

## THE MEANING OF MUSIC

Here are the ideas of someone we know who is studying black music and dancing. We hope people write to us and tell us what they think about these ideas. Do people think they are right or wrong.

According to our friend, music and dancing have always been an important part of everyday life in the country areas of Africa. Most activities, work included, and all celebrations, include music. Also performers and audience are not divided - everyone joins in. Is our friend right?

She also told us about the changes which she thinks took place in black music when people started to move from the country to the town. The people who played and the people who listened to music were now separate. In the towns people began to do many different types of work - they began to experience many new problems at their place of work and at home. As a result they expressed themselves in new forms of music.

These days people listen not only to country music but hear on the radio other kinds as well, like Mqashiyo, Mbube, Spirituals and Jazz. Often the things which are sung about in the new types of music created in the city are not the same as those which are sung about in the country areas. A question which our friend thinks is important is this - Do the songs of the city express the experience of black people in the same way as the songs of the country do? What do people think about this?

There was a time when many songs were about the way Whites treated Blacks. One wellknown one is ..

"There comes the Big Van  
All over the country  
They call it the Pickup Van  
There is the Pickup  
There, there is the Big Van  
"Where's your pass?"  
"Where's your Tax?"

Is it true that fewer songs like these are sung than were before? Our friend thinks that today many musicians are more interested in money than in the experiences of their fellow black people who work in the cities and in the country. Also, songs which are about the unhappiness and suffering of Black workers are not heard over the radio because the radio follows government policy.

If you know any songs which are about the oppression of Black workers in the city or in the country we would be very happy if you would send them to us so that we can include them in the newspaper. Then other Black people who don't already know these songs will be able to learn them and pass them on.