

reality of informal settlement is to be properly addressed, consideration will have to be given to the option of large-scale **upgrading** as a means of distributing necessary services.

Conclusion

The main argument in this paper has been that KwaZulu will provide the locale for a substantial increase in the level of Black urbanisation in Natal-KwaZulu. The source of this urbanisation process lies in two factors: that Black urbanisation has been severely restrained by Government policy in the past, and that KwaZulu provides the only significant alternative for Black urbanisation in this region. To this extent it is deficient. However, irrespective of Government policy on Black urbanisation – both at the national and regional level – circumstances in this region make Black urbanisation both necessary and inevitable.

In development terms, however, spatial concentration in urban areas should not be confused with development. Unless necessary conditions are created and fulfilled to ensure the greater integration of urban Blacks into the wider functions of the cities, the consequences will be deficient in development terms as well. At one extreme, the consequences could be what Simkins (1982) calls “deruralisation”; at a lesser extreme, divisions may be created between those who have greater or lesser access to the benefits of urbanisation. In both cases, however, although to different degrees, Black urbanisation will remain deficient until the Government relaxes the restrictions imposed on the pressure for full Black urbanisation in the country as a whole. This returns the issue to what has dominated the relationship between the Government and Black South Africans for so long: intransigence over the necessity for a political accommodation of the Black population. This will continue to define the struggle over Black urbanisation and development in South Africa.□

by Joy Brain

CLOISTERED PERSPECTIVES

Patricia Kay: *Notre Dame under the Southern Cross*. Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984. 375p. illus.

This is a detailed history of the sisters of Notre Dame de Namur from the time of their arrival in Southern Africa in 1899 to the present, written by one of the sisters and based on the *Annals of the community, their journal, “Les cloches de Notre Dame”* and on letters passing between the sisters and the mother house in Belgium and later the English Provincial house, Ashdown. The Notre Dame sisters are renowned for the high standard of education they offer in their convent schools for girls in various parts of the world and this book is largely the story of the problems encountered in providing education of this standard in the changing political and economic circumstances encountered in Southern Africa in the twentieth century. The book deals with Northern and Southern Rhodesia as well as South Africa and the sisters are still running mission schools in Zimbabwe. The story follows the activities of the sisters to and fro across the Limpopo and from the Transvaal to the Orange Free State and finally to the Cape. Their work in Swaziland and Botswana concludes the account.

Their first assignment in Southern Africa was at the Jesuit mission at Empandeni in the Plumtree district of Southern Rhodesia where they were to be extremely successful as educators of both children and adults in the primary, secondary and evening schools. From Empandeni a number of out-stations were established, one of which, at Embakwe, was still being run by Notre Dame sisters at the time of publication of this book.

Before the sisters arrived the Jesuit fathers had already translated parts of the Bible into Sindebele as well as pre-

paring readers, catechisms and prayer books in that language and all the sisters managed to learn Sindebele and to teach in the vernacular.

In South Africa the Notre Dame sisters opened day and boarding schools for White and African children, all of which finally succeeded in providing primary and secondary education of a high standard as well as sporting and extra-curricula activities. They also ran schools for coloured children at Somerset West and at Grassy Park. As strangers to the country the sisters had to accept the judgment of bishops about the need for Catholic schools in the areas of their jurisdiction as well as the ability of the parents to pay for the facilities created for them. The advice they received was quite wrong on more than one occasion and they were to abandon the project and move on. In each case the financial problems had to be overcome usually with assistance from the Provincial house in England and a reasonable explanation had to be forthcoming. Although the sisters were sometimes badly advised nevertheless one cannot help thinking, from the information given here, that they sometimes rushed in without sufficient enquiry and gave up, perhaps, rather too quickly. The absence of any historical background to the Catholic Church in the Transvaal and Orange Free State in the account makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the reader to assess the overall situation relative to the sisters’ work. This is especially true in the case of Bishop Miller O.M.I. whose behaviour towards the sisters and their proposed convent school at Belgravia was the cause of the abandonment of the venture. Because she has concentrated only on Notre

Dame sources for her information the author has been unable to explain Miller's point of view and the picture is therefore incomplete.

After having abandoned the idea of opening a school in Belgravia, they started work in Kroonstad, eventually opening a day school in the town, and a high class convent boarding school on the outskirts. It was here, too, that they entered the field of African education, opening a school in the location for the children of urban Black families. From as early as 1907, then, they accepted the dual role of teaching White children who were able to pay fees and required not only good educational standards and examination passes but music and art; the profits from this school were utilized to provide a building and equipment for the African school which then applied for a government subsidy to pay the Black teachers required. The other communities of nuns worked in the same way providing education for rich and poor alike but, in terms of the laws of the time, separately. Sister Patricia gives a graphic description of the preparations for the official opening of the Kroonstad convent, which was to be performed by Bishop Gaughren of Kimberley. With the preparations complete, the sisters retired for the night but were soon awakened by loud knocking on the door. Opening it they found the bishop and guests with the news that their beautiful and long awaited school was ablaze. Arson was suspected but eventually the insurance company paid compensation and the building was rebuilt.

The 1920's found the community opening an African mission school near Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia. Here they were astonished to observe the missionary method of the Jesuits in action with its enormous patience and tolerance shown towards tribal customs and traditions which were frowned on by Christian missionaries all over Africa. It was only in the late 1960's that the principle of building on such tribal customs, rather than destroying them, has been generally accepted by missionaries. The Jesuits were far ahead of their time in this regard. This school prospered and was eventually handed over to another community in 1948 but not before the nucleus of an African sisterhood had been established.

The involvement of the sisters in African education was increased in 1931 when they were persuaded to open a school at Martindale, near Sophiatown, for urban children. Once established the school was utilized to the full by the local community but the return of the Nationalist Government to power in 1948 and the far reaching legislation that followed led to the removal of African families from Sophiatown and the surrounding areas and the school had to be closed. The secondary school for African pupils at Venterspost was also closed under the Group Areas act while the Bantu Education Act was eventually responsible for the closing of their other schools. The Grassy Park venture, for poor coloured children, was taken over in 1969 by the Department of Coloured Affairs. Added to their problems was the Government's unsympathetic attitude to Catholic immigration which prevented the arrival of sisters from Europe while the attempt to train nuns at the Constantia convent was not really successful.

The elite schools for White girls ran into difficulties also. The fall in admissions for financial and other reasons, such

as the growing popularity of co-educational institutions, placed a strain on the Sisters' resources. Another reason for the decline in support was that less emphasis was placed by the Catholic Church on the parents' obligation to send their children to Catholic schools and the eventual result was the closure of the convents at Kroonstad, Venterspost, Westonaria and finally Constantia.

Emphasis now shifted to Swaziland, Botswana and the two schools in Matabeleland. Here there was a genuine need for education and the sisters felt their efforts were appreciated and they would not be harassed by apartheid laws. In the case of Swaziland, however, the government policy of Africanization made it necessary for them to withdraw in 1977 when Swazis took over the running of the flourishing school. The fate of the school at Embakwe was in the balance when the book was printed. The Botswana missions were developing fast.

One might ask, then, what the Notre Dame sisters really achieved despite all their hard work and all the funds raised here and abroad and poured into their educational institutions. Generations of well educated girls of three races testify to their educational skills, to their cheerful or even joyous approach to life. All the mission schools for Africans were handed over as going concerns with substantial buildings and enviable academic records. They were among the pioneers of sound education for Africans and will be remembered as such.

The weakest sections of this book are those that deal with general historical events and perspectives. The first chapter, in particular, which gives a summary of African history from the earliest times, is so superficial that one wonders for whom it is intended. It is clearly inadequate for readers overseas or for those who have little knowledge of the subject and, because of its brevity, too inaccurate to be of much value to local readers. Throughout the book one has the impression that odd snippets of historical information have been pushed in after the text was written and they are too short and sketchy to be useful. I find it strange, too, that in a book deeply concerned with the problems of African education, there is no mention of Loram and the other policy makers prior to 1948.

In the case of Catholic Church history there are a number of factual errors and omissions, all of which could have been avoided by more careful consultation of the secondary sources quoted. A more serious criticism is the narrowness of the primary sources used. Concentration on the archives of the Notre Dame community, however interesting, necessarily leaves a great deal unexplained. The author has not referred to the decisions of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda whose policies and directives would have influenced the superiors of all orders and congregations and through them the actions of individual missionaries.

Sister Patricia's book is well written, contains some excellent character sketches and has adequate references to sources. There are two maps and photographs of groups of staff, of pupils and of buildings. There is a source list and also a list of all the sisters who served in Southern Africa from 1899. Of the nearly 150, 22 were born in this country. For readers interested in education in the widest sense and in the effects of Nationalist Party policies on African education after 1948, particularly in urban locations, this is a useful book.□