

Sash

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Saul Mkhize 1935 – 1983
The Black Sash Magazine



Saul Mkhize's son Paris. His glass eye fell out during the alleged police assault on him.

Since this alleged attack, reported in the stop press of the last issue, during which he claims he was asked why his father was resisting the removal from Driefontein, (and which was apparently the sole reason given for the assault) he has been summoned to the police station on several occasions for an identification parade so that he can point out his assailants: and each time the police failed to hold the promised parade. He claims that during these visits he has seen some of his assailants in the police station.

Saul continued to lead the resistance to the proposed move even after the beating up of his son Paris provided an ominous sign of what might happen to him.

*Jill Wentzel, Transvaal Chairman,
at the funeral on April 16*

Misplaced loyalty prevented the Minister from condemning publicly the 'outrageous' actions of some of his men... Worse, he and his predecessors lead young policemen, such as Constable Nienaber, to believe that anything they do, especially where blacks are concerned, will be condoned.

*Helen Suzman in Parliament
April 1983*



Saul Mkhize's coffin is lowered into the grave

CONTENTS

2	Mathopistad	18	Marjorie Byron
4	Presidential address Sheena Duncan	19	Onslaught on squatters Merle Beetge
7	New deal seeks to entrench evil system Alan Boesak	21	Pensions workshop at Driefontein
	Recession — two views	23	Conference resolutions
10	Capitalism to blame Solveig Piper	24	National Headquarters report Joyce Harris
12	Hits all economies E M Wentzel	28	Ruth Foley Marjorie Britten
13	New constitution and strategies of rejection Joyce Harris		

Mkhize photos and front cover picture by Ingrid Hudson; cover design, Pierre Hinch and Alky Georgiades; Conference photos, Paul Alberts; Mathopistad photos, Struan Robertson. The cover picture depicts Saul's wives and one of his children at the graveside.

Saul Mkhize



SAUL MKHIZE was shot in the middle of the Easter weekend. From now on, appropriately, here in South Africa, the rich symbolism of Easter will be loaded with the memory of Saul's life and death and the knowledge of the pain of forced removal.

The story of Saul Mkhize and the people of Driefontein tells everything that needs to be known about relocated rural communities, their tragically misguided belief in the protection of the law, and their leaders of unforgettable stature who in a normal society would be members of parliament, who are in every way superior to those many officials whose arrogant rudeness they have to bear.

Many of us knew Saul well. With a good job and a house in Johannesburg, he stood to lose less than most by the proposed removal from Driefontein; yet he sacrificed his time and money and the well-being of his now impoverished family for the sake of his community.

For nearly a year we watched this determined man teach himself the skills of leadership. During the last weeks of his life some of us noticed and spoke uneasily to each other about his moods of foreboding. After the beating up of his son, and in the wake of increasing police harassment of the people of Driefontein, he began to realise that what he had thought was a battle of title deeds, minutes and meetings, permits and lawyers, publicity and special pleading, was something quite different and that he had taken on a ruthless and implacable foe.

Symbolic of apartheid's brutality and its debasement of ordinary people, and telling more about the causes of the shooting incident than any amount of mulling over the fatal events ever can or will, is the story of the two young constables among a vanload of policemen who descended on the Mkhize home the next day to take statements. One of the constables, in plain clothes with a gun strapped round his waist, was pointed out to the family by friends who claimed that he was Constable Nienaber, who had shot Saul. When the family objected to his presence in their home Captain Scheepers sent him outside. Later, he and another young constable were seen riding horses that visitors had tethered in a nearby field. Captain Scheepers angrily reprimanded them.

Minister le Grange has denied that Constable Nienaber was present that day. The inquest will no doubt establish the truth of the matter. Nevertheless, whether or not one of them was Constable Nienaber, and whatever was in the minds of those two young policemen when they so arrogantly rode those horses, they performed an historic act . . . And the uncaring attitude that this embodied was later echoed in the Citizen editorial which, while acknowledging that Saul's death 'is the kind of incident which is tragic in itself', concluded 'Above all, the utmost care must be taken, by the police and officialdom generally, to ensure that nothing happens that can be used against this country to blacken its name'.

Never mind the strange values that dictate this greater concern with our good name. What is really awful is this fresh evidence that the obvious lesson remains unlearned by a white establishment that has become compulsively blind to all evidence of the destructive nature of apartheid.

JW

MATHOPISTAD also doomed?

The Black Sash's relocation committee on March 5 escorted a group of PFP members to Mathopistad, a black spot about five kilometres from Boons. They also visited the site at Onderstepoort, where the 1 500 people are due to be resettled.

We took some 16 people from the Houghton branch of the PFP, who had expressed an interest in seeing Mathopistad.

When we arrived in the village we were greeted by a large crowd, and about 100 people gathered for a meeting in the local school. Mr John Mathope, in the chair, gave us a brief history of the Bakubani tribe who have lived in the area since 1885.

Around the turn of the century the tribe split, and in 1910 one group bought a piece of land from a white farmer. This is the area now known as Mathopistad. According to government surveys, this land is Elandsfontein No. 20, and it will be expropriated when the people are moved.

I gather that of the 1 500 people on the farm, only 22 hold title needs and 30 have deeds of sale.

Many of the adults live and work in Johannesburg, about 1½ hours away.

'But it is still our land,' says Mr Johannes Mathope, chairman of the Johannesburg branch.

'It is the land of our fathers. It was given to us by our fathers and forefathers. The children have to work in Soweto, but they didn't take the land with them, they left it here.

'All the people who are here are farmers and they are looking after our fathers' land. We have 16 tractors, and we grow many crops.'

The farm stretches to the horizon. Even though there has been a severe drought the land is green and crops are

relatively unaffected. A river flows through the property, which is well served with natural springs and fountains.

'We live here like white farmers,' said one of the villagers. 'We grow maize, sorghum, potatoes, apricots, prickly pears and peaches'.

Mr Rankoko, an elder of the tribe, is one of the most vocal spokesmen and has been involved in most of the negotiations with the government.

He pointed out that the farm is in the heart of the Transvaal maize triangle, and said that the villagers grow not just enough maize for their own needs, but they generally have a surplus which they sell to the Koster co-operative.

The villagers have known about the projected move to Onderstepoort since 1969. The issue has split the community, and some people have already moved, but the others have refused to go. They say that the people who moved are hungry, they can't grow food in Onderstepoort because it is too hot and dry.

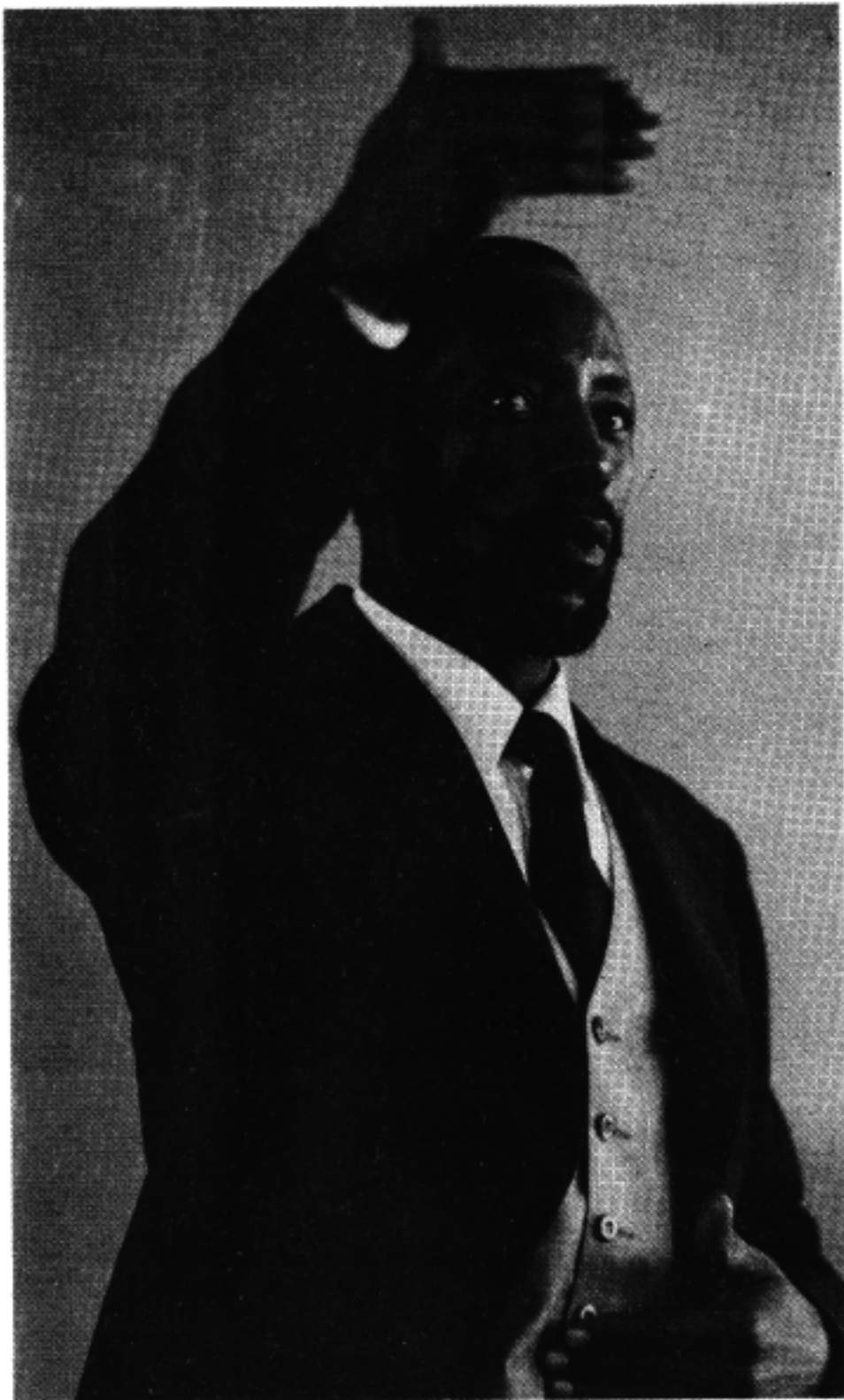
Dr Koornhof has told the people at Mathopistad that they would have piped water when they moved to Onderstepoort, whereas at present they do not have any water.

The villagers say that the Minister failed to understand the situation. Admittedly their borehole isn't working — someone stole the pump — but they do have ample water from the many springs on the property, and, of course, from the river.

One old man said: 'I have never asked the Govern-



The farm stretches to the horizon — Mr John Mathope shows members of the Black Sash and PFP the ancestral lands of the Bakubani tribe



Mr Johannes Mathope — the Saul Mkhize of Mathopistad

ment for water, even though I am old. Dr Koornhof must not be worried because we have no water here. Onderstepoort is in the bushveld. It is no good at all.'

The chairman of the Houghton constituency, Brian Doctor, asked the meeting if there was anyone there who wanted to move. The response was silence. After a period of discussion among the villagers, during which we urged them to speak freely to us, one person said that a commissioner had already asked many times for the names of people who wanted to move, and there was no one.

We suggested that if the commissioner comes to see them again they should ask him for an agenda in advance, and that they should refuse to hold the meeting unless they are given an agenda beforehand, and that they should see that the agenda is adhered to.

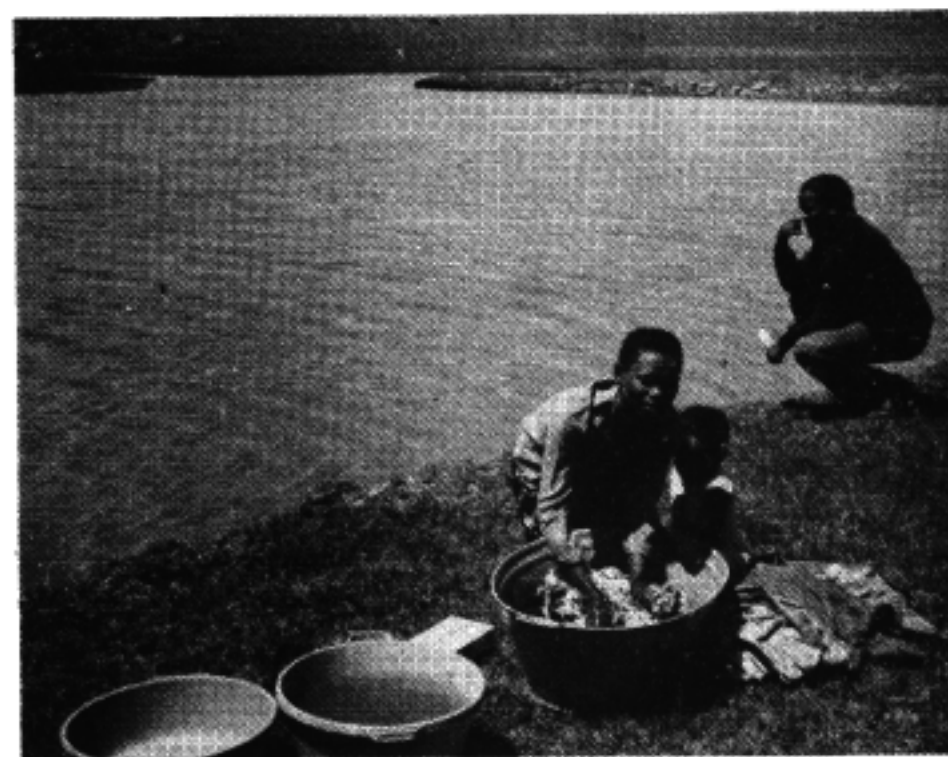
From Mathopistad we drove to Onderstepoort, the proposed resettlement area, just outside Sun City.

We stood in a vast empty silence with nothing around us except rows and rows of brand new shiny tin toilets in absolutely parallel lines marked out with exactly even spaces between them, like regimented tin soldiers stretching as far as the eye can see.

There are said to be 4 000 tin toilets at Onderstepoort, so the government is obviously preparing the area for a resettlement very much larger than Mathopistad.



'We live here like white farmers'



'Dr Koornhof must not be worried because we have no water here ...'

Dr Koornhof has told the people at Mathopistad that they would have piped water when they moved to Onderstepoort, whereas at present they do not have any water

It's nice to feel you're noticed. Isn't it?

Jill de Vlieg was seen at Mathopistad, and an anonymous caller — he said he was a traffic cop — phoned her husband Rob to ask if vehicle reg no XYZ was theirs.

'Yes, why?'

'It was involved in a traffic accident at Mathopistad on March 5.'

'Oh no it wasn't.'

A later telephone call to Rob from ADJ Officer Coetzee at John Vorster Square was just to warn him that Jill should have a permit to go into a black area.

Adv Brian Doctor, chairman of the Houghton branch of the PFP, was out when someone phoned his home after the Mathopistad trip.

The caller asked his maid a list of questions about the family. Does the advocate's wife work? And how many children have they?

Is she happy in her job, and what is she paid?

Presidential address

Sheena Duncan

THE YEAR that has passed since the last Black Sash National Conference in March 1982 has brought us face to face with the harsh realities of the National Security State.

The shape of the Total Strategy has become clear as the concept of a Total Onslaught is created for us requiring also the creation of the image of an enemy. This created concept of Onslaught as well as requiring the image of an enemy also requires a redefinition of the 'State'. Our understanding of a State as being the organised political community of the whole people within defined geographical borders has to be abandoned and replaced by a word State which refers to the centre of political and armed power and the few in whose hands that power lies. 'State' has become synonymous with the ruling elite. Thus all who oppose the policy and actions of the ruling elite become 'the enemies of the State'.

Because the overwhelming majority of people in South Africa do oppose the policy of the ruling elite, *total strategy* is designed to destroy or to neutralise that opposition: and it is a *total strategy*.

Total Strategy does not refer to the ever-increasing militarisation of the society and to the powers of the Security Police. It includes all the plans for constitutional change, the creation of new geographical boundaries, the denationalisation of black South Africans, the new patterns emerging in the control of the supply of labour, the improvements in quality of life for those black people who have some limited rights to live in 'white' urban areas, the containing of the growing black worker organisations, the harnessing of the power of the economic sector, the control over the dissemination of true and accurate information and the mounting of a propaganda onslaught directed towards those within and without the country.

At this 1983 conference the Black Sash will be studying the mechanisms of the Total Strategy — the ways in which the exclusion of the majority for the benefit of the minority is being accomplished.

The political mechanisms

Change is certainly happening in South Africa — probably the most radical change there has been since 1652 but that change cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be described as reform. We believe that it is change away from the goal of democracy towards the entrenching of political economic power in the hands of a minority elite and towards the complete exclusion of the majority from



political, economic and social participation in our common society. This means used have become more sophisticated and more efficient over the years and the current attempt to include people who are not white in the governing minority is a necessity forced upon government by the impossibility of continuing to maintain on a small base a militarised State at the same time as keeping the country's administration functioning and its industry growing.

The line between the prosperous and powerful minority and the poor excluded majority is no longer the same as the line between white and black, but the line between rich and poor, between the in-group and those outside is becoming a fortified and impregnable wall.

Some years ago (before the abolition of the Senate) I heard a black political leader say that there is nothing wrong with the existing South African constitution except that it denies the vote of black people. He maintained that, given a universal franchise, our constitution would be a democratic one because it enshrines the principle of direct government by the people for the people through the elected Parliament. I don't entirely agree with him because the lack of entrenched restraints has enabled this Government to remove the civil liberties of citizens by denying them unfettered access to an independent judiciary and to the Courts. Nevertheless, what we have is infinitely better than what is proposed for us.

We are jettisoning it, not for a new constitution modelled on any existing democracy, but for a constitution which will remove power from all elected representatives of the people and place it uncontrolled in the hands of an executive State President who will not be directly elected by the people.

Any idea of an entrenched Bill of Rights for the protection of the civil liberties of the individual has been

rejected.

The escalation of conflict caused by the constitutional proposals became evident immediately the Labour Party announced that it would participate in the new system. This conflict can only become more bitter, more violent and more destructive as long as constitutional arrangements continue to be made by only a small minority of the people of South Africa.

The people of South Africa demand no less than did the people of the United States when they defined their purpose in making their constitution: 'In order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity'.

The present proposals move us in the opposite direction.

The political exclusion

The political exclusion of the majority is being achieved by the denationalisation of black South Africans through the bringing to independence of the homelands.

The first proposals for this new constitution were presented to us in 1977 soon after Transkei independence in October 1976. Bophuthatswana became independent in 1977, Venda in 1979 and Ciskei in 1981.

Between October 1976 and December 1981 more than eight million South Africans had their citizenship taken away from them. There was no Tswana, Xhosa or Venda speaking South Africans anymore. They are aliens amongst us and as such have no legal claim to a vote for the central institutions of South African government.

Reform demands, at the very least, restoration of citizenship to all those from whom it has been taken away and no further deprivation in the future. Without this recognition of our common citizenship no constitutional arrangements can even be begin to be seen as a step in the right direction.

The physical exclusion

The physical exclusion of the majority is continuing apace through the Government's resettlement programme. There used to be a rule of thumb that one third of the black population lived in the towns, one third in 'white' rural areas and one third in the reserves. By 1960 40% of the black population was resident in the bantustans. By 1980 54% of the black population was resident in the homelands and the removals go on all the time, concentrating poverty, unemployment and economic activity in the homeland areas.

We shall be reporting at this conference on the **economic exclusion** through influx and efflux enforcement which is being applied ever more rigidly. It is now being reinforced by the urban labour preference policy which seeks to concentrate the privilege of having a job in that part of the urban black community which has rights of residence in the urban areas. (It is very important to understand that when Government refers to 'The urban black' it only means that minority who have Section 10 rights and *not* to the much larger group of people who are in fact living and working in the urban areas).

The encouragement of a commuter system (workers living in the bantustans and travelling to work in the 'white' area on a daily basis) ensures a supply of labour to the 'white' economy while shedding the costs of the social infrastructure on to the homeland governments. This system is increasingly excluding from any possibility of legal employment those who live in remote homeland areas and those who live in those homelands with no geographical proximity to industrial centres.

The Government is intent upon reducing the number of black people in the urban areas and upon preventing all further black urbanisation in the 'white' areas. The Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill has been postponed until next year but we are now threatened with amendments to the existing legislation which are to 'return us to the status quo ante the Komani and Rikhoto judgements'. In other words amendments are to be introduced to take away the rights of women and children to live with a qualified husband or parent and to take away the rights of migrant workers to acquire urban residence status after working for ten years in the same job. This amounts to a total clampdown on all black urbanisation outside the bantustans.

This brings me to the next point I want to make tonight:

The exclusion of law from administration

The Komani judgement handed down by the Appeal Court in 1980 established the rights of women and children to live in town with their husband or parent provided that the latter enjoys urban residence rights. *That is the law.*

The judgement has been consistently frustrated by the refusal of officials in Johannesburg to recognise the legal rights of such wives and children.

More than two years after the judgement women are still having to enlist the help of an attorney before their rights are endorsed in their identity documents.

The Rikhoto judgement in the Transvaal division of the Supreme Court and the Booij judgement in the Cape Division established the rights of migrant workers to acquire urban residence rights after ten years legal employment in one job. An appeal has been lodged by the Administration Board in the Transvaal but not in the Cape.

Tens of thousands of people are affected by these judgements but 18 months after the Rikhoto case they are still not receiving recognition of their rights. Not only that, but the refusal of the bureaucrats to obey the law and to give Section 10 endorsements is being extended to other categories of people who have perfectly straightforward claims to urban qualifications.

People have complained that they have been told, 'There are no more qualifications' or 'there is a new law' or 'you will be fined R5 000 if you continue to employ this person'. All these comments are in anticipation of the Orderly Movement Bill *which is not yet law.*

• *We have now been forced to realise that in this whole area of our work it is impossible for people to enforce their legal rights and that Court judgements will simply be ignored if they are not in line with Government policy.*

This is a terrifying realisation. It cuts away from under our feet that foundation on which the future society in this country might have been built had it not been destroyed by the present Government.

We have over the last 30 years watched the way in which the legislature has removed the rights of citizens by making laws to diminish those rights. Now even the rights that remain in law are increasingly being denied by administrative decision and bureaucratic action.

Official lawlessness in Ciskei

I have observed what this means to people in the Ciskei where law has become meaningless in many aspects of people's lives. There the process is crude and obvious. People seeking redress for their legitimate grievances about pension rights, housing matters, extortion of monies by CNIP* officials, for example, are often warned 'You are too clever. You are ready for Dimbaza', Dimbaza being where the Ciskei National Intelligence Service takes people for interrogation and where they may be detained indefinitely.

The South African Government is more subtle in its approach but the end result is the same. Citizens become powerless to act lawfully in obtaining redress of wrongs done to them. The lawlessness of Government inevitably leads to lawlessness in society and to political confusion and disorder.

Civil liberties and the USA

In a very encouraging speech in Johannesburg last month the United States Ambassador to South Africa said:

'This Administration does not wink at violations of human rights in this country, or elsewhere. We recognise that any State has a legitimate interest in the maintenance of law and order and that, indeed, the breakdown of law and order would be incompatible with the process of peaceful change. But for precisely that reason we believe in the judicial process which allows every person his day in Court and a fair trial.

This is why we cannot accept the concept of detention without trial or the onerous punishment of banning, which restricts people by administrative fiat. . . . For if there is one thing that conservatives feel strongly about it is that the State should not be entrusted with arbitrary and discretionary powers over the individual'.

This is in marked contrast to an earlier statement by Dr Chester Crocker, US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa that 'We do not believe that change is inconsistent with tough security measures. It may be precisely when change is going on that the people who are responsible for it may feel a need to prove more than ever that they are in charge'.

This argument is often used in South Africa by those who believe that a process of political reform is under

way. It is an almost extraordinary statement for a member of the Government of a country which is a great democracy, whose justification for that claim lies in a constitution which enshrines the most magnificent ideals to which mankind can aspire:

'Congress shall make no law respecting. . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances'. (First amendment).

'The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated. . . (Fourth Amendment).

'No person shall. . . be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law. . .' (Fifth Amendment).

'Cruel and unusual punishment (shall not be) inflicted' (Eighth Amendment).

● Dr Crocker is protected in his own personal life by the constitution of his country and we resent very much that he should so lightly discard the idea of that protection for the people of this country. Dr Crocker may be thankful that Minister Le Grange is not in a position to engage himself constructively in the affairs of the United States of America.

Detainees Parents' support committee

The Minister of Law and Order's attack, under the protection of his Parliamentary privilege, on the admirable work of the Detainees Parents' Support Committee and on their attorney Raymond Tucker, our respected and trusted friend and legal advisor, has made us all realise afresh that every person living in South Africa has cause to be personally and immediately fearful of the power wielded by this man — power not controlled by the law or by the Courts.

But the Minister should also know that our fear will not cause us to desist from speaking out and upholding those values of justice in which we fervently believe. He can do many things but he cannot touch or destroy those ideals which he has abandoned but which will outlive him and his temporary power.

Civil War and conscientious objection

At this conference we will also be considering the question of conscientious objection and the harsh and unreasonable new proposals for alternative service and the punishment of objectors. We will be asking why there should be conscription at all.

In the Second World War there were deep emotional divisions of opinion in this Country about the war and we had no conscription.

In the war of occupation in Namibia and in the conflict within South Africa there are even greater and more intensely felt divisions.

If in this conflict it is considered necessary to have conscription, is that not an admission that the war is already lost? Such a war cannot be won if the hearts and minds of

* Ciskei National Independence Party

the people are not engaged in it. Without conscription those whose hearts and minds are convinced of the rectitude of their cause will volunteer for military service. Those many of us who feel that only political solutions are possible in a political conflict will be freed to work constructively for a just and democratic future for all the people of this land. We do not believe that it is possible to do this while the guns roar about us and the chaos of war destroys all rationality.

War does not only destroy lives and infrastructure. In its blood and dust and flames ideals of justice and democracy are also consumed.

War destroys the future as well as the present — always it is the people who suffer.

We in the Black Sash do not like what we see is happening around us.

We are not seduced by the image of an enemy so skilfully presented to us.

If the enemy is communism its soldiers are not somewhere 'out there' battering at our borders to get in. That enemy's forces are the extremes of wealth and poverty within our borders and the forces which seek to maintain the great gulf fixed between the haves and the have nots.

The enemy is within the gates.

There is no enemy 'out there'. There are only people who want food and shelter, land and opportunity, security and peace, and who know that their hunger will only be assuaged if they have some political power and who know that there can be no peace unless there is justice.

Black Sash Conference, March 10, 1983

**Address by Dr Allan Boesak to the national conference of the Black Sash in the
Claremont Civic Centre, Cape Town, March 1983**

New deal seeks to entrench evil system

I AM PROUD to be associated with this organisation which has such a wonderful record in the history of resistance to injustice in South Africa. You have been around for a long time now, driven not only by deep care and concern for people in need, but also by a genuine desire to work with others towards those ideals which have come to mean so much to the people of our world: human liberation, freedom, justice, peace and fulfilment.

The struggle for these ideals in this country has been long, and your own contribution to it shall not be forgotten by the oppressed and suffering people of our land.

Since the day you joined this struggle in your own gallant way, much has remained the same in this sad, beloved country. We still have apartheid and discrimination. In many areas of our national life injustice still reigns supreme. Inequality is still sanctified by law and apartheid still justified by theology. In too many places too many children still die of hunger and malnutrition and too many old people still languish in too many resettlement camps. In too many eyes the years of endless struggle have extinguished the fires of hope and joy and too many bodies are bowed down by the weight of that peculiarly repugnant and slow death called hopelessness.

But the decade of the eighties has brought its own demands and new elements are evident in the common struggle we face.

First, and most important, is the slow but sure evolution of our country into a national security state. At almost every level we are taught to accept that the security of the State is supreme. All other things: human rights,

human dreams, and hopes, freedom, democracy, are of secondary importance. Even worse: some give the impression that to hold on to these values is in itself a dangerously subversive activity which the State dare not tolerate.

The catchword of the national security ideology in this country is 'Total Onslaught'. The mere mention of this concept dispels rational discussion on what really is the source of unrest in South Africa, the reasons for the protracted war on the border of Namibia and allows for the unprecedented militarization of our society. It makes it impossible to understand that security for the people of this land does not lie in draconian measures and the quite frightening powers of the security police, but rather in the pursuit of justice for all South Africa's people.

It is the national security ideology which to a large extent determines the nature of the struggle in South Africa today. It is also this ideology which is becoming the focal point of the conflict between the church and the government in South Africa. Within this context there are two things which reveal startlingly what we are facing: one is the incredible ease with which the white Dutch Reformed Church at its Synod last October in Pretoria, could allow representatives from the army and the National Intelligence Service to set the tone for their deliberations in a secret meeting at the beginning of that Synod.

The second is the current investigation into the affairs of the South African Council of Churches by the Eloff Commission. Here the Church is on trial, and a careful reading of the report submitted by the South African Police,

leaves no doubt that the Church is indeed on trial. But I am absolutely certain that history will prove that it is not the Church which is on trial, but rather this country and its government.

While I am talking about the report of the South African Police, let me say this: that report reveals more about the South African Police and about the government it serves, than it does about the South African Council of Churches. And furthermore, the Council is being accused of helping the victims of oppression, of giving legal aid to those charged in political trials; of helping the dependants of those who are banned, imprisoned on Robben Island, detained without trial; of helping black children to get education. I want to say that we should actually be proud of these accusations.

It is not a shame to be the voice of the voiceless and to struggle for justice for all of God's children in this land. It is not a shame to give support (even a few measly rands a month) to the families of those in prison. It is not a shame to help those charged under laws which should not have been on the statute books anyhow. It is not a shame when the Church in its own weakness, seeks to help the weak, the lonely, the dejected, the poor and the destitute. And inasmuch as the Council has been able to do that vicariously for all the churches, I say: Praise be to God! And I thank Him that He has been able in spite of our weaknesses, to use the churches in this way.

But there is another element that we have to take cognisance of in our struggle in South Africa today, and this is the creation of the illusion of change. The proposals of the President's Council, which have become the new constitutional plans of the government is a prime example.

One cannot repeat often enough that these proposals are a sham, that they unashamedly entrench white domination and apartheid; that they leave the very basis of the system intact, and worse: that they are building an elasticity into the system which gives it both a longer lease of life and makes it even more difficult to bring about fundamental change.

A few 'coloureds' and 'Indians' in their own separate parliament will not make any difference to the harsh realities of the homelands, or to the life and death struggles of the families in the camps here in Cape Town. Neither will they bring us closer to the solution of the problem of the redistribution of wealth in South Africa.

The new plans may bring better economic conditions for a new 'coloured' bourgeoisie, but it will not alter the fact that millions of South Africans have lost their citizenship and will continue to lose it because of an immoral and indefensible policy to which these 'coloureds' and 'Indians' will help give credibility in the eyes of the world.

These proposals do not offer any solution. They bring serious tensions, they enhance vastly the potential for violent conflict and disaster; they perpetuate a system which has no right to exist. And someday we will have to learn in this country, that evil and oppressive systems cannot be streamlined, they cannot be adapted; they have to be irrevocably eradicated.

The report of the SA Police reveals more about the SA Police and about the Government it serves, than it does about the SA Council of Churches

A third element which comes to mind is the creation of confusion. For the company assembled here tonight, I am sure that the confusion lies not in the choice between Dr Treurnicht and Mr Botha.

Nor does it spring from the confusion currently rampant in the National Party itself in terms of where it is really going with the people of South Africa. No, I think a greater danger lies in the confusion that arises because of the apparent willingness of some black people to surrender themselves to the persuasive powers of the National Party and to co-operate with the Government.

The question that arises from that fact, and which very quickly becomes a reproach is: if these blacks are willing to work with us, who are you whites, and what right have



Delegates and observers at the National Conference of the Black Sash in Cape Town remember those who died in detention. From left: Jill Wentzel, Joan Grover, Ulrike Johanns, Phoebe Cottrell, Sheena Duncan, Margaret Barker, Joyce Harris, Ethel Walt

you got to continue your opposition to the government?

In answer to that one will have to say firstly that the nature and the quality of the struggle cannot be determined by the colour of one's skin, but rather by the quality of one's commitment to justice, peace and human liberation. And in the final analysis, judgment will be given, not in terms of whiteness or blackness whatever the ideological content of those words may be today, but in terms of the persistent faithfulness we are called to in this struggle.

But secondly: this country is as much yours as it is mine. Its future is not safe in the hands of people who despise democracy and trample upon the rights of the people, whether they be white or black. Its future is not safe in the hands of people — white or black — who need the flimsy cloak of ethnic superiority to cover the nakedness of their racialism. Its future is not safe in the hands of people who put their faith simply in the madness of growing militarism.

So, for the sake of the future of our country and our children, whether *you* be white or black, resist those people, whether *they* be white or black!

Let us not be fearful of those who sit in the seats of power, their lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification. Let us not be intimidated by those who so eloquently, so frighteningly, echo their master's voice.

We are doing what we are doing not because we are white or black, but *because it is right*. And we shall continue to do until justice and peace prevail.

A fourth element which calls for our attention is the creation of false dilemmas.

Many people in South Africa cannot face the challenges and the choices this situation brings. They lack the courage to take the clear stand on the issues of justice and liberation that the situation demands. And so escapism becomes part of their lives. But since no one wants to be known as an escapist, we think up little ways and means of throwing up a smoke screen. One way of doing this is by creating false dilemmas.

So we have people who express deep concern about the future. How can we be sure, they ask, that a black government will be better than this white government. At least now, we have democracy. What will we have then? Will such a black government protect the rights of white people?

But this is a false dilemma. The question is not so much what we shall do *one day* if a black government should do something wrong. The question is what are we doing *right now*, while this white government is doing what it is doing. While it is not wrong to have legitimate concern for the future, it *is* wrong to use that as an excuse for not being concerned about the plight of those who are the victims of oppression and exploitation right now. And it is a tortuous logic to use the fear for the results of oppression as a reason for the continuation of it.

It is a tortuous logic to use the fear for the results of oppression as a reason for the continuation of it

Another false dilemma is created in the debate about changing hearts and changing political structures and the laws of society. People argue that changing the laws of a society is unimportant really, because you need to change the hearts of people. Changing political, economic and social structures is only an *external* affair — what we need is the *internal* conversion.

I want to concede immediately that it is true that people's hearts must be changed if changes in society are going to be lasting changes. But we have also learned that although morality cannot be legislated, behaviour can be regulated. And when the pattern of behaviour is changed, pretty soon attitudes will be changed, and with some people it is true that they will not change their minds until the law is changed.

It is true that the law can't make a person love me, but it can prevent him from demolishing my home and breaking up my family. The law can't make my employer love me but it can stop him from paying me starvation wages.

The law can't make a person love me, but it can stop him from putting me in jail without trial and torturing me — and I think that that is pretty important also.

But there is a third and even more dangerous false dilemma that we have to deal with these days — the argument that refusal to co-operate with the government in the new constitutional plan, is participation in bloody revolution.

This may be a clever political tactic, but it is as empty as it is misleading.

There is general consensus (even from coloured supporters of the plan) that the plans are an entrenchment of white political dominance and of apartheid. What does that mean? Apartheid is an exceptionally violent political system.

Let us continue to say: non-co-operation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is co-operation with good

There is, first, the structural violence embedded in the laws, and the structures of our society. When there is economic exploitation, when a system by design causes deprivation, malnutrition, hunger; when the law requires the breaking up of family life, this is violence: in fact any act which erodes the human dignity of the other man is an act of violence.

But secondly, there is also the violence needed to maintain the system, to safeguard the privileged position of the dominant group — police and military violence, without which apartheid would not survive for a minute. We have seen it: at Sharpeville, in Soweto, in Cape Town.

Saying "yes" to co-operation with the very government who maintains this violent system without first fundamentally changing it, is taking responsibility for the continuation of the violence. The choice of violence, therefore, has not been made by those who resist the perpetuation of the system in the hope of working for a better society, but precisely by those who have aban-

— continued on page 27

Recession:

1_ *capitalism to blame*

Paper delivered to the Black Sash National Conference by Solveig Piper

In this paper I would like to discuss why recession is a normal part of capitalist development and therefore why it becomes inevitable to inflict periodic misery on thousands of workers and their families. By outlining the causes of recession, I hope to be able to show that moves aimed at ameliorating the suffering of the working class are themselves contradictory and give rise to further impediments to successful accumulation by the capitalist class. The circumstance places serious restrictions on the scope of 'welfare' activities which the state may undertake to soften the impact of the recession.

Capitalist economies are 'driven' by the desire or need to make profits. Adam Smith's so-called 'invisible hand' (ie market forces) guides individual capitalists towards profitable opportunities and the outcome should be that everybody becomes better off because of the wealth creation which ensues. Now it is perfectly true that real living standards for most people have risen considerably during the last century or so but that improvement has been very unevenly distributed. Certain groups in society, e g unskilled and semi-skilled workers suffer serious hardship whenever the pace of growth slows down or becomes negative because they are the first people to become redundant.

Also, because of the dynamism of capitalist technology, other groups become marginalised or simply obsolete through what is termed progress.

The key to an understanding of this phenomenon of recession is found by studying the process of capitalist accumulation of 'investment' as it is popularly called. A capitalism which does not grow is a capitalism in crisis. Only by making the pie bigger are capitalists able to disguise the exploitation on which their system is based. To achieve this they must invest. However, if they do not discover new profitable opportunities for investment, they cease to do so. When this malaise strikes what is known as the leading sectors (usually the construction industry, the manufacturers of capital goods, the manufacturers of durable goods and the manufacturers of inputs to these industries such as iron, steel, bricks and cement) production slows down, stocks pile up and workers are dismissed or forced into short-time working because capitalists cannot sell at a profit that which has been produced.

Capitalism is constantly embarrassed by over production which is a cause of much hardship. This gives rise to underconsumption — because people have no jobs, their earnings fall rapidly and so too do their consumption levels, thereby exacerbating the crisis.



Solveig Piper, left, and Esther Levitan

Historically, capitalism has been plagued by many crises since its very inception, but after the Great Depression of the 30's, with its unprecedented and massive unemployment with all the attendant woes, the State began, tentatively at first, to take a more active hand in guiding and directing the unplanned and unchecked development of capitalism. This tendency was considerably strengthened by the events of the Second World War whose aftermath saw the birth of 'welfare capitalism' — active state intervention to attempt to secure 'full employment' and to provide a safety net of welfare benefits for workers. This safety net of welfare benefits was best developed where worker organisation was strongest, e g in Britain and in the Scandinavian countries.

In the long period of reconstruction following World War II, capitalism enjoyed a respite from the boom-crash cycles of times gone by and it came to be believed that the capitalist state could precisely control the economy forever, to the benefit of all or nearly all. But under the surface, the contradictions were piling up steadily rising inflation rates, growing demands on the

revenues of the state and then the 'oil' shock of 1974 which finally plunged international capitalism into its deepest crisis since 1930.

Prolonged recession in the major capitalist economies did little to reverse the structural contradictions now embedded in the very heart of the system and so economic stagnation coupled with high inflation simply persisted.

Traditional Keynesian policies, the tried and trusted tools of the post-war prosperity period, failed utterly. Short bursts of prosperity were succeeded by growing periods of recession in most of these economies.

In place of the wishy washy liberalism of welfare capitalism there has emerged the much more disciplined conservatism of Reagan and Thatcher (labelled Reaganomics).

Preaching austere individualism coupled to a doctrine of 'reduction of government intervention' and 'financial discipline' these two State heads have spearheaded a war against the working class to roll back those welfare gains, won through decades of struggle. It is clear to capitalists and to the capitalist state that only by taking decisive moves to restore profitability can accumulation proceed once more. In order to do this, it is necessary to gain 'control' of the working class — hence Thatcher's anti-unionism; hence Reagan's iron-fisted crushing of the air-controllers strike at the same time as he expressed sympathy for the Polish workers!

The point is that capitalism can no longer afford to finance out of taxes those expenditures necessary to disguise its true nature.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONNECTION

South Africa is a capitalist economy. The ideology of 'free enterprise' (a synonym for Thatcher and Reagan) is dominant and South Africa is tightly linked into the world capitalist system, *but* as a junior partner. When there is a crisis in international capitalism South Africa feels the pinch, somewhat later than most other capitalist economies, but feels it nevertheless.

When this happens, those industries described above as leading sectors, also those which are dependent on export markets, come increasingly under strain as they try to maintain levels of employment and of wages. Very often, simply to survive, they adopt drastic measures against their own workers as retrenchment and resistance to salary increases become the order of the day. Increasing competition causes further cost cutting, forcing the weaker firms to the wall. Even the giant corporations are affected by shrinking markets, witness the current margarine war.

The disease then spreads to other sectors of the economy. Transport, faced by falling revenues because of declining output levels, is a case in point. Empty harbours and half-loaded trains have forced SATS to retrench thousands of workers. If they raise their charges

Difficulties in South Africa are compounded by the 'fiscal crisis of apartheid'. The State, with massive expenditures to make a so-called 'defence', cannot step in with welfare payments to protect the workers without running the risk of fuelling inflation

in an attempt to generate more revenue, they will drive away more of their trade whilst at the same time adding yet another twist to the inflation spiral.

Difficulties in South Africa are compounded by the 'fiscal crisis of apartheid'. The State, with massive expenditures to make a so-called 'defence', cannot step in with welfare payments to protect the workers without running the serious risk of increasing deficits and thereby fuelling the inflationary process. Workers must therefore suffer, and it should be noted that inevitably, in view of the LIFO (last in, first out) policy (which all employers should adopt when retrenching) it is primarily the younger people who find themselves unemployed, thus seriously increasing an already 'explosive' mood of this category of people.

It is not the personal motivations of this or that capitalist which causes the suffering of the workers, although clearly there are 'good' and 'bad' capitalists; it is the impersonal workings of the market system, the internal logic of capitalism which compels capitalists and the State to adopt the austerity measures necessary to purge the system.

In the light of this, it is clear that organisations such as our own, face an acute dilemma. Humanitarian considerations alone demand that we should insist, with all the strength at our command, an adequate protection for those defenceless workers, who through no fault of their own are cast on the capitalist scrapheap. Yet, it should be clear that in attempting to provide such aid and succour, the state, if it acts on behalf of workers, will simply function in the long run to heighten those contradictions which are the very basis of the crisis now faced by capitalism.

Unemployment benefits, welfare payments and state assistance, besides being miserly, are poorly distributed among the worst-off workers in our society, so we must protest on behalf of the voiceless and the powerless. More than this, however, we must seek to expose in every way possible the cruel workings of the system which masquerades under the name of 'free enterprise'. Promises of growing prosperity for all are a hollow sham. Ultimately, profit matters more than people and so long as this is true, it will always be a case of one step forward and one or more steps back.

In place of the wishy washy liberalism of welfare capitalism there has emerged the more disciplined conservatism of Reagan and Thatcher who have spearheaded a war against the working class to roll back welfare gains won through decades of struggle.

It would be very easy here to reel off a string of statistics which show how badly workers have fared during the current recession, but it is not necessary. Even though this recession is scarcely a year old it has had serious effects on employment and income levels. For a more thorough lesson in the devastation caused by capitalist 'business cycles', as they are euphemistically termed in the jargon of economists, we could turn to the recession of 1976-1978. There, hundreds of thousands of jobs were destroyed or were not created and hence were permanently lost. The construction industry in South Africa has still not recovered to its 1975 level of activity. The point is that behind this bald catalogue is the untold grief of thousands of human beings struggling to find employment, any employment. All of you have seen the long queues of unemployed, desperate to be 'requisitioned',

all of you have had workseekers knocking at your doors, desperate for a job, any job.

THE CAUSE OF THIS MISERY IS CAPITALISM or free enterprise, whose most important freedom is the freedom to starve if you cannot find a capitalist willing to exploit you.

Workers in most capitalist states are on the defensive. As the recession deepens, all but a handful are forced to concede hard-won gains — salary decreases, cuts in numbers employed, increases in the pace of work, falls in living standards.

We must commit ourselves to supporting the only institutions able and willing to do battle against this inhuman system, namely the independent democratic trade union movement.

Recession:

2_ hits all economies

LARGE-SCALE unemployment is ugly and dehumanising. Any system which produces it denies life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which liberals assert as the goal of social organisation.

Liberals thus share in the feelings of outrage which it provokes. They are, however, sceptical of any analysis which defines the cause as capitalism and the solution as its abolition. Both the analysis of the malady and the solution presented seem to liberals to be old-fashioned and simplistic despite the assured and certain air with which they are asserted.

It is not surprising to find that those who present this point of view are more adept at asserting than explaining 'the structural contradictions now imbedded in the very heart of the system'. Economists have learnt that economic systems are complicated and perplexing beasts; that recession is not a monopoly of capitalist states nor those of mixed economies but strikes also at the state-managed economies with savage power with shortages of essential products including food and a shortage of jobs, capital and foreign exchange.

The Western societies are seeing a revolutionary change in the status of

the working man as the societies are changing into mixed economies. An assertion that 'short bursts of prosperity have been succeeded by growing periods of recession in most of these economies' is difficult to fit the Europe, Japan and North America one has actually seen in the post-war years. Be that all as it may the standard of living of the western worker in this deepest of deep recessions remains the envy of his walled-in counterpart to the East.

The Western worker has one supreme advantage, a vote, to protect himself and his living standards. When he exercises it he shows a desire not to destroy the 'dynamism of capitalist technology' nor yet 'the embarrassment of over-production' — the envy of less happier lands.

Traditionally a rousing overture against the capitalist system in general is followed by a second movement devoted to a discussion of its particular South African variant. South Africa however with its increasingly state-managed economy is much more closely linked economically with Eastern Europe than the complicated mixed economies of Western Europe. The manipulation of the people of South Africa for the benefit of those who have political and economic power is so vulgar and

obvious that it would require a strange champion indeed.

One must, however, be careful of dangerously facile solutions. What South Africa will need when its people gain their freedom will be a dynamic system of growth to preserve and create jobs and prosperity. There will have to be a good strong dose of some of that dynamic capitalist technology within a mixed economy. It will also need democracy and the protection of its workers by a real vote with which the theorists and the capitalists can be kept under restraint.

We can all join in support for an independent democratic trade union movement. Thus far these movements have only been seen in capitalist and mixed economies. What those movements seek to do is to continue with dynamic prosperity but also to progress to more compassionate societies in which democracy is developed in both the political and the economic institutions. The road to social democracy is one which liberals happily follow. It is the one to the labour camp which they would prefer to avoid.

E M Wentzel

New constitution and strategies of rejection

An analysis by Joyce Harris, vice president

Participation - non-participation: principle and strategy

Moves to change the constitution of South Africa have caused confusion bordering on chaos on the political scene. The National Party has been painfully split. There are widening divisions in the coloured and Asian communities. The official opposition is faced with problems bedevilling its reactions and its public relations. The black community, having been excluded, is watching from the sidelines with varying degrees of cynicism and anger, though it too is split over the local government recommendations.

The total opposition spectrum is in a state of disarray, for it is face-to-face with that intractable issue which to date it has been unable to resolve — that hardy perennial of participation — non-participation; co-operation — non-co-operation.

This could be a matter of strategy rather than principle, but the two are frequently confused resulting in possibly unnecessary divisions within the opposition. It is sometimes difficult to judge where the one ends and the other begins, and the problem is aggravated when, inevitably, different people draw their lines of differentiation in different places.

The constitutional proposals place this problem inescapably in the centre of the stage.

The white, coloured and Asian communities are presently being faced with the difficulties which beset the black community when it was confronted with the homeland policy. Some accepted it and took the indepen-

dence — so-called — which was being offered. Some decided to use the platform it provided to oppose from within the system. And some rejected it out-of-hand. Those who rejected out-of-hand accused those who decided to work within the system, of betrayal of principle, while those who worked within the system maintained that this was not the case but that they were simply using different strategies towards the same ends.

The result of this division has been a seemingly unbridgeable chasm within the black community,, surely counter-productive to both protagonists and must militate against the eventual achievement of their aims.

This debilitating division is spreading throughout the ranks of the opposition, which seems to be as incapable of resolving the issue as has been the black community.

The coloured community has been split visibly by the decision of the Labour Party to work from within the system. The Asian community is on the verge of a similar split. The official opposition has delayed its final decision for clearly stated reasons, but at the possible cost of its credibility in the black community and amongst some of its own members.

Yet all these communities and political parties have stated unequivocally their rejection of the constitutional proposals in their present form. All have deplored the exclusion of the black community. All have questioned the excessive powers of the Executive President. All have worried about the possible entrenchment of white power in general and Afrikaner nationalist power in particular. Their aims are not all that disparate and their differences could be more matters of strategy than of principle, yet



From left: Catherine Moultrie, Jill Wentzel, Joyce Harris

the animosity of non-participants towards those who are prepared to work within the system indicates that they feel that their principles have been betrayed. Thus once again an unbridgeable gap is being created.

History of the proposals plus public comment

An examination of the proposals might help to establish whether this division is justified and what should be the attitude of the Black Sash towards the proposals.

The Government in 1977 introduced proposals to alter the constitution by creating an Executive President and three separate houses of Parliament for whites, coloured people and Asians, excluding blacks. This caused a public outcry and the matter was referred to the Schlebusch Commission and from there to the newly created President's Council. The President's Council itself was rejected by the majority of the people on the grounds that it was nominated and therefore not representative, that it was purely advisory and therefore had no powers, and that it too totally excluded blacks.

The President's Council published its proposals in 1982. The recommendations included a single or multi-chambered Parliament with segmented autonomy; an all-powerful Executive President elected by an electoral college with powers to introduce legislation, dissolve Parliament, call for referenda and appoint the Prime Minister; and a non-parliamentary Cabinet not answerable to the electorate. There were to be eight Regional Administrators, eight elected Provincial Councils including coloureds and Asians but with no legislative powers, and seven Metropolitan authorities whose members were to be nominated by the elected local authorities and elected black local authorities, with the suggestion that control over the local authorities could still be vested in the central government.

Reactions to these proposals were varied and emphatic. Mr David Curry of the Labour Party said, 'The coloureds now share this power to influence reform . . . We have decided to take an active part in being the catalyst for change . . . we refuse to become prisoners of our history or of our political situation. Somebody must be prepared to take the first step (Sunday Times, 16/5/1982).

Professor David Welsh said, 'Will the proposals create a legitimate political framework? And will that political framework be able to regulate conflict — or will it aggravate conflict? In both respects the President's Council recommendations fail. . . Subsequent reports may fence in the executive with some curbs on power, but in its present form the recommendations would delight any prospective dictator'. (Sunday Times, 16/5/1982).

Dr Van Zyl Slabbert said: 'If the Government unqualifiedly accepts the present recommendations of the President's Council concerning the exclusion of blacks as final, the PFP will have no choice but to oppose them as vigorously as it is able whatever the consequences'. (RDM, 19/5/1982). He warned people not to be fooled by talk of change. (Sunday Express, 9/5/1982).

Professor Hermann Giliomee said, 'It all looks as if the political crisis of South Africa will deepen as a result of the constitutional proposals . . . By proposing that the first president should be chosen by Parliament it has



Jill de Vlieg, left, and Netty Davidoff listen intently as Joyce Harris analyses the difficulties involved in devising strategies of rejection

ensured that the office will be filled by an embattled politician suffering from limited legitimacy (RDM, 19/5/1982).

In July, 1982, the Government published its guidelines to the President's Council's proposals. Mr Botha spelled them out at a National Party Congress in Bloemfontein.

'The central legislature should consist of the President, a parliament consisting of three chambers for whites, coloureds and Asians and a President's Council advising the President at his request . . . In the event of a conflict among the chambers over a matter of mutual concern the decision of the President's Council will be binding on the President . . . The chamber concerned alone should decide on matters relating to a particular community . . . The President . . . should decide in each particular case (concerning legislation) whether the matter is of mutual concern or of community interest only . . . Legislation on matters of mutual concern must be passed by all the chambers separately . . . standing committees to be constituted by the different chambers . . . to promote consensus between the chambers on Bills concerning matters of common interest . . . The executive authority should consist of The President, who will not be a member of any of the chambers, is elected by an electoral college consisting of 50 whites, 25 coloureds, and 13 Asians chosen by the chambers from among their own members; a Cabinet with a fixed number of members appointed by the President and whose members need not necessarily be members of the legislature; and the President's Council consisting of 20 whites, 20 coloureds and five Asians elected by the three chambers and 25 other members appointed by the President'. (RDM, 31/7/1982). These guidelines were accepted by all the National Party Congresses.

In November, 1982 the President's Council issued further proposals based on the Government's guidelines to its initial proposals.

It rejected a Bill of Rights. It recommended an intricate system of multiracial committees, operating in secret, with no guaranteed representation for opposition parties, and with a fixed ratio of 4 white, 2 coloured, 1 Asian where legislation would be decided on in principle, each

chamber deciding on who is to represent it; a State President who would be free to appoint or dismiss Ministers at his discretion and dissolve Parliament or the President's Council at any time after the first 12 months of operation; freedom of religion to be neither absolutised nor entrenched; human rights in future to continue to be left to the courts; the three chambers to be housed under the same roof; the 4:2:1 ratio of representatives in the three chambers to be entrenched; in the case of conflict between the chambers the President to fulfil the role of arbiter and to refer the conflict to the President's Council; controversial legislation to be passed by only two chambers if necessary, and quorums in each chamber to be very low. (Star, 22/11/82).

These, then, are the proposals on which all sections of the opposition must make their principle and strategy decisions. The Labour Party has already done so, the SAIC is still undecided, the anti-SAIC and sections of the Asian community have rejected this, the PFP has kept its options open. . . The Government has itself split on the issue, though a detailed examination makes one wonder why. Obviously even a constitution is subjective and depends upon the eye of the beholder.

Professor Andre du Toit said that the President's Council's Constitutional Committee announced 'nothing less than the imminent demise of opposition politics . . . (RDM, 3/12/1982).

Professor Robert Schrire said, 'The executive President will be a dictator in relation to inter-chamber conflict . . . It will undermine and seriously limit the power of parliament to control executive power'. (RDM, 22/12/1982).

At its Eshowe Conference the Labour Party 'voted overwhelmingly to use the Parliament to try to achieve their goals of one man one vote in a non-discriminatory, unitary South African state in which blacks were included in all decision-making . . . In his opening address Chief Buthelezi warned that coloured and Indian participation in the new system would make those two groups "enemies" of other black South Africans . . . Mr Hendrickse said, "We say with conviction that the time for protest politics has passed" while Mr David Curry said the Party would "force the pace of change" by participating in the new system' (RDM, 5/1/1983).

An editorial in The Star maintained that 'the fact that the main political voice of the coloured people has spoken out in favour of negotiation rather than flat rejection of the Government's model should be seen as good news for everyone, whatever side of the fence he sits on. . . It will be if it helps woo the NP away from . . . a history of discrimination'.

Later Mr Hendrickse said 'The LP would use the system to negotiate towards its goals and would review its participation from time to time in the light of what was being achieved' (RDM, 6/1/1983).

In an interview Dr Allan Boesak said that the Labour Party 'had now lost whatever respect it might have had and predicted a united front of opposition' (RDM, 7/1/1983).

Writing about whether to fight from within or without Patrick Laurence wrote, 'It is common knowledge that the ANC (at one time) saw the boycott of separate political institutions as a tactic to be applied selectively, not a principle to be adhered to at all costs. . . But when new

—continued overleaf

An assessment of the proposals

Despite the pacifying sounds coming from Mr Heunis in Parliament I still believe that the Government and the President's Council between them have a devised fool-proof method of perpetuating National Party power while giving the impression that other parties and racial groups are being included in the process of government.

One chamber will never be able to prevent the passage of a Bill because, if necessary, the agreement of only two chambers will be sufficient.

No majority party in any particular chamber will be able to voice its protest by refusing to co-operate because the tiny quorum recommended will enable the minority party to govern if necessary.

The Asian and coloured chambers will not be able to exercise control over the budget and therefore over how money is spent, because the real power and control will be in the Budget Committee in which the numbers ratio applies, and the final word in any conflict will rest with the State President.

The State President will never be other than a Nationalist because the electoral college which elects him will reflect the same numerical ratio, with the Nationalists in the majority.

The role of the opposition in the white Chamber, and in the coloured and Asian Chambers too, is questionable, Mr Heunis has given the assurance that it will be included in the committees of government where the secret wheeling and dealing will occur if it happens at all, but there is nothing in the proposals which states this categorically. The goodwill of the ruling party or the State President will be required before it is permitted to participate.

The all-powerful Executive, consisting of the President and the Cabinet, will be able to manipulate the passage of Bills because it will decide which legislation is to be presented to the various Chambers. The Cabinet is not exempt from the numerical ratio and will therefore be controlled by the Nationalists.

When the crunch comes the Asians and coloureds will be entirely powerless for they will be outvoted on the committees and in the Cabinet. If they attempt fundamentally to alter government policy they will be overruled by all the powers vested in the Executive arm of government, which have been carefully spelt out.

The final arbiter of conflict will be the State President and the President's Council, which will have a preponderance of Nationalists amongst its members.

Executive power grows at the expense of Parliament, which has been downgraded. It is this Parliament in which coloured and Asians are being offered representation.

Blacks are totally excluded, and the Cabinet Committee which has been formed to discuss their future is circumscribed by government guidelines which reject their inclusion in the real corridors of power.



A break for discussion — from left, Gusta MacDonaki, Molly Blackburn, Adelaide Allchurch, Bobby Melunsky

forces began to stir in the black body politic in the late sixties the old dispute about whether or not to take part in government-created structures resurfaced strongly. . . Steve Biko warned 'that the system had been designed to foster the apartheid ideology, and blacks within would be ensnared by it, not liberated through it' (RDM, 8/1/1983).

Dr Jasset, chairman of the anti-SAIC Committee, said 'the new constitution is designed to maintain white control while attempting to draw some of the privileged elements of the opposed people into the white laager' (Star, 8/1/1983).

Jac Rabie, Transvaal Leader of the Labour Party said, 'it was realised that the politics of protest only was over, affirmative action was imperative . . . The party rejected the proposals . . . but believes its participation within . . . can assist us in the achievement of our goals. . . Consensus can be strived for even before legislation is drafted' (RDM, 18/1/1983).

Expressing a different viewpoint Chris Freimond said, 'Some LP leaders believe that when compromise turns into confrontation their position within the system will be too powerful for the NP to ignore their demands for further concessions'.

David Curry, national chairman of the LP, defends its position. 'We as a party have opted for peaceful change and the politics of negotiation . . . We have mustered the courage to use those vehicles and levers that we find appropriate . . . We are going into the system to work for true reform . . . If after a reasonable period of time our hopes prove to be wrong then, as we did in the days of the CRC, we will review our position and take appropriate steps' (Sunday Times, 23/1/1983).

David Curry: 'We have decided to take an active part in being the catalyst for change . . . We refuse to become prisoners of our history'

Refuting this argument Dr Allan Boesak said, 'Working within the system for whatever reason contaminates you . . . what you call compromise for the sake of politics, is in actual fact selling out your principles and the future of your children . . . The politics of refusal is the only dignified response black people can give in this situation' (RDM, 24/1/1983).

In the non-confidence debate in Parliament Dr Van Zyl Slabbert made a number of points. 'It is arrant nonsense for Mr Heunis to say there was negotiation in drawing up these plans. There is a fundamental difference between consultation and negotiation. . . To deny that blacks are excluded from the plan will depend not on Mr Heunis' opinion or mine, but on the black political movements themselves. . . When Mr Heunis talks about the Opposition's role he merely contradicts him-

Dr Jasset: 'The new constitution is designed to maintain white control while attempting to draw some of the privileged elements of the opposed people into the white laager'

self. . . How can you move away from the Westminster system . . . and at the same time say the opposition's position is going to remain exactly the same? . . . I believe the positive attitude for reform should be kept alive and that we should inspire people to go for real reform. At the same time we must not delude them. We must spell out the problems of reform and tell the truth about what we are trying to do' (Sunday Times, 6/2/1983).

An editorial in the RDM made the point that 'it seems evident that a key element in debate on the government constitutional plan is not merely how it should be moulded, but whether it can be moulded satisfactorily at all. That is the essence of the conflict between Chief Buthelezi and the Rev Mr Hendrickse. It is also going to be at the heart of the real debate about the future' (RDM, 8/1/1983).

Black Sash beliefs, principles and suggested strategies

That is the situation at the time of writing, though there is still the possibility of alterations in the final legislation which comes before Parliament. If they are radical, constructive and useful this will be vindication of the Labour Party's decision to negotiate and the efficacy of the official opposition.

Negotiated meaningful reform will of necessity be slow and piecemeal, but if it is moving in the right direction it is preferable to confrontation.

However I believe that the changes envisaged serve to entrench Afrikaner nationalist power and apartheid, and that reform is conspicuous by its absence. This is further borne out by the fact that settled black communities like those at Methopiestad and Driefontein amongst many others are still being uprooted and

Negotiated, meaningful reform will of necessity be slow and piecemeal, but if it is moving in the right direction it is preferable to confrontation

dumped against their will; that shacks are being demolished in Soweto leaving more people homeless in the midst of an acute housing crisis; that coloureds and Asians are still being evicted from their homes in the so-called white areas despite the fact that no alternative accommodation is available to them; and that the Pass Laws and Influx Control are being administered with increasing efficiency and severity.

Given the proposals themselves, and the climate in which they are being propounded, there can be no alternative for the Black Sash but to reject them totally.

But in common with all other opposition groupings, we must also devise our strategies of rejection and, in doing so, must be careful to allow for different strategies from different bodies. For instance, we are not in the same position as political parties, which must rely for their continued existence on the votes of their members and on participation in the establishment. If they were to opt out they would be hard-pressed to maintain themselves and their identity, which is part and parcel of their role in the institutions of political action. To remain true to their principles they may in the end be forced to opt out, but I doubt whether one would be justified in condemning their decision to negotiate until such time as this proves to be completely useless, however negative one's feelings may be in this regard.

All I would quarrel with is that they have not succeeded in making it unequivocally clear to the public in general that they have a bottom line of principle beyond which they will not budge, and that if their bottom line conditions are not met they will withdraw from further negotiation and participation. This, I believe, should be absolutely fundamental to their strategies. It is an apparent unwillingness to commitment which I suppose a political party finds it difficult to make in terms of the belief that politics is the art of the possible and there must always be room for manoeuvre and pragmatism.

Probably this is where the thin dividing line between principle and strategy becomes blurred, and where the ever-present danger of co-option lurks.

They will have to guard against this, against being sucked into the establishment insidiously, against being tarred with its brush, and against being seduced into enjoyment of the trappings of power, even if they prove to be merely tinsel without substance.

But there are dangers, too, in total non-participation which excludes all negotiation, for the alternative to this can be nothing less than confrontation. It is a no-win situation in which it is exceedingly difficult to strike a balance that leaves the door for peaceful change without surrendering or tarnishing integrity.

Personally I was saddened by the Labour Party decision to participate because I feel it was premature and that a strong and rare bargaining position was wasted. I would have preferred to see the total opposition spectrum united in its opposition to participation until such time as it could get from the government a statement of intent to move in the direction of the desired reform.

But this was not to be, and instead we have the unedifying spectacle of members of the opposition at each other's throats. The government is succeeding in dividing and ruling and the opposition is playing its game. Meanwhile opportunities of effective opposition on an issue in which there is widespread consensus are being allowed to slip through undirected fingers.

There is little that the Black Sash can do about this unhappy state of affairs, except to try not to fall into the trap of condemning out of hand those strategies with which it does not agree. Such a reaction only serves to split the opposition forces still further.

In common with other opposition groupings, we must also devise our strategies of rejection and, in doing so, must be careful to allow for different strategies from different bodies

We are in the fortunate position of being able to take our stand on principle, as we have always done. We are not dependent on the establishment for our existence. We do not need to tailor our reactions to the opinions of anyone other than our members, and we all share a common commitment to justice, morality and fair dealing.

I suggest that our role should be to study, to clarify, to explain, to refuse to permit the wool to be drawn over our eyes or those of the public, to differentiate clearly between what is change and what constitutes real reform, and to support all real reform while condemning all entrenchments of the status quo, be it obvious or subtle.

We must do all in our power to prevent the present proposals from becoming law, and to this end we must lobby, write, make statements, hold meetings, disseminate information.

But we must also guard against being self-righteous — an attitude which the politics of non-participation seems to engender. We stand for peaceful negotiation to achieve a just society, and would like to see a national convention or on-going negotiations, with concrete proposals as the end result. Unilateral proposals cannot succeed. All must be involved in their formulation.

Discussion . . . on resistance to new constitution

The following statement was carried unanimously:
The Black Sash rejects the Government's Constitutional proposals. The Black Sash believes in a common citizenship in a unitary society with political representation for all through universal franchise.

It was reported that a BROAD DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE, in opposition to the proposed constitution was currently being mooted, and that participating organisations might be required to endorse the Freedom Charter.

Extract from Conference minutes:

Several versions of the Charter were in circulation and there was, as yet, no clarity on which version would be the basis for a final decision. In the original version delegates to Conference did not express any difficulties with the four main introductory statements of principle but some clauses of the details of the Charter were not clear and were not acceptable to all members of the Black Sash.

There was consensus that there were gross economic injustices in South African society but delegates were divided as to the solutions proposed in the Charter.

Ann Colvin asked that a test vote be taken to see how divided the conference was. Conference agreed to a test vote. The question was put:

'If any alliance formed to oppose the new constitution should make it a condition for participation that organisations endorse the Freedom Charter should the Black Sash endorse the Charter?'

By a show of hands 13 delegates answered 'yes' and 16 delegates answered 'no'.

It was agreed that headquarters should circulate the Freedom Charter to all Regions and that Regions should arrange for their members to be informed about it and to discuss it.

It was also agreed that should any approach be



*Should the Black Sash endorse the Charter?
Enid Robertson, left, and Mary Schurr*

made to the Black Sash by any alliance requiring endorsement of the Charter as a precondition for co-operation Regions could not endorse it. They should be quite open and honest about the reasons for the lack of consensus. They should at all times stress the Black Sash's absolute rejection of the Constitutional proposals, our belief that no constitution for South Africa could be acceptable unless it arose from some inclusive process such as a National Convention, and our desire to co-operate with others in our opposition to the proposals.

Should it be necessary an emergency national conference or meeting of regional chairmen could be arranged.

It was suggested that one strategy of opposition to the proposals would be a call for a boycott of elections.

By 22 to four, with seven abstentions, it was agreed:

'that the Black Sash urges its members and the public to a total boycott of any election which may be called in terms of the new Constitution'.

OBITUARY

MARJORIE BYRON was a member of Natal Coastal from the very early days, and was made an honorary member of Sash by the Region.

Marjorie and her husband, Senator Lewis Byron, were involved with the Indian community from the twenties. Their life was a busy one and both were always available to help those who needed it. Marjorie was also very interested in Pinetown Child Welfare and in the Kloof Rest Home, a home for the aged, serving on committees of both. Their life was also a political one, with sessions in Cape Town. They had five children.

Their daughter, Ann, tells a story about her mother. In 1948, at the time of the Durban riots, the Byron's home became a refuge for people who fled their homes. One day, alone in the house, Marjorie heard thumping and chanting. Fearing that the rioters were coming to attack the people sheltering in her stables, she took up a walking stick and set off for the stables to protect her refugees. Fortunately, what she had been hearing came from a workers' gang digging on the nearby railway!

Marjorie was a wonderful friend and example to us all. We send our sympathy to her family for the loss of a very special South African.

Part of a countrywide process

Onslaught on squatters

Merle Beetge tells of GG attacks at Walkerville

5.00am — The most tranquil time in my day. The rest of the household is still asleep, and I drink my first cup of coffee while watching the sun rise pinkly over the hills.

But this Tuesday morning I am disturbed by three blanketed women who appear at the door.

'Please, the GG raided us last night. Can you help me find my husband before they send him to the State Farm?'

The GG men are local Board officials, so called because their car registration numbers begin with GG. Walkerville is a rambling area of smallholdings, and can come under attention from Kliprivier, Meyerton, Everton or De Deur police or administration boards. Last night's raid could have been by any of these officials. I don't know the accuracy of the 'State Farm' story, but it is one I have heard often over the years. Apparently if no family member appears in time to pay the fine, people are sentenced and sent away to farms in the Free State as convict labour for anything up to 120 days.

By 7.30 I have 15 people outside

my door, all sharing the same anxiety.

At 8.00am sharp I start phoning and am shunted from one official to another. Eventually I learn that Meyerton Administration Board was responsible for the raid. Then I start checking my list, to find where each person is being held, on what charge, and what the fine will be.

By 12.00 I have established most of the information. The charges are nearly all trespass, or making illegal beer. The women begin their long trapeze around the farms, to friends and relatives to raise the money for the fines. They will have to leave home by 5.00 tomorrow morning, to reach the court in time.

At 1.00pm Selinah arrives. She is an old lady of 82, with a sharp and lively mind. A farm labourer's widow has no right to live on a white farm. Unless she is employed she is a trespasser. In law, Selinah should be in a homeland, but she has no intention of moving to a place she has never seen. She receives her pension each month, and prefers to take her chances in squatter camps. She picks

up the pieces of her hut each time it is demolished, and moves on — until the next raid. Her age and ill health usually save her from being arrested.

'Please, I need milk for the children.'

'What children Selinah?'

'The GG raided us last night and took away many people.'

I take her back to the camp, about 10 kilometers from my house. As we drive in, toddlers run screaming from the car. It is a scene of utter desolation. Corrugated iron shacks have been pulled down, and personal belongings are scattered everywhere.

Most of the people in the camp are unemployed, although they are allowed to be in the area, as many of them were born around here. Many, like Selinah, are old age pensioners, and many others are women and small children.

Farm labourers who lose their jobs also lose their homes. They and their families are put off the farm almost immediately, with all their goods and chattels. Wherever they live until the man finds a job, they are trespassers, and liable to be arrested.

Some white farmers in the area allow squatters to erect shacks on their property for rents between R5 and R20 per month. Administration boards raid now and again, but the people soon drift back as they have nowhere else to go.

It is now 3.30 and there is not much that I can do. We give the children bread and milk, and I drive home to see to my own children's belated lunch.

After supper I go through my notes. I have asked many of the people who came this morning to return with their relatives once they are freed, so I can check whether their reference books are in order, and if they have Section 10 1a rights.

The case histories I gather on Friday make depressing reading:

Selinah, a farm labourer's widow, chats to Merle Beetge in the squatter camp off the Golden Highway in Grasmere



● Solomon M

I have worked on this farm for 15 years. My employer lives in town, and I look after his sheep and cows for him. I was asleep for a long time, and then heard a van coming in very fast. The GG said they would break the door if I didn't open it. They looked at my book and threw it on the floor. They looked through all our cupboards, and found beer my wife had made. They threw me in the van. I told them the baas had sheep, and I must start the pump for their water, my wife is pregnant, and the pump is hard. They beat me. My wife asked where they were taking me, and they told her if she didn't keep quiet, they would take her too. I told her to get Mrs Beetge to telephone the baas. He came to De Deur the next day and got me back, because there was nobody to look after the animals. My face and hands are very swollen. I do not want to lay a charge. I just want to work with no trouble.

● Maria L

I was born on this farm. I married two years ago, but my mother is very ill, and cannot walk, so I came back to live with her. My husband works two farms away, he was born there. I am Solomon's sister. The GG first went to Solomon's house, and we heard the noise. They then came to my mother's house, and found my husband. They said he was trespassing, and put him in the van. They said it was my fault he was on this farm, and put me in the van. My baby is only nine months, but they made me give him to Solomon's wife. I told them she is too sick to look after all the children, and animals and my mother, but they didn't listen. They threw all our things around looking for beer, but we didn't have any.

● Emily

My mother and father are old, and I live with my sister, and work nearby. She is married, and her husband works on the farm. The owner lives in town. We were sleeping, it was very late when the GG came. They put me in the van, and it was so full I fell out. I was crying because I am five months pregnant, and they hurt me. My sister pleaded with them not to take me, and they said if she paid R20,00 they would leave me. She gave them the money, but they did not give her a receipt.

The next day I went to the Hospital because my chest hurt. I do not want to lay a charge, because my life will be too difficult then.

● Martha

The master brought my husband and me up from his farm in the Free State in 1948, and my husband helped him to build his house, and worked all the years for him, until he died in 1980. Two months after my husband died, the master came to me and said I must go, because he needed the room for a new man to work on the farm. I have no sons to care for me, only daughters who are both married. (By black custom, daughters belong to the in-laws, and sons care for elderly parents). I went to Mr C's farm, and he let me build my kaya there, for R5,00 per month, but there is no water here, I must carry it from a long way. My daughter let my grandson live here with me, he is at school. The hut is very cold in winter, and most of my furniture is still on the other farm, as I can't pay to have it moved here. The baas has put it in a store room, but I must move it soon or he will sell it. I have only just managed to get my pension.

I was asleep on Monday when the GG came. They said I was trespassing, and took me to Meyerton, then to De Deur. My daughter came the next day, and paid R20,00, and I went back to my hut. Mr C says if they raid again, I will have to go, because it is trouble for him, but I have nowhere to go, and where will I get my pension then? I don't want to go to the office in town, although I know the lady helped the people on Mr Wheelers farm, because I am scared they will notice me then.

● Elizabeth

I live with my grandmother on this farm, I was born here. My mother works in Mondeor, and I look after my grandmother and my brother and sister, who go to school. My pass is from Everton, and when the GG came, they said this farm is now in the Johannesburg area, and my pass is wrong. But I have tried to get my pass changed to Johannesburg, and the people at Polly Street said my pass was right, the farm wasn't in the Johannesburg area when I was born. The GG took me away, and my brother came and paid the fine on Wednesday, and they let me go.

The stories are all very much along the same lines. As far as I can estimate about 200 people have been arrested, the majority for the crime of being with their wives and families, or for not working, or for being too old to work. In the past I have sent people to the Black Sash office to try to get their reference books in order, but most of them prefer to just keep quiet, and plod on, hoping that it will be a while before the next raid takes place. With what appears to be the present Government policy of removing squatters from the scene competely at all costs, I don't share their optimism.



The squatter camp, with a demolished hut lying in the foreground

PENSIONS WORKSHOP AT DRIEFONTEIN

THE PENSION payout point was at a shop, a little way from the farm. When we arrived, hundreds of people had already gathered to wait. The atmosphere was lively, and vendors were selling pots, apples and brew.

Almost immediately, people gathered around us, so we split up, each with an interpreter co-opted from the crowd. We had been briefed by Sheena, and were all armed with notes and regulations. About 50 or 60 people listened to each question-and-answer session.

The majority of the women were lawful residents of Driefontein, and had an official pink stamp in their reference books to that effect. To obtain it they had gone in the company of Mr Mbisi, chairman of the now-disputed board, to the magistrate at Wakkerstroom, where he had affirmed their lawful residence in the district.

Some women said that recently Mr Mbisi had refused to go with them to obtain the stamp.

Most of the women present were able to say, by historical identification, when they were born, and were over 60 years of age, thus qualifying for a pension subject to the means test.

Some few had been wrongly 'assessed', presumably by 'the computer at Pretoria' — one woman of 83 has it written in her reference book that she is 50 years old, and another of over 60 years that she was born in 1930.

But the greatest number of women without pensions consisted of those who said they had been to the office at Wakkerstroom on more than one occasion, and had been 'chased' away by the clerks there (whom they refer to as 'police'), with sticks.

Some said they had been told they were not old enough, another that she should find a husband to look after her since she was not crippled. They apparently did not manage to see the District Pensions Officer personally to make their applications.

There were a number whose books had been annotated to the effect that a request for age assessment was being made 'to Pretoria'. Some had failed to return to learn the outcome. Others, after months of enquiring, had given up. We urged people to go to the Magistrate's office again now that they know the position and to insist that their applications be made.

We understood that since Saul Mkhize's committee had been issuing forms introducing pension applicants to the Magistrate's office, that office itself has now printed forms. The committee's forms had been disregarded by the Magistrate's office.

Meanwhile the Magistrate, Mr Prinsloo, had arrived and begun payouts to the queue at a cubicle in the

When we visited Driefontein in January, we learned that pensions — or the lack of them — are a major problem among the community. At the request of the villagers Sash members attended the pension payment for women on March 8, 1983. Ethel Walt, Sue Sher, Dawn Ingle and Josie Adler were accompanied by Joanne Collinge of The Star and Saul Mkhize.

fenced-in shop enclosure. He seemed annoyed by our presence.

Soon after, three or four police trucks arrived with white uniformed police from Dirkiesdorp SAP. One policeman examined the letters we were writing and told the Magistrate that there was nothing wrong with any of them, whereupon the Magistrate said he was not going to read anyone's letters.

Then the police turned on the surrounding vendors, confiscating their goods and issuing summonses. One old woman said she had been just about to buy apples when she too was summonsed. Like the others, she must appear in court at Wakkerstroom in April or pay a R30 admission of guilt fine.



Sue Sher at the Black Sash mini advice office at Driefontein pension payout. Ethel Walt is partially obscured

Letters to Dr Koornhof

Dr P Koornhof
House of Assembly
Box 15
Cape Town

Dear Sir,

I am 66 years of age, and lawfully resident in Driefontein.

I have several times over a number of years made application for an old age pension and have been told by the clerks to get married. The magistrate told me to go and stay at home.

Dr P Koornhof
House of Assembly
Box 15
Cape Town

Dear Sir,

I am 82 years old and lawfully resident in Driefontein, as stamped in my reference book.

I am a widow and have no income. I have several times over the last three years been to the District Commissioner's office at Wakkerstroom to apply for an old age pension. The clerks have told me to go away and get married.

I shall be grateful if you will assist me in this matter.

Dr P Koornhof
House of Assembly
Box 15
Cape Town

Dear Sir,

I am 66 years of age and lawfully resident in Driefontein as stamped in my reference book. I am a widow and have no income.

I have on several occasions over a number of years made application for an old age pension to the magistrate at Wakkerstroom but have been refused.

Non-racial sport:

Chris Merrett replies to Jill Wentzel's anguish

Jill Wentzel's objection to the SACOS non-racial line seems to hinge on its rejection of gradualism. Ten years ago a gradualist approach might have been feasible. It has no place in opposition thinking now, since the Nationalist government has hijacked this very tactic in order to provide a smokescreen behind which to hide increasingly severe socio-economic repression. Even confining the debate to sport, one finds change designed not to promote integrated recreation, but to provide South Africa's friends with enough excuses to keep her in international competition.

Sportsmen and sportswomen who cannot relate sporting activity to the society in which it is played, and worse, allow themselves to be used for propaganda purposes, are not 'being driven into the arms of the government'. They belong there in the first place. The inherent racism of most white South Africans, and the paternalistic attitude of their sports bodies and acceptance of the 'multi-national' and 'international' charade, has bred an understandable intransigence in non-racial circles. In view of the importance of sport to white South Africans (in the sense that the performance of a Springbok team has always been related to assumed superiority and virility, and actual political ascendancy of the ruling group), there can be little doubt that boycotts are tactically correct. The few changes which have taken place owe much to boycotts, nothing to liberal persuasion. Certainly this

attitude can be labelled punitive, but given the facts of South African history, it would be arrogant to deny black South Africans one of the few weapons they possess. Recent South African history is littered with the political corpses of those who tried to 'work for change within the system'.

It is very much part of non-racial thinking that progress in sport itself means little and that sport as an activity cannot change society. This does not in any way preclude a contribution to the eventual goal of a non-racial, democratic South Africa, even if this is simply an expression of solidarity with those who have the political and economic muscle to promote real reform. Put bluntly it is a matter of choosing sides: those who identify in any way with official sport are by implication conceding respectability to government policies. It is popularly thought that the latter have now had the effect of meeting the demands made on South African sport a decade ago. Lord Chalfont and John Carlisle, MP, are working very hard to make the outside world believe so.

Yet it is conveniently forgotten that state education remains rigidly segregated, a segregation reinforced by differential patterns of government spending, and that mixed education is restricted to a few expensive private schools, turning out members of what Mr Botha hopes will be a docile and stabilizing black middle class. For Pretoria's supporters to extract 'mixed sport' from school to international level out of this, is sheer hypocrisy.

It is hard to know what Jill Wentzel means by 'creative dissidence'. The term could cover a host of means, and ends, and is open to variable interpretation. In terms of ends it is not easy to think of anything more creative than the truly non-racial South Africa to which SACOS and like-minded organizations aspire. It is an unhappy truth that in a totalitarian state the luxury of debating and choosing means to an end becomes academic since by its very nature such a state reduces effective opposition to a narrow front. Ultimately it is the end which will count and to which non-racial sports policy is contributing through what a British journalist has described as 'flexible realpolitik'.

• For references, see page 27

. . and Jill says

CM's reply to my anguish is the acknowledgement that he has none — which was the cause of my anguish in the first place. I have none of the self-assurance of theory or practice in which CM rejoices. I did not come to a conclusion adverse to SACOS but raised the question whether all-or-nothing is necessarily the most effective weapon and whether carrot-and-stick tactics do not have a place.

I reiterated a few times the fact that white intransigence had virtually ended all hopes of gradual reform. Obviously an answering intransigence is understandable and inevitable. I just don't see the point of making it a moral obligation; for its consequences are clearly ominous. Asking questions about one's own standpoint is an old liberal preoccupation: no doubt it is frequently debilitating in contrast with the vigour and pleasant feelings of moral superiority which are possible for those who avoid doing so.

JW

The Black Sash resolves:

on PENSIONS

The Black Sash wishes to alert the public and those organisations or companies who operate pension schemes to the danger that these private pensions could disqualify African contribution from drawing on a State pension. We call upon them to make themselves and their potential contributors aware of the disqualifying minimum income allowed.

The possibility exists that such contributors might draw a pension which is less than that of a state pension which is at present R49,00 a month.

on DETENTIONS

The Death in detention of **MR TEMBUISE SIMON MNDawe** has exposed once again the brutality of detention.

The Minister's code of conduct has been shown to be totally ineffective. More ominously, the press has joined in labelling Mr Mndawe an 'insurgent' and 'terrorist', and implicitly justified his detention and death.

We repeat most urgently our call for the total abolition of the security laws and the unconditional release of all detainees.

Only this can end the litany of deaths in detention.

We rededicate ourselves to the continued campaign against the detention system in South Africa.

on CONSCRIPTION and CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Statement in regard to the Defence Amendment Bill and proposed legislation concerning conscientious objection.

During World War II the South African Government respected the conscience of individuals and there was no conscription. The country is even more seriously divided now than it was then.

South Africa is occupying Namibia illegally and this is cause for many in conscience to refuse military service. When South Africa withdraws from Namibia there should be no need for a massive military establishment unless there has been a political failure to respond to the desires of the citizens.

If a conscripted army is necessary it will be because of the political failure to respond to the desires of the citizens, and that army will be engaged in a civil war which is good cause for many to refuse military service. In such a civil war if the state has to rely on conscription to man its army the war is already lost.

Therefore the Black Sash demands that the South African Government abolish all conscription for military service. We maintain that there is no total onslaught against the people of South Africa and the total strategy required of us is not the military defence of a minority government but the all-out effort of all South Africa's people to bring about democratic government and the relief of the poverty and deprivation suffered by the majority.

on MASERU RAID

The Black Sash National Conference, meeting for the first time since the December 1982 SADF raid on Maseru which caused the deaths of fellow South Africans, condemns that raid. We also condemn efforts made to condone this raid, especially by the PFP as the official opposition.

We reiterate the resolution of the 1981 National Conference which expressed grave concern at the increasing engagement of South African military forces beyond the borders of the country, in particular the 1980 raid into Maputo which was in violation of international law and could only serve to bring us closer to open warfare.

The 1981 Conference issued the reminder that our fellow South Africans have been driven to armed struggle by the institutionalised violence of apartheid. It concluded, 'the only way to end violence is to establish justice and the Rule of Law'.

on ABORTION

The Black Sash urges the Government to appoint a Commission of Enquiry under the chairmanship of a judge and including experts from various fields and women of all races to investigate the working and effects of the 1975 Abortion Act.

on UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND

The Black Sash believes that the Department of Manpower Utilisation is seriously neglecting the rights of contributors to the UIF. Its failure in this regard is adversely affecting the lives of thousands of people. Workers who have been excluded from participation in the UIF through the coming to independence of the Bantustans are now entirely unsupported.

This Conference therefore resolves to distribute as widely as possible information regarding the Fund and the rights of contributors.

National Headquarters Report

March '82
— March '83

Joyce Harris

HEADQUARTERS reports invariably are prefaced with a comment regarding the difficulty of separating regional and national activities.

In this report this difficulty is compounded by the fact that we have as our National President someone who increasingly is becoming a national figure and whose activities, as a result, extend well beyond the range of purely Black Sash work, though they are always related.

I have therefore decided to confine this report mainly to the activities of our President, Sheena Duncan, and to overlap on regional activities only where Sheena has been directly involved.

She is a remarkable, very special person, with a galaxy of talents which she uses to the full. Her brilliant and clear mind unerringly probes to the essence of whatever is relevant even in the most complicated issues. She is a fount of information which seems always to be at her disposal as though she carries a filing cabinet in her head. She remains serene, patient, warm and helpful no matter how pressured she may be. Her energy matches her dedication, and both are boundless. An excellent public speaker, she has an enviable command of language and she writes with fluency and impact. She is also very human and everyone loves her. She is a source of inspiration to us all and we are indeed privileged to have her as our National President.

Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill

Of all that Sheena has accomplished during the year under review perhaps the beautifully orchestrated

campaign against the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill is the outstanding achievement. This was a three-pronged affair, involving a memorandum to the Select Committee on the Constitution, the informing of the public in general and employers of black labour in particular, and the dissemination of basic information to black people themselves.

Sheena examined the legislation in depth and wrote at length on the subject. In addition to the memorandum there were articles for the Press, articles for other organisations, articles for circulation to elicit the support of employers and the Press, articles for translation into African languages, and what has become known as 'The Little Yellow Book', a masterpiece of clarity and simplicity, for circulation to the black people of our country. Some 50 000 of these have been distributed.

She concluded her memorandum to the Select Committee with these words:

'This proposed legislation is so appalling that it must either have been designed by bureaucrats who do not understand what they are doing, or by bureaucrats who understand very well what they are doing but are prepared to sacrifice all the principles of Christian justice on which the Government which employs them claims to base its policies in order to achieve their desired end.'

It is difficult to believe that such a discriminatory, unjust, outrageous, and altogether unworkable piece of legislation should have been presented to Parliament with the serious intention of making it law.

It can only lead to increased alienation of black from white, instability and tension in both urban and rural communities, and great human suffering.

The Bill fails entirely to address itself to the needs of our society and will therefore inevitably lead to an escalation of conflict. It should be withdrawn'.

Sheena can rightly take much credit for the temporary shelving of this Bill and its being sent to the Select Committee. She made quite sure that no-one could plead ignorance of its implications.

Other legislation

Other legislation studied and com-

mented upon by Sheena were the Intimidation Bill; the Protection of Information Bill, about which she said:

'It seems quite clear that even more severe restrictions on the release of information about detainees are intended but it could be even wider than that and could affect the compiling of information deemed to be not in "the interests of the Republic of South Africa" and it is difficult to know what that might mean; the Internal Security Bill; the Cooperation and Development Amendment Bill; the Constitution Amendment Bill; the Demonstration near or in Court Buildings Prohibition Act, about which she said:

'You need to get out your measuring tapes around the Commissioner's and Magistrate's Courts as well as the Supreme Court . . . I don't suppose there is anywhere in Grahamstown where you can be 500 metres from a Court; the Fingerprint Bill, on which she reported at last year's Conference; and the Orderly Movement Bill.

It is exceedingly difficult to extract the wheat from the chaff of verbosity which characterises Government bills, and Sheena often finds herself interpreting them for people and organisations outside the Black Sash. This is a valuable service to them and to us.

Constitution — the President's Council's proposals

The National Committee held discussions and agreed that we oppose the proposals totally because there is no move towards democracy and the status quo is reinforced. Believing that the proposals cannot be divorced from the citizenship policy we resolved to educate our members to address meetings on the topic of citizenship and the constitution. This we did and Jill Wentzel, Ethel Walt and Elizabeth Rowe gave talks in addition to those delivered by Sheena. I wrote an article on the proposals, which was published on the centre page of 'The Star'.

Constitution campaign

The Constitution Group continues to meet under my chairmanship and attended by Sheena, the two of us representing the Black Sash. The Group has naturally discussed the constitutional proposals, to which they, too, are totally opposed. It was agreed to try to form a common citizenship committee across a broad

spectrum, but this has not materialised. A special workshop was conducted on local government, the only aspect of the proposals not totally rejected by the Group, although more detailed discussion gave little for anyone's comfort.

Ingwavuma — KaNgwane

We were incensed by the Government's unilateral decision to divest South Africans of large portions of land and large numbers of South Africans of their citizenship.

Sheena and I sat on the platform officially representing the Black Sash at the public meeting convened by the PFP in the Johannesburg City Hall, and Sheena wrote a letter of support to Chief Buthelezi who replied with warm thanks.

It is heartening to note that concerted public protest can still bring results, for the government has withdrawn its decision and referred the matter to a Commission.

Pensions

Correspondence with the Minister of Co-operation and Development regarding the payouts of pensions was continued, with the Chief Commissioner OFS requiring details about the complaints of maladministration from Tweespruit. The details were sent but no further developments have been conveyed to us.

Justice

I have an on-going correspondence with the Minister of Justice regarding torture and deaths in detention, some of which was reported to last year's Conference. In reply to my letter about the need for protection of detainees the Minister replied as follows:

'Kindly accept that your letter of the 26 November 1981 did not anger

me and that you are at liberty to bring any relevant matter to my attention. The Government appointed the Rabie Commission to consider all our present security legislation and to make the necessary recommendation with a view to the future and I am at present considering the Commissioner's report and the proposed new legislation that flows therefrom. Although the proposed new legislation and regulations will still not be to your satisfaction, I am satisfied that it will be in the best interest not only to the State but all other people who are involved in security matters'.

I subsequently wrote to him about his failure to respond to the memorandum of the Detainees Parents Support Committee.

'We note with dismay that you have not yet seen fit to respond to the memorandum on the torture of detainees submitted to you by the Detainee's Parents Support Committee. These were apparently actual allegations made by former detainees and are horrific in their content.

We simply cannot understand why you have not acted immediately and publicly, either to refute these allegations if you are able to — which seems unlikely in the face of so much evidence to the contrary — or to express your own personal abhorrence of such methods and your determination to use all your authority to ensure that they cease forthwith.

There is no time for this matter to wind its way slowly through the bureaucratic channels which usually cause replies from Ministers to be delayed for several months. It requires your most urgent and immediate attention, for in the final resort responsibility for the welfare of detainees and all those in prison



Sue Joynt



Lesley Hermer



Joan Grover



Beverley Runciman, second right, discusses the need for more dynamic pamphlets to assist in recruiting members. From left, Marion Lacey, Audrey Coleman, Judith Hawarden, Annica van Gijlswyk and right, Rosemary Meny-Gilbert.



Noel Robb — *Because I know it's always full of all the old conference stuff, I never bother to open the magazine*

rests with you'.

He replied: *'You may rest assured that I will in due course comment upon the memorandum which the Detainees Parents Support Committee published in The Star and other newspapers. It is well-known that the Commissioner of Police ordered a proper investigation some months ago and I wish to assure you that the alleged accusations are being properly attended to.'*

I refuse to be rushed into public statements on any particular issue and will only make a statement after I have all the relevant facts at my disposal'.

I replied: *'While it is gratifying to hear directly from you that you are giving your personal and urgent attention to the welfare of those who fall within the total control of the Security Police, nevertheless I have grave misgivings about the proper investigation ordered by the Commissioner of Police some months ago, to which you refer.'*

It concerns me, Sir, that the police should be conducting an investigation on the police — in other words that the Department should be investigating itself. It is surely too much to expect of anyone or any organisation that it should voluntarily expose its own defects.

What the Black Sash would like to see is an independent investigation, possibly by a member of the

Judiciary supported by citizens of unquestioned integrity'.

And he replied: *'I refer to your letter dated 11 November and beg to advise that I have confidence in the integrity of the investigating officers and I will in due course make a statement on this issue'.*

I also wrote to him regarding the reimposition of the ban on Dr Beyers Naude: *'We know Dr Naude well. He is a man of God and a man of peace, a man dedicated to bringing about peaceful change in our country so that all who live in it may share of its fruits, participate in its government, and contribute to its progress. When those in power repudiate such a man it is the society they govern which should be censured and not the man. The Government should unban Dr Naude forthwith'.*

He replied: *'Your request cannot be granted for reasons that have been stated on numerous occasions. I can, however, assure you that the further restriction of Dr Beyers Naude was only decided upon after due consideration of all the relevant circumstances'.*

Map of Removals

This has been one of the most professional and successful issues of the Black Sash, and copyright was sold to the Federation of Reformed Churches in Germany.

Ford Foundation

The Black Sash entered into a contract with the Ford Foundation whereby the Foundation asked us to further the work of the Advice Offices and to publish information related to the work and to report to them at the end of the year.

Articles written by Sash President

During the year Sheena has written articles on Resettlement, the Population Registration Act, the new Pass Law Legislation for the Churches, the Orderly Movement and Settlement Bill, a short article for translation on the influx proposals, another short one for translation on KaNgwane - Ingwavuma, Reform/Change for the South African Foundation, a draft message for the SACC on the eve of the Eloff Commission, Resettlement for the Anglican Synod, the Orderly Movement Bill for Seek, the Dynamics of Influx Control for the Institute of Race Relations, the little yellow book on the Orderly Movement Bill, a draft of the work done by the Black Sash for the IRR Survey and a Change/Reform booklet for the Churches. I have written one on the Constitutional Proposals.

Meetings attended by Sash President

Among others Sheena attended the Urban Foundation Panel on Urbanisation, the KaNgwane Ingwavuma Protest meeting at the City Hall, a panel on the new Pass Legislation, the IRR on the Halt All Resettlement Programme and their Urbanisation Conference, the SACC Relocation Task Force, the Urban Foundation on rural aspects of the new Pass Laws and the Legal Resources Centre on the destruction of Section 10(1)(b) claims. In all of these she was an active participant.

Talks given by the Sash President

I have been able to count 43 talks given by Sheena all over the country on subjects ranging from Conflict or Communication, to Advice Offices, to resettlement and relocations, to the Information Bill, to the Pass Laws, to the Constitution and Citizenship, to Liberation and Justice, to Education, to Permits and Pensions, to Militarism, to domestic workers, to Black life in South Africa to the Orderly Movement and Settlement Bill, to Industrial Relations and to Universities — a truly staggering achievement.

Visitors and interviews

In her capacity as Advice Office Director as well as that of National President Sheena has spoken to visitors from the USA, Germany, France, Namibia, Australia, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Uganda, Israel, Norway, Sweden, Belgium and Canada.

I have counted 111 visitors during the year, but there have been many more recorded in the visitor's book and not in the committee minutes.

She has given innumerable press and radio and TV interviews, locally and from overseas countries.

Overseas visit

Sheena was invited to attend the YWCA Conference on Women and Human Rights in Britain in October, where she spoke on racism in South Africa. She also addressed innumerable Church Women's groups in Holland and met with a wide variety of Government, political party, Church and University people.

Correspondence with the US Ambassador

In Sheena's absence I wrote to the American Ambassador saying: 'I feel I must express to you the deep concern my colleagues in the Black Sash share with me over the sentiments attributed to you in the Press concerning the Government's constitutional proposals.

You are purported to have indicated publicly your own and therefore your government's support for these proposals as being an acceptable beginning to change in our country.

Members of this organisation, members of the Progressive Federal Party, and many members of the public including millions of black people disagree with you. They strongly support the view that these proposals are in fact a step in the wrong direction, that they entrench white Afrikaner National power, that they aggravate racial divisions and resentments, and that they are merely a new strategy on the part of the Government to entrench as much of the status quo as it can under present circumstances'.

He replied: 'While I appreciate your candor and the sincerity of your concern, I cannot help but feel that you — or others — are misrepresenting the position which the United States Government and I have taken on the Prime Minister's constitu-

tional proposals'.

He went on to quote from an interview he had given to The Star which said: 'Mr Nickel said his government did not think the new constitutional proposals now accepted by the National Party were "being written in granite — they have to be the beginning of a process".'

Sheena subsequently had further correspondence with him following a misquote in the Press of a statement she made at our meeting on the Constitutional proposals.

The Ambassador wrote: 'Before leaving for the United States later this afternoon, I wanted to thank you for calling the Sunday Express to straighten out misunderstandings that may have arisen over the November 18 account in The Star of my position on the constitutional proposals. I take it that you have seen my explanation of that position in a letter which I sent to your National Vice President, Mrs Joyce Harris, on November 2 . . . Let me assure you that I have no desire to get into a public argument with a person and an organisation I greatly respect, particularly since our positions on the matter are really not that far apart'.

Sheena replied: 'I am very sorry that The Star misreported what I said at the meeting on 17 November. The "thin end of the wedge" comment did not refer to you. I did quote you accurately that the constitutional proposals "have to be the beginning of a process" but was arguing that the proposals cannot be the beginning of a process of reform and that they are rather an entrenching of the exclusion of the black majority from participation in our common society'.

Jill Wentzel, who has been our very innovative and imaginative editor of SASH, managed exceedingly well when, in addition to this, she had to take on the tasks of Acting President and Acting Chairman of Region when Sheena, Audrey and I were all away at the same time.

In the absence of an official national or regional secretary this work has been shared by Sheena and Jill, and Robin Harvey has been our most efficient national treasurer, keeping a firm hand on our finances.

No President could function effectively without the willing and able

co-operation of the office staff, and headquarters is extremely grateful to our typists, Ingrid Kekana, Cecilia Kekana, and particularly to Margaret Kirk, for her many years of coping so efficiently with the many demands made upon her, also to our interpreters, particularly Mabel Makgabutlane, who is responsible for the bulk of the reproductive work. We thank them all for their loyalty and support.

NEW DEAL — from page 9

done the struggle for a better society by strengthening the present one.

So let us stand firm. The heritage of non-violent resistance is a proud one, and one that you, in your own way, have made your own. Let us continue to seek ways to genuine peace for the people of this country. Let us continue to say: non-co-operation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is co-operation with good. And let us continue to strive to build, even now, in the midst of struggle, the foundations for genuine reconciliation for black and white South Africa.

As you continue your work against so many odds, do not become weary. As you stand alone on the streets, crying out your silent protest against the violation of justice and human dignity, do not lose faith. Remember that it is a vigil for truth and justice. And if it seems futile, and the dark clouds of despair blot out the sun and your hope, remember that we are guided, not by strength and power, but by faith in God, who has given us a vision that shall not die.

MERRETT — from page 22

For those readers interested in pursuing further the issue of non-racial sport the following references will be of interest:

ARCHER, Robert and BOUILLON, Antoine. *The South African game: sport and racism* London: Zed, 1982

COMPTON, Richard C D. *No normal sport in an abnormal society: a study of the South African Council on Sport*. Unpublished Political Science Honours essay. Pietermaritzburg University of Natal, 1980

HICKSON, Michael. *The Aurora Cricket Club and South African cricket since isolation*. *Reality* 11(4) 1979

MANSON, Andy. *Sacos*. *Frontline* March 1983

RUGBY in the Eastern Cape: a history. *Work in progress* 17 April 1981

Ruth Foley

RUTH FOLEY died in Zimbabwe on April 22 this year. Those of us at the memorial service in Johannesburg, who knew her in her great days, had long thoughts.

'We can't sit still and do nothing - I don't know what we CAN do, but we must do it. We must act. There must be thousands like us and we must get together. And so, says Mirabel Rogers in her book *The Black Sash*, from those words to co-founder Jean Sinclair, to Jean Bosazza, Helen Newton Thompson, Tertia Pybus and Elizabeth McLaren at tea on May 19 1955 was born the Women's Defence of the Constitution League.

The Nationalist Government, unable to secure a two-thirds majority by normal means, had proposed to 'pack' the Senate with extra senators of its own party, in order to remove the coloured people from the common roll and do away with one of the Entrenched Clauses in the South Africa Act.

Let me add that others, invited but unable to attend that tea party, Betty Taylor, Leslie Roberts, Marjorie Juta and Betty Barker, added their weight immediately.

On May 25, 2 000 women from all walks of life marched to the City Hall in Johannesburg, bearing banners. By the time the procession reached the City Hall there were 18 000 hands to raise in response to the Mayor's resolution 'Withdraw the Senate Bill'.

Six days later a manifesto was issued, ending 'Let all women who value liberty and freedom heed this call to action'.

All over the country women flocked to join the League, women who were citizens of South Africa and thus entitled to vote. Two petitions were drawn up and sent to every centre in South Africa: one to Prime Minister J G Strijdom asking for the Bill to be repealed, or that the Government resign from office; the other to the Governor-General, Dr E G Jansen, asking him to withhold his assent to the Bill's becoming law. Within 10 days more than 100 000 women had signed the petitions.

Ruth Foley, the League's first National President, made a lightning tour of the major centres, galvanising women to action.

She was perhaps the most effective speaker in the Sash. Her shining sincerity, her mastery of facts and figures and her political experience in the United Party, made her a natural leader. She was able to clarify moral issues in so direct, and simple a way that men and women felt inspired.

Those at the City Hall that historic day will remember her call:

'You will find that there are many who are not yet ready to join with us. They have not grasped the seriousness of the situation, or they are too shy, too fearful, too lazy or too pessimistic to bestir themselves.

'You can tell the shy and the reticent', the words of Miss

Mary McLarty (an M P C and an ex-suffragette) that "Once in a lifetime a situation demands dramatic public action, and when such a situation arises, no action can be too dramatic or too ostentatious".

'You must tell the fearful that fear is the weapon all tyrants use... That they must have courage, moral courage, to stand now, lest worse befall.'

'You must tell the lazy that apathy is the disease that has been slowly killing South Africa... You must shock them, shame them, pester them, until, for the sake of peace, they join in'.

'I cannot tell you how to deal with the pessimist, for I am a confirmed optimist. I believe we get from life what we deserve from our own efforts.

Ruth seemed indefatigable. On the brink of a major operation she spent the two winter nights in the Union Building grounds in Pretoria with 79 other women, after presenting the petition to Mr B J Schoeman, the Prime Minister's Deputy, and rejecting his arguments. She said afterwards, '...I realised that the basic difference between him and us was that he made a fetish of fear... We are not afraid. We believe that the principles of faith and fair dealing and trust in one another will survive'.

She laid down the policy that the women would do nothing to impair the dignity and sincerity of their protest. And so it was: the black sash of mourning with the card saying all, EERBIEDIG ONS GRONDWET (Honour our Constitution); the silent vigils; even, in the early days, hats!

I remember her so well from the days of my chairmanship of the Natal Coastal Region. She set Natal alight. It was always Ruth we wanted to visit us when spirits were failing, progress seemed slight, numbers were dropping. It was inevitable that from a membership of 10 000 at the time of the convoy to Cape Town to stand at Parliament while it debated the Senate Bill, the impetus could not continue. Having failed to secure the repeal of the Bill, what was there for us to do?

'Inform the ignorant, sustain the tenacious, encourage the doubters' — that was Ruth's message. From the ranks of formerly sleepy Natalians, many Sash women moved into spheres of public service, briefed by the invaluable information sheets produced by the Central Executive and fortified by Ruth's stimulation.

Her family backed her. Arthur, her husband, once responded to her sigh that she no longer had time to do her beautiful flower arrangements in the house, with, 'Flowers are not important. Keep your eye on the ball'. Her son, her daughter and her grandchildren will remember her with pride, as do we all.

Marjorie Britten

From left, Toni and David Hayson, Ruth Foley and Marjorie Britten at a Black Sash event in Durban in the 1950's



PENSIONS

Old age pensions now are: R138 per month for whites
R 49 per month for blacks

From October 1983 they will be:
R152 per month for whites
R 57 per month for blacks

THE GAP HAS INCREASED

R152 a month is totally inadequate to provide for the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing for any person

R57 a month?

Blacks who have an income of R29,50 a month and over are not entitled to receive *any* State pension at all

Helen Suzman

The Conference wishes to place on record its warm appreciation of Helen Suzman's unwavering and untiring defence of human rights in South Africa in Parliament and beyond.

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LAYOUT: By Joyce Brown

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KHOTSO HOUSE, 42 DE VILLIERS STREET
JOHANNESBURG 2001**

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