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BLACK ORGANISATIONS

Political Pressure Groups

The South African Students Organisation

THE 1973 ISSUE of *Black Review* dealt with the large scale bannings that nearly crippled the South African Students' Organisation. However, as events in the years 1974 and 1975 have indicated, SASO continued to be in the news and progressively rebuilt its strength.

In January 1974, SASO called its 5th General Students' Council in the wake of large scale bannings and the disappearance of its leaders across the borders.

The 5th General Students' Council

This conference was held in Hammanskraal during January 1974, the main purpose being to reorganise SASO and to fill up leadership positions left vacant after the bannings. The conference got off to a good start with a letter read from the President of the Southern African Students' Movement, O. R. Tiro. SASO was itself an affiliate of SASM and had contributed a number of the leaders in SASM including Mr. Tiro.

In his letter, Mr. Tiro, who was shortly to die of a parcel bomb blast, made very prophetic exhortations encouraging the students to carry on with the struggle in spite of difficulties. "From this meeting some of you will be called a number of names, the most prominent of which will be 'communist', some of you will be forced to sleep with hungry stomachs; some will be faced with eternal separation from their parents and friends; some will languish in prison. This is not new. Our forerunners have suffered all this. No struggle can come to an end without casualties. It is only through determination, absolute commitment and positive self assertion that we shall overcome".¹

The conference was a resounding success in terms of rebuilding the morale amongst the SASO membership. True to its character, SASO took care to comment on a wide range of topics to give direction to the Black Community. This includes the following comments:—

- a condemnation of any purported representation of the black struggle in the country by the so-called leaders of Bantustans who are nothing but an extension and perpetuation of the oppression of black people in this country. This followed in the wake of extensive travel abroad by the country's Bantustan leaders including men like Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, Mr. L. L. Sebe, Chief Kaizer Matanzima and Chief Lucas Mangope.²
- an attack on the white-owned South African press which tended to suppress all legitimate expression of black opinion and giving very great and deceitful coverage to the Bantustans and other Government created platforms.

Labour Party Attacks SASO

Delivering his Presidential address at the Labour Party Conference held in Umtata in January 1975 Mr. Sonny Leon, the national leader of the Labour Party in South Africa criticized SASO and the Black People's Convention for frustrating the attempts of the black people in the fight for freedom in South Africa. Mr. Leon alleged that organisations like SASO and B.P.C. were devious in a way they could have learned from white politics. In this way they were causing dissension in black ranks by their dividing tactics.

Mr. Leon was reacting to the constant attacks that SASO had been making on homeland leaders and other participants in government created platforms. SASO had been mounting pressure on the Labour Party to pull out of the Coloured Representative Council.

The Death of O. R. A. Tiro

On February 1, 1974 Mr. Onkgopotse Ramothibi Abraham Tiro, was killed by a parcel bomb blast in the house where he was living in Botswana.

Mr. Tiro had been one of five members of the Black Consciousness movement who had left the country towards the end of 1973. He was at that time president of SASM whose headquarters were in Gaborone.

The parcel addressed to Tiro bore Swiss postmarks and according to labels on it, had allegedly been sent by Mr. Lars-Gunnar Ericksen who is the director of the International University Exchange Fund. Mr. Ericksen denied having sent any parcel to Mr. Tiro, and claimed that he believed the bomb had been sent to Mr. Tiro in Gaborone from South Africa. He said "basically all our mail to people in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, goes via the Republic...we corresponded frequently;

the last letter I wrote to him as the president of SASM was on January 24".³

In a statement issued in the week of the explosion, the Botswana Government claimed that the bomb was a result of Tiro's "speaking out against the denial to Black South Africans of their human rights. The statement went on to note that "Onkgopotse Tiro had incurred the displeasure of certain powerful circles in South Africa. Mr. Tiro's sudden and cruel death will in no way detract from the validity of his criticism of education in South Africa. The Botswana Government wishes to state unequivocally that this kind of terrorism will not make it change its attitude towards those who seek refuge in Botswana from oppression in their own countries".⁴

In reply to the Botswana statement Mr. Jimmy Kruger, Deputy Minister of the South African Police, declined to comment saying that he thought the reference to "certain powerful circles in South Africa" was too general to be taken as meaning the South African authorities or the South African police. "The allegation is altogether too vague to warrant any comment"⁵. On the other hand, an official South African Government statement was issued by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Hilgard Muller. Dr. Muller released the text of the communication he had sent Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana expressing the strongest exception to the imputation and insinuations contained in a communication to the United Nations from the Botswana's permanent representative.

In his communication Dr. Muller claimed "the South African Government had frequently expressed its strongest opposition to and condemnation of acts of terrorism of any kind. The South African government also condemned this particular outrage by whomsoever it may have been committed".

Closely following on the killing was another bomb blast in Zambia which claimed the life of Mr. John Dube, an exile of the African National Congress. An editorial in a British newspaper, *The Observer*, claimed that the murder of the two black exiles, Mr. Tiro and Mr. Dube, "can only have been carried out by rabid supporters of [Mr. Vorster's] regime". The editorial went on to note: "It is not enough for Mr. Vorster to deny that the South African Government was behind the two killings...it is up to Mr. Vorster to apprehend those guilty of these murders which can only have been carried out by rabid supporters of his regime, whether misguided security regimes (who teem throughout Southern Africa) or members of white extremist groups in the Republic."

In reply, Dr. Muller claimed that it was complete nonsense to ascribe this to the South African government "How could we know

who it was? It might very well have been enemies of South Africa who were trying to place us under suspicion.”⁶

The General Post Office in South Africa disclaimed responsibility for not detecting the parcel bomb from Geneva which killed Mr. Tiro. A spokesman for the post office said that detection devices were only used on mail destined for addresses in South Africa.

The whole country was shocked by the brutal killing of Mr. Tiro, whose death was described as “a grave loss to the Black Community and mankind”.⁷ Statements of condolence were made by several individuals and bodies including SASM, SASO, B.P.C., African Teachers’ Association of South Africa, African Lecturers’ Organisation and by the Rector of the University of the North, Professor Boshoff, who had been responsible for Tiro’s expulsion in 1972.

Mr. Tiro was eventually buried in Botswana, following a legal tussle concerning the transference of his body from Botswana to South Africa. The funeral was attended by about a thousand mourners, mainly students in Botswana, as well as representatives of SASO, the Botswana Government, other nearby African states, and diplomatic missions in Botswana.

Publication of Newsletter Resumed

In May 1974, SASO resumed publication of its newsletter which had been discontinued following large scale bannings and subsequent disruption of the organisation. SASO officials revealed that there had been problems with printers who were refusing to undertake work on the newsletter. The organisation had hunted for willing printers in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town and all of them had refused on the grounds of intimidation.

Van Wyk Commission

Following the walkout by students of the University of the Western Cape in the course of 1973, a one-man commission consisting of Justice Van Wyk, Judge President of the Cape, was appointed by the Government on August 10, 1973, to investigate disturbances in the Western Cape. Altogether 77 people and organisations submitted sworn statements and memoranda to the Van Wyk commission. In addition 22 people gave oral evidence. However, 20 students who had been asked to give evidence refused. At the beginning of March the commission published its report which amongst other things blamed the disturbances on the activities of SASO which included steps “to bring about confrontation and to force the authorities to close the university”. The commission also claimed that the majority of students were not aware of the “concealed aims of SASO” and that SASO members had gained complete control of the S.R.C. The commission had no doubts that the

aims of SASO especially as shown by the Alice Declaration had played an important role in disrupting the normal activities of the university through unrest and confrontation with the authorities.⁸

In a statement accompanying the commission's report, Dr. S. W. van der Merwe, Minister of Coloured Affairs, blamed SASO: "I want to refer pertinently to the unsavoury role of certain members of an organisation such as SASO who were largely instrumental in misleading certain students and therefore bear a large share in these regrettable events. The existence of this organisation on the campus of the university is undesirable. Further I ask students not to allow themselves to be misled by those who want to destroy their university. It is their gateway and springboard to better things".

6th SASO General Student Council

In his report to the 6th G.S.C. of SASO, the President of SASO, Mr. Muntu Myeza, exhorted SASO members to maintain a high standard of discipline in their everyday interaction with the members of the public whom they met in the course of their work. Outlining the organisation's achievements, Mr. Myeza mentioned the following community projects:

- At Mpeko, near Umtata, a school had been built by the movement, and construction of a clinic was now underway.
- Medical students at Wentworth, Natal, were running a clinic at Inanda. The students visited the area on Saturdays only. The charges were low to enable more people to get attention and advice.
- A school was being built at Upper Gqumashé in Alice and plans for the building of another school at Winterveldts near Pretoria were held up because permission from the Bophutatswana Government had not been forthcoming.⁹

At the end of the conference the SASO executive was re-organised. Muntu Myeza was appointed to the position of Secretary-General which is a full time position. Mr. Pandelani Nefolovhodwe was elected as President, Mr. Mosioua Lekota as Permanent Organiser, Mr. Rubin Hare as vice-President and Norman Dubazana as Publications Director. These were the men who were destined to lead SASO through what proved to be the most difficult time of its short history. By this time 29 men holding top positions in the organisation had been banned and several other peripheral supporters of SASO were also banned. Holding an executive position in SASO has become an almost automatic invitation to reprisals from the security police and other government forces.

The Frelimo Rally and the Aftermath

The details of the Frelimo Rally are mounted in the chapter on detentions. It is now common knowledge that following the call of SASO for a rally to be held at Curries Fountain during September, a large number of people were collected near the stadium and the police after breaking up the meeting arrested several SASO, BPC and BAWU officials. The entire SASO executive with the exception of Mr. Dubazana was arrested and to all intents and purposes it appeared that SASO had been neutralized because many of the lower echelons in the leadership went under cover and escaped into neighbouring Botswana.

However on the October 26, 1974, some of the remaining branches of SASO called a meeting in Durban to consider action in the light of the new harassments. An interim executive was elected with Mr. Gwebelentlanzi Mposelwa of the Federal Theological Seminary as the new President, Mr. Diliza Mji of the University of Natal Black Section as the vice-President, Mr. Thami Zani a private student with UNISA as General Secretary and Mr. Norman Dubazana retained his original position as Publications Director. To all intents and purposes with the election of this executive the activities of the organisation were once more resumed and offices which had been closed for a while were reopened.

Towards the end of 1974 and the beginning of 1975, a growth of the pattern set earlier on was witnessed. More SASO leaders, both banned and unbanned, left the country. Mr Henry Isaacs followed Mr. Geoff Baqwa and left the country whilst Geoff Baqwa escaped into Botswana. Henry Isaacs left via Swaziland to New Zealand. On the campuses one rector after another announced unwillingness to accept SASO on the campuses. At Fort Hare while SASO was not banned on the campus many students who had been suspected of being SASO members in 1974 were not allowed to return to the campus. The University of the North suspended SASO activities on the campus until further notice. The position remained pretty fluid on many other campuses. In a lengthy statement during an interview with *Black Review*, the SASO General Secretary Mr. Thami Zani put the position as follows:

“The government instruments have been trying since September to see to the destruction of the organisation but this has not dampened the spirits of the many millions of Blacks in this country. After the detention of the Executive and Staff and many other members of the organisation we did not sit down and say “what next” but we stood up and saw to the smooth running of the organisation. An emergency meeting was called by the University of Natal Black Section in October and an interim Executive was elected. We appointed people into the regional offices in Transvaal, Eastern and Western Cape and one must praise them for the work they have done so far. On the University

campuses the position remains somewhat confused as the forces of Bantu Education, coupled with the State's administrative machinery, continue to thwart the development of the Black personality. Black students who are only after the truth have been heavily victimized in these Universities. In some Universities many issues are still sub judice but with the removal of certain misunderstandings progress shall be made".

SASO Policy Outlook

In spite of the heavy blows that SASO has sustained, there has been no change in its policy outlook. SASO still continues to commemorate Heroes' Day although the Durban service was banned under the new Riotous Assemblies Act, on March 29.

In his statement Mr. Zani emphasised that SASO still remains vehemently and totally opposed to racial organisations like racial sporting bodies, Bantustans, the Coloured Persons' Representative Council and the South African Indian Council. SASO continues to work with relevant black organizations in the country and maintains a healthy relation with international groups like SASM.

Increasing International Recognition for SASO

One of the side effects of the barrage of attacks on SASO by government forces, has been the growing acceptance of SASO by international groups as an effective opponent of the South African Government and its policy. Student organisations like the National Union of Students of Britain, the International University Exchange Fund, the International Catholic Students Organisation and many others have long accepted SASO and her viewpoint in the South African context. In addition to this, it was reported in May that the All-African Council of Churches will recognise SASO alongside other South African liberation movements.

Reporting this to *Drum* on May 8, the Rev. Morris Ngakane the associate General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches said the All-African Council of Churches "eventually agreed that SASO and liberation movements should send official representatives because churches could not pass judgement on whether individuals sent to the consultation were Christians or not".¹⁰

When the new Frelimo government was being installed in Mozambique on June 25, 1975, SASO was one of the very few South African groups invited to the occasion. Other groups invited were the ANC, represented by Mr. Oliver Tambo, and NUSAS. As far as could be ascertained SASO did not actually send any representative to the independence celebrations.

Natal Indian Congress

Important Changes in Policy

Towards the end of 1973, there had been increasing speculation that the Natal Indian Congress was shaping up to participate in the South African Indian Council provided that this body would have elected members. It was not quite clear what the Natal Indian Congress policy was exactly on this issue.

However, in his presidential address to the 1974 conference of NIC held at Orient Hall in Durban in September 1974, the president of the NIC Mr. M. J. Naidoo outlined succinctly the NIC policy towards the SAIC. Mr. Naidoo revealed that the congress executive had taken a decision that when there are true elections of the SAIC, "when you and I and the 600,000 in Natal can nominate and vote then Congress will participate. This executive decision will be put to conference where a final decision will be made. This decision does not mean that Congress now accepts SAIC in that the SAIC is for us in the acceptable stage in the evolution of political rights for the Indian people". NIC according to Mr. Naidoo was mindful of the many bannings imposed on its leadership and sought the kind of protection that attaches parliamentary privilege to these statutory bodies.

"Congress needs to, and will have to use, the South African Indian Council as a protected platform to make its demands for full democratic rights. It needs the platform to reach the people on the one hand and to make the Government to hear its demands on the other hand. If it were not for the protected platform the SAIC would have nothing to offer us. Congress policy *has* not, and is not changed".¹¹

Outlining his criticism of the SAIC, Mr. Naidoo made the following points:—

● That the failures of the SAIC are not due to its personal law but rather due to the fact that it was created a powerless body and was not intended to achieve anything more than placate a small section of the Indian people.

● That it had the other side effect of dividing the people into those who looked up to it and those who rejected it in a typical divide and rule technique.

● That the so called elections implied that half the SAIC, i.e. fifteen members, would be voted into office by an electoral college consisting of the Local Affairs Committee and Town Boards. Mr. Naidoo revealed that in Natal, this electoral college, would consist of a hundred people and would vote into office the ten "elected" Natal SAIC members. Quoting a newspaper commentary Mr. Naidoo described this election

as "one which would be screamingly funny if it were not so tragically serious."

When the issue of participating in the elections of the Local Affairs Committee and the South African Indian Council was ultimately debated by the conference of the NIC, the conference decided to reject participation within the SAIC election, describing the SAIC as "another institution created for the sole purpose of dividing and subjugating the oppressed people of South Africa".

Another policy issue raised at the conference was whether the organization should change its character and open its doors to people of all races. This issue had come before several conferences of the NIC and had remained unresolved. The 1974 conference decided that congress should open its doors to all groups and the word "Indian" should be removed from the constitution. This effectively broke a longstanding tradition of exclusiveness on the part of the NIC in their membership.

In an interview with *Black Review*, the NIC President Mr. M. J. Naidoo admitted that the new open-to-all policy of the congress widened the scope of similarity with the Black People's Convention. He said even though his movement has never given consideration to the possibility of a merger with the Convention, it would not be a remote possibility. He added that he was personally uneasy that the Convention had decided to close its ranks even to sympathetic Whites, while the Congress was completely non-racial. He felt, of course, that this would be a matter to be considered when merger talks started.

NIC Political Perspectives

In his report to the conference, the General Secretary of the NIC Mr. R. Ramisar outlined new trends in the sophisticated policy adopted by the government of "including black people to accept their exploitation" Mr. Ramisar claimed that the Government did this by

- creating a powerful and influential black middle class which will have an interest in preserving the present order.
- creating the impression mainly through the press that liberal opinion amongst the Whites is growing and that Whites of their own accord will bring about a just society in South Africa.
- trying to cause division among the black people and therefore weakening their strength
- creating institutions which give black people the shadow and not the reality of power.¹²

Mr. Ramisar also called for closer co-operation and elimination of quarrels amongst the various black organizations who all had a common aim.

In the field of sport, Congress firmly reinstated its belief in integrated sport beginning at club level and rejected the so-called multi-national events. Congress called upon white sportsmen to show their honesty by refusing to participate in matches against groups like the Derrick Robin XI. Congress went on to support the stand taken by people like Hassan Howan and Morgan Naidoo who are black sport administrators and strong critics of racist sport.

With regard to transport and increased bus and train fares, Congress blamed the Government for dumping black people in ghettos, miles away from towns and therefore making it necessary for black people to travel in and out of towns at their own expense everyday. Congress called upon the Government to acknowledge its own faults by subsidising transport costs.

With reference to education, Congress voiced concern on the disparity in the amounts spent on the different racial groups. Congress went on to call the attention of black people to the lack of academic freedom on black campuses.¹³

On the question of African trade unions, Congress voted in favour of supporting African unions and called upon existing trade unions to further this course.¹⁴

Attempts at Creation of a New Political Party

In the course of June, there emerged in Durban some manouvre to form a new Indian political party for the country. It appeared that these moves emanated from discussion groups led by Dr. M. H. G. Mayet, and consisting largely of many professional people in the community. Amongst those invited to the initial discussion on this new political party, were five senior officials of NIC including Mr. M. J. Naidoo, president, Mr. Rabi Bugwanden, Dr. Faruk Meer, Mr. D. K. Singh and Mr. Ramisar. According to the NIC president Mr. M. J. Naidoo, all the NIC officials refused to attend the meeting on the grounds that, "on the surface it appears a gimmick of some kind by certain people. And we are not prepared to get our hands soiled with such a group as it presently appears".¹⁵

The Black People's Convention

In 1974 the activities of the Black People's Convention were marred by police intimidation and harassment and arbitrary action on the part of the Department of Justice.

Banning of the Heroes' Day Gathering

According to policy and custom, the Black People's Convention declared March 21 as Heroes' Day on which the branches of the move-

ment all over the country would commemorate various massacres of black people especially through police shoot-outs as was the case with Sharpeville. The Durban branch of BPC organised what was to be a massive commemoration service to be held at Young Men's Christian Association Hall in Durban at 2 p.m. on the 30th of March 1974. Large posters and handbills advertising the meeting were distributed throughout Durban, and it appeared that the commemoration service would draw large crowds.

However, on the 29th of March, the magistrate for the district of Durban Mr. L. L. A. McKay evoked provisions of the Riotous Assemblies Act which had been passed shortly before, and banned the Heroes' Day Commemoration service from being held anywhere in Durban. Notices of the ban were given to five Durban newspapers and to the local officers of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. The notice read,

"I hereby in terms of Section 2 (i) of the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1956...prohibit the said gathering at the said place and everywhere in the said district from the period beginning at 12.01 a.m. on March 30th and ending at 12.01 a.m. on April 1".

Mr. McKay said in the notice, he "had reason to apprehend that the public peace would be seriously endangered by the gathering advertised as Heroes' Day Sharpeville Commemoration Service, to be held in the Hall of the Young Men's Christian Association, Beatrice Street, Durban, at 2.00 p.m. on March 30 1974".

Following the banning of the meeting the BPC issued a statement calling on all those who had intended attending the meeting to rededicate themselves to a firmness of purpose. It read "The unilateral banning of a commemoration service to remember all fallen heroes in the black struggle for freedom, is only too familiar." The banning of the meeting was also condemned by many other people including Professor John Duggard of Witwatersrand University, who claimed that the use of the new powers confirmed the fears of those who believe that the new Riotous Assemblies Act was intended to put an end to freedom of assembly throughout South Africa.¹⁶

BPC Durban's Symposium

A national symposium was organised by BPC in Durban in September 1974. Amongst the chief speakers at the meeting were, Mr. Zeph Mothopeng, a former PAC leader, Mr. Phandelani Nefolovhodwe, SASO president, Mrs. Fatima Meer and Mr. Harry Singh, Public Relation's Officer of BPC.

The main feature of this symposium was a concentrated attack on "institutions that work within the apartheid system" which were counted as Urban Bantu Councils, Homeland Governments, SAIC,

and CRC. The highlight of this meeting was the public tribute paid to the BPC by Mrs. Fatima Meer, who in her speech declared "the time has come when we all have to get together and work for a determined unity. We must use our passions, our methods and energies, to get all our black brothers and sisters together and form a united front".¹⁷ The meeting was also marked by the physical ejection of some people from amongst the crowd who were identified as "spies". Outside the Kajee Hall where the meeting was held were two car loads of plain-clothes security policemen.

Frelimo Rally and Mass Arrests

The BPC joined hands with SASO to announce on the weekend of the 20th to the 22nd of September the times and venues of a series of rallies to be held throughout the country to celebrate the victory of Frelimo in Mozambique. The first rally which was to be held in Durban on the 25th of September was widely advertised in the press following information from some quarters that Frelimo representatives would be addressing the meeting.

The details of what went on thereafter are spelt out in the chapter on detentions. Many of the BPC leadership, about thirteen in number, and many other followers of the movement were subsequently arrested and detained.

Partly as a result of mass arrests, and the accompanying disarray, the conference of the BPC scheduled to be held in December was indefinitely postponed. The offices of the BPC in Johannesburg were broken into, allegedly by the police. However it was not quite clear what had happened since the police claimed to have gone into the office in the company of a BPC official whose name did not appear on any BPC list and with whom no BPC leader was acquainted.

Reorganization After the Mass Arrest

At the time of the Frelimo Rally and the subsequent mass arrests, the BPC president Mr. Farisani was on a study visit to Israel and came back at the end of the year, together with leaders of the main branches in Johannesburg, Durban and the Cape. Mr. Farisani set up a provisional structure to take care of the affairs of BPC and visited branches throughout the country to keep up the morale of the membership. BPC branches remained reasonably active in Johannesburg, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, King William's Town, Cape Town, Vereeniging, Bloemfontein, Daveyton and went about with the normal business of the movement but at low profile. In March 1975 many of these branches held a customary Heroes Day Commemoration service without much interference.

At the time of writing, a meeting had been called of all the branch leadership with the national leadership to re-examine the thrust to be made by the organization within the given situation.

Self-Help and Religious Groups

BLACK COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

1974 saw a phenomenal growth in the work of Black Community Programmes which brought it much closer to the intended goal of being a community development organ within the black community.

Home Industries

The Black Community Programmes began to consolidate its attempts to offer means of economic existence to some destitute areas, particularly in the Eastern Cape, through the creation of home or cottage industries in places like Njwaxa, Zinyoka and Norwood. These home industries are manufacturers of leather goods and cloth garments. The production process is laboriously slow in that it is labour intensive and uses minimum machinery. At this stage 50 people are employed in the various home industries who derive their living from the sale of goods they manufacture.

In addition, the Black Community Programmes has set up a sales organization to publicise the work of the home industries and to ensure a constant supply of orders to them. The sales division represents not only the home industries run by BCP but also those established by the Border Council of Churches under the leadership of their field officer Mr. Themba Sibeko. The Border Council of Churches has established home industries at Dimbaza, St. Matthews and Krwa-krwa, near Alice, all of which employ about seventy people. The two organisations have worked well together in this sphere and all these home industries are slowly approaching the stage where they will no more need to be subsidised except for expansion.

The purpose of the home industries is not only to provide gainful employment to destitute people but also to train people in mastering certain basis production skills and also management skills. It is also hoped that through this form of living example many people will be encouraged to exploit their natural resources where opportunities for work are hard to come by.

Research and Publications.

The Research and Publications' Department of Black Community Programmes continued with the production of *Black Review* 1973. *Black Review* has now become a yearly feature, as was intended. After publication of *Black Review* 1973, it was decided to change the year for *Black Review* so that it spreads over one half of each consecutive year. Thus instead of having *Black Review* 1974 we have *Black Review* 1974-75 which covers the period from July of the one year to June of the following year. Hence *Black Review* will now appear in the latter half of each year. *Black Review* continues to be of immense value to the scholars of the South African situation and remains a proud documentation of things done by Blacks, done to Blacks as reported by Blacks. In this sense it serves a unique purpose in the South African situation.

In addition to *Black Review*, the Research and Publications Department is to resume publication of *Black Viewpoint* and *Black Perspectives*. The next issue of *Black Viewpoint* will reflect the feelings of Blacks on the detente exercise currently in the news in Southern Africa whilst *Black Perspectives* will concentrate on an academic analysis of the significance of the Bantustan policy to the black community. Both topics will be treated in an unbiased balanced way reflecting the predictable differences known to exist amongst black people.

Women's Division

At the beginning of September 1974, Mrs. Daphne Khoza (formerly Miss Daphne Mahlangu) left the service of the Women's Division of the BCP due to marital commitments and was replaced by Mrs. A. N. Ndamse of Umtata who now heads this division. Mrs. Ndamse operates from a branch office based in Umtata which is dedicated entirely to women's work.

Through this office courses are organised for women's training sessions in spheres such as nutrition, child care, basic skills such as knitting, sewing, crocheting, cookery and gardening.

Health Schemes

At the beginning of 1975, the Black Community Programmes started a health centre in the Eastern Cape, about nine kilometres out of King William's Town. The Health Centre is situated between two large consortiums of rural settlements, collectively known as Zinyoka Valley (west of the centre) and Balasi farm area (east of the centre). In this way it is within reach of many thousands of people who otherwise would have to be attended to in King William's Town at much greater cost.¹

The Community served is mainly rural people living on trust lands, freehold lands and white farms between King William's Town and

Frankfort. In its first six months of operation the Centre saw close to 2,500 patients. Over this period the average daily intake worked out each week built up to 41 patients per day. Most of the patients come from families averaging six in number and living on an income of between R5 and R10 weekly. The patients are mainly women and children and men over the age of 50 since most young men are away on migratory labour.

The centre consists of three parts:—

- the outpatients clinic consisting of a waiting room, an injection/dressing room, a preventive medicine lecture room and two external toilets.
- the maternity section consisting of a labour ward with three beds, a maternity ward with six beds and six cotbeds, a linen/slucice room and a toilet and bathroom.
- The on-duty staff section consisting of a kitchen-cum-dining hall, a staff room with overnight facilities and a staff toilet/bathroom.

Besides the Medical Officer Dr. M. A. Ramphele, the Health Centre has four sisters, one staff nurse and administrative staff. A few doctors in the area occasionally do voluntary relief duty.

In addition to the daily curative work at the clinic, there have been many subsidiary services of preventive medicine nature introduced at the clinic. The clinic also serves two out-stations.

The Zanempilo Health Centre is only the first of a number of similar health schemes that the BCP is planning to introduce into the country. Others are earmarked for Northern Natal, Northern Transvaal and Transkei areas.

Other Projects

The BCP has also started introducing into urban areas a bulk buying scheme to minimise the effects of inflation on people. The scheme involves co-operative buying of monthly groceries by communities through wholesalers to reduce overhead charges. The pilot scheme marking the introduction of this type of programme was launched in King William's Town in April 1975 and the scheme had become very popular and has been completely taken over by the people.

Regarding child care, BCP has seen the provision of creche schemes in urban areas as being of extreme relevance in enabling more members of the family to be able to go to school and for others to seek work. Already BCP has managed to revive a creche in Ginsberg location in King William's Town and plans to put up model creches in Umlazi, Durban.

Leadership Training Programmes.

Setbacks were experienced in this aspect of BCP work following bannings on staff including the arrest and detention of Mr. Aubrey Mokoena of the Johannesburg BCP office. However, in 1974 more leadership seminars were held in places like Umtata and a National Consultation of Black Organizations is being planned for October 1975.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRICANS—ASSECA

Due to lack of timed information activities of the ASSECA were not included in *Black Review* 1973. The following report on ASSECA will therefore date back into 1973.

The Aftermath of the Fort Hare Walkout

Following the 1973 students crisis at Fort Hare many parents expected ASSECA to play a major role in mediating between the students and the Fort Hare authorities. Dr. H. M. S. Nyembezi of Johannesburg attacked ASSECA for maintaining a silent attitude claiming that ASSECA is given large sums of money for use in the advancement of Blacks in schools. He asked ASSECA to "Kindly explain to the Blacks why they now seem completely paralysed and why they refuse to co-operate with other Blacks to improve the lot of the students".² Replying to this Mr. Mehlomakhulu the General Secretary of ASSECA dismissed the attack as unfounded and claimed that ASSECA was committed to promoting black solidarity and not to dividing the community by sniping at other black organizations. He said "Had it not been that this statement contained such blatant untruths, we of ASSECA would have ignored it."³

Outline of ASSECA Problems

Further elaborating on the issues involved in this debate, the president Mr. M. T. Moerane dealt with grants to ASSECA and described the use to which the money was put. He revealed that ASSECA had received a grant of R10,000 which ASSECA used for general administration of the organization which included the salary of an organiser, the establishment of an office with equipment, employment of a typist and purchase of a car for office purposes.⁴

Amongst programmes undertaken by ASSECA was the running of a yearly Summer School for matriculants. In addition ASSECA had equipped the laboratory of Orlando High School and initiated the TEACH fund that was backed by the *Star*.

Mr. Moerane also revealed that ASSECA had advanced plans to establish technical schools in urban areas.

Following the tragedy at the Western Deep Levels ASSECA announced that it would start a fund to ensure that the children of people who were killed in the accident would be educated.⁵ Summing up ASSECA's role within the black community, Mr. Mehlomakhulu said that ASSECA's aim was to ensure that every African child went to school under the best conditions.

In a report in *The Star* it was announced that Polaroid would continue its support for ASSECA because it regarded ASSECA as a valuable organization.⁶

Controversy over the Collection of Funds

Late in 1973 ASSECA launched a campaign to collect money for ASSECA programmes. A suggestion was made that a ten-cent levy on students be imposed to go towards a special fund for ASSECA. This suggestion roused a storm of protest from a number of parents especially in Dube, who protested that it was incomprehensible to expect children to boost ASSECA.⁷ Soweto residents generally criticized the organization on the grounds that outside expansion throughout the country, the organization had nothing positive to contribute. In a meeting at Soweto heated arguments were exchanged between ASSECA officials and parents who were demanding a financial statement from ASSECA.

In a special interview with *Black Review*, the general secretary of ASSECA, Mr. Mehlomakhulu explained that the controversial 10c levy was in fact misinterpreted. He said that the intention had been to involve the black community in raising funds for development programmes run by community organizations like ASSECA; which was in fact an important aspect of community development, to promote a spirit of self-reliance.

The money was only supposed to be given to children and channelled through schools to facilitate the collection of donations. A further meeting was called between officials of ASSECA, the Urban Bantu Council Chairman Mr. Lengene, and parents. It was planned that at this meeting ASSECA would release statements about its activities, finances, and assistance to students. Later on, however, ASSECA officials denied having agreed to this meeting and declared that they would independently release statements about the organization's affairs. Despite insistence by Mr. Lengene that the meeting should go on all the same, the meeting did not take place at the prescribed time.

Polaroid Grants to ASSECA

At the beginning of 1975 conflicting reports were given about the continuation of the Polaroid grants to ASSECA. It was reported in the *Rand Daily Mail* that the Polaroid Corporation had cut off its massive subsidy to ASSECA and that two senior officials working in the Soweto office were sacked.⁸ The report continued to say that the crunch had come in a special statement by a representative of Polaroid, Mr. Helmut Hirsch who had been responsible for the financial donations. Mr. Hirsch is reported to have told the *Rand Daily Mail* that he was not happy with the way donations had been made to ASSECA. He said "In 1975 Polaroid donated R15,000 to ASSECA on a rand for rand basis but since then we have not been fully informed of what is happening".⁹

In the meantime, *The Sunday Times*, reported that Polaroid had merely interrupted its support to ASSECA pending full financial reports from ASSECA. The Polaroid official denied having sacked the two ASSECA officials claiming that such dismissals could only be made by the ASSECA officials and that in this instance they had been made without his knowledge or approval. Later on Mr. Mehlomakhulu explained that the dismissals had been occasioned by an internal reorganization which had rendered the positions superfluous.

Outlining the new approach to the funding of ASSECA Mr. Hirsch said that Polaroid would discontinue from 1976 onwards giving outright grants to ASSECA but would give grants on a basis of ten rands to every rand raised by the organisation and that this would all depend on satisfactory progress and financial reports.

Asked in an interview by *Black Review*, whether or not the Polaroid change of funding approach had been prompted by the controversy raised, Mr. Mehlomakhulu explained that Polaroid had promised annual grants to ASSECA for a period ending in 1975. It was therefore not surprising that Polaroid could decide to change its funding policy.

Mr. Mehlomakhulu further expressed an observation that there were people especially in Soweto, who sought to destroy the good name and the work of ASSECA because of their personal differences with individuals involved in ASSECA. He advised such people to allow the community to reap the fruits of work done by organizations like ASSECA, and that they should make it their business in future to come into ASSECA to help build the association with constructive criticism; and "not stand on a hill and point fingers, while they themselves are doing very little to be desired. I want to emphasise that we want the people to associate themselves with ASSECA, and everyone can be part of the association. Co-operation is the word we must observe for the prosperity of our community."

Growth of ASSECA Work

In the Cape ASSECA continued to flourish in some of the towns with the Mdantsane branch succeeding to make a useful impact on the community there. As a result of the success at Mdantsane a new branch is about to be formed at Duncan Village to take care specifically of that area.

IDAMASA

IDAMASA continued to grow in strength during 1974 and 1975. Branches in the major centres, especially in Johannesburg, took strides in tackling social issues in the black community.

Black Review learnt from several interviews with top officials of the association and with the general membership in some parts of the country that there was a strong move from within Idamasa, to revise the role and the service of the association in society.

This reassessment, which was spearheaded by the young ministers from the time of the 1974 annual conference, which was held at Edendale in Pietermaritzburg, has prevailed through 1975; and it is expected to dominate the 1975 conference due to be held at Gugulethu, Cape Town in August.

One of the major points on the revision programme was the whole question of opening the doors of Idamasa to all the other black groups i.e. Indians and Coloureds. This move was seen as a long overdue revision of policy.

The 1974 annual conference appointed a new national executive, consisting of six people. Rev. Jerry Poswa was appointed President, Rev. P. M. Mkatshwa first vice-President, Rev. WaNamo, second vice-President. Reverends Sol Lediga and John Mbata were elected secretary general and assistant secretary general respectively, and the treasurer was Rev. Zulu.

Projects Supported by Idamasa

In 1974, Idamasa took a key role in fundraising for the establishment of the African Bank of South Africa, a project of the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC). It therefore became one of the major participants in the project. It was expected that it would buy shares in the bank.

Idamasa believed in involving the community in the raising of funds for community projects. Talking to *Drum*, on June 8, the Projects

Director of Idamasa, who was also appointed a member of the board of directors of the African Bank, Rev. Enos Sikakane said: "...the only way Blacks can be liberated is through self-discovery, self-help and standing on our own feet.

"Just imagine the amount of money we can raise if each Black were to contribute a cent to a fund," said Rev. Sikakane.

Explaining the Association's involvement with the African Bank, Rev. Sikakane said, "We decided to invest in the black bank because it is our own, and we will have a say in its running".¹⁰

From its Orlando base in Soweto, Idamasa launched an urban development programme conducted by the Rev. B. B. Radebe, former Secretary General of the Association.

Idamasa has continued to assist needy students with scholarships. One of the three students they sent abroad for training in community development and social work, Miss Nthabiseng Bolofo is back in the country and is reported to be helping in the Idamasa Soweto Training Project.

THE EDENDALE LAY ECUMENICAL CENTRE

The Ecumenical Centre at Edendale underwent remarkable expansion in the course of 1974 and 1975. A large conference hall was built with dressingrooms, film screen and modern interior equipment.

Five rondavels were put up, each with a capacity for 25 persons; mainly to be used for group discussions. Four more of these are planned. These rooms are proving quite useful to the various programmes run by the centre.

Women's Programmes

Arts and Crafts: The Lay Centre has been running a programme of giving skills to local needy women in such crafts as crocheting, embroidery, pottery, beadwork etc. In addition to this programme, women are being taught in pattern designing and dressmaking. A total of eighty-six women have gone through this programme.

Makhelwana

The Makhelwana programme (meaning "neighbourliness" programme) was started in 1973, and it was intended to equip women with skill in house-wifery. Fifty-two women have gone through the programme since its inception.

Youth Programmes: This division started functioning in May 1974, with a large seminar of young people from the neighbourhood, in an attempt to identify their needs, work out their priorities and formulate methods of achieving their goals.

As part of this programme, regular youth leadership training sessions are held at the centre.

Agriculture and Fish Culture: With the introduction of Mr Mazibuko, the famous Natal agriculturist, the centre has been able to run very useful and interesting programmes of soil utilization.

Mr. Mazibuko was a demonstrator at the Valley Trust agricultural haven at the Valley of a Thousand Hills area near Pietermaritzburg. Since his arrival at the Lay Centre, he has built up an admirable vegetable garden from which local people get opportunities of learning the best methods of gaining the most out of little ground and minimal water supply.

A pond for fish cultivation has been made at the garden. The yield takes care of the needs of the centre, as well as helping the neighbourhood which suffers as a result of soaring meat prices. Many people come to learn for their own use, the methods involved in fish breeding.

In a report pamphlet issued by the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre in June 1975, the Director, Rev. E. Sikakane says, "the long term objective demands the building up of ecumenical relations so that friends of the centre may increase throughout the world, beginning here in South Africa, and Africa as a whole.

ASSOCIATION OF SELF-HELP (ASH)

The historical background of this association was fully related in *Black Review* 1973. During 1974 and 1975, ASH moved at a faster pace developing into a strong effective community development body. The almost traditional financial problems that accompany most Black voluntary organisations in South Africa have considerably slowed down the enthusiastic growth of ASH, but to use the words of one of the organisers, Bob Marie, "The will to continue and the full knowledge that time and the truth is on our side has kept us going".

Early in 1975, ASH applied for registration as a non-profit company. Such status would enable them to engage in all kinds of economic activity, and whatever income that accrued (tax-free) would be wholly devoted to the running of ASH work in self-help programmes.

PROJECTS:—

(i) Adult Literacy

With the belief that literacy promotes “a person’s self-respect and confidence”,¹¹ ASH embarked on a literacy campaign in March 1974. The project started slowly with a trial period which saw preparation and printing of literacy co-ordinators’ handbooks and primers; development of codes, slides and other aids necessary for the running of the work. While this programme was aimed at assisting the illiterate members of the community to acquire the skill of reading and writing, it was also designed to assist individuals to reflect critically on their environment, and encourage them to act jointly to solve their problems.

(ii) Playgroup

During 1974 and 1975, ASH initiated playgroups in Merebank, to fulfil a need felt by lower-income parents of pre-school-going age children. At a nominal fee of 50c per month per child, children attend the daily playgroup which involves indoor creative activity and outdoor play.

Each playgroup is administered by a Working Group of parents and interested members of the community. These Working Groups send representatives to the Central Planning Committee which consists of resource personnel and the ASH Director. The task of the committee is to co-ordinate the administration and education aspects of the programme. ASH believes that it is of the utmost importance to keep the parents of the playgroup children fully involved in the administration and development of the programme.

Reflecting on their work, ASH printed in a report published in June 1975: “The first aim of establishing the Playgroup has been achieved. Much work needs to be put into raising the standard of the playground. However, since space and facilities are problems, any attempt to raise the standard of operation will have to involve the invention of a new structure of operation that will obviate these problems.

While there is emphasis on restructuring the mode of operation of the playgroups, an equal, if not greater emphasis needs to be placed on the education and training of parents.

(iii) Communal Buying

This scheme, which was discussed in *Black Review* 1973, grew stronger in 1974 and 1975. By June, 1975 it catered for 100 families divided into 7 groups. These people buy their groceries jointly as groups, and therefore enjoy the advantages of whatever discounts are offered as a result of bulk buying. Perhaps more important has been the way the project has succeeded in uniting community efforts in problem-solving.

Evaluating the work, ASH wrote in their publication "Much work has been put into orientating the families to meet once per month to discuss common problems...On the whole the gatherings are informal and conducive to free discussion".

(iv) Other Projects

ASH runs training programmes catering primarily for community members involved with playgroups and communal buying. The training programmes touch basic administration, group co-ordination and human relations.

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