

# Surveys canvass Black opinion

A NUMBER of surveys canvassing urban Black opinion on the issue of disinvestment have shown that an overwhelming majority oppose the strategy.

Internationally recognised sociologist, Professor Lawrence Schlemmer, Director of the Centre for Applied Social Studies at the University of Natal, showed in one report that 75 percent of working Blacks were opposed to disinvestment.

## “Rising unemployment will result in increasing unrest”

A Human Sciences Research Council survey of 1 500 Blacks over 18 years of age in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area revealed that:

- A substantial 64 percent regarded economic pressure as their biggest problem -- including a lack of money and housing as well as unemployment problems. 21 percent felt that apartheid was their most serious problem.
- Over 60 percent said they felt Blacks would suffer most through disinvestment; 14 percent thought Whites would be more affected.
- Just over 56 percent felt Black pupils were wrong to boycott classes; 35.8 percent approved of boycotts.
- About 27 percent believed White Government institutions and leaders were responsible for the boycotts; about 25 percent blamed pupils and their representative councils.

Clarion Call was told that although the Minister of Manpower, Mr Piet du Plessis, puts the unemployment figure in South Africa at 500 000, unofficial estimates put it between 2.75 million and 3 million — and rising.

Concentrated in the major metropolitan centres in South Africa, unemployment is hitting mainly semi-skilled



*Chief M G Buthelezi talking to factory workers... none have told him they support disinvestment.*

and unskilled Black workers.

It is feared that the rising unemployment figures will result in increasing unrest.

In an interview with The Star in Johannesburg, Mr Loet Douwes Dekker, senior lecturer at the Wits Graduate School of Business Administration, highlighted another problem.

“Most South African employers see labour as a liability and not as an asset,” he said.

“As a result, in a recession the first cost factor which managements look at is the wage bill ...”

Professor Nic Wiehahn, head of the UNISA's School of Business Leadership and chairman of the Wiehahn Commission, also told The Star he believes it is time to re-examine the type

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of free-enterprise system needed for South Africa.

“Until there is freedom in the economy, unemployment will be one of the negative side-effects of structural restrictions in South Africa.”

The lifting of restrictions on labour such as influx control, the Group Areas Act and discriminatory legislative practices would go a long way towards freeing the economy, he added.