

# Use of force in society discussed

THE use of force, aimed at maintaining certain social standards within the social system, cannot be ignored completely, as anarchists would have it, Dr. C. D. Roode, sociologist, University of the Orange Free State, said at a symposium on "Violence in present-day society," organised by the Social Services Association, in the Trinity Methodist Church Hall in Kimberley last night.

## Song festival a big success

AAR. — The annual De Aar Song Festival has proved so successful since its inception in 1967 that the committee has decided to hold the festival over two days this year. For the first time, children's groups will also participate in the festival and as in the past, all singing Karoo towns will be invited to De Aar. About 100 people will sing in the festival on October 11 and 12, from the Departments of Education in the Free State and the Orange Free State and those who attended previous festivals said that the festival was of a high standard.

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Quoting sources of reference, Dr. Roode said: "There must always exist some socialized force to restrain the anti-social manifestations of force itself, whether exerted by individuals or by organized groups."

Although there was the possibility that the power of a ruler was sufficient to overcome all opposition, it occasionally happened that the reaction was so great that the ruler was overthrown, he said.

Social research had shown that group or mass behaviour could sometimes be coupled with the most senseless acts of violence, while, on the other hand, there was no apparent intention to hurt, Dr. Roode said.

The use of mass demonstrations against the atom bomb, work conditions, or any other situation, could, however, lead to violence, Dr. Roode warned.

Former societies had looked upon physical energy and the use of force as acceptable means of gaining power, but these methods were nowadays looked upon as being primitive, he said.

It was an open question whether modern society was not only now beginning to reap the evil fruits, which, in spite of violence and force, had been brought home to the child.

Unfortunately, Dr. Roode said, this problem had no easy solution. An international reevaluation of social problems was urgently needed.

The combating of crime and violence posed a grave problem; one which involved the necessity for constant vigilance and continuous efforts to find ways of counteracting negative activity in this regard, Dr. Roode said.

Dr. A. Lamont, Commissioner for Mental Health, was the fourth speaker. Dr. Lamont, attached to the Orange Hospital, Bloemfontein declined to allow the Press to quote his address to the symposium.



Pictured at the symposium arranged by the Social Services Association were, left to right, Mr. G. McLeod, branch chairman of the Kimberley branch of the Association, Dr. A. Lamont, Commissioner for Mental Health, of Bloemfontein, and Mr. C. J. H. Vorster, Secretary for Social Welfare and Pensions, The Association is at present holding its annual meeting in the city.

# City symposium told of sharp rise in S.A. criminal violence

BOTH society and the law-giver have erred in assuming that the topics and problems of crime, violence and the criminal should be dealt with as if they were concepts all of one piece, Mr. Justice Steyn, national chairman of the Social Services Association, said in Kimberley last night.

Society's failure to appreciate the difference in the moral culpability of respective criminal conduct was best demonstrated by the "vicious prejudice which exists against any person who has been convicted of the commission of a crime," Mr. Justice Steyn said. This prejudice, he added, had as one of its significant by-products, the tremendous problem of rehabilitation and re-acceptance of any of the convicted in the community.

Violence in present-day society presented a grave problem, illustrated by the rapid increase in the number of persons charged and convicted of offences involving serious violence, he said.

Statistics showed that, for the year ending June 30, 1964, 3,120 persons were charged with

murder; 929 were convicted (of murder with or without extenuating circumstances); and that for the year ending June 30, 1967, 4,968 persons were similarly charged and 1,653 convicted. "This is an increase in both cases of more than 55 per cent. Even allowing for the natural growth of our population, an increase of such proportions over a period of three years is indicative of deterioration or defect somewhere in our society," Mr. Justice Steyn said.

### DEATHS

During 1965/66, he said, acts of violence were responsible for 8,640 deaths in the Republic. During the same period, 202,049 cases of assault were reported and 68,581 persons convicted of such offences.

The facet of crimes of violence which caused the greatest concern was the motiveless, often senseless, serious assaults perpetrated by the under-privileged people of South Africa, one upon the other.

"In particular, amongst our Coloured people of the Cape, it has become almost a way of life to terminate any argument, where serious or minor, with use of a knife," Mr. Justice Steyn said.

### SOLUTION

"Speaking from experience and without the assistance of results from a project aimed at investigating knifings in this section of our community, the one outstanding feature of this senseless, often serious, type of assault, is that it is usually committed either under the influence of alcohol or drugs, more particularly of dagga."

Practicalities, he said, dictated that prohibition, even for this section of the community, was impossible.

"We are therefore obliged to live with it."

Mr. Justice Steyn said a solution to this problem would be an educational campaign aimed at teaching that moderate use of alcohol and sensible use of alcohol was the answer.

He said he would support Government agencies and local authorities which recommended and stimulated Coloured enterprise to provide decent facilities (both on and off-consumption facilities) for the benefit of the Coloured community in their own areas.

Referring to the widespread use of dagga, Mr. Justice Steyn said: "I appeal, particularly to our Press, to exercise restraint when it comes to the publication of material which would suggest to our young people that the use of drugs such as dagga is not really reprehensible or physically harmful."

"There have in the past been forms of publication which have overtly suggested that society should adopt a more permissive attitude towards drugs and drug-taking. This smacks, in my view, of yellow journalism. The Press should be a responsible ally of the forces concerned with the administration of the law," he said.

Discussing the causes of crime and ways in which the courts help to combat crime, Mr. Justice

Steyn said: "Let me emphasize that adequate punishment is essential to control the incidence of crime."

"Harsh and inequitable penalties have never done so. Punishment can only control and curb, it can never eradicate."

"I concede that where one has to deal with a crisis situation, it may even be necessary over a short period to impose very severe penalties on the individual. However, if society thinks that harsh and inequitable punishment is the panacea for the ills of violence, bitter disillusionment awaits it," he said.

Mr. C. J. H. Vorster, Secretary for Social Welfare and Pensions, said in the opening address at the symposium that society should endeavour to remove social conditions which could lead to crime.

He stressed the importance of co-operation between the local welfare organization, its national body and the State. Such co-operation would lead to better understanding of each others' problems, and mutual consultation and further co-operation would follow spontaneously, he said.

Referring to the social worker, Mr. Vorster said that in 1967 about 1,400 students received training in welfare work. Several years ago, however, there had been only 1,000 welfare workers in the Republic.

He paid tribute to the many welfare workers who had striven over the years to aid the needy.

Mr. Vorster stressed the importance of making an ex-convict feel needed in society — "I appeal to employers to open their doors to these people and to offer them suitable employment."

Earlier, he had mentioned that between July 1, 1965 and June 30, 1966, there had been 339,143 people in South African prisons. During the same period there had been 204,773 people awaiting trial in jail. These figures included all races, he said.





# Advertiser

THE VOICE OF THE  
NORTHERN CAPE

OCTOBER 10, 1968

## Real service to society

**F**EW welfare organizations in the country are more worthwhile than the Social Services Association, whose annual National Council meeting and conference is being held in Kimberley this week. And few face greater problems in what they try to do.

For they are dealing, in essence, with the problems of society itself and the products — those who have "gone wrong." The causes of crime and the rehabilitation of offenders are matters of primary concern, and it was thus appropriate indeed that attention should be focussed on the opening day of the conference on the question of violence in society.

We live in a world that is increasingly turning to violence on an individual or organized basis to achieve its aims. Student riots in many places — in France, Germany, Mexico, Ireland, Brazil — are expressions of this. So is, for example, the slogan "law 'n order" which is becoming a factor in the American presidential elections. Aside from lost lives and broken heads in rioting in America, reported crimes of violence have risen there by 16 per cent. in a year.

Though more orderly in the general sense, in that we have been spared outbursts of organized violence, the South African picture is by no means reassuring. Mr. Justice Steyn, chairman of the Association, points out that in three years there has been an increase of more than 55 per cent. in the number of people brought to court for murder — in 1966/67 4,968 were charged and 1,653 convicted. Violence caused 8,640 deaths in the previous year and there were 202,049 cases of assault (88,581 convictions).

Among these, the motiveless, senseless assaults, usually with knives, are a major worry. Though products of inadequacies in society — insufficient opportunity being one? — the situation is aggravated by drink and drugs.

Mr. Justice Steyn will receive wide support for condemning outright the current wave of "permissiveness" which seeks to condone drug-taking. He is also right to stress the need for education in drinking habits, particularly among the poorer non-White sections of the community and for respectable places in which to do so.

Most important aid of all in the invaluable work that Social Services is doing is the need for wider acceptance that this is not something happening in isolation from society. There are a great many facets, not least the difficult question of the rehabilitation of the prisoner, in which individual members of the community have a real and positive role to play.

Diamond Fields Advertiser, Kimberley: 10/10/68

# Association to act on drug possession

**T**HE Social Services Association of South Africa yesterday decided at its annual meeting held in Kimberley, to make representations to the appropriate authorities about the possession of drugs.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the National Council of Social Services Association of South Africa, Advocate J. J. Labuschagne, chairman of the Pretoria branch of the association, said there was no legislation to prevent the public from possessing large quantities of drugs.

Existing legislation covered only the possession of dagga, he said.

If the supply of drugs was cut off, addicts would be forced to seek treatment, Mr. Labuschagne said.

The association decided to make representations to the authorities about possession of drugs.

Last year the drug problem was brought to the attention of the Inter-Departmental Advisory Committee on the Need of Care, Misconduct and Crime among Children and Juveniles. The matter was still under consideration, the meeting was told.

An approach by the association to the Newspaper Press Union about news reports concerning cases in which the accused was eventually acquitted was discussed at the meeting. (The association feels that it is unfair on both the accused and his family — when such cases are publicised — if the accused is found not guilty. The stigma is not easily shrugged off, it was said).

Miss L. M. Slater, organising secretary for the association, reported that the N.P.U. had replied, saying the matter had not yet been discussed.

Mr. Justice Steyn, national chairman of the association, in an article published in "Social Work", a journal for social workers, was quoted as saying that "A trial can become not only a trial in the courts, but a trial by newspaper, where the guarantees of civil liberty, the rules of evidence and procedure and the concepts of a

reasonable doubt of a balance of probability, are not maintained.

"This is not theorizing. One knows of many examples of people whose lives have been hideously affected through publication of their identity at an early stage of court proceedings."

The association decided to approach the Department of Bantu Administration and Development about a reduction in short-term imprisonment for petty offences.

Mr. Justice Steyn had earlier said that in 1967, about 200,000 Bantu were sentenced to jail terms of a month or less. This was felt to be a wasteful burden to the taxpayer and industry, as it affected industrial turnover (because of staff shortages) and other hold-ups.

Today, delegates to the meeting will be taken on a tour of the Open Mine and Museum. A business session will start at a local hotel at 1.30 p.m.

## After-care of prisoners

The Social Services Association had received a "wonderful" response from people representing the Indian, Coloured and African communities in establishing committees aimed at providing after-care for prisoners, Miss L. M. Slater, organizing secretary for the association's annual meeting now being held in Kimberley, said yesterday.

Miss Slater said the association had been gratified by the interest shown in such work by members of these communities. In Kimberley, the response had been particularly pleasing, and reports from branches throughout the Republic had shown that interest was running high.

## Last bid to stop monolith project

PRETORIA

**T**HE National Monuments Commission is to have an interview with the Minister in a bid to stop the National Board from "vandalising" Kruger Park granite kopjes and monolithic boulders.

The unanimous decision of the members of the commission sitting in Pretoria, Minister of Information — the man who will be asked to stop the five-man commission's mission to agree to a "protection plan" board.

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# Poor response to welfare appeal

DD 19/5/67

**EAST LONDON—Lack of public support is crippling the local drive by the Social Services' Association of South Africa to assist in the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners.**

Daily DISPATCH  
19/5/67

A/B/14/1

"Over 2,000 appeal letters were posted to people and business firms, but the response was very poor," said the chairman of the East London branch, Mr. W. Liedtke.

"Without the assistance of a grant from head office last year, the East London branch would have been in serious financial difficulties."

In his annual report to be delivered at the society's annual meeting next week, Mr. Liedtke says: "Our inability to supply organised centres where ex-prisoners can be usefully occupied makes them aimless, lonely and frustrated persons."

## HOUSE NEED

"How wonderful it would be if a large house could be leased or donated to us for this purpose."

The East London branch is at present negotiating for separate Coloured and African welfare branches.

It has also made application to the municipality for a vacant house to lease for use as a rehabilitation centre."

The aim of our organisation is to prevent criminal behaviour, to rehabilitate prisoners before they fall back into their old life of crime," says the secretary, Mrs. E. Visser, in her report.

"But to get employment for the ex-prisoner is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

"Social work in East London has increased to such an extent that we have applied for a second full-time social worker.

"Whether this need can be met depends entirely on the public, as we received only 60 per cent subsidy on the social worker's salary — the balance has to be raised by our branch."

—DDR.

Public welfare

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