

minimum wages, and an overhaul of the wage determination machinery. What kind of wage determination is it that allows an employer to pay a woman worker R3,50 per week, and a male worker R6,50 per week? And what kind of society allows it?

There is yet another reform that is needed. There are some employers who are not in the least concerned about labour wastage. The wages are low and therefore the factory can get by: This employer is the first to complain of the low productivity of his workers, and therefore to justify the payment of poverty wages. It is clear that there are some inferior factories which profit by labour wastage. It is to be hoped that the Prime Minister will encourage the employers of labour to investigate the need for the more intensive training of workers, a training not necessarily confined to the job in hand, so that the employer can afford to pay better wages. The vast majority of African workers have never received any secondary education.

At least one more reform is required. Inflation, which now seems to be endemic, soon erodes pay rises. It is time that all wages, all earnings of all people, should be increased regularly to keep pace with the rising cost of living.

Whether the Government will join in consultation with employers is at the moment doubtful. If it discharges its duty in regard to wage determination, that would be something. But it is the largest employer of all. Then let it at least set a proper example, taking as its guide the

words of the Prime Minister that workers are not labour units but people.

REALITY would like to reiterate another truth which it would like to see take permanent occupancy of our minds. We shall never be able to build any worthwhile kind of society, whether common or federal or multi-national, while there is this gross disparity between white income and black income. And there is no better place to begin than with the wages of the workers. But it is only a beginning.

It would be fatal to be satisfied with the progress that has been made in the last few weeks. The rises are far from spectacular. In some cases they are disgusting, when one considers the misery of the conditions against which the workers were striking. White South Africa is at the moment experiencing a pleasant euphoria, largely because the confrontation that it dreads has again been avoided.

**There is nothing to be euphoric about. We live in a parasitic society, in which whites live off blacks and blacks live off whites. Until all South Africans can feel that this society belongs to them, there can be no peace. There are signs that more white South Africans are beginning to understand this, for which we must be thankful. But the pace is perilously slow. One can only wish Good Luck to all those South Africans of whatever party or persuasion who are trying to speed it up.**□

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# **SPRO-CAS : MOTIVATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

by Peter Randall

We are a deeply divided society and the needs of the black community and those of the white community are very different. To attempt to meet those needs through a "traditional" multi-racial strategy is likely to be unsuccessful - there is much evidence of this in our past history - and hence Spro-cas 2 is clearly demarcated into Black Community Programs and White Consciousness Programs, each with its own director and staff, the former based in Durban and the latter in Johannesburg. (Since a description of the Black Community Programs should clearly only be provided by those engaged in them, I shall refer interested readers to the BCP Director, Mr. Bennie A. Khoapa).

Spro-cas 2 is the second phase of a project working for a more just social order in South Africa. The initials stand for Special Project for Christian Action in Society. Spro-cas 2 is a follow-up to the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (Spro-cas 1), which began in mid-1969. The entire project is due to finish at the end of 1973, although certain independent on-going activities may emerge from it.

Spro-cas is sponsored by the South African Council of Churches and the Christian Institute. It thus has links with both the institutional Church and Christian bodies working in specialised fields. The work of Spro-cas is itself

specialised and limited. It does not attempt to do the work of the Church, but to assist the Church in a specific way. It seeks some vision of what South African society could be if Christianity was taken seriously, and in what way churches, organisations, institutions, government departments and individuals can work towards such a society.

The specifically Christian dimension underlying the work of Spro-cas has been spelt out by my colleague, the Rev. Danie van Zyl, who identifies five biblical principles:

- the principle of change and renewal
- the principle of concern for life
- the principle of Christian participation
- the principle of Stewardship, and
- the principle of human worth.

The document in which Mr. van Zyl deals with these principles is available on request from Spro-cas. Let me merely quote two brief extracts as illustrative of the ethical concerns which guide us:

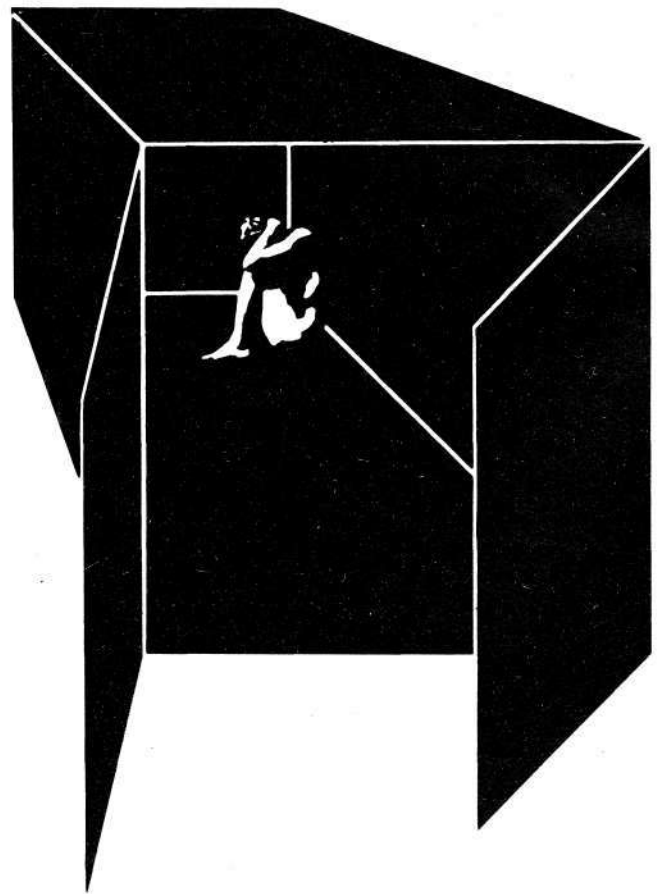
**“Not only are we stewards of our own lives and abilities, but also of the land we live in, the soil, the water, and the air. We are also stewards of the social processes under our control, whether it be as employer, committee member, or driver of a motor vehicle. It seems that westerners too often operate on a principle of ownership implying a responsibility only to self, whereas the bible suggests rather a management principle where we are entrusted with resources and are responsible in using them to both God and our fellowman. . . .”**

**And: “The freedom of the Christian is a freedom to be true man loved by Christ and free to love. Christian love overcomes the alienation between man and man. Christian love denounces as false all that restricts his freedom, all that oppresses him, all that alienates him from his fellows”.**

Besides these Christian principles, which allow us no option but to see ourselves as needing to be active collaborators in social change in our situation, we base our approach on a number of assumptions about the nature of our society and strategies for change. These can be only briefly outlined in this article.

One of our assumptions is that white people will always remain in South Africa, and that the groups will thus have to achieve a basis for co-existence, involving participation in both political and economic structures. We believe that the search for an alternative society that will make this possible is only just beginning.

We accept that fundamental change in South Africa – in the sense of a *radical redistribution of power, land and wealth* – will ultimately be initiated and brought about by blacks. We thus believe that the Black Community Programs are both potentially and actually the most important single aspect of Spro-cas, and the white staff have taken a deliberate decision to phase the white programs out before the end of the project in favour of the black ones, if we are unable to meet our full budget requirements for the year. It is significant that the B.C.P.'s share of the total Spro-cas budget has increased from about 20 per cent to more than 50 per cent over the past year.



The crucial question for whites opposed to the status quo<sup>o</sup> is how effective they are in working for change (much of our own thinking in this regard is shaped by the excellent chapters on Strategies for Change in *Towards Social Change*, the report of the Spro-cas Social Commission). The immediate question for white opponents of the status quo is whether they seek to be reformist or radical. For decades liberal whites have sought to exhort and convert the white masses. That this is largely a futile and even counter-productive exercise hardly needs stating. The Social Report clearly indicates the hopelessness of reacting to superficial events in our national life, which “alternately ignite or extinguish sporadic flickers of hope for change.” This sensitivity to the superficial “blinds many people to the lessons of past decades, during which the basic structure of inequality has persisted despite many marginal adjustments in political terminology and practice” (*Towards Social Change* p. 158).

The necessary starting point for work for change then is an understanding of the basic social forces in our country. The reports of the various Spro-cas study commissions and the publications of the Black Community Programs have helped us to understand just how profoundly entrenched in our social system are the basic patterns of inequality, injustice and discrimination which have endured despite “marginal adjustments”. That they run right into all our social institutions, including the body of the church itself, is clearly revealed in the report of the Church Commission, and in a subsequent survey which Spro-cas carried out

into the wages and conditions of work of black employees in white church schools (the average wage, for example, was R36 p.m., and one church school in the Transvaal worked its black employees for ten hours a day, seven days a week, and paid them an average of R18 p.m.)

It is necessary at the same time to recognise that we are all part and parcel of a system of exploitation, and if we are white we inevitably enjoy the benefits of this whether we consciously wish to or not. We are thus, in black eyes, part of the problem. It is our decision whether we wish rather to become part of the solution. Our understanding of the moral imperative sketched above seems to leave us with no option.

At the same time the system of exploitation (perhaps the most effective form of labour exploitation, more effective even than slavery, according to the Spro-cas Economics Commission) which provides us with material benefits, also damages us gravely, reducing our liberty and lessening our humanity. To recognise the harm being done to us, as whites, is probably a necessary starting point for effective work towards change. The concept of 'white consciousness', which embraces this, is explored in *White Liberation*, published by Spro-cas in February, and edited by my colleague, Horst Kleinschmidt.

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Realising that we are necessarily limited by certain realities of the South African situation, including the draconian powers contained in legislation, we yet aim for a radical approach, i.e. in the sense of going to the roots of the problem – power and wealth. Merely to list the pre-conditions that the Economics Commission found to be necessary for fundamental change (radical redistribution of power, land and wealth referred to earlier) indicates both the extent of the task and the dimensions of the new society:

- the right of all people to effective political power
- the right of all workers to belong to legally recognised trade unions
- a significant redistribution of land
- a significant redistribution of wealth and income
- radical changes to the existing educational system, and the right of all to equal access to education
- the right of all people to effective social security benefits.

(*Power, Privilege & Poverty*, p. 104)

Recognising that such fundamental change may not in fact be possible within the present political and economic structures, we seek to pose really radical alternatives, and see the urgent need for a serious consideration of socialism and such concepts as participatory democracy and workers' control. (See, for example, *The Eye of the Needle* by Richard Turner, reviewed in the January issue of *Reality*.)

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The white staff of Spro-cas see our task as primarily within the white community, to prepare it for fundamental change, and to bring about such meaningful reform as possible (as, for example, contained in some of the recommendations of the six Spro-cas Commission reports). We are committed to working for the liberation of white people as a part of the creation of a liberated society. Part of this task is the need to communicate effectively with our own community, and we try to do this not only through our growing body of publications, which range from a scholarly study of Migrant Labour by Dr. Francis Wilson to a collection of poems (*Cry Rage!*) by two black writers, and our posters, dossiers, study aids and background papers, but also through small group workshops and seminars and public meetings (such as a series of lectures on 'The Need for Reform in South Africa,' to be held in Johannesburg during February – March). We see the need to be experimental and flexible, and to risk the inevitable controversies.

We see, as part of this, a need to work as effectively as possible to modify those structures to which we have access (in church, education and the economic structure), and hence we have been pursuing programs in these three areas and will continue to do so until Spro-cas ends. Workshops, seminars and public conferences form part of this, as do participation in the events of "change" organisations, and the provision of resource material and personnel to assist such organisations. Another feature of this is our contact and co-ordination program which seeks to assist "change" organisations to plan effectively and to co-ordinate their efforts. We also provide consultancy services and are collecting relevant audio-visual and other resources.

I am very conscious that these notes are much more an attempt to sketch the rationale for Spro-cas than a detailed description of our work. But the work is meaningful only in the context of our motivation and our understanding of the situation, and those who are really interested can always enquire further. Spro-cas is a short-term project and not an organisation, and is thus constantly moving and changing to meet new issues and new situations. One of our freedoms is that we do not have a vested interest in self-perpetuation.□