

Two portraits of rural S. Africa

LILY HERBSTEIN

The hopeless . . .

TO get to Welcome Wood one drives past Mount Coke (about 14 km from King Williamstown) turning off to the right and after a few km reaches this most recently established re-settlement camp — situated in the usual beautiful Ciskei surroundings.

This new community of 50 families was endorsed out of a place named Riemvasmaak near Upington, as they constituted a "black spot". There are about 300 people — as usual, mostly elderly or very young.

In Riemvasmaak, I was told, they had ground and cattle but were told that they would not have ground in Welcome Wood so they got rid of whatever cattle they owned. However, they *do* have ground in Welcome Wood but of course now have no cattle!

The area is dry and barren and there is very little water. The tiny two-roomed houses, built of planks are shocking — a few that I entered had no furniture, some not even beds, and belongings were piled up in corners.

They worked together as a community and the day I was there they were busy making two tiny huts into a "creche" with a "lean-to" kitchen.

Men and women worked together mixing mud, sand and manure into a "plaster" for the walls and floors. No furniture and the social worker said he hoped to obtain some second-hand mats for the children to sit on!

There is a clinic with a Government social worker on duty and the usual fee of 20 cents which is waived when necessary (I think). There is a tiny school with three teachers — none properly qualified.

The people are desperately keen to work their land but have no farm implements or sufficient water. If they could get just *one* tractor they would work together, helping each other — as a community — but, I was told — no one wants to know their troubles!

There is no work available and no source of income at all. Border Council of Churches supplies rations. There are six taps in the camp, and a bucket system for each hut. A really horrible place that made me feel nauseous and miserable. Humans should not have to live like that.

Lily Herbstein.

. . . and the helpful

THE Zanempilo community health clinic is situated in Inyoka Location, 9 km north of King Williamstown among the beautiful Ciskei hills and valleys.

It was built by the Block Community Programmes Ltd., a welfare organisation registered in 1973 as an autonomous Black company with a board of directors. The land was leased to them at a reasonable rental by the Church of the Province.

The area is rural, populated mainly by women and children since the men go to the mines to earn a living for their families. It is very obvious that there is an urgent need for health services. A generous donation helped to start this project and today there is an excellently equipped clinic.

I was shown over this recently completed project by a charming sister and was completely overwhelmed to see what had been achieved by dedicated communal workers who believe in "self help".

The clinic has everything. It is complete with reception room, dispensary, examination rooms, maternity and labour wards, preventative medicine

lecture room, staff room, kitchen, sluice, toilets, incinerator room and a general waiting room.

I met the young, attractive and dynamic medical officer, Dr. M A Ramphele and her staff of five, Sisters Nongauza, Moletsane, Sokupa and Ngenya and Staff Nurse Qodi.

Although only a few months in operation there has been a daily attendance of 60 patients to date. Maternity cases are admitted and kept for 48 hours after confinement and patients are given pre- and post natal instruction and care and regularly attend monthly lectures.

The clinic hopes to pay its way, as a basic fee for consultation and treatment is fixed, except in cases of obvious destitution where free treatment may be considered by staff.

It was interesting to hear what the clinic hopes to accomplish — to combine curative with preventive medicine.

Curative medicine will give attention to paediatric, general medical, obstetric and minor surgical problems. Preventive medicine will take the form of an education programme, through which in-

(Continued on page 21)

Mr Pogrund preferred the word "dispassionate" though he found himself hard-pressed to define that too.

The Rand Daily Mail attempts to control the personal prejudices of its staff members through the creation of a series of filters through which the news is processed. There are always people looking over other people's shoulders, so that there is a constant attempt to maintain balance at all times.

News selection is a matter of professional training, and experience provides an awareness of what is news and what is not. There is a deliberate intention to put forward news that will sell papers — a very necessary approach if a paper is to survive, particularly in South Africa with its small reading public. But obviously this is not the only type of news that a paper will publish.

In this country newspapers must be all things to all men and editors must walk a tightrope in an effort to keep all types of readers satisfied.

Press people suffer constant anxiety about whether they are really in touch with the public; with what they want; with trends of thought, while at the same time having to consider whether a newspaper must follow or lead.

It is part of the community it serves, and must be careful about getting too far ahead of its readers.

There are constant tensions on a newspaper — good, inter-active tensions between newspaper people which help to maintain an even keel. As different influences are brought to bear a newspaper will veer around to some extent. In addition there is the plethora of laws restricting what the Press may publish, and the pressures from the Government which arise from time to time.

Newspapers like a first-class mix of politics, crises, crimes, rapes, disaster — these are what sell — and of course all these matters taken together reflect existence.

All newspapers have their own special interests. The Rand Daily Mail is particularly concerned with such matters as poverty, wages, the

pass laws and other allied topics, and this influences its choice of material in the news and feature articles.

Mr Louis Luyt's recent attempt to gain control of SAAN has served to remind the public of the importance of a free Press, imperfect though the Press may be.

The tensions and anxieties aroused by this attempt caused newspaper people to wonder whether the Rand Daily Mail was worthwhile preserving and whether it can achieve enough, and the feeling was very strong that it was still meaningful. The public will surely endorse that feeling.

● *Barbara Waite's letter is published here by kind permission of the Rand Daily Mail.*

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(Continued from page 10)

formation regarding health matters will be given to the community by means of personal contact and through lectures and demonstrations.

Patients attend Monday to Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Patients are also visited in Ginsberg Location, Kingwilliamstown, a few kilometres away from the clinic on Thursday afternoons, and at Ugwenya-Middledrift on Friday mornings.

Water was a major problem and initial expense was involved in prospecting for water, which fortunately after much searching was struck near the site and piping laid on in time for construction to start on schedule.

The Zanempilo Clinic is a significant step taken by a Black voluntary agency and it is hoped that it will be followed by other similar projects. Like all other voluntary organisations the clinic is heavily dependant on grants and donations for its work.

Zanempilo is a splendid example of dedicated community work and all those concerned are to be congratulated on succeeding in achieving a project which will benefit many of the poor and destitute Black people in those areas.

Rocklands Beach

○ ON a hot summer Sunday afternoon I lie upon this little beach

Children and parents dip in and out the sea, others enjoy a picnic tea.

Yachts and speedboats passing by, gulls awheeling in the sky.

I should be thankful and serene, enjoying the beauty of this scene

But my mind is a turmoil of despair — why me down here those up there?

Where well-dressed dark people line the rails and longingly upon us gaze.

You men who enact our laws — pause.

How would it be if your children and you lined those walls?

And they ask, "Why can't we go down, Daddy?"

What would your answer be?

"RSB"