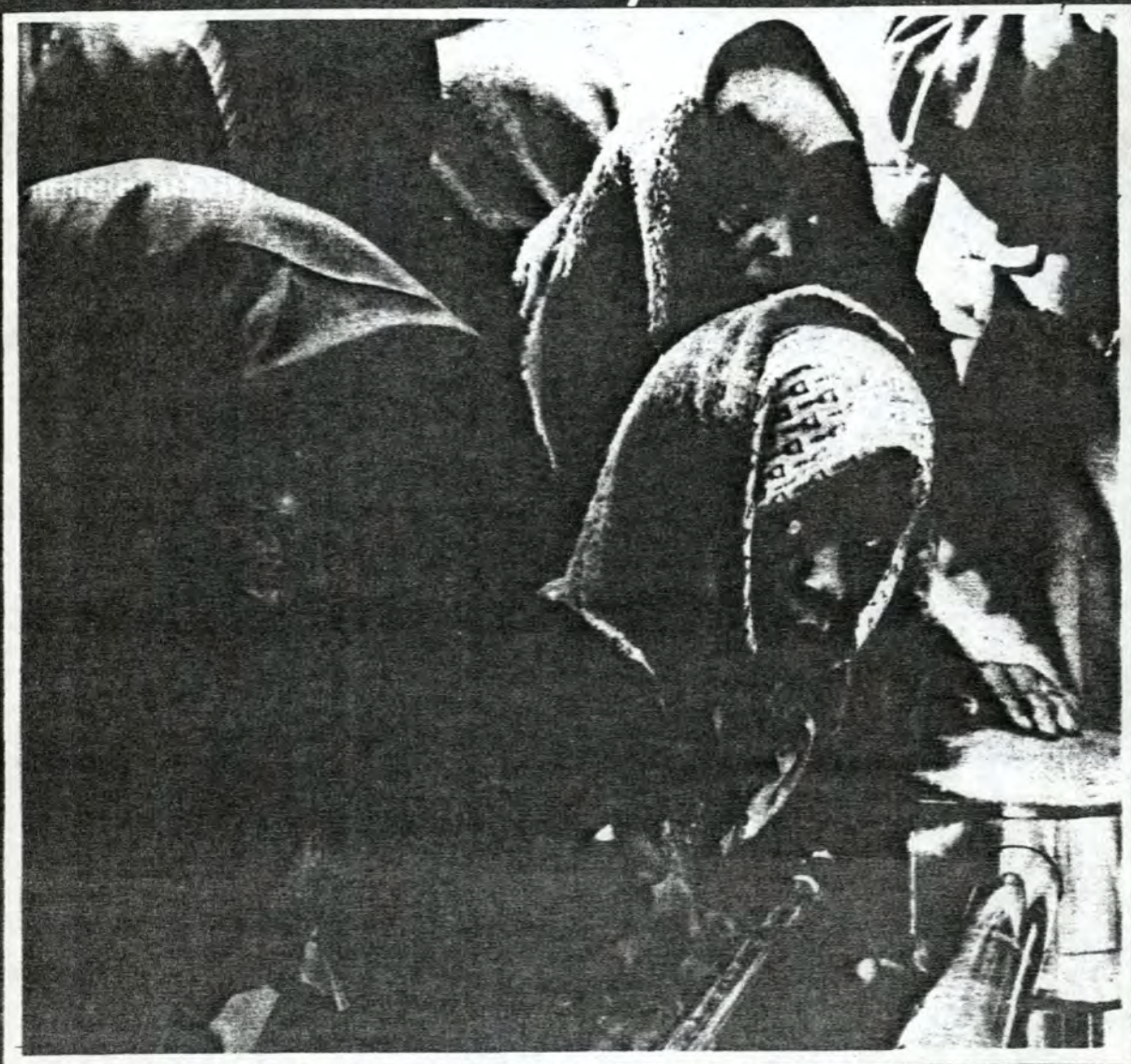


Sash

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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 deeds 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.

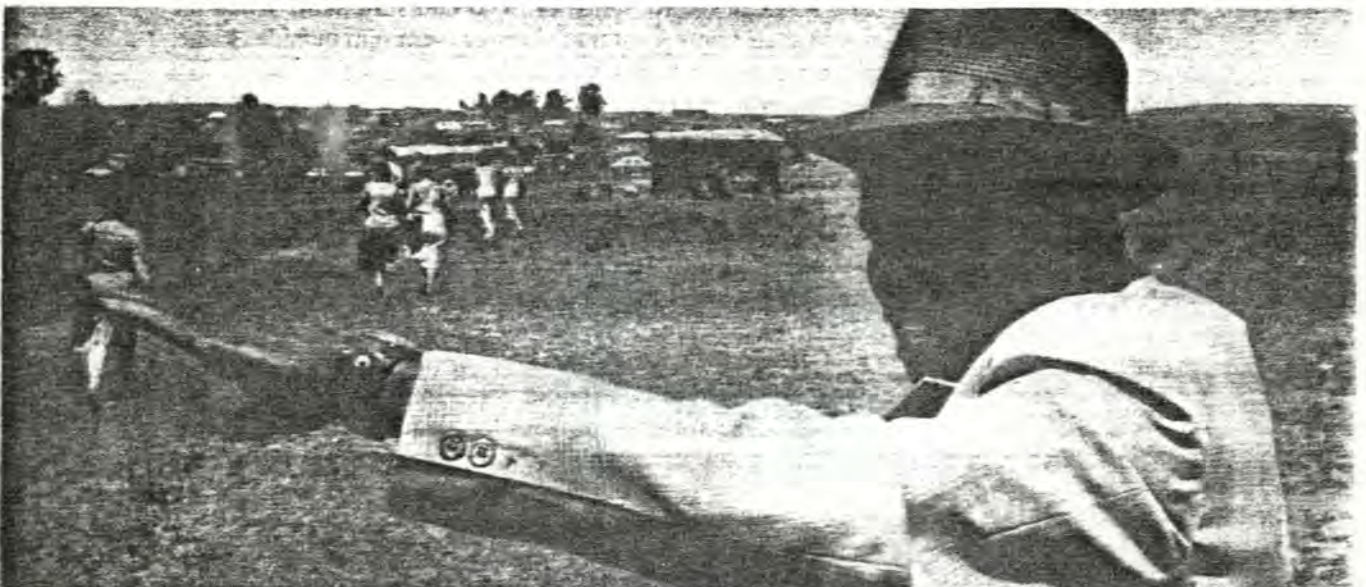
He pointed out that the farm is in the heart of the Transvaal maize triangle, and said that the villagers grow not just enough maize for their own needs, but they generally have a surplus which they sell to the Koster co-operative.

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.

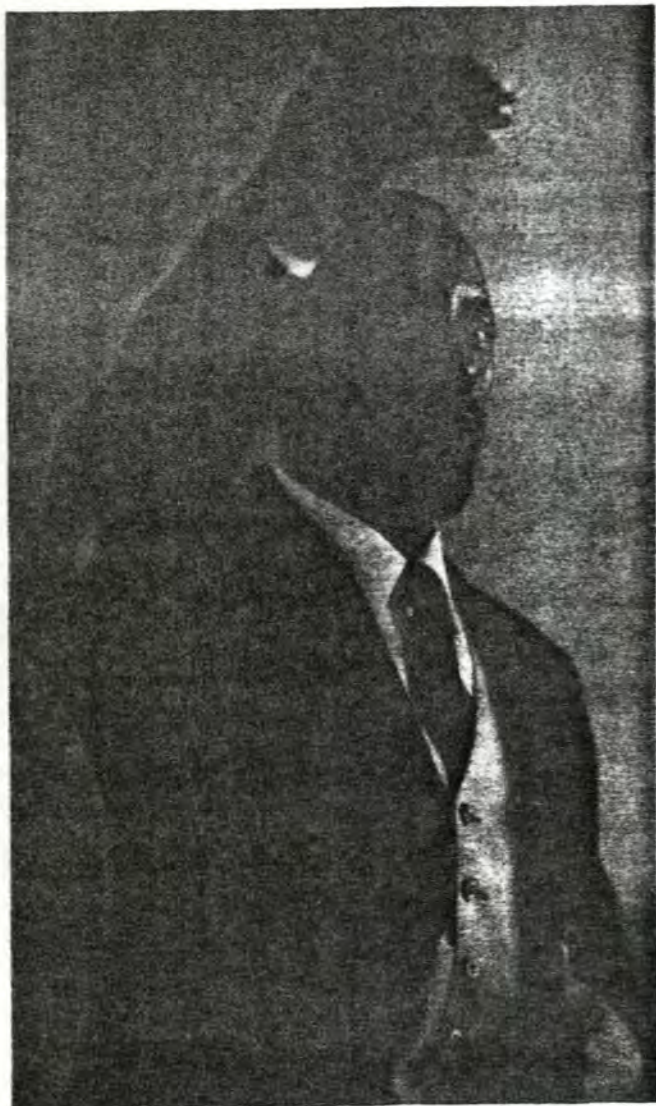
Dr Koornhof has told the people at Mathopistad that they would have piped water when they moved to Onderstepoort, whereas at present they do not have any water.

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.'

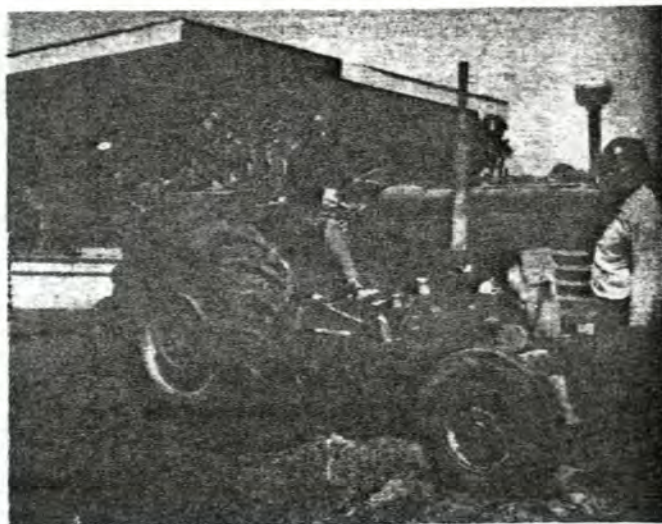
The chairman of the Houghton constituency, Brian Doctor, asked the meeting if there was anyone there who wanted to move. The response was silence. After a period of discussion among the villagers, during which we urged them to speak freely to us, one person said that a commissioner had already asked 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 FFP, 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 Rikhotso 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 Rikhotso judgement in the Transvaal division of the Supreme Court and the Booie 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 Rikhotso 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 Parent's 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 — an 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 skillfully 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 Johanna, 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 human 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

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