of the programme. Their objectives vary from supporting, improving, influencing or changing the education system to providing remedial or supplementary activities for either pupils or teachers, or both.

Most are funded by the private sector, both South African and overseas, by church organisations or foreign governments. In many programmes there is a strong involvement of one or more universities; others are entirely independent agencies set up for a specific educational objective such as literacy, pre-schooling, teacher training, science education, English or adult education.

A recent survey lists about 55 non-governmental programmes involved in one way or another with the in-service education and training of teachers (INSET) in South Africa, to take only one facet of these alternative programmes.

- **Alternative educational opportunities**

Here we are looking at alternative opportunities of an institutional nature, which for the most part have to be sought outside South Africa, mainly at tertiary level, in the universities and other higher education institutions of the USA, UK and Western Europe. In July 1986, for example, 120 black students (80 postgraduate and 40 undergraduate) selected by the Educational Opportunities Council, left for up to four years of study in the USA. About 300 students are already in the USA on scholarships granted in previous years. Within South Africa, Khanya College, the higher education institution set up by SACHED, is probably the only formal structure which can be said to be offering a true alternative.

- **Alternative non-formal education**

Arising from community initiatives, these include a wide range of activities set up by churches, women's groups and trade unions, for example, as well as 'counter-education' in and around the schools designed to conscientise pupils, discuss alternative economic and political models, interpret the processes of exploitation and oppression, and prepare them for the 'liberation struggle'.

What can be done in the next five years? Where will there be opportunities for the process of educational change to take place? There are no neat answers. However, there are a number of points of entry to the future which deserve consideration.

'As the DET increasingly loses control of its urban schools, will it simply close them or will it be forced to negotiate?'

1 Central education systems

The first area to consider is that of central education systems and in particular the triangular relationship of government, the Department of Education and Training and the NECC. The central issue seems to be: as the DET increasingly loses control of its urban schools will it simply close them or will it be forced to negotiate a new kind of local management (based on parent-teacher-pupil bodies) and a new agreed curriculum, accommodating to some extent the specifically educational aspects of People's Education?

This will depend both on the strength of the NECC as a national negotiating body (which in turn depends upon its survival under the State of Emergency, its maintenance of credibility in the community and to some extent its recognition by government) and the strength of the more positive elements in the DET to withstand pressures from the government's security apparatus. Until the emergency is lifted and strong security controls removed, however, the possibilities of significant negotiation must remain very doubtful.

2 Peripheral systems

The peripheral systems of education include those of the six non-independent homelands and the four independent territories, where 70 % of black pupils are at school.

The issues at stake in the urban areas are spilling over into areas such as Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and Lebowa. While having to accept a probable deterioration in the educational environment in these areas over the next five years, there is still considerable room to manoeuvre. Because there is a greater readiness to allow outside agencies to experiment with alternative methods and approaches involving both teachers and communities, the homelands offer a potential for innovative programmes in change-directed education which, as yet, has not been fully exploited.

3 Universities

In the process of moving towards post-apartheid education, the universities and other institutions of tertiary education can play a crucial role. (See article on page 14). The time has come for a radical change of attitude on the part of sponsors, overseas funders, white universities, community and political organisations, towards the black state universities and those of the independent territories.

There is a potential in both the students and staff of the 'black' universities that has not yet

been fully opened up. With support and recognition they could play a much greater and more positive role in the process of educational change.

For the English-medium 'open' universities the issues are somewhat different and are reflected strikingly in a recent report of the University of the Witwatersrand. They have to do in the main with the perceptions of the various constituencies of the university, in particular those of the wider black community which saw Wits as:

- Dominated by big business, government and the white community.
- isolated from the experience of black people;
- opposing apartheid but discriminating against blacks within the university.

In the next five years the university will clearly continue to be contested terrain, but also has the potential, in the words of the Wits report, 'to create the space that would allow it to restructure meaningfully its role in a changing society' and participate positively in the process leading to post-apartheid education.

In the field of tertiary education one of the most problematic areas, especially for the black community, is teacher education and training. The state has demonstrated forcibly that 'own affairs' colleges of education are at the heart of education non-negotiables. Nevertheless, the possibility of universities building up networks of relationships with teachers' colleges should not be discounted in spite of the structural constraints. Informal co-operation and mutual support, for example in the form of staff development programmes, could do much to link the colleges with change-oriented movements in education.

Another opportunity that needs to be explored in the immediate future is alternative higher education within South Africa on the lines of SACHED's Khanya College, but not at traditional university level. Resources put into a community college type of institution and into a private teachers' college to test these models would open up effective options in a future educational dispensation.

4 Informal sectors

There is considerable area of educational ground not occupied or only partially taken by the state. This is the area outside the formal schooling system, in informal and non-formal sectors of education. The opportunities for innovation, freer action, greater choice, community involvement and private initiative are all much



11 August 1976: Langa high schools pupils, who marched on the Langa police station in Cape Town on 11 August 1976, stand with their hands raised seconds after police fired tear gas cartridges over their heads. Minutes later one of their number was shot dead. Note the conciliatory messages on the posters, which typified protest marches at the time.

The Argus

wider than within the schooling system, which governments all over the world tend to regard as their preserve. There are three specific areas of non-formal education of a more organised nature that are important factors in any consideration of education futures:

(i) Pre-school education is an area that holds considerable promise because of the creative learning opportunities it can offer young children and its opportunities for parental education. The possibilities of positive and effective cooperation between parental and community bodies, private sponsors and professional service agencies are real and already established.

What happens in pre-school education now can have considerable impact on the kind of formal schooling system South Africa has by the end of the century.

(ii) There are many broader community needs – personal, social and economic – that will have to be met by strong and effective adult education networks. Here again the potential for

community involvement and management is considerable. The need for second-chance programmes, particularly for young adults who have dropped out of, failed or rejected the formal system, is critical. It is doubtful whether any education system, no matter how transformed, can survive unless these young people are rescued within new and innovative learning environments so different from the schools they knew that the bad memories recede into the background of consciousness.

(iii) As a distinct part of adult education, worker education will become of increasing importance over the next few years. In the light of the wide-ranging debate on questions of relevance in schooling and education, and the issues surrounding education and work, the attitudes and contributions of trade unions to People's Education could be of major significance in setting future patterns of educational development.

'The upsurge of People's Education has provided a new opportunity to debate the realities...'

5 Teachers

In the highly contested area of the formal state schooling systems where the prospects of fundamental change appear to be the most limited, it is vital that in the short term every opportunity should be taken to strengthen the independent, professional position of teachers. Changes in the control of education will inevitably come about by political means. New policies, instructions, curricula and syllabi can be introduced by political fiat. But in the end teachers remain the most potentially powerful group of change agents, particularly if they can be freed from present constraints. (See the article on attempts to forge teacher unity, on page 18.)

This is clearly appreciated by the NECC and People's Education movements. Yet more than ever the state is making it clear that it regards them as employees, not as professionals, and is claiming total ownership of their thoughts, actions and behaviour.

Major structural changes are needed to rescue teachers from the untenable position in which they find themselves, notably:

- The removal of the education and training of teachers from the control of the employers, the education departments, to a more independent situation in which colleges and universities could work together and in which the rightful say of the employing departments could be balanced by the interests of the teaching profession and the teacher educators. There are numerous models in many parts of the world, including Africa, for this kind of arrangement.
- The removal of the appointment and employment of teachers from the ambit of the civil service to a separate and independent teaching service commission of the kind working successfully in many English-speaking African countries.

Apart from structural issues, teachers themselves, particularly in their professional associations, will have to continue to wrestle with such fundamental questions as:

- What does it mean to be professional?
- To whom is the teaching profession accountable?
- How do teachers show a broad commitment to the idea of a non-racial democratic future for South Africa, and yet remain non-aligned to a particular political ideology or party cause?

Recent decisions of ATASA and UTASA to withdraw from departmental committees and advisory bodies are a strong indication of a less accommodating and more independent stance by the profession. It will be even more important that teachers' associations negotiate an understanding and acceptance of their

professional stance as educators with community organisations such as the NECC, a process which is already under way.

It would be a tragedy if teachers could not make a strong professional contribution to the process of development of People's Education in terms of content, approaches, style, standards and quality.

6 Private funding

Finally, it is necessary to look at the implications of all that has been discussed for sponsors, trusts and foundations, private sector corporate responsibility programmes, and all those here and abroad who have the disposal and allocation of resources in their hands.

In the next five years, as community and teacher initiatives strengthen and as concepts of alternative education clarify and are expressed in programme proposals, one of the major limiting factors could be the availability of funds to implement these proposals. Funding should be channelled towards those projects and programmes that are part of the process leading to post-apartheid education.

Conclusion

The upsurge of People's Education has provided a new opportunity to debate the realities, the relevance, the quality and style of education in South Africa and to negotiate its future for all its people.

The common ground, now and in the future, must be a commitment to a non-racial, democratic, equitable and just society, in both the political and economic sense, by the parties to the debate and negotiation.

In education many of the main actors, pupils and teachers, have seen the learning environment collapse around them and the education system disintegrate. The hurts are deep, emotions run high, and the obstacles to understanding and shared debate are massive. But there is also hope, because in spite of the slogans and the rejection of much of what at present is schooling, there is a common appreciation of the fundamental importance of education and what it could contribute in a regenerated society. □

This article is published with the consent of the Institute for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Cape Town. It was originally published as the fourth paper in their series entitled 'Critical Choices for South African Society.'

non-racialism: universities face the challenge

annamia van den heever

The campuses of [the 'open'] universities in South Africa where significant numbers of students from different backgrounds and cultures learn, live and grow together are among the very few places where young black and white South Africans can meet and mix as equals in every sense of the word. Tensions there must be, given the state of the nation, but this is surely the greatest educational task any South African university can tackle.

Dr Stuart Saunders, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, in his presidential address to the South African institute of Race Relations, 1987.

'Embattled' is a word used by onlookers, sympathetic as well as unsympathetic, to describe the 'open' universities in South Africa – the universities of Cape Town, Natal, the Western Cape, the Witwatersrand and Rhodes. These institutions, in the forefront of attempts to establish a non-racial, common future to replace South Africa's fragmented and separated past, are under assault from the government and subject to enormous pressures from both the white and black communities they serve. The challenge facing them in their educational task is to respond creatively to the tensions – political, educational, social and economic – so that they can emerge strong and able to serve present, as well as post-apartheid South Africa.

The universities which are now making concerted efforts to rise to the challenge have, since this government came to power, been thorns in its flesh. They have jealously guarded their academic freedom and protested – with varying degrees of success – against government assaults on this freedom: The Extension of Universities Act of 1959 which introduced a permit system for blacks to study at universities promptly labelled 'white', the quota system which is on the statute books but which has not been implemented, and lately, attempts to apply conditions for subsidy if university Councils do not discipline students and staff deemed (by government) to have overstepped acceptable (by government) levels of protest.

The assaults continue under the guise of attempts to ensure that taxpayers' money is 'well spent'; a spurious argument when teaching and research records of, for example, the University of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand are analysed.

In recent years the proportion of black students at these universities has increased steadily. At UCT, for example, it has risen from 11 % in 1980 to 22,4 % in 1988.

Nevertheless, the composition of the student bodies is a long way off from reflecting the composition of the South African population. Projections of the number of matriculants by the year 2 000 show the demand for university education amongst blacks, particularly Africans, will rise drastically. In 1985, 29,5 per thousand whites were at universities, 19,8 per thousand Asians and 4,7 per thousand of 'coloured' people and only 2,2 per thousand Africans. In the UK, 7,5 per thousand of the population was at university while the figure for Australia was 11 per thousand. The current South African situation clearly cannot persist.

What are the steps taken by universities such as UCT to increase opportunities for black students given the educational, financial and social obstacles they face in the apartheid society? How successful have they been?

Academic Support Programmes (ASP) have in recent years become increasingly important. These programmes provide intensive





subject-specific support as well as courses in English language skills. The nature of the programmes has provided a concomitant impetus for change in the institutions themselves and is a source of debate on the processes of teaching and learning as well as the curriculum content.

Recent publicity surrounding a paper delivered by Professor James Moulder, of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Natal has focused critical attention on the desirability and success of ASP. Moulder, an initiator of the programmes he now believes cannot succeed, pleads for South African universities to lower the level (rather than the standard) at which their degree programmes are offered and not to aspire to the standards of Oxbridge which, he says, will be impossible to achieve in any event. Saunders points out, however, that although the universities concerned did not have all the answers, progress was being made and students from disadvantaged backgrounds were performing satisfactorily.

Within the universities themselves the possibility of lowering of standards is an issue. There are those who see it as an inevitable consequence of increasing access. Others strongly disagree. It cannot be denied that among some black students exclusion on academic grounds is a major issue.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that African students in particular have limited post-secondary education choices. A white student can choose between the technikons, teachers' training colleges and a host of other higher education opportunities. For many African students the choices are as blatant as between living in relative comfort in a university residence, or in poverty in an overcrowded township; a career after university education or a life of manual labour. It is therefore crucial to those who gain admission that they be given every possible chance to remain.

Closely aligned to ASP is research into detecting potential and ability to succeed at

university. For some time universities found that whereas white, 'coloured' and Asian matriculation results were fairly good predictors of success at university, African results were not. This situation has improved somewhat but enormous problems remain with school-leaving examinations administered by no fewer than 17 education departments in Southern Africa.

Providing financial support for black students has been a high priority for universities such as UCT. Fundraising in recent years has concentrated on this, as has planning innovative responses to the financial hardships of black students. UCT assesses each applicant for assistance and provides the student with a financial aid package consisting of loan as well as bursary components.

In 1987 UCT allocated R2,2-million of its own resources to financial aid. It administered a further R3,7-million in donations and processed a further R14-million granted to its students by outside organisations. In spite of this the university was still R5-million short of providing for the students' assessed need. In addition, the university estimates that some 400 black students offered places each year do not register because of financial hardship. To assist them, an additional R18-million per annum would be needed, assuming each student undertakes a four-year programme.

The increase in the numbers of black students on campuses such as UCT has brought with it an increased demand for student housing. The Group Areas Act and the inadequate housing provision for the black, particularly African, population make it almost impossible for black students from outside Cape Town to find non-university accommodation.

Jon File, Academic Secretary at UCT and warden of a newly constructed residence, The Woolsack, writes: 'Many local African students live in overcrowded homes with inadequate facilities for studying. For most African students then, the provision of UCT accommodation is a prerequisite for academic success. Furthermore, a student housing place is required for the student's entire academic career at UCT as the prospects of moving into private digs in the senior years are minimal.'

The university has responded by increasing its housing stock by 27% in the last six years. Sixteen per cent of white students are currently in UCT accommodation, whereas 78% of African students live in UCT residences.

File sees the changing composition of students in UCT's student housing system highlighting the challenge to create a non-racial academic environment. Each individual residence at UCT is responding to this challenge in its own unique context.

'Unless drastic measures are taken to relieve the situation, financial constraints could obliterate the improved access black students have to university education.'

He discerns the following issues in his residence, which, he says, in many ways represents a microcosm of the UCT student community. Firstly, there are real political differences between black residents and white residents, particularly at the level of involvement and the extent to which an individual can act from, or profess, an apolitical standpoint. 'Politically active "progressive" white students have tended historically to prefer communal student housing to the inevitable constraints of residence life,' he says.

Secondly, there are sociologically rooted differences in attitude towards personal space, particularly when entertaining visitors. These differences have also led to tensions. 'These are difficult to resolve when, unlike most white students, African students have no friends outside of the residence system thus having little choice but to get together and hold parties in residence rather than at private venues.'

File says the critical issue in the Woolsack in 1988 will be to formulate a constitution for the government of the residence and a broad code of conduct for residents. 'It is here that Woolsack has the advantage of being a new residence without the strong tradition and internal culture of other residences which have inevitably come to reflect the interests and backgrounds of the residents over the past decades. The residence structures flowing from these traditions are often seen by black students as white structures. Add to this perception the popular political strategy of non-participation in "the system" and it is not surprising that black students have been reluctant to participate in residence government, and have generally opted to set up informal alternative structures. The strategy of non-participation in residences and, more widely, in student government on campus, is, however, not a static one and is currently being debated in many residences. For most black students it is a strategy and not a principle and in residences with majority black membership, it has been reviewed and modified.'

The relative freedom insisted upon by the 'open' universities has created much-needed space in the South African context for political protest. Ironically, this is the area in which the universities have had to face most public criticism. University authorities believe that their handling of student protests in the years 1985 to 1987 and the unwavering support they gave to the right of protest while clearly denouncing violence have paid dividends and have helped establish a working relationship and mutual respect between opposing constituencies.

Much has been achieved in these universities; much still needs to be done. The overwhelming financial problems they face could, however,

seriously endanger all the achievements of the past and plans for the future.

Over the past five years university subsidies have declined in real terms while student numbers have increased. Students are having to meet an increased proportion of the cost of their education. Salaries of academics have been eroded to such an extent that the quality of education offered is in serious danger.

Unless drastic measures are taken to relieve the situation, financial constraints could obliterate the improved access black students have to university education.

Saunders believes the following would be essential to solve some of the problems relating to increased access as well as finance: a single education department with a single budget allocated according to educational need and not ideological principles; full subsidisation of universities; the introduction of a comprehensive state scheme combining bursaries and loans available to all South Africans with repayments spread over a long period; state subsidy for academic support programmes and the establishment of pre-university colleges to bridge the gap between school and university.

Traditional liberal white supporters of the 'open' universities have questioned the direction they have taken in trying to ensure a more equitable access to university study for all South Africans. Last year, for example, a concerted campaign was launched in the English press against the universities, as some journalists perceived the crumbling of traditional liberal values such as freedom of speech, the dropping of standards, the increased politicisation of campuses, the destruction of traditional social customs. This campaign reflected alumni fears that a fundamental shift was taking place from the traditional liberal foundation of the universities towards an alien, unknown (and therefore feared) framework.

From the black community comes calls for universities to shed their colonial past for relevance in Africa, for an identification with the liberation struggle and for accountability. Little change is perceived and this is also criticised.

As Saunders put it: 'The University is an exciting place to be in....It is a place where tomorrow's leaders are learning to work and to live together. If we fail in this historic task of educating in every sense of the word these bright young people representing all spheres and strata of South Africa - if we fail, then I do not see much hope for South Africa.' □

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the long road to unity

merry dewar

The issue concentrating the minds of a large proportion of South Africa's organised teachers is how to put old differences behind them and form a single organisation. Merry Dewar spells out the issues.

The teaching profession, like most other areas of South African society, has long been characterised by deep divisions. For this reason, a conference, held in April this year, to explore the possibility of 'teacher unity' was hailed as an historic occasion.

The original impetus for the meeting came from Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) when he addressed the annual general meeting of the Western Cape Teachers Union (WECTU) a year earlier.

Arguing that teachers were paralysed by their lack of unity, he urged them to form a single mass-based national union of democratic teachers' associations.

This was not an entirely new notion. Discussion aimed at establishing a national teachers' organisation have been ongoing since 1985, in line with similar moves to overcome divisions and strive for unity amongst workers, youth, students, women, rural communities and civics.

These talks culminated in the April conference, held in Harare so that South Africans based outside the country could attend. One of the most significant aspects of the conference was that it represented the first joint meeting between teacher organisations recognised by government education departments and the unrecognised 'progressive' teacher organisations. A full list of participants is set out in the Table. The participants included representatives from all teacher organisations with black, 'coloured' or Indian membership. The only white organisation

represented was EDASA – Education for an Aware South Africa.

The conference was jointly hosted by four teacher organisations based outside South Africa (see Table), indicating strong support for the unity moves by these organisations. The meeting was chaired by trade unionists representing COSATU, South Africa's largest trade union federation, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), an exiled organisation allied to the African National Congress. Representatives from the African National Congress also attended the meeting. Delegates representing exiled organisations were all associated with the Congress tradition of South African politics. There were no representatives of the Pan Africanist or Black Consciousness traditions.

At the end of the five-day meeting, delegates unanimously adopted a 15-point series of recommendations, stressing the need for national unity, and the establishment of 'negotiating machinery' to pursue this objective. The primary goal would be the establishment of one national teachers' organisation that would be part of the 'national mass democratic movement' committed to a 'free, non-racial, democratic South Africa' and 'free, non-racial, non-sexist, compulsory, democratic education in a single education system.' The organisation would also commit itself to realising the ideals of 'people's education'.

The envisaged organisation would also take on traditional trade union functions, protecting and promoting the rights of teachers. In addition, it would implement a programme of pol-



Rashid Lombard

itical and professional education to enable teachers to 'play an effective role within the community' and abide by the principle of 'non-collaboration with all structures of the apartheid system'.

The resolution also stressed that negotiations with the authorities should only be conducted 'with the mandate of the constituencies concerned'.

Commenting on the meeting, Franklin Sonn of the United Teachers' Association of South Africa, said: 'It was very positive in the sense that it was also a way of destroying stereotypes and of showing ourselves to one another.'

In order to reach this agreement many controversial issues were debated.

One contentious topic was the meaning of the term 'non-collaboration'. After considerable debate, delegates agreed that negotiation could not be considered collaboration if it was conducted by mandated representatives, accountable to their organisational membership. Collaboration occurs when individuals, acting without a grassroots mandate, serve on government structures to assist in the process of decision-making and administration to serve government interests. For teachers this implies refusing individual appointments as inspectors, or as members of departmental curriculum committees.

Another debating topic was whether teachers are 'workers' or 'professionals'. This debate emerged within the context of an attempt to locate the position of teachers in relation to the working class, that was accepted

WECTU's Yousuf Gabru (left) UTASA's Franklin Sonn (far right) and CTPA delegates (below and right) at their recent conference.



as being 'in the vanguard' of the anti-apartheid struggle. Central to this debate was the question of whether teachers should engage in strike action. The view that teachers are professionals implies that strike action is inappropriate. Others question the professional status of teachers, citing the Department of Education's rigid control and the absence of a professional Board or Institute or professional code of conduct to support their position. This view holds that strike action along traditional trade union lines is appropriate for teachers.

This debate was resolved in Harare by defining a worker as anyone who receives a salary or wage. On this questionable basis, considerable support emerged for the notion of a union of teachers, but in the absence of a mandate on the issue, delegates avoided pre-empting the outcome of future discussions on the form the proposed national body should take.

Significantly, it was agreed, that in the interests of achieving unity, no pre-conditions for membership should be established in the form of any particular programme or charter.

The main advantage of a single, national teachers organisation would be clout. The teacher organisations contemplating unity have a combined membership of 95 000 – 100 000 out of an estimated 240 000 teachers country-wide. By uniting, teachers will have more organised muscle. Furthermore, a single body is likely to be able to establish links with other mass-based organisations, such as COSATU, thereby creating the possibility of co-operative action with

Signed-up membership figures for South African teacher organisations

(Unless otherwise stated, statistics compiled from verbal communications to the Black Sash)

Unrecognised 'progressive' organisations

Democratic Teachers' Union (DETU)	200
Eastern Cape Teachers' Union (ECTU)	not available
Education for an Aware South Africa (EDASA)	140
East London Progressive Teachers' Union (ELPTU)	100
Mamelodi Teachers' Union (MATU)	500
National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA)	2 090
(before February restriction)	
Port Alfred Teachers' Union (PATU)	not available
Progressive Teachers' League (PTL)	300
Progressive Teachers' Union (PTU)	200
Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU)	2 000

Officially recognised teacher organisations (with stop-order facilities):

African Teachers' Association of SA (ATASA)	65 000
Teachers' Association of SA (TASA)	8 600
United Teachers' Association of SA (UTASA)	25 762
(UTASA includes the 22 000-strong CTPA)	

Total number of teachers in above organisations 104 892

Total full-time teachers in public and private schools, excluding special schools

(i) in the RSA	234 362
(ii) in the 'national states'	69 869
(iii) in the 'rest of SA'	51 153

* Source: Preliminary Education Statistics for 1988, issued by the Department of National Education (NATED 02-214 (88/07))

workers and community organisations. Conversely, the 'mass, democratic movement' would be strengthened by improving its access, through teachers, to rural communities which are not yet organised.

A non-racial organisation would challenge the existing ethnic divides in education and increase the possibility of protest action by teachers that transcends imposed ethnic barriers. This could strengthen the bargaining power of numerically smaller components, such as EDASA, and could lead to growth in their membership. This could have important implications for work in the most difficult of arenas – the white schools.

Nor are the advantages limited to issues of bargaining-power. At the heart of the matter is the control of ideology. For decades, the current education system has been used to entrench apartheid ideology, placing education at the centre of the 'contested terrain'. It is for this reason that the educational arena is considered central to the anti-apartheid struggle – and why the government is so determined to retain control.

Furthermore, a unitary body of progressive teachers may enhance the tendency to 'push' more conservative groups leftwards. Finally, the envisaged unitary organisation would be based on consensus, mandate and accountability, rather than the traditional 'top down' practice of most professional organisations.

What problems lie ahead? Current excitement about unity may be misplaced. There are likely to be real difficulties ahead. It is not yet clear whether black communities will accept the notion of teachers – who are among the most affluent of township residents – as workers, and they could reject a teachers' union as a 'bandwagon strategy'.

If a single body is formed, whether it is a union or not, it would not automatically be granted recognition. Indeed, the Minister of National Education has already indicated that a union of teachers will not be permitted. Without a recognition agreement, whether formal or informal, it would not be possible for the proposed organisation to negotiate 'shopfloor issues' such as conditions of service, making it debatable

whether it could continue to attract membership.

Central to the process of forming a single body is the question of relinquishing existing material assets, power-bases and platforms. The organisations involved in the discussions are of widely divergent numerical strength, raising a problem of whether and how this should be reflected in the process of decision-making during pre-unity negotiations. It could also influence the debate on the type of organisation that emerges. A federation of teacher organisations (in which existing organisations retain their own structure and power base within a greater framework) could favour the larger bodies, while smaller constituencies could wield more influence in a unitary structure.

Another potential problem is the division that has traditionally surrounded the question of service on government commissions, or appointments as inspectors and subject advisors.

Some organisations, such as the CTPA, have taken steps to change their position on this issue to accommodate the view of their critics. In 1986, the CTPA resolved not to 'collaborate' with apartheid structures and held a series of talks with the ANC. At its annual conference this June, the CTPA passed resolutions against 'multi-racial' sport, the State of Emergency, detentions, restrictions on progressive organisations and individuals. Women members resolved to investigate the role of women in the organisation and society in general. The conference's most significant step in this context was the adoption of the Freedom Charter.

None the less, these moves have not been enough to convince everyone of the CTPA's acceptability into the 'progressive' fold.

In a pamphlet, entitled 'The CTPA – Rehabilitating Collaborators', the New Unity Movement, an 'anti-collaborationist' group based largely in the Western Cape rejected the movements towards unity in the following words:

On the basis of the strategy of a certain segment of the liberatory movement to achieve dominance in the various spheres of activity among the oppressed, e.g the church, trade unions, students, tea-

chers and sportspersons, etc., and the 'one industry, one union' system, COSATU issued a directive that there should be only one teachers' union; ...COSATU choosing to ignore the political history of the various teachers' bodies, imagines that it can prescribe from above that these bodies should get together, despite the irreconcilable differences that exist.

...It is clear that the CTPA is a reactionary and collaborationist organisation. No number of visits to Dakar, Lusaka or Harare will change this fact; no acceptance of the Freedom Charter will make the leopard change its spots; no amount of 'radical' rhetoric and anti-apartheid utterances will alter the opportunist nature of this petty bourgeois organisation.

It is clear that the movement towards unity will be a long and difficult process. However, those involved in it believe that the building of teacher unity is a means of empowering anti-apartheid teachers, and requires the ongoing support and encouragement of all who oppose apartheid. In his address (read on his behalf) to teachers at the June CTPA conference, Jay Naidoo warned:

We have reached a critical point in our history in which teachers' unity is of paramount importance in our struggle for an education in a social system that meets the needs of our people. To build this one has to drop the posturing, parochialism and sloganeering of the past, and in a spirit of comradeship that has characterised your recent discussions, take a decisive step towards unifying your ranks. To this end, Cosatu and the whole democratic movement will do all in its power to facilitate the establishment of such a machinery. Let history judge those who have not contributed towards forging of the unity that is so desperately needed.

Only time will show whether teacher unity is achievable and whether the 'spirit of comradeship, mutual respect and common purpose' which characterised the Harare conference can be maintained. □

Molefe Tsele



Vusi Khanyile



Eric Molobi



education leaders in detention

Students and teachers have constituted a large percentage of Emergency detainees, and leaders in the education sphere have been particularly vulnerable. The entire national executive of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) remains in detention, where some have been for almost two years.

Vusi Khanyile, 38, national chairman of the National Education Crisis Committee, was detained under the Emergency regulations on 12 December 1986 - and was one of the three detainees who escaped while undergoing treatment at the Johannesburg hospital on 13 September.

An accountant by profession, he played a central role in community organisation in Soweto for five years before his detention. He was a member of the Soweto Committee of Ten and served as secretary of the Soweto Civic Association.

In 1985 he was involved in the formation of the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee and held negotiations with the Department of Education and Training in an attempt to secure conditions that would end the prolonged school boycotts. He has been credited with a major role in the return-to-school decision. He was involved in the formation of the NECC and in January 1986, was elected its first chairman. In October 1986 he was appointed as special assistant to the vice-chancellor of UCT.

On 12 December 1986, he was detained under the Emergency regulations. All attempts to secure his release - including a court application - failed.

Rev Molefe Tsele, 32, general secretary of the NECC, was detained under the Emergency regulations on 12 December 1986, re-detained on 11 June 1987 and was still being held when SASH went to Press.

Tsele, who grew up on the East Rand, became politically active in 1975 when he joined his school SRC. He was detained during the 1976 uprising. He holds a Bachelor of Theology degree from UNISA.

In 1983, Tsele was acquitted on a charge of furthering the aims of a banned organisation. He was elected chairman of the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee two years ago and last year was elected NECC secretary.

Eric Molobi, 39, a National Education Crisis Committee executive member, was detained under the Emergency regulations on 7 December 1987. In 1975 he was detained for several months, during which time he was allegedly tortured. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment on Robben Island for furthering the aims of the African National Congress.

On his release he helped form the Soweto Civil Association and in 1983 was elected to the United Democratic Front's Transvaal executive, serving as treasurer.

Molobi played a central role in the formation of the National Education Crisis Committee in 1985 and for the past two years has served on its executive. Since the State of Emergency was declared on 12 June 1986, he was in 'hiding' and served as the NECC's main representative following the detention of Vusi Khanyile and Molefe Tsele.

Joyce Mabudafhasi, an NECC executive member, was detained under the Emergency regulations in December 1986.

Mabudafhasi, a community leader from Mankweng, near Pietersburg, was a founder member of the NECC. In May 1986, while employed as a librarian at Turfloop University, she was seriously injured when her house was bombed late at night. She left the area and went into hiding. At the time of her detention she was involved in negotiating a return to classes with Port Elizabeth students.

Since her detention her father has died and her mother, who lives in Venda, has suffered a stroke.

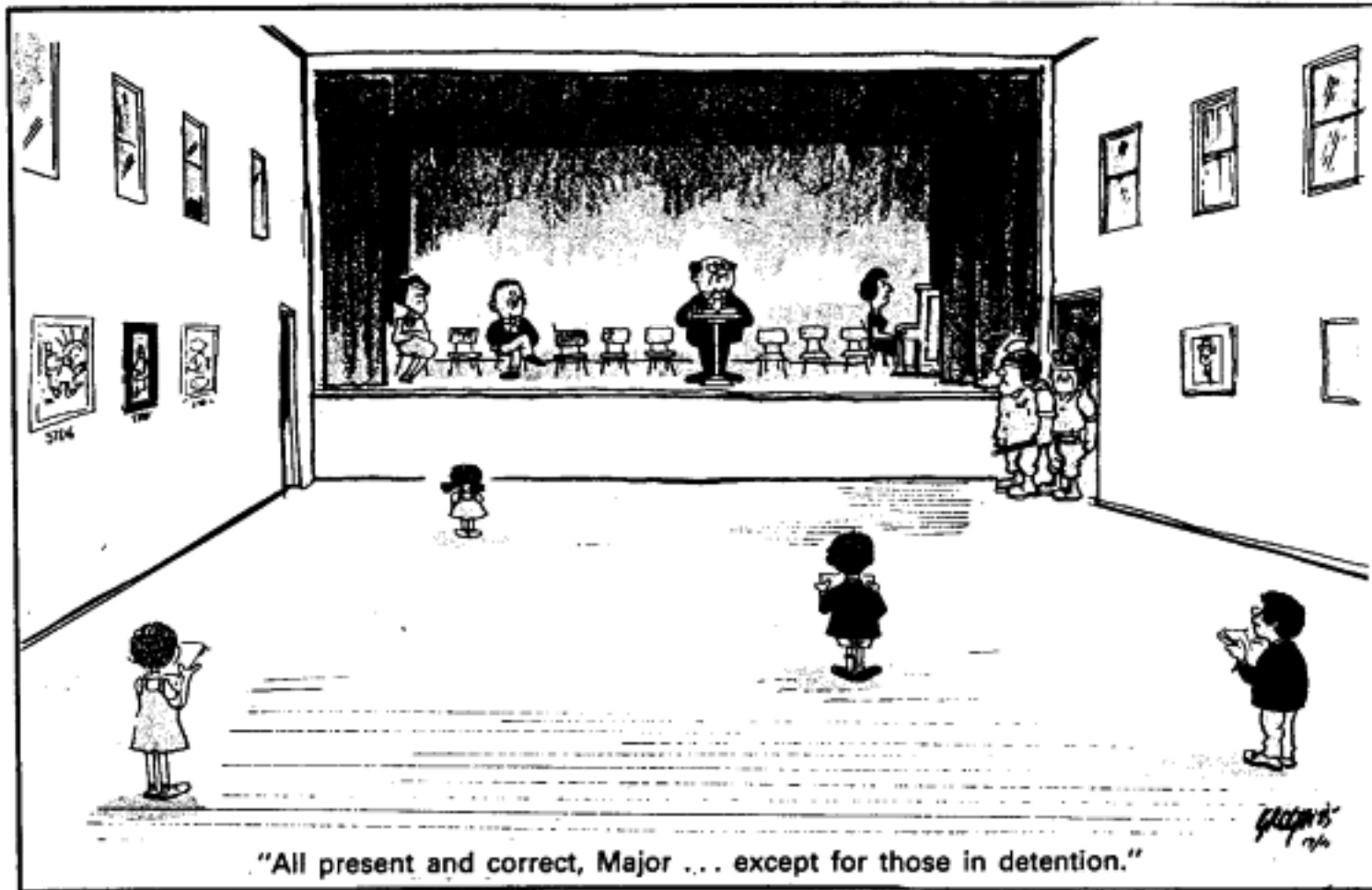
Ihron Rensburg, 28, NECC secretary general, was detained under the Emergency regulations in 1986.

Rensburg, a New Brighton pharmacist, was an executive member of the Eastern Province Council on Sport before working for the NECC. He was active in the NECC until his detention.

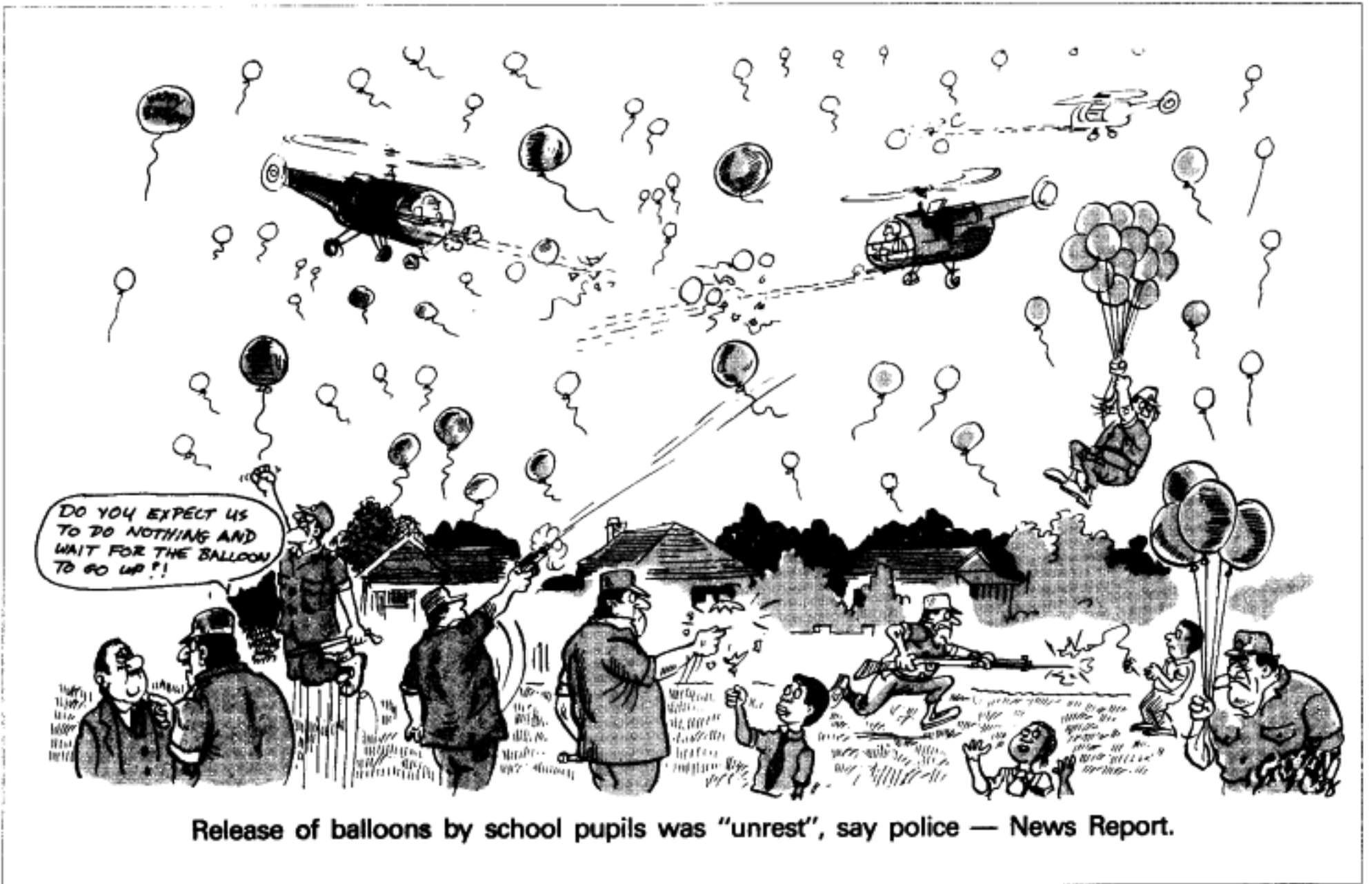
Acknowledgement: Weekly Mail

no laughing matter

The state of education in South Africa is hardly a laughing matter, but the recurrent absurdity of official policy remains a rich source of material for cartoonists. Here is a selection of Tony Grogan's best, with thanks to the Cape Times.



"We can't use it for black education because it's in a white area, but all is not lost ... We can have it declared a national monument."



State confesses to black school radicals probe



The 'opening' of South Africa's schools to all races could solve some of the problems besetting South African education, says a past president of the South African Teachers' Association.

More than twenty white state schools in the Cape Peninsula, three schools outside Cape Town and the Cape Town College of Education have recently indicated that they wish to be free to admit black pupils. The Cape School Board also voted by a majority that schools should be free to admit pupils on a non-racial basis. Why do we want open schools?

The Moral Argument: It is simply not justifiable on moral grounds that 153 637 vacancies exist in white schools (and this number will increase each year from now onwards) which may not be filled by black pupils. An actual example: Ugies High in the northern Cape was built for 700 pupils, but the current enrollment is 28.

Only 3% of African teachers have a degree. Since being taught by a teacher with graduate experience is essential for pupils hoping to go to university, African pupils are at a disadvantage from the start.

Yet in spite of the need to train many more qualified teachers and in spite of the Department of Education and Training's own admission that 50 000 teachers must be trained by the year 2 000 and that existing facilities are inadequate to achieve this goal, fully equipped training colleges are being closed down or amalgamated in the white 'own affairs' sector. Oudtshoorn's college is to be taken over by the SADF; Paarl's is to go to some as yet unnamed non-education body; Denneoord and Graaff Reinet are to be maintained as 'teletuition' colleges, which means there will be no students in permanent residence and other colleges are at half capacity.

The Social Argument: Research by the Human Sciences Research Council reveals that large numbers of the population are unable to communicate with one another.

The research reveals that 91,8% of whites cannot speak, read or write an African language, while 26,9% of Africans aged 15 and older in the white urban areas cannot speak either Eng-

lish or Afrikaans and 37,3% of the total group of African employees cannot speak either English or Afrikaans.

Our children will not be able to negotiate their future because they cannot communicate with those with whom they must negotiate. Neither are they able to understand the culturally specific norms of each group.

There are several million illiterate adolescents walking the streets of our cities and towns. Adolescents are awkward and energetic and they must

and learn to respect the cultures of others. They are taught about the 'others'.

It seems that if our children are to experience one another as real people with valid feelings, hopes and ambitions, then they must be educated together. The alternate philosophy is that people are not aware of their own identity until they are aware of themselves in relation to others. This implies being educated together.

At present, schools may not admit pupils of another race group if they are state schools. The present hope is that the state will accept the principle of 'freedom of association' in order to resolve the impasse, allowing schools to admit whom they choose.

At present, there is no sign that such a policy change is likely. In private schools the number of admissions comprising pupils not classified white is fewer than 10 000.

The three white English-speaking associations are in favour of open schools. The four Afrikaans-speaking associations are not. The 'coloured', Indian and African associations are in favour of open schools. These positions reflect, in microcosm, the general positions in society as a whole.

However, there are disturbing signs of a swing against open schooling among English-speaking whites. This is disturbing because the more society is polarised along racial and language lines, the more difficult it is going to be to establish a normal society in future.

The present dispensation has failed completely to produce a peaceful society. This is as much the fault of the education system as it is the fault of other institutions and policies. The education system does much to entrench the myths and prejudices which have led to the present tragic division.

The 'open school' philosophy is a commitment to an open society in which our children are able to

- communicate with each other
- respect each other's values and cultures
- negotiate their common future
- live without envy or anger, because there will be equality of opportunity in a democratic society. □

'open' schools open minds

richard hawkins



be disciplined even in the most stable homes and educational backgrounds. But these adolescents come mainly from unstable home backgrounds and few have had any education. This amounts to a potential tragedy of Grecian proportions for all of us.

Not only are our children separated on racial lines and educated unequally, but they are also separated on language lines. They are separated under the 'own affairs' philosophy so that they may develop their 'own identity',

St Joseph's is a Catholic 'open' school in Cape Town which runs from pre-primary to matric. It has about 450 pupils (mainly boys), of which about 49% are classified 'white'. Almost all the rest would be classified 'coloured'. I teach in the high school.

How open is the school, in fact? Earlier this year, at the A.G.M. of the Catholic Schools and Teachers Association, a lot of soul-searching was done on this question. One of the speakers asked the question: 'When did the Church stop serving the poor?'

The official policy at St Joseph's is that pupils are accepted on merit alone and many bursaries are available, but there seems to be little doubt that our pupils come mainly from relatively affluent homes. A result of this tends to be a lack of awareness, especially about educational issues, and those pupils who are not 'white' are often cut off from the communities in which they live.

Running a school such as this necessitates a lot of compromising. For instance, a year or so ago some representatives from the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) came to speak to the staff about what changes would have to be made in our sport if we were to be able to join SACOS (and, incidentally thus be able to play our brother school, St Owen's, a township school).

SACOS prohibits its members from participating in 'multi-racial' as opposed to 'non-racial' sport. Under the slogan of 'No normal sport in an abnormal society,' SACOS rejects any sporting contacts with teams representing predominantly segregated institutions, and prohibits the use of their facilities. It has also, in the past, rejected sporting contacts with clubs requiring permits under the Group Areas Act. These stipulations would not only have required that St Joseph's teams stop playing against the teams that have been their traditional opponents for the past 70 years, but also that many parents resign from their own sports clubs. If this stipulation had been introduced, it was felt a large number of parents might remove their sons from the school, which would cease to be economically viable. So we don't belong to SACOS – but we do still exist, and I believe that each time

*Trying
to be*

a normal school in an abnormal society

biddy greene



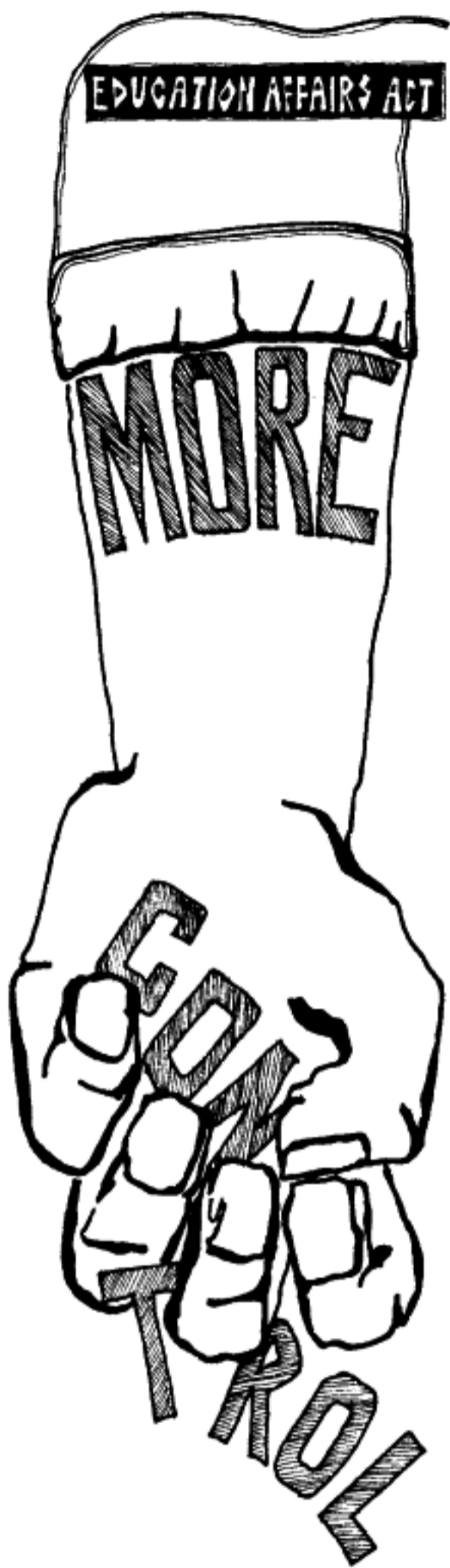
our racially-mixed teams play against teams from 'white' schools then a little progress is made; a few more minds open just a little further.

There is a remarkable degree of genuine forgetting about race classification in the pupils' day-to-day relationships at school. Most of the time the issue just doesn't enter one's mind. But at times it does, particularly during socialisation after school. I see this as a direct result of the Group Areas Act: it is often difficult for the children to travel to each others' 'areas' and so they tend to be friendlier with those who live closer. And from these divisions, subtle prejudices can develop. Older boys sometimes tell you that the different race groups like different kinds of music and different types of social activity.

Despite the fact that such comments are made, I believe that the non-racialism that exists at the school means that pupils generally just consider each other as people with the same hopes, problems and rights (whether fulfilled or not) as their own. Almost all of them will have no problem with the idea of sharing things in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Of course, there are exceptions, but it is more often the parents who are the problem. We had a minor drama recently when some parents got very upset that on 'Awareness Day' we taught their children to sing *Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*. But at least we *had* an 'Awareness Day' and this is the bottom line; we did something we could not have done at a state school. I was with the Std five, six and seven boys that day. One of the activities was group discussions and plenary report-back after they had watched a video about the different lives of a Soweto schoolgirl and one from the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The bell for break rang in the middle of the report-back. Nobody stirred; they all wanted to have their say and hear what others thought. It was a special moment for me. That is the kind of thing that makes me believe that schools like this really do make a difference. □

Biddy Greene is a member of Cape Western Region and teaches mathematics at St Joseph's.



roger burrows

Though it is hard to believe, the South African education system has been burdened by another piece of restrictive legislation that places severe constraints on white schools.

The Education Affairs Act (House of Assembly), governing schools which fall under the Minister of (white) Education and Culture, Piet Clase, greatly centralises control over white education. At the same time it imposes additional restraints on both the rights of teachers and parents.

The Act had its origins in the move – long desired by the National Party – to abolish provincial control of education. This system was the last vestige of the desire on the part of both the Cape and Natal states to have a federal system of government in South Africa, rather than a union, in 1910. Part of the compromise reached at the National Convention was to allow education, other than tertiary, to be devolved to the control of the four Provincial Councils. Over the years, control by the provinces over black, coloured and Indian education was replaced by central government control. The transfer on 1 April 1986 of white education to the control of the Ministers' Council of the House of Assembly and the abolition of the Provincial Councils in June 1986 marked the end of the compromise reached in 1910.

Having been separately controlled, albeit with a high degree of co-ordination, each provincial education department functioned under its own rules and regulations and under separate Provincial Ordinances. A new Act of the House of Assembly (note not parliament) thus became necessary to administer the newly centralised white school system.

For over two years departmental

officials and certain individuals worked on drafts of a new Bill. This was submitted, on a highly confidential basis, to the advisory parent bodies which have been created. These bodies were not able to consult, nor report back to, their elective groups (parent committees, school boards etc.) before submitting their comments to the Minister. In the event, from a scrutiny of evidence laid before the House of Assembly Committee which handled the Bill, these bodies had a farcical length of time in which to comment, and even the most conservative of them had the greater majority of their submissions ignored. There was little or no public debate and certainly no public call for submissions.

When the Bill was tabled in the House of Assembly, a small committee was formed (heavily dominated by Nationalist and Conservative Party members, with the Progressive Federal Party and National Democratic Movement represented by one member each). Written evidence previously sent to the Department was circulated but the committee voted, by majority, against a proposal to hear evidence from interested parties. The Nationalists were determined to stamper the Bill through that session.

The Act is far more than merely the synthesis of the four provincial ordinances. The weighting given to particular aspects means that for some provinces, existing educational practice is altered completely. In addition there are some sections which introduce new concepts.

The Nationalists, in guiding the Bill through the House committee and then in debate, were at pains to emphasise that the principle of 'centralisation and delegation' was dominant. This means that in the new Act all powers which were previously vested in the Administrator and the Director of Education are shifted to the Minister and the Superintendent-General (SG) of Education. The powers of the SG – the single executive officer in charge of white education – are massively increased. For both the Minister and the S-G the power of delegation exists and numerous minor functions were delegated to the provincial Directors of Education in April 1988.

The great differences in educational philosophy became especially evident in the debates on the Bill, with a total lack of desire on the part of the Nationalists to meet differing viewpoints.

If we look to the Act, we find numerous objectionable sections on which any hope of a more flexible and democratic education system must founder. So, for example, in the definition of 'education': 'Education means instruction, teaching or training provided to *White* pupils in terms of this Act' (my emphasis). The dominance of this racial characterisation – stemming from the 'own affairs' nature of education in South Africa – means that the thousands of pupils of colour in the so-called 'white' system can be conveniently ignored – after all, the Nationalist view is that 'white' schools cater for these pupils on an 'agency' basis.

Amongst the functions assigned to the S-G in Pretoria are the approval of educational programmes for pupils, the determination of the conditions for admission to teaching and training, determining the school calendar etc. Many submissions made to the House Committee proposed that these functions be exercised together with the Provincial Education Councils which are at least partly representative of the parent community in the schools system. This was refused and amendments to this effect voted down in the committee.

In the end, therefore, the S-G and his department in Pretoria have an almost absolute say over what occurs in

every classroom in the land. They may set the courses, they may select the teachers, they exercise control over the Principal, whilst there is a verbal undertaking from the Minister that the ethos and character of each Province's education system will be recognised it is hard to believe that this can take place in the total absence of any protection being offered in law.

In general the tone of the Act is highly authoritarian, it smacks of prescription rather than guidance or suggestion. In a number of places in the 114-clause Act, the S-G is empowered, apparently without consultation or advice, to exercise his discretion: for example in refusing a subsidy for a pre-primary school, even where it complies fully with the conditions he may lay down.

Similarly a school board may exercise its powers regarding admissions to schools in its feeder area without the consent of the particular school committee in question. This zoning provision is particularly severe:

(Clause 52)

- a) no child whose parent resides within the area, shall, except with the approval of the school board concerned, attend a school outside that area.
- b) the school board concerned may -
 - i. refuse to admit to the school a child whose parent is not resident within that area;
 - or
 - ii. terminate such a child's attendance of the school.'

This certainly violates the commitment in the de Lange report on parental choice. Even factors previously seen as sufficiently good reasons for choosing a school over another – such as co-educational, language medium, subject package or simply that it is a better school – all are ignored.

Despite all attempts to have the Department consider school readiness as a valid criterion to determine admission to school – rather than only the age of the child, this was resolutely opposed on the grounds that there was inadequate time to consider the matter properly. It certainly looks as if speed rather than educational desirability was the determining factor in this case.

Finally the Act considers in detail the employment of teachers. Even here the heavy hand of centralisation and control rests harshly on the teaching profession. For example teacher 'misconduct' is so broadly defined as to include, amongst others:

- encouraging disobedience or resistance to an Act of Parliament.
- public criticism of the administration of any State department.
- becoming 'financially embarrassed' (what of teachers' salaries!)
- being guilty of gross discourteousness.
- committing an offence.

The political rights of white teachers are still further restricted. Previous restrictions are extended. In terms of the Act, no teacher may 'express himself [sic] in public, in the public press or at a public meeting, on any matter, or in any manner, which may further or prejudice the interests of a political party or an organisation with political aims, or which may embarrass the Department.'

For the Black Sash it is interesting to note that 'public meeting' means 'any gathering, concourse or procession in, through or along any place of any number of persons but excluding a meeting admittance to which is restricted to members only of the same group, party or movement.'

Effectively teachers are politically emasculated and left at the tender mercies of the Minister should they wish to appeal against a conviction of misconduct.

Educational administration will become more cumbersome, more restrictive and distanced from the user. Racially it is already oppressive and anti-democratic. The tight hand of control grasps just where it should be most relaxed. As a Nationalist said in the House Committee on the Bill – 'When we had the choice, we went for centralisation.' The result is another restriction, another tightening of the noose. When will education be of the people, for the people and by the people? □

Roger Burrows is the Progressive Federal Party spokesman on education.

regional roundup

This survey of education in various centres shows that predictions of the pending collapse of black highschool education may not have been far-fetched.

No teaching, no learning

Schools in Soweto have been emptied by boycotts in recent months and classes at several schools were suspended in what Deputy Minister Sam de Beer described as a 'friendly warning' and to allow a space for negotiation around the causes of the unrest. The issues will not be easy to resolve.

Years of chronic unrest have taken their toll of the children of Soweto.

When they returned to school in their thousands at the beginning of 1987, educationists and officials said they were 'cautiously optimistic' about the immediate prospects for meaningful education. With hindsight, they were right to be cautious and wrong to be optimistic.

The fragile peace which descended on the classrooms was breached sporadically later that year and has been shattered this year.

Pupils have staged lengthy stay-aways to protest against the detention of classmates, vandalised schools and frequently attacked inspectors and other officials of the Department of Education and Training, resulting in the temporary closure of several schools.

However, educationists have been more disturbed by what is happening in the schools where attendance is supposedly normal than by these incidents.

They no longer talk about the 'deteriorating' learning environment in Soweto. As far as they are concerned, conditions conducive to education no longer exist.

An official said: 'There is education in the rest of the country and then there is education in Soweto.'

There has been a complete break-

down in discipline. Teachers say pupils arrive late in the morning and leave at about 11 am. They walk in and out of the classrooms as they please and talk, play music, drink and dance during lessons. They ignore requests to study or to do homework.

Demotivated and intimidated, many teachers no longer prepare lessons or make any attempt to keep to the syllabus. Control of the schools has passed on to the pupils. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that inspectors are unwelcome.

'Some students try to maintain some direction but there is a general atmosphere of unease, anger, frustration, demotivation and despair,' says a principal.

This climate is attributed, at least partly, to the fact that none of the pupils' grievances have been addressed. Instead, a myriad of restrictions governing the conduct of pupils was introduced, SRCs were crushed, student organisations such as the Soweto Students Congress (Sosco) were forced underground and scores of pupils were detained.

The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) which played a major role in persuading children to return to school and might now have had a moderating influence over pupils, - was restricted. Its leaders were detained and 'people's education' was outlawed.

The Minister of Education and Development Aid was empowered to suspend the activities of a school or class for any period he determined - a power he is using frequently now.

Ex-detainees were denied places at schools, as were those above the age

limit and many pupils who had failed the 1987 examinations.

Educationist, Ken Hartshorne, said recently:

'Pupils and teachers at black schools are often present in the flesh, but not in spirit, because attitudes have not changed and the fundamental issues of separation, discrimination, isolation and white domination have not been addressed in an effective way.'

Others say pupils, many of whom have not known a year of uninterrupted secondary education, have been harmed psychologically by the on-going conflict.

Former journalist and now Unisa Lecturer, Phil Mtimkulu, who has been monitoring the situation in Soweto, says: 'The accumulated effect of years of unrest has scarred their immature minds. They can't get back to work.'

'They are rootless and volatile. Any little thing that happens brings out their anger.'

'And they don't realise how they are losing out ... what the consequences will be. They live for now and cannot project into the future.'

He says there is little point in pupils going to school while there is little motivation to learn. 'They need to be counselled by professionals, to be re-motivated and shown the value of education.'

Mtimkulu also feels ordinary parents, not civic or political leaders should get together with pupils to 'assess their intentions, find out their problems and try to find ways to solve them'.

'It is very worrying that pupils no

longer have an organisation such as the NECC to articulate their grievances and negotiate with the DET on their behalf. The more hard-line attitude of the DET doesn't help. Closing down schools only exacerbates the situation.

Mtimkulu believes there has been a huge exodus of pupils committed to their studies from Soweto to private schools, educational programmes in the Johannesburg city centre, the rural areas and the homelands. (In 1987 between 16 000 and 18 000 pupils were lost to Soweto, according to the DET).

Only a small minority of conscientious pupils remains in the township, often studying in secret, he says. 'They loiter around the school premises during the day with their friends and then go to libraries and study centres at night and weekends.'

A high school teacher concluded: 'What is happening here is not education. Pupils just sit here for a few hours each day. There is no teaching, no learning.'

Zenaide Vendeiro
(Acknowledgement: *the Star*)

The crisis spreads

The disintegration of education that characterises Soweto schools is fast becoming the norm in some western Cape schools as well.

The high schools under the Department of Education and Training (DET) in the townships of Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga have been deeply disturbed since the start of the year. The initial controversy centred around several clauses in a registration form that many pupils and parents found unacceptable and that the DET refused to amend, despite an apparent undertaking to do so. The resulting confusion was exacerbated by the fact that the Joint Parent Teacher Student Association and other PTSAs were prohibited from meeting to discuss the issue and 1 544 pupils who registered late were excluded from schools. The DET attempted to explain these exclusions by saying that 936 pupils had 'unacceptable or inadequate documentation' and 199 pupils had 'frivolous and unsubstantiated reasons

for delay in applying.' When the schools finally opened almost six weeks late, three were little more than half full.

These events have caused great anxiety in the affected communities. The Joint PTSA mounted a court challenge against the exclusion of pupils and the ban on their meetings, but the outcome was unsatisfactory. The court found the PTSAs had the right to meet, as they are legal organisations. However the DET was not required to recognise them, enabling officials to refuse PTSAs the right to meet on school premises or to obtain addresses of parents.

Pressure has continued to mount on the DET and two delegations have met the Deputy Minister, Sam de Beer, and begun negotiations. The DET has drawn out negotiations for so long and changed their positions on the excluded pupils so often, that what seemed to be a conciliatory gesture has become a mockery of what negotiation should be about.

In addition to these problems, six teachers were suspended early in the year, all or whom were members of the Democratic Teachers Union (DETU), an unrecognised teacher organisation drawing its membership from teachers in DET schools. Five of these teachers have been charged with misconduct, apparently for participating in a boycott in which other teachers also participated without facing charges. These teachers are awaiting a hearing in a special court convened by the Department of Justice to hear their case.

Two well-qualified and committed white teachers at black schools were dismissed without being given reasons other than that they were 'temporary'. Their positions have been filled by less suitably qualified people, also temporary.

Teachers have no power to challenge the DET's action, and the unity forged over the issue of excluded pupils between Peninsula African Teachers' Association (PENATA), the recognised association, and the Democratic Teachers' Union (DETU) has proved temporary. Boycotts and stayaways are the only weapon many pupils and teachers believe they have and these can be costly, particularly if

Schools Protests Athlone 26 April 1988.



Adil Bradlow

teachers are suspended. Pupils responded to the COSATU call for three days of protest in June and the commemoration of Nelson Mandela's birthday. These actions were called by the Western Cape Students' Congress (WECSCO) under whose banner the SRCs of these schools operate. An estimated 1 200 teachers also supported the stayaway on Monday 6 June.

Stayaways have become endemic in schools here and the very organisations which solidly support continued schooling, the Joint PTSAs and the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), are not able to operate due to restrictions. Meanwhile another sinister phenomenon is occurring. Youth gang violence is keeping children from school, and the police and army are even more strongly present in the townships and at schools. There are some who believe that these forces are not impartial.

The schools in the 'coloured' townships have also been deeply disturbed this year. The Department of Education and Culture (DEC) backed up by the SADF and SAP, has threatened schools in Athlone, Bonteheuwel and Mitchell's Plain where pupils were protesting at the dismissal and detention of teachers and pupils. Student resistance grew in response to police threats, culminating in a three days of awareness programmes, protest rallies and stayaways.

This brought a response from the Minister responsible for Education and Culture, Allan Hendrickse. He stated that he had reached an agreement with Minister Vlok that the police would keep away from the pupils.

Crucial issues in the community and in the country influence pupils and they continue to protest against the detention of their teachers and fellow students. Stayaways here, too, have become endemic. A report in the Cape Times on 20 July gave official estimates of overall attendance at coloured and black schools as 'about 50% of usual levels'. Reasons for the low attendance at schools were not clear, one official attributing it to a protest around the Sharpeville Six in the case of 'coloured' schools and gang warfare in the case of black schools.

The state's policy of control and coercion has predictable consequences. The lessons of 1976, 1980 and 1985 have been ill-learned. As the structures and legitimacy of schools become increasingly frail, the effects will have a profound impact on our future.

Susan Philcox

and spreads...

The 1988 school year began with a call from progressive organisations for pupils in Natal to return to school. Both parent and student bodies appeared keen for this to happen, but the official handling of the registration process made it almost impossible for many students, especially those who had been politically active or detained, to register.

Firstly there is a genuine lack of facilities so that activists could be 'legitimately' refused places because they registered late or the school was full. The scramble for places in schools seemed to be specially acute in KwaMashu where there are more than 11 primary schools but only three high schools. One school in KwaMashu was reported to have turned away more than 1 000 prospective students (Daily News, 05.02.1988).

Overall there is a shortage of some 12 000 classrooms in KwaZulu; the total school enrollment of KwaZulu is 1,5 million. It is estimated that this represents only 67% of the total school age population. The high school enrollment is approximately 25 000 in just under 600 schools.

Secondly there is irregular but ongoing and consistent vigilante action which either prevents students attending classes or settling down to work. Because the vigilante groups are conservative, these incidents are generally reported as Inkatha/UDF clashes. Clashes have been reported from as far

north as Ezikhaweni (Richards Bay) and as far west as Waaihoek (Ladysmith). The destabilisation of schooling has certainly not been limited to the Pietermaritzburg area. The Kwa-Ndengezi/KwaMakhutha/Lindelani areas (around Pinetown) have been particularly badly affected and scholars have flocked into Durban to seek alternative schooling.

The students seeking help gave the following reasons for not being able to re-register:

- Violence in their areas
- principals refusing re-admittance
- not holders of Inkatha membership cards
- principals refusing to give transfer papers

These grievances and a request that something be done to alleviate the situation were telexed to the Ministers of Education of KwaZulu and South Africa, Oscar Dhlomo and Gerrit Viljoen, but no practical help has been received.

Parents and students are in a quandary. The question at stake appears to be who gets to go to school. Communities are being divided and labelled as either Inkatha or UDF areas although local residents often don't belong to either organisation. Parents are obviously reluctant to encourage their children to attend school since this could mean that they do not see them alive again.

The state does have the upper hand in the struggle for power in the field of education in Natal. However, this remains a strongly contested terrain, and with the planned unification of teachers and the training of student bodies in democratic practices, organisations will be strengthened at their bases and pockets of 'people's power' will survive to continue the struggle.

The crisis in white education is also a struggle for control, with the Education Affairs Bill removing the last vestiges of local educationists' input in educational matters relating to Natal. Nonetheless some educationists feel optimistic that if teachers can combine to win concessions in salaries, they could also be mobilised on other pertinent issues (Education Update Workshop, 13.06.1988).

Wendy Anneck

Better - but hardly rosy

To the outsider it seems as though 'normality' has returned to the black schools in the Grahamstown area: there have been no school boycotts and all examinations were eventually written. Money has been spent on buildings - there are two new double-storey primary schools in Grahamstown and one in Bedford. There are two science laboratories in Grahamstown and woodwork is taught at one high school. The picture is not, however, uniformly rosy: the pupils have returned to school and have stayed there but the leaders who urged the return to school after the last boycotts are still in detention. (Of the 50 people still in detention, nine are beginning their third year behind bars.) Several members of the Grahamstown Students' Congress (GRASCO) and the Grahamstown Youth Congress (GRAYCO) have been detained. Furthermore, no new classrooms have been built, there has been very little upgrading of older buildings, technical facilities (apart from woodwork) are non-existent and the ratio of pupils to teachers is still high: one teacher to 37,6 pupils at primary levels. The following extract from a parent describes the actual conditions in a Grahamstown primary school:

Two of my children are in Archie Mbolekwa Higher Primary School. None of the 24 classrooms there have doors or window-panes since 1984. The parents contributed R5 for windows and panes. They are short of chairs and desks so children must share. There are not enough books and pens for the children. The classrooms are cold and uncomfortable so my children are always cold and sick. It is very poor.

In schools administered by the 'coloured' Department of Education and Culture, attendance has been high. Facilities are inadequate: there is a severe shortage of laboratories, libraries, films, videos, sports facilities, transport and even books and writing materials. This year free books and stationery were provided - a great step forward.

Bursaries which provide uniforms and examination fees are still inad-

equated although the Grahamstown Area District Relief Association (GADRA) has been able to help many. Many pupils in the rural areas are unable to afford to travel to schools which go beyond higher primary level and the inadequacy of hundreds of farm schools remains a cause for concern. There are still reports of children being kept out of schools to work on the farms during harvest.

The tragedy of this area is its depressed economy: over and over again one sees school pupils eager to finish their education and expecting the world to open up for them. They are unrealistic in several respects:

- the matric examination in black schools, where facilities are so inadequate equips the pupil for very little;
- in this area there are no facilities for technical training;
- even where, against great odds, some skill has been acquired, there are no jobs: unemployment is estimated at a conservative 60%.

Black enrolment at Rhodes university is now about 20%. A non-racial forum has been created on campus at which an unprecedented range of residence and society leaders resolved that the university should be trying to build non-racialism on campus instead of assuming it would occur spontaneously.

At the university of Fort Hare there has been one short stay-away this year, when a student was detained by Ciskei police. A policy of fewer admissions of students from outside Ciskei is reinforcing the 'tribal college' concept and barring potential 'trouble-makers' from outside.

The Cape Teachers' College (Fort Beaufort) was closed in May and the students were sent home. The protest centred on food and accommodation - students claim that only third year students have beds and that the rest apparently sleep on the floor. Over-crowding is clearly a major problem - a sad reflection on a system that allows the whites-only Graaff Reinet Training College to be closed for lack of students.

There is a good deal of 'alternative

education'/private education in this area. MASIFUNDE ('we must learn' in Xhosa), a Christian Trust group, offers a variety of services and provides winter schools, adult literacy projects, resources and materials. INSET, based at the 1820 Settlers Foundation, provides upgrading courses for teachers.

The South African Committee on Higher Education (SACHED) was deliberately burned down the night before it was due to re-open early in January. The fire slightly delayed the start of SACHED's educational programmes, but by the end of February, tutorials and classes had begun at a new venue and enrollment was such that the large new building was bursting at the seams. SACHED runs a UNISA support programme (85 students), a Std ten course (87 students) and a Std eight course (91 students). Its library and audio-visual facilities are available for use by non-SACHED students.

EWE, meaning 'Yes' in Xhosa and an acronym for 'Each Working in Education' is a small but lively project that helps students sustain their studies despite detention. It has helped about 50 students to return to school this year without repeating a standard. There are 201 students learning by correspondence, of which 16 are still in detention. The scheme is run jointly by Dependants' Conference and SACHED in Grahamstown. (See SASH Vol. 31 No. 1, June 1988, p. 44.)

Obviously without a radical economic and educational change, there is little cause for optimism. IDASA held an education conference here in May which addressed the question of democratic education and this topic will be further considered at a conference on the Future of Grahamstown (FOG) scheduled for September. A note of optimism is that two private boys' schools in Grahamstown now offer alternative programmes to cadets and an increasing number of boys are opting for these. □

*Betty Davenport and
Mary-Louise Peires*

The Parents Teachers Students Associations (PTSAs)

The Parents Teachers Students Associations (PTSAs) are a combination of student activism, parental caution and academic foresight. They are designed to bring together the three constituent groups in the schools: parents, teachers and students – under the broad guiding principles of democracy within the community. The PTSAs should be developed to the point where they are able to manage schools effectively and efficiently and be accountable to the communities they serve. Responsibility for education needs to be given into the hands of educators and parent communities, rather than entrusted to politicians and education authorities who should only play a supportive role.

The PTSAs will destroy the myth the black parents are uninterested in the education of their children. What has been evident in the ongoing education crisis is a breakdown of communication and discipline among the students and youth, and a lack of understanding and trust, as the students hold the view that the parents have abdicated responsibility. Through the PTSAs, a method of communication on issues affecting education has been established and this will strengthen democracy as decisions will be taken collectively.

The active participation of parents, teachers and students at this level provides a forum for discussion of problems, be they educational, political, social or economic and stimulates critical thinking and analysis. This leads parents to learn to understand the youth, their aspirations and ambitions.

The Education policy statement by Dr Viljoen, Minister of National Education, implying recognition of parent participation and involvement in education is fraught with inconsistencies as was evident in the Langa High School crisis, which has up to now not been finally resolved. The Langa High PTSA, out of a desire to resolve a problem of overcrowding, which had been created by the unilateral decision of the DET to transfer Std five pupils to high schools, in appointing teachers to

vacant posts and making endeavours to provide additional accommodation, seemed to have overstepped its mark and had by implication assumed power to control the school. The DET responded by closing the school officially.

The events that followed are historical, such as the opening of the school by the broader community of Cape Town and the protest by the pupils' mothers at the DET offices.

Other high schools and the community in general pledged their solidarity with the Langa PTSA. It is interesting to note all that was done was under the direction and guidance of the PTSA, entailing a measure of non-co-operative co-operation with the system, i.e. negotiating to our own benefit from an independent position of principle and organisation.

The struggle for people's education is no longer a struggle for the student alone. Education has become an instrument for liberation. It follows, therefore, that we must encourage the formation of PTSAs and increase the critical awareness of parents on questions which affect the education of the child.

Whilst Bantu Education is designed to produce labour, white education is based on 'domination'; both are undesirable. But the casualties between the two opposites have been truth, integrity, honesty and human dignity.

These are social and moral values which I think all of us hold dear. The movement towards an alternative system of education is a struggle which will, in the process, humanise the whole of our society. □

Lungile Daba

Lungile Daba is chairman of the Joint Parents Teachers Students Association in the Cape Town area. In terms of a Supreme Court ruling, the PTSAs are allowed to meet – but the DET has the right to refuse them any access to school premises and resources, making it very difficult for the PTSAs to function and call meetings.



Njongo Primary School: Khayelitsha, 18 April 1988.

Jan van Eck – M.P., mediates between disgruntled parents and riot police. The parents this morning blocked access to the school in protest at alleged abuse of alcohol and sexual harassment of pupils by some of the staff.

the october elections

mary burton

Divergent attitudes towards the municipal elections threaten to rekindle divisions within some anti-apartheid organisations. Within the Black Sash, there are those who argue that the legitimacy of National Party policy is at stake, while others believe that progressive white voters should seize the opportunity the election offers to retain 'political space' for anti-apartheid work.

The 26 October elections are at hand. By the time you receive your magazine, they will probably be over. Nevertheless the issues raised during the election process are important and deserve on-going analysis by us all. The fact that the elections still lie ahead at the time of writing will be reflected in the tenses used in the text. But the debates will remain relevant far beyond the election.

The elections are seen as a test of strength both by the government and its opponents. Strategies of opposition differ and are again causing division. The issue is further complicated by the fact that the more vigorously the government tries to garner support for the elections and to silence opposition, the more they are seen as part of its strategy to win acceptance for its constitutional provisions.

In a letter to the Cape Times (7 September) the head of the Bureau for Information, Mr David Steward, says: 'Municipal government is an important facet of government in any society. It is desirable that it should be representative of, and responsible to, the communities it serves.' We agree, but we do not define those communities in racially separate categories. And when Mr Steward continues: 'It is also important that as many South Africans as possible should gain as much experience as possible in grassroots democratic processes,' we find this arrogant and patronising coming from a government that has done so much to destroy grassroots democratic processes.



cesses.

Local government is important. It needs to be thoughtfully and thoroughly discussed and then carefully established and strengthened. This process is extremely difficult in present circumstances.

The State of Emergency regulations make it a criminal offence to call for an election boycott. Some church leaders have taken the forbidden path which restricted organisations might have chosen. We support their right to do so. In the meantime the process of registration of voters and nomination of candidates has been marred by allegations of coercion and corruption. On the other hand there have been reports of intimidation of prospective candidates and one has been killed. Members of several organisations have been detained and it is widely believed that many detentions are linked to the elections.

In some areas nominations have been duly received and elections will take place; in others too few nominations have been made; and in a very few areas no names at all have been put forward.

In all our Regions the Black Sash has spent time considering its role in these elections. We agreed at an early stage that our task should be to study the implications, to make available the information at our disposal and to monitor the process. We have published the booklet, *You and Your Local Authority*, we have participated in discussions, we have kept records of news and opinion and our members have wrestled with the question of whether or not to participate in the elections, and if so, to what extent.

In Johannesburg, the Black Sash is a subscribing organisation to the Five Freedoms Forum which has decided to participate in the election for the Johannesburg City Council.

In the Cape Western Region, the Regional Council endorsed a statement on participation emanating from the local Five Freedoms initiative. The statement accepted participation by white voters in the Cape Town City Council elections as a valid strategy to achieve future political objectives. The statement affirmed that it would be in the long-term interest of the western Cape and of the goal of achieving a united and open City if the maximum

number of progressive candidates were elected. The statement also encouraged support for progressive candidates but underscored the right of organisations to follow their own agendas, so long as this did not undermine the election of such candidates.

It is important to note that this endorsement does not bind Black Sash members to a participation strategy. This decision is left to the personal discretion of each member. We are also aware that the very fact that we can have such discussions, involving a great many of our members and representatives, is one denied to many other organisations. This places an added burden of responsibility on us.

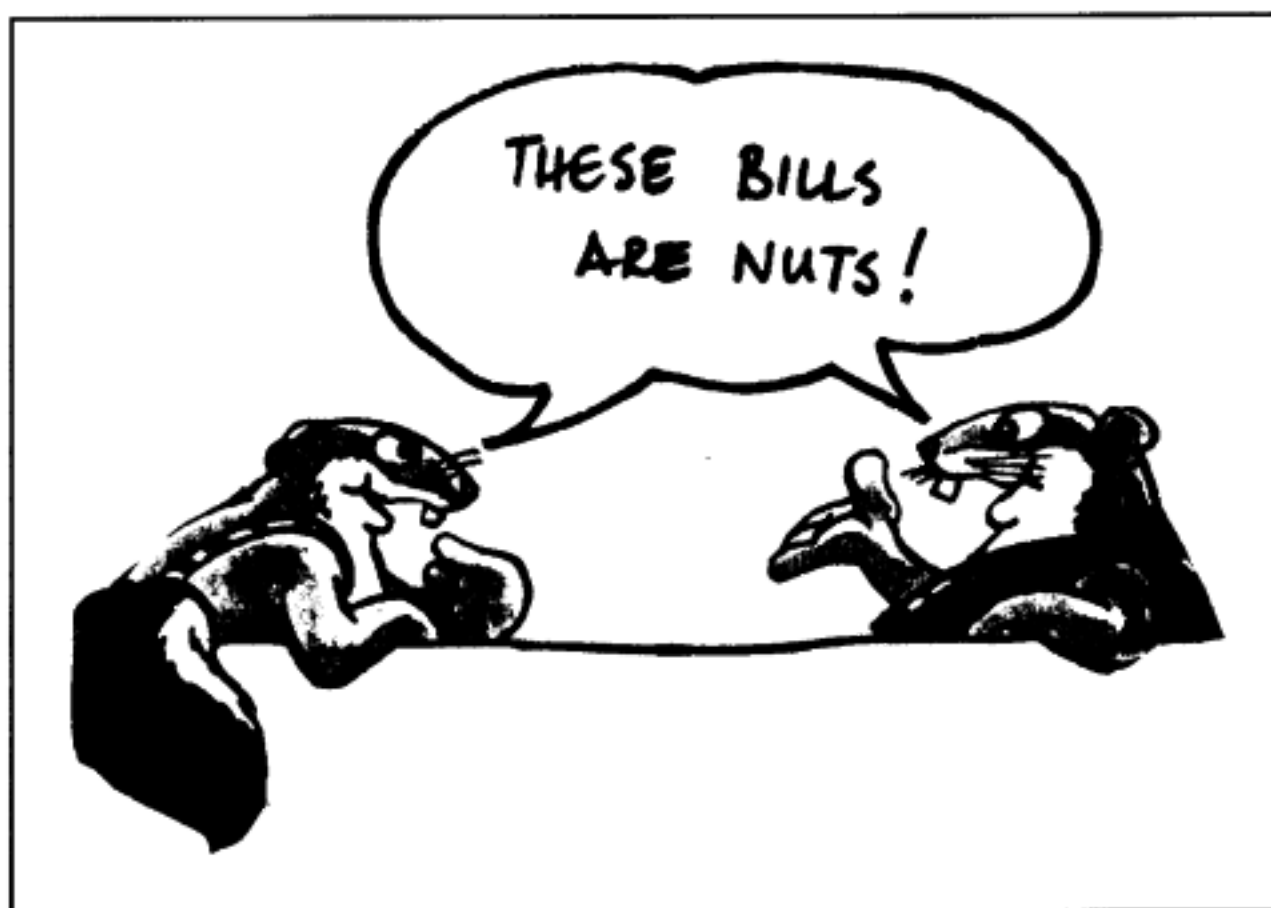
In the Western Cape Region, for example, the newly formed Local Authorities interest group was involved in organising a lecture series and panel discussion in which a wide variety of views on the election were presented. These discussions were attended by representatives of a broad range of organisations.

Those who oppose participation, including those Black Sash members who will not vote, argue that the local authorities are based on racial classification and entrench the concept of 'own affairs' government. They note that many fellow citizens are denied a vote, either because they live in the 'homelands' or because they live in an area in which there is no provision for their 'population group'. They regard the government's attempt to clamp down on 'Group Areas', 'slums' and 'squatting' through new legislation as a reminder of the constraints under which local government is forced to operate. They note that the poorer local authorities (which usually means the black ones, even if they represent larger populations) have less power on the Regional Services Councils; that the restrictions on organisations, the detentions of representatives and the regulations outlawing boycott calls all abrogate basic human rights; and that the black local authorities are intended to choose the electoral college to send nine representatives to the proposed National Council, thereby lending support to the government's constitutional initiatives. Opponents of participation also assert the desire to show solidarity with those who will boycott the elections.

Others, including Black Sash members who will vote, are no less critical of the present system, but they believe local government is a 'site of struggle', and that selective participation can be a legitimate strategy for change. While they acknowledge that strategic boycotts can be productively applied in a variety of circumstances, including elections, they oppose the elevation of the boycott strategy to the status of a political principle. They believe that different strategies are appropriate to divergent constituencies with opposing political traditions, and that strategy must be developed accordingly. They believe that in certain 'white' municipalities, where there is a danger of rightwingers making gains, or even taking control of a Council, it is necessary to try to prevent this. Where municipalities are committed to working towards fully open cities and non-racial practices in spite of the prevailing restrictive legislation, there is merit in striving to give impetus to these endeavours.

The importance of this attempt lies not so much in the immediate results (although the composition of local authorities will affect the terrain in which opposition organisations must work). An additional argument is that the foundations for the quality of life under a future post-apartheid government need to be laid now. Even if the present regime were to be dismantled by the end of the century, segregation would take a long time to undo if discrimination had been a factor in urban planning all along. Those who are devising plans for non-racially ordered cities need to be enabled to go on doing so. Black Sash members who take this view believe that even if there is a slight chance of being able to achieve this, it is imperative to be involved in attempting it.

Those who take either decision do so on the basis of strong convictions, and the arguments are hotly debated. The important factor for the Black Sash to recognise is that both positions are firmly grounded on moral principles. Both are committed to non-racial democratic government at local and national level. So long as this is the case we remain united in our aims and strengthened by 'mutual trust and forbearance,' in the words of our dedication. □



laws that discredit the law

The Black Sash's Transvaal Region has produced an information package on three Bills, that together constitute a concerted attack on millions of homeless South Africans. This is a summary of the Bills, incorporating subsequent amendments.

More than five million people - one million families - in South Africa do not have proper shelter. They are South Africa's homeless (see box).

What is the government doing about them?

It is proposing to increase the penalties people must face for being homeless.

It is proposing to make even more people homeless by evicting them from their present homes on the farms or in the 'wrong' group areas.

It is proposing to break down houses, remove people from where they are without providing any other place for them to be, and effectively reintroducing influx control through controls on housing.

Three Bills, dealing with enforce-

ment of Group Areas, control over squatting and control of slums have been tabled in Parliament. The Black Sash has given urgent attention to the three Bills in an attempt to prevent them from becoming law. The Bills are: the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Amendment Bill, the Group Areas Amendment Bill and the Slums Bill.

The three Bills have certain things in common:

- * They make homelessness a crime.
- * They punish the condition of being homeless with penalties more suited to crimes of violence.
- * They remove the legal principle that people shall be considered innocent until proved guilty, removing one of the most important protections of the law.

They concentrate enormous power to evict people in the hands of the Minister of Constitutional Development, making it extremely difficult for people to challenge eviction in court.

Intrinsic to an understanding of how these Bills work is an analysis of the land issue in South Africa.

All land in South Africa is basically reserved for whites except for the limited areas set aside for occupation by people of other races.

Between 13% and 14% of the land constitutes the homelands. Thirteen million people, more than one third of the total population, live in those areas because they were removed there or because they were not permitted to leave to seek their survival elsewhere.

Limited areas are set aside as 'group areas' for Indian and coloured people.

Limited areas are set aside for African occupation in the black townships attached to white towns and cities.

The rest of the land is for white people who constitute only 15% of the population.

Homeless black people are unable to resolve their housing problems legally because there is just not enough space in the areas where they are allowed to live. Most are unable to afford such land as is becoming available.

The proposed laws cannot be enforced. They will cause more human suffering and more chaos. Orderly urbanisation will be prevented. Laws such as these bring law into disrespect.

The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Amendment Bill

The proposed amendments to the Illegal Squatting Act undo most of the reforms of the Abolition of Influx Control Act and make the situation significantly worse than it was before. In terms of the pass laws, at least those black people who managed to qualify in terms of Section 10 were secure in the cities. In terms of the new amendment, anyone other than a land owner may be removed from his or her house by the decision of a junior official regardless of whether the person has permission to be there. If this Bill becomes law it will wipe out all the normal legal safeguards afforded to tenants who rent houses. People who can prove that they have a right to be where they are will not be able to use this as a defence against unlawful eviction. The only possible defence will be bad faith on the part of the officials, which is very difficult to prove. While the Bill is non-racially framed, it is clearly aimed at blacks who live in shacks or squatter settlements.

It contains frightening somersaults in basic legal principles. In terms of the Bill a person may be deemed guilty of being a squatter until s/he can prove innocence. The court's discretion to decide on a course of action appropriate to the circumstances of the accused is removed. The Bill lays down that the court must order the squatter's eviction and the demolition of the shelter/house, thereby destroying the possible legal defence that a person has nowhere else to go. This principle of 'alternative accommodation' has, until now, been the main legal weapon Group Areas Act evictions.

Furthermore, there are sections in the Bill which make it virtually impossible for a person to protect his or her home by legal action in the civil courts and which provide a form of indemnity to officials empowered to remove 'squatters.'

Many of the people who qualified to live in cities under the pass laws live in shacks because of the government-created housing shortage. Previously these people enjoyed a measure of security in the cities, but if this Bill becomes law they will find themselves

infinitely worse off than before. The Bill renders millions of people vulnerable to a process of unchallengeable eviction and demolition and removes the rights and protection which were secured by previous court cases and principles of law.

The Bill also wipes out the recent reforms in law affecting forced removals. In terms of the previous system the State President had the power to order the removal of any black people from one area to another. This law was repealed in mid-1986. The new Bill grants the same power to a magistrate, and there is no provision for a parliamentary check on this power as there was under the old Act.

The Group Areas Amendment Bill

A person who is accused of owning or leasing or occupying any property in a 'wrong' group area (i.e. an area which is set aside for occupation by a race group of which s/he is not a member) will be presumed to be guilty unless s/he can prove that s/he is not.

The Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning will be empowered to order a person to leave a property or to sell a property immediately, or after three months notice. No court order is necessary.

A court that convicts a person of contravening the Act must inform the Minister, who is empowered to act against the person in his discretion.

A person who buys or lives in property in the 'wrong' group area will be liable to a fine of R10 000 or to imprisonment of up to five years. This is a significant increase over the possible fine of R400 and imprisonment for two years. The same penalty applies to a person who lets a property to someone in the 'wrong' group area.

As in the Squatting Bill, appeals against any conviction or order will no longer have the effect of suspending the punishment or eviction.

The Slums Bill

If this Bill becomes law, it will greatly increase the power of the local authorities arbitrarily to demolish slums

and deprive the inhabitants of the right to oppose the demolition in any effective way.

The penalties for disobedience to orders can be a fine of R4 000 or imprisonment for up to one year.

People have to live somewhere.

The existing chaos is the direct result of government policy and laws and will be worsened if laws such as these are put into effect.

Homelessness in South Africa

In June 1988, the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Chris Heunis, told Parliament that there is a shortage of 702 750 housing units for black people outside the homelands.

That means that 702 750 black families have no adequate shelter. Other authorities have estimated the shortage to be well over 800 000 units.

The shortage in the 'independent' homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and Venda in 1986 was 106 291 units. The shortage in the 'non-independent' homelands in 1985 was between 149 218 and 174 978 units: a conservative estimate would be 160 000 units. In Indian and coloured areas the shortages were 44 000 and 52 000 units respectively in 1986 (Race Relations survey 1986).

These figures mean that more than five million people in South Africa have no proper place to live - and that is a very conservative estimate.

Another way of saying it is that one out of every six South Africans is without proper shelter or is living 'illegally' somewhere she is not supposed to be. □

another death...

The author of this article, Margaret Biet, is neither a member nor a supporter of the Black Sash. But we offered to publish her story because we support her conviction that it should be told. It was originally due for publication in a women's magazine, but was withdrawn following General Magnus Malan's warning in parliament that he would not tolerate women's magazines questioning conscription.

On Tuesday 20 October 1987, the SABC announced the death of my son, Gunner Sean Biet, in an army-convoy accident in Namibia. He died shortly after his 20th birthday, and two months before completing his two years' military service.

I had been informed of Sean's death three days before the television broadcast by a military chaplain. As soon as I saw him at the front door, I knew what he had come to say. I had lived in dread of this prospect for months. And I had done everything I thought I could do to prevent it.

Nothing worked. All my requests – and those of a chaplain and my doctor and Sean himself – to have him exempted from Border duty and transferred closer to Cape Town, failed.

I want to tell my story because I believe it may help others in a similar position. It may encourage the SADF to take account of peoples' personal circumstances when taking decisions that can destroy their lives.

When Sean went into the army, I knew I could not face another death in my family. In the previous four years I had lost my husband, my mother and my brother. Sean was my only son.

I am aware of the fact that many people face difficult personal circumstances. But I believe they deserve sympathetic consideration by the Defence Force, particularly widows with only sons. I have now insisted on

an investigation into why our transfer applications were rejected (or ignored).

It appears that neither the welfare office, nor his army base camp kept a record of the numerous calls I, the chaplain and my doctor made requesting a transfer for Sean. It seems they have even lost the registered letter my chaplain sent them (although they signed on receipt), as well as his follow-up letter and the letter I sent them repeating the request. I did not register my letter, or keep a copy of it, because it did not occur to me that it would be necessary. The chaplain did not so much as receive an acknowledgement of receipt of his letters.

Looking back, I now realise that from the moment Sean went into the army we lost any say over his life. Perhaps if we had tried to make these arrangements before he went in, it would have been easier. At the time I was still mourning my mother's death and the possible implications of Sean's call-up had not hit home. I also felt powerless because I didn't know what my rights were.

When Sean began his basic training at Potchefstroom, parents received a circular letter from the commanding officer assuring us that the army had the interest of our sons at heart and asking us to refer any problems we might have to them.

So that is where I started. When I

began to contemplate the possibility of his death in military service, I contacted a chaplain who has known our family for many years and asked him to help me get Sean transferred nearer Cape Town. He sent a letter to Potchefstroom with a substantiating doctor's certificate saying that I had been through severe depression and it was advisable that my son be transferred.

When there was no response, he wrote another letter and then telephoned requesting a reply. When none was forthcoming, he suggested that Sean contact the army welfare office in Potchefstroom himself, which he did, but no-one from the welfare office turned up at the first appointment. (There was no explanation.) At his second appointment they told him to fill in an application form requesting a transfer. He was turned down on the grounds that his reasons for requesting a transfer were not strong enough.

I phoned the army headquarters in Potchefstroom many times over the next few days but there was no reply. So I phoned the army welfare office in Cape Town and asked them to contact Potchefstroom.

By September 1986 I was feeling such intense stress that I had a blackout. Sean had given up trying to secure a transfer from Potchefstroom, and I resolved to start from scratch, since there had been no response to any of my previous attempts. I asked my doctor for another certificate. He said he would contact the welfare office himself. A woman captain in the office asked my doctor: 'Is Mrs Biet terminally ill?' When he said I wasn't, she said Sean would not get permission to transfer.

In October I had another blackout.

Then I was notified that Sean was going to the border for three months. Perhaps if I had two or three other sons I wouldn't have felt so desperate.

At the time I thought that soldiers only had to do border duty. I didn't know there was a war going on in Angola. I thought if South Africa went to war, I would know about it. At that time we weren't reading about the Angolan war in the newspapers. I know about it now, because young men who were involved in it have told me about it. I spoke to one of Sean's friends, and

he said he saw someone's foot just fly off after being hit. I have also heard from other women: one's son was in a ratel that was hit by a missile. The other son was in a casspir. Both were killed. Eighteen-year-old boys were involved in that war. They saw people being killed, or had to kill people themselves. How do they live with it?

I didn't know about these things at the time. I was just terrified of him being on active duty on the border and all my deepest misgivings surfaced.

I wrote to the army in Potchefstroom in October 1986 and told them I could not afford to lose my son. They said it cost the government R2 000 to train a soldier and they needed him; they also said he had volunteered to go. His friend said later they were told to go.

I contacted the army welfare office in Cape Town and spoke to the female army captain again. She said there was more danger in travelling on the roads than in going to the border. I said: 'I won't argue with that. I just don't want him to go.'

She replied: 'Lady, you'll have to learn to live without your son because he's not going to be with you forever.'

If only she'd known how prophetic those words would turn out to be.

He spent his 20th birthday on the border. He was supposed to come back after three months, but there was some problem with army transport and so they had to spend an extra two months there.

He came home on a pass after that. He didn't say anything about his experiences, and I have been told that boys who come back from border duty usually don't want to talk about it. But I saw how deeply agitated he was, and I had always known him as a calm, in fact a placid person. He had lost weight and was smoking a lot. All he kept on saying was: 'I don't want to go back to the border.'

I told him I had done everything I could to get him transferred from the border and that there was nothing more I could do. I know other people have succeeded. I don't know what they did, or whether they had the right contacts, but my attempts failed.

I phoned the captain in welfare in May 1987 and said I was worried about my son's agitated behaviour. She said all boys were like that when

they came back from the border because there was nothing for them to do in camp.

'If they have nothing to do with him in camp, send him back to me: I need him!' I told her.

In July 1987 things came to a head. Sean phoned me and said: 'Mom, I'm going AWOL' (Absent Without Leave).

I begged him not to, because I believe that detention barracks is worse than everything else.

He said: 'I just can't take it any more.'

I realised that he was in a very serious frame of mind but it was a Saturday night and I couldn't do anything about it. There was no way I could get through to the authorities on a weekend. I pointed out that it was nearly over, he had only about four months to go and then it would all be over. He was due out on 15 December.

On Monday I telephoned the office in Cape Town and said I wanted a chaplain to speak to Sean to try and assess his frame of mind and help him cope with the situation. I didn't get any response from either the chaplain or the welfare office. I found out later that a chaplain only went to see him five weeks after my telephone call. What upsets me more than anything else is that the Defence Force now says that Sean was willing and happy to stay with his unit on the border. I know he did not feel this way. He kept saying that he did not want to go back to the border, and I saw how stressed he was every time he had to go back there. But what power has one person got against the SADF?

In August he came home on a weekend pass, and again in September. He was upset and agitated and it seemed as if he wanted to talk to me but couldn't. He went round the house picking up photographs to take back with him.

He was killed in an accident on Friday 16 October. He was in a convoy headed for the operational area in northern Namibia. His buffel was crossing a bridge near Asab, 100 km south of Mariental. The survivors said the buffel flashed its lights at a truck at the other side of the bridge and then proceeded. So did the truck. Two others were killed, two riflemen, aged 19 and 20.

When the army chaplain came, he asked to speak to my husband. That was very distressing under the circumstances.

He had very little information beyond the fact that my son was dead: I asked if Sean had been driving the buffel all the way from Potch – was he tired? I asked whether the boys had been strapped in. A month later he was able to tell me that they were well rested, that Sean hadn't been driving, and that the boys were in their sleeping bags but were not strapped in.

They always try to tell you that your boy died instantly, but I heard on the grapevine that a young man who was in the same convoy got to Sean before he died and held him in his arms. He lived for about 10 minutes. Another boy was still alive when the medic got to him and the third died instantly, we think.

At the end of November the army contacted me and asked where the keys were for Sean's car, which was still in Potchefstroom. I told them to get keys made. So they did, and then telephoned to ask me to pay for the petrol for the car to be driven down to Cape Town.

Apart from that, people were very considerate towards me. Elize Botha phoned, and I told her about how I had tried to get Sean transferred, or at least stopped from going to the operational area. She said she could not understand why our circumstances had not been taken into account, as her husband considers every letter.

She contacted someone in the office of the Minister of Defence and he contacted me. I told him: 'It's too late, my son is dead.'

But it took ten days for Sean's body to come down to Cape Town and in that time I reviewed my thinking: this was something that didn't have to happen. So I went back to Mrs Botha's contact and said I wanted an investigation into why I had had no response to my requests.

It was then that I discovered, to my horror, that there was no record of my phone calls to the welfare office. The only record they had kept was the one of July 1987 when I reported that my son had threatened to AWOL and was in a deeply agitated state.

I received a letter from a colonel, also a woman, who tried to persuade

December 1987

me that no-one would benefit from the investigation into the case. She was attempting to close the case before it had been opened.

I phoned the colonel and said I was insisting on an investigation. In March an officer came from Potchefstroom to question me about my calls to the welfare office.

When I telephoned the colonel again, she asked what I hoped to gain from the investigation. It seemed that they were now investigating me. She told me that if it was a monthly pension I was after, I had no claim because Sean wasn't killed in the operational area!

I told her I thought they'd want an investigation, because clearly there was a problem and I'd imagined they would wish to sort it out so that it wouldn't happen again. She said: 'Oh, now you want to blame someone.'

An army major came and questioned me about a form I had filled in after Sean died, regarding pensions. They seemed very concerned with the idea that I might be trying to get money out of them.

In the meantime, I couldn't get my son's ashes out of them. They said they were waiting for a special memorial plate to be made in Pretoria, which would go up on the memorial wall in Durbanville. Eventually I said I could wait no longer, he would just have to go without the memorial plate. I telephoned the Durbanville municipality and was told the ashes could be put in Heroes' Acre in Durbanville the day the army gave the word. So I got the ashes and the permission and on 28 March, Sean's last remains were placed in Heroes' Acre.

By August, I still had not received my son's personal possessions, which went up with the convoy: I know where they went, but in terms of the Defence Act am not allowed to say. Someone said his bag was at Cape Town Castle, and someone else said that was impossible.

I accepted the death of my husband, my brother and my mother. I cannot accept this death.

Elize Botha sent a printed card, 'Presented to the guardians of our borders'. She had added the words 'and one who gave his life, Sean Biet.'

He didn't give his life. It was taken.

Dear Mrs Biet

YOUR LATE SON : 83410597NA GUNNER S.R. BIET : 1 LOCATING REGIMENT

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter in the above regard.

The circumstances you have described have indeed aroused much heartfelt sympathy for your particularly sad state of affairs.

By direction you are assured of the realization that given your previous endeavours to procure a transfer, the death of your son must have been a particularly heavy burden for you to bear. It can only be trusted that through the healing passage of time you will be granted the consolation that only time can bring.

Although it would seem particularly difficult at this stage, I am sure you will accept that it cannot prove beneficial to anyone to try to reconstruct a case for exacting blame on any person for what has transpired.

You can nevertheless be given the assurance that the Minister of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force involve themselves personally with all losses of serving members and where possible this is prevented at all costs.

Yours faithfully


(COLOKEL J.C. VAN DER POEL)
MILITARY SECRETARY : BRIGADIER

This is the SADF's reply to Mrs Biet's written request for an official investigation into why various previous applications to secure a transfer for her son were either rejected or ignored.

The SADF comments:

The SADF has commented on Mrs Biet's situation. These are the relevant sections of its statement:

'Mrs Biet's plea for a transfer for her son was handled according to policy. Gunner Biet applied in writing for a transfer nearer home. This application was referred to a social worker, who investigated the matter and recommended that the circumstances did not warrant a transfer. Gunner Biet was informed and undertook to inform his mother.

Military welfare officers deal with requests according to specific guidelines laid down for different levels of welfare cases. The officers, who are all trained social welfare workers, go out of their way to treat parents and families with sympathy and understanding. Mrs Biet's health background was investigated and insufficient grounds were found to justify a transfer at the time.

The welfare officer at Potchefstroom consulted with Gunner Biet. Gunner Biet confirmed later that his presence at home was not considered essential, but was only intended to be emotional support for his mother.

Mrs Biet said she had made many attempts to have her son transferred. However, no letters could be found at the headquarters of the unit. The officer commanding personally scrutinised the registers and records of incoming mail with no success. No letter from Mrs Biet could be found on Gunner Biet's personal file nor in the records of the unit chaplain. There is therefore no record of any correspondence from her.

The SADF has great sympathy and understanding for Mrs Biet and her circumstances and has rendered all possible assistance in her time of trial and bereavement. In fact, she was visited by senior officers on 28 April and again recently.

national service need not be military service

David Shandler puts the case for genuine national service.

Future criminologists, when reflecting on South Africa's history, will be confronted by a peculiar trend. They will have to try to understand a particular group of young men who chose to go to jail because they were committed to the country.

Living in South Africa today it is somewhat easier to understand the dilemma of those who refuse to serve in the South African Defence Force.

Commenting on the imminent prospect of being sentenced to a six-year jail term for refusing to serve in the SADF, David Bruce said: 'Yes, it's a long time, but I know it's the right option to have chosen. I don't want to run away. I have a commitment to South Africa. Exile would be too easy an option, although I would be miserable in London.'

'The government would like us to believe that the SADF is a neutral force whose main task is to defend this country against an external threat. But all the evidence available to me shows very clearly that the SADF is directly involved in upholding and defending this racist political system against the aspirations of the majority of South Africans.'

He said that he would be prepared to serve in an army which fought for and defended all South Africans.

In July, David Bruce was sentenced to six years in jail. He is viewed by the authorities as a common criminal.

David Bruce is one of a growing band of conscientious objectors who are publicly refusing to serve in the SADF.

Earlier this year, Ivan Toms, a community doctor working in Cape Town's African townships, was sentenced to 21 months imprisonment for refusing SADF service. After completing his studies, he served reluctantly in the SADF, being commissioned as a lieutenant.

In his trial Ivan stressed that his commitment to South Africa compelled him to heed his conscience and refuse to serve in the SADF. 'The reality of the injustices in our country have convinced me of the impossibility of continuing with any form of service in the SADF,' he said.

'I have worked as a doctor for six years in Crossroads, and know that I am able to do real

national service working with the poor and disenfranchised.'

But the law does not recognise the service Ivan has performed as being in the interest of all South Africans and, therefore, a satisfactory form of national service.

Now 18-year-old Charles Bester faces a possible six year prison term for refusing to serve. A committed Christian, he has decided against applying to the Board for Religious Objectors for 'alternative service'.

At present the law provides for non-military, or community, service only for those who are bona fide religious pacifists. If they satisfy the strict criteria set out in the law, objectors may qualify to serve in a government department for a period of one-and-a-half times the length of time they owe to the military.

With alternative service available to so limited a category as religious pacifists, the clamour for a change in the conscription laws is becoming louder all the time. Thousands of young men who face the call-up and have severe objections to serving in the SADF have for years adopted various means of evading military service.

The 'perpetual student syndrome', whereby men facing the call-up opt to pursue tertiary educations on a long-term basis, appears to be a peculiarly South African response. David Bruce describes his time at university as being taken up with 'a six year BA'. Remaining a registered student means that the conscript can get deferment from military service in the medium-term.

But such a strategy has severe drawbacks: a student has to complete his studies at some point and then still has to face the obligations imposed by the law; also many see this approach as placing severe constraints on their career prospects, and therefore do not see it as a realistic long-term option. The solution is often far more drastic: the one-way road of emigration; leaving as exiles with the hope that they will return some day to a less oppressive society.

The Committee on South African War Resistance, a Europe-based group of refugees from SADF service, estimate that by 1985 there were about 7 000 men in Europe and North America who had left South Africa because of their refusal to serve in the SADF. In 1986 and



Vernon Bouille

In the alternative national service project run by the ECC before it was banned, volunteers help cover a burst waterpipe between the SACLA office (in the background) and the water supply. SACLA is the South African Christian Leadership Assembly.

1987 South Africa experienced a nett loss of some 9 000 people, including some of the country's most talented people. Surveys have shown that compulsory military service has been a major contributing factor to this export of our human resources.

A survey of all male students at Rhodes University in 1987 showed that 55% were contemplating emigration; of these 28% gave the call-up as their primary reason, while a further 28% said it was a contributing factor.

Professor John Gear of Wits Medical School expects 100 of this year's final medical class of 220 to emigrate, either on graduation, or on completing their internships. He says that a reason is that 'on completion one is immediately eligible for military service. People are going as soon as they have no legitimate reason for obtaining deferment. The figures suggest that 40% of all Wits medical graduates have been lost to the country in the last 20 years.'

The 'brain drain' due to military service extends into other sectors of South African society. It is having a seriously undermining effect on the economy. In a country with a severe skills shortage, the nett export of skills that is occurring further undermines South Africa's deteriorating economic performance.

Says UCT Business School director, Professor Paul Sulcas: 'Leaving aside the moral

and emotional issues, there can be little doubt that one of the major factors causing young and talented graduates to leave South Africa is the prospect of two years, plus subsequent call-ups, for military service.'

Between 1984 and 1987, 1 651 engineers, 329 doctors and dentists, and 714 accountants and allied professionals left the country. The economic cost of this drain of skilled resources is enormous. The tally must include the losses incurred in training the emigrants in South Africa, as well as the draining effect on productivity within the economy which their absence induces. The scarcity of skills is causing a dramatic and unrealistic rise in salaries for skilled personnel. Since 1986 chartered accountants' salaries have risen by 50 to 60%. Starting salaries for newly qualified chartered accountants have risen from R36 000 p.a. in 1986 to their present level of R60 000. The extremely weak South African economy cannot afford this.

But not all who face military intakes are in a position to leave the country. Many opt for the 'ducking and diving' route within the country, living as fugitives from the military police; and from the tax system which will place them on a state computer and therefore make them traceable. This makes it virtually impossible to hold down a stable job or live for extended periods at the same address.

Many who, for a variety of reasons are unable to choose any of the other options, are serving in the SADF reluctantly. For all these categories of fugitives, and reluctant conscripts, there is a dire need for reform of the call-up laws. Public calls for such changes have become increasingly prominent over the past few years, with ever-widening groups of people joining the appeal to government. A strong current of the call has been to introduce a viable system of alternative national service for conscripts.

There has been support for this view from the established anti-apartheid parliamentary parties, the business sector in the form of the financial press, and not least the End Conscription Campaign before its banning.

Campaigning under a banner which proclaimed, 'National service need not be military service', the ECC united a range of organisations in calling for a system of alternative national service. In direct talks with SADF officials, and in an array of public activities, the ECC put forward a series of changes that should be made to the Defence Act. It believed that alternatives to military service should be available to all who, in good faith, are opposed to military service in the SADF; that such service be of the same duration as military service; and that it be made available in private sector organisations.

The principle of the call being made by the ECC had wide support in a range of constituencies.

Recently, 143 conscripts declared that they would not serve in the SADF. At the same time they called for an extension of the national service system to include a non-military component which they would find acceptable. Included in the group were many skilled individuals who should neither be lost to South Africa through imprisonment, nor through being forced to leave the country. An alternative national service system could make valuable use of their skills; and their commitment to serve the people of the country.

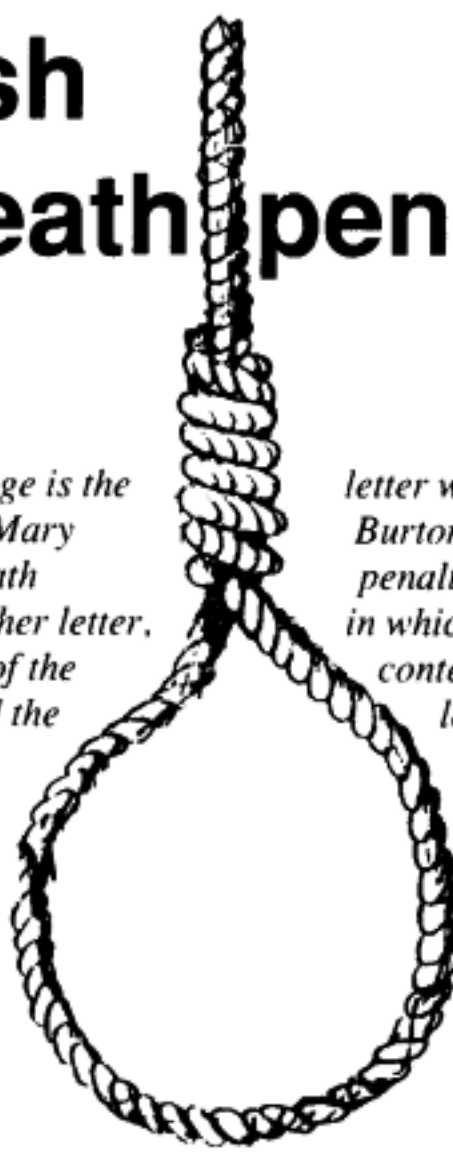
Justice would be done if David Bruce and Ivan Toms were permitted to serve South Africa in such a constructive way. Many families would remain united and much-needed skills deployed if the thousands who have left the country had not done so, and had the option of a period of non-military national service. Many post-graduates would be freed from the narrow confines of the universities to put their skills to work in the broader society if the law were changed. Others would feel free to emerge from the shadows at the edge of society and take up their place as committed South Africans in this country.

There is an urgent need for the government to address this sad and curable South African syndrome. □

abolish the death penalty

On the opposite page is the letter written on behalf of the Black Sash by Mary Burton, calling for the abolition of the death penalty. Mary received a courteous reply to her letter, in which Mr Botha said he had taken note of the contents 'with interest' and had forwarded the letter to the Minister of Justice.

letter written on behalf of Burton, calling for the abolition of the death penalty. Mary received a courteous reply to her letter, in which Mr Botha said he had taken note of the contents 'with interest' and had forwarded the letter to the Minister of Justice.



Revival of the Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty

The Black Sash's concentrated focus on capital punishment (as part of our Human Rights campaign) has drawn strong support from a variety of organisations including the legal community and the churches.

As a result, it was resolved at a meeting organised by the Centre for Applied Legal Sciences in July, to revive the Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty. The original moving force behind the society was Barend van Niekerk, the abolitionist whose untiring efforts during the late 1960s contributed to an actual drop in the number of hangings in the early 1970s. The society was active during the years between 1971 and 1975 and had over 500 members countrywide.

The society is now to be re-launched at a public meeting which will take place on Saturday, 5 November, at the University of the Witwatersrand. Professor Ellison Kahn, who was the last president of the society, will preside. The first part of the meeting will include an address by Judge Leon and the second part of the meeting will be a business session with the election of the new executive and president. Any proposed constitutional amendments will also be discussed.

The steering committee is keen to sign up members as soon as possible and would be delighted to receive the names and addresses of potential members. A R5 membership fee is envisaged as an annual subscription. There has also been a call for the setting up of local chapters which could then send representatives to the launch in November. Anyone wishing to join should write to: The Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, School of Law, University of the Witwatersrand, P.O. Wits, 2050. □

Laura Pollecutt

THE BLACK SASH**DIE SWART SERP**

TELEPHONE 685-3513

9 a.m.—1 p.m.

Mondays—Fridays

5 LONG STREET
MOWBRAY
7700The Hon. the State President,
House of Assembly,
Cape Town.

20 June 1988

Dear Sir,

Several years ago the Black Sash expressed its opposition to capital punishment, referring to the arguments advanced by other leading opponents of the death penalty, including those of the late Barend van Niekerk.

We are desperately concerned about the large and growing number of people being hanged in South Africa - over 1 000 in the past ten years, 164 of them in 1987 and 66 so far in 1988 (as at 2 June). We understand there are 274 condemned prisoners awaiting execution at present. We are sure that many people would share our feelings of anxiety and revulsion at the knowledge that executions are carried out in multiples of up to seven people at a time.

We believe that capital punishment has a destructive effect on society that far outweighs the likelihood of the death penalty acting as a deterrent to possible offenders. We cannot see that the cold and deliberate way in which the state kills can deter other people from killing in the future.

The death penalty, irreversible as it is, carries the onerous risk of error. It is an act of retribution rather than correction or rehabilitation.

South Africa is a country sorely troubled by divisions and hostility. The execution of people convicted of crimes committed in circumstances of political turbulence only serves to exacerbate this situation. We live in a society racked by violence in many forms. We believe the death penalty contributes to a diminishment in the value attached to human life.

Our concern encompasses the sentencing to death of people who are convicted of criminal offences which have no political connotations. We have noted that you have recently granted clemency to seven prisoners who were due to be executed, and that their sentences have been commuted. We welcome this decision, and hope that it may be followed by others. Any steps towards reducing the number of executions would bring us closer to the standard required of a civilised and Christian country.

The case of the people who have come to be known as the 'Sharpeville Six' has brought the issue of capital punishment to the forefront of public opinion this year. We have already appealed for your clemency in their case, and we take this opportunity to do so again, while noting that their case is still under consideration by the courts.

We wish to place before you with particular urgency the case of Robert McBride, and to ask for clemency for him. We believe that only good would come from such an act of mercy.

We ask the same for Sergeant E.R. van der Merwe, for Captain J. la Grange, Constable D.P. Goosen and Warrant Officer L. de Villiers. We acknowledge that the dreadful crime of murder is aggravated when committed by policemen whose duty it is to protect and defend, but we do not believe that they should be hanged for their crimes.

We are interested to learn from a statement during the debate on his Budget Vote by the Minister of Justice that the government will consider taking advice from the judiciary on whether the mandatory death sentence should be removed. We would welcome such an outcome, and we hope that an investigation into the advisability of the death penalty itself would follow, with a recommendation that it should be scrapped.

We believe that a complete moratorium on all executions pending such an investigation would be in the best interests of South Africa. We note with concern that a number of states in the USA have retained or re-introduced the death penalty. We wish to see South Africa move closer into consonance with the countries of Europe, where only Turkey still provides for the death penalty (though no-one has been executed there since 1984). The British House of Commons has just voted 341 to 218 against re-introducing capital punishment.

We bring this issue to your attention, Sir, as a matter of the utmost gravity and importance. If there is one single action which can immediately reduce levels of tension and anger in our society, elicit support from almost all groupings within the country and abroad and also carry us a step forward towards the establishment of a just and benevolent society, that action is the abolition of the death penalty.

Yours faithfully,

M.M. Burton
National President

BOOK REVIEWS

Journey Continued: An autobiography

Alan Paton (Cape Town, David Philip Publisher, 1988)

Alan Paton sums up his philosophy in the following words:

By liberalism I don't mean the creed of any party or any century. I mean a generosity of spirit, a tolerance of others, an attempt to comprehend otherness, a commitment to the rule of law, a high ideal of the worth and dignity of man, a repugnance of authoritarianism and a love of freedom. (p. 294)

No-one who reads this book - the second volume of his autobiography - can deny that he strove to live up to these principles. What emerges from the book is the portrait of a man of great honesty, integrity, and courage.

In this volume he takes up the account of his journey seeking the holy mountain of Isaiah, in which 'the wolf would dwell with the lamb, and the leopard would lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion would come together, and a little child would lead them' (p. 1). He begins in 1948, with the occurrence of two events which were to alter the course of his life: the publication of his novel, *Cry the Beloved Country*, which became an international success, and the coming to power in South Africa of the Nationalist Party. He discusses his writing modestly and seriously, describing the Bohemian days which followed the success of *Cry the Beloved Country* with a mixture of relish and nostalgia. He describes the background to the writing of his second novel *Too Late the Phalarope*, and furnishes some interesting insights into his poetry.

Among the people who had a profound influence on his life he includes J. H. Hofmeyr, Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton, Alfred Hoernlé, and Reinhold Niebuhr, whom he called 'the wisest man I ever knew'. He was to write biographies of both Clayton (en-

titled *Apartheid and the Archbishop*), and Hofmeyr. Of his work on Hofmeyr, which was awarded the 1964 CNA Prize, Paton himself says:

I am often asked 'Which do you regard as your best book?' To that I answer 'I would not place Hofmeyr second to any of the others.' (p. 13)

His writing career was curtailed by his activities on behalf of the Liberal Party, founded in 1953 to fight the dra-

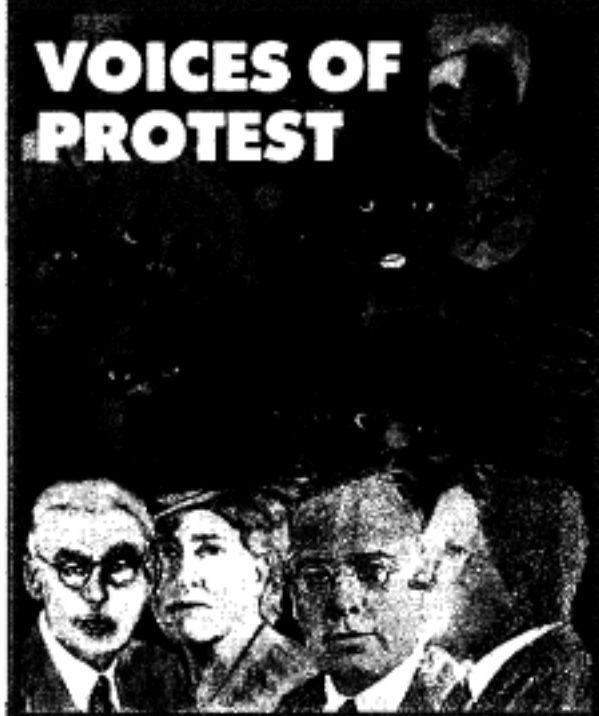
Alan Paton

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
BY THE AUTHOR OF *Cry, The Beloved Country*

Journey Continued

PHYLLIS LEWSEN

VOICES OF PROTEST



conian laws introduced by the government to implement its policy of apartheid. 1949 saw the passing of the Immorality Act, the first of a series of laws designed to maintain a rigid system of race separation, which disrupted countless lives and sowed the seeds of hatred now being reaped. Paton's account of this process makes painful but salutary reading, particularly for those too young to remember

clearly the events of the 1950s and 1960s.

Possibly the most controversial and the most interesting section of his book is that describing the frustration and anger which led certain members of the Liberal Party to espouse the belief that only violence could bring about change. He writes with regret of figures like Patrick Duncan, John Harris and Adrian Leftwich, and with anger at a system which prevents men of the calibre of Nelson Mandela and the late Robert Sobukwe from making their contribution to our society.

In summing up his life, he says:

I could have made better use of my life, but I did try hard to do one thing. That was to persuade white South Africa to share its power, for reasons of justice and survival. My efforts do not appear outwardly to have been successful. There are two things to be said about that. The first is that one does not uphold love, justice and mercy in order to have been successful, but because it has to be done. The second is that one has no means of measuring. One is no more than a worker in a kind of apostolic succession. All one can say is that one has had some noble predecessors, contemporaries and successors. (p. 293)

If South Africa ever attains the mountain of the title, that achievement will in no small measure be due to the efforts of people like Alan Paton. The life described in these pages is convincing evidence that he is one of the 'noble predecessors'. □

Cecily van Gend

Voices of Protest. From segregation to apartheid, 1938-1948

Ed by Phyllis Lewsen (Ad Donker (Pty) Ltd, 1988)

It is 1938. An artful scheme for representing blacks in the central government, while keeping white supremacy intact, is launched. A re-enactment of the Great Trek plays into the hands of

BOOK REVIEWS

white nationalists of the extreme right. An aging leader sits tight while crises - of dire poverty and social dislocation, of black demands for equal justice and political rights, of heightened racism, and of much more, including war - relentlessly mount. The times call for action: "Indecision", Pretoria students are warned, "can only lead us to the abyss."

Voices of Protest consists of 65 extracts from articles, speeches and correspondence, arranged chronologically and ably introduced in an essay which interprets and supplements. There is, as the editor points out, an 'astonishing immediacy' in these documents from the 'decade of flux' which led up to the National Party victory in 1948.

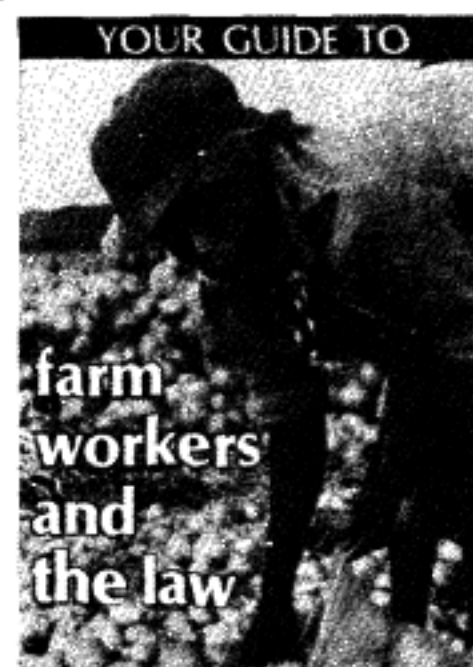
The focus is on the 'native representatives' in parliament - four white senators, three white members in the House. Their speeches and writings reflect the issues ('All South African politics are Native affairs,' Margaret Ballinger once said) as well as the ways in which they individually interpreted their brief. But other voices are heard, for example the Nationalist Paul Sauer defending the notion of a white *Herrenvolk*, and A. B. Xuma, president-general of the African National Congress.

Smuts was prime minister for all but the first few months of the decade, 1938-48. We read Donald Molteno's lament, in 1947 with a general election coming up, that he has little choice but to support 'the present Government [which] has made an unconscionable mess of the affairs of state'. On issues such as Smuts's leadership, Phyllis Lewsen provides useful comment. The book is equally valuable for its references to less well known people and events. Who remembers the Friends of Africa, a pressure group which addressed questions of wages and trade unions for blacks?

Much information is detailed in several pages of notes. But, information apart, readers will respond - selectively, perhaps! - to the ideals and keen insights which animate these voices from the past.

Candy Malherbe

BLACK
SASH
PUBLICA-
TIONS



YOU
AND YOUR
LOCAL
AUTHORITY

Your Guide to Farmworkers and the Law is the title of a book compiled by Annemarie Hendrikz and an editorial committee (Rural Legal Services Project Cape Town 1986). Envisaged as the first in a possible three part series, it was previewed in **SASH** (Vol. 30, No. 4). It is a fat (453 pages) little (10x14 cm) book which will fit into some pockets and all handbags, knapsacks and briefcases without adding much in terms of weight.

This book 'is for you as a farmworker, or a rural advice worker, union organiser, church worker, teacher, or any person who needs to know about farmworkers' legal rights'. All these and more are likely to be grateful for it: it is very clearly and attractively set out, with numerous drawings, diagrams and photographs.

Book I includes an introduction to the law, court procedures, lawyers and legal aid before moving on to terms of employment and workers' rights. Relevant forms and questionnaires (e.g. for making applications or claims) are accompanied by explanatory text. It is, in every sense, a valuable resource - which will be amplified by subsequent books.

Book I is obtainable from Black Sash offices and various other resource centres.

Candy Malherbe

Transvaal Region has put out a booklet entitled *You and Your Local Authority*. It was written by Sheena Duncan in consultation with national headquarters, Regions, TRAC workers, Church workers and others. Aninka Claassens devised the questions at the end of the book and Sheena supplied the answers.

The project was initiated as a result of reports from TRAC workers and Church field workers that people in the rural areas and on the platteland were being confused by the pressure being put upon them to participate in the elections for black Local Authorities.

They had no understanding of the law nor of what they were being called upon to do and it became very apparent that something needed to be done to attempt to remedy this situation.

Sheena therefore set about writing the booklet on the black local authorities explaining in the simplest and most straightforward terms exactly what the Act says. It contains no comment, only facts.

The booklet is obtainable from the Black Sash offices in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth. It can be reproduced or translated, and organisations requiring large numbers can order them direct from the printers - and, of course, pay for them! □

Joyce Harris

NEWS-STRIP

Janet Small Released

The Black Sash welcomes the release of our fellow member, worker and friend, Janet Small, from over three months of detention under security legislation with of relief and anger.

We are relieved that in spite of the inevitable effects of long solitary confinement, she remains strong and brave. We are angry that she was detained for absolutely no reason except, as far as we can guess, that officials of the state found that she might in some way offer a threat to its plans. We condemn this action where Janet is concerned. Even more do we condemn the practice of detention without trial.

Janet may be free from prison but she is not free to leave Cape Town, to return to her work in our Grahamstown office. In terms of her harsh restriction order, she is not allowed to take part in any Black Sash activity. Nor is she free to speak to the press, to write for publication nor to speak to any gathering of more than five people. She is obliged to remain at her parents' house from 6 pm every night. These restrictions are suffered by many people who are released from periods of detention of varying length and who are not charged with any crime. We will not cease to protest against these infringements of civil rights and the rule of law.

Mary Burton

Janet Cherry Re-detained

As SASH went to press, we were deeply shocked to hear that our friend and fellow member, Janet Cherry, was re-detained on 23 September as she was preparing to board a flight at Port Elizabeth's H.F. Verwoerd airport. Janet's re-detention comes a year after her release from an 11-month period in detention in Port Elizabeth during 1986/7. The Black Sash re-dedicates itself to work for Janet's release and the release of all detainees.

The poem, right, was written during Janet Small's detention. It takes on added poignancy and relevance following Janet Cherry's re-detention



Janet Small



Janet Cherry

A Poem for Janet

janet, the small
beginnings are hard
hard as a rock, as a seed
hard as a prison wall

janet, the small
consolation might be
that the cell, the lock,
the cold, hard wall
acquaint you with the rock:

against silence and fear
you turn inward like a stone
hug your knees, feel your bone:

you are bone
you are rock
at the core
taste the iron in your blood.

janet, the small
seed of hope in it all
is that now they are striking the rock!
Lynette Paterson. □

Albany's Video

You may have seen the video version of the comedy the Cape Western Region devised for the Fedsaw women's fair.

Now there is the Albany Advice Office movie!

The Albany Region of the Black Sash hosted a mini film fest during this year's Grahamstown festival and decided to use the opportunity to publicise the work done by the Advice office and expose social conditions in Albany.

They approached Graham Hayman, a lecturer at Rhodes University's department of Journalism for help. The result is 'Nyaka Nyaka! Advice is Free,' a 30-minute video produced by Graham and a voluntary crew of students. Nyaka Nyaka! means 'chaos/mess!' - and is a phrase regularly used by Mary Kota, the advice office's longest serving translator, whenever things get confused.

'It is the title,' says Graham, 'because the advice office helps bring order and understanding to people's lives under this repressive system. When people are barely educated and cannot read or write, the ordinary red tape of administrative forms and correspondence with a distant bureaucracy (which whites take for granted) is repressive in itself.'

Nyaka Nyaka! is a documentary.

'We decided that the film needed a distinctive style to get away from the usual fact-filled documentary with a formal narration that doesn't make a lasting impact.

'I was puzzled in the initial stages about how to convey the advice office work on video, says Graham.

'At first glance it is very unimpressive and boring: three people - a translator and a client and a Black Sash worker - around a table with files and papers. But I soon felt the focus of the movie should be the intense communication and caring that occurs between these three. The trust that is possible is astonishing. I took a chance that this feeling would be conveyed on the video.

NEWS-STRIP

'The film crew were very aware of the sensitivity required for shooting in such a situation and we tried to keep a low profile so as not to affect what we were filming', says Graham.

The unedited video material recorded during the Advice Office Counselling sessions can be used for training office workers in interviewing techniques.

Jean Fairbairn □

Sash Members to Appeal

Six Black Sash members and four members of NUSAS have been found guilty in the Durban magistrates court of attending an illegal gathering. The conviction arose from a stand on 26 February protesting the effective banning of 17 organisations. Although the protesters stood at the conventionally accepted 'legal distance' from one another, the magistrate ruled that they constituted an illegal gathering because they had a 'common purpose' in standing. They were cautioned and discharged.

The conviction, which potentially has far-reaching implications for Black Sash stands, will be taken on Appeal in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court, and the magistrate's ruling will not be binding pending the Appeal.

A noteworthy feature of the trial was that the magistrate, Willem Hahn, referred to the Readers' Digest illustrated dictionary's definition of 'gathering' to support the conviction - and made no mention of the definition contained in the Emergency regulations!

Christina Scott □

Khotso House Bomb

Apart from the disruption of the Black Sash's work, the bombing of Khotso House in the early hours of 31 August left many people uncertain of how to contact the Black Sash's Johannesburg office. The new postal address is P.O. Box 2827, Johannesburg 2000.



Above: Jean Sinclair celebrates her eightieth birthday in July. Mary Burton looks on.

Right: Judy Chalmers.

Award for Judy

Judy Chalmers, the Black Sash's advice office co-ordinator and field worker in Port Elizabeth was awarded the prestigious 1988 'Woman of the Year' award by the Union of Jewish Women in Port Elizabeth for her 'outstanding contribution to the community.' Judy shared the honour with blind physiotherapist, Hazel Smith.

In its citation, the UJW praised Judy's 'selfless and tireless commitment to realising her ideals in practical service.'

'Judy brings a valuable dimension to social service, emphasising that knowledge is strength [and trying] to teach people to help themselves so that they can take back to their communities knowledge that will help others in similar need.'

It was an award richly deserved and all Black Sash Regions join in congratulating you, Judy.

Bobby Melunsky □



New Vehicles of Protest

On Thursday 9 June, about 30 members of the Albany Region took part in a motorcade through Grahamstown to draw attention to the imminent expiry and probable re-imposition of the State of Emergency.

The car procession was undertaken because poster protest-stands are prohibited within a certain radius of the Magistrates' Court - which prevents us from standing in most of the central Grahamstown area. For this reason, Albany Black Sash is always looking for imaginative and innovative vehicles of protest!

Niki Cattaneo □

Conscripts Need Alternatives

*The Black Sash remembers all those who have been imprisoned or face possible imprisonment for refusing to serve in the SADF. In particular we think of **Ivan Toms**, 35, who was sentenced in March this year to 21 months imprisonment for refusing further military service;*

***David Bruce**, 24, who was sentenced to a six prison term in July for objecting to military service and*

***Charles Bester**, 18, who also faces a possible six year prison term on the same charge.*

