

The founder and organiser of the Zenzeles, who is now the general adviser of the Zenzele YWCA's is still the link between all the human-relational chains. She "advises" on who should be next year's office-bearers. She is the women's chief guide, instructor and friend. She shows the new Chair-woman how to conduct meetings, the Treasurer how to administer and account for moneys, the Secretaries how to keep books. Although, during 1953, she was officially "adviser" to the Johannesburg branch, and during 1954 officially its Thrift-Treasurer, she remains "Mammie" to everybody.⁽¹⁾

In her the YWCA have found that rare treasure - a voluntary worker doing a professional job. And the Zenzeles possess in her a non-European doing a European's job.

Her main functions are to explain, to teach, to show by example. She has infinite tact and tremendous patience. Minor squabbles are brushed over lightly, major ones are remedied. She is kind-hearted, untiring and unaffected, and obviously enjoys it all hugely. Also she grew with her job.

Her prestige is immense. She is "the first lady of the land".

She does however, not speak a Bantu language.

Since the beginning of this year a full-time paid African organising Secretary has been appointed. She is a B.A., ex-teacher, mother of four children. She was a member of the Johannesburg Branch. Her position is a difficult one; the general adviser is still strategically the leader. She has to establish liaison between new and old groups, boost the beginners, select volunteers, trainers, leaders, speakers, she must assist with training for responsible jobs, and do much administrative work.

This was a new venture, introduced with great circumspection, and the matter is still in its experimental stage. However, so far, the person selected is acquitting herself admirably and, of course, profiting greatly by the admirable training of the American Executive Secretary.

It is expected that in the near future, the need for paid expert assistance will make itself felt elsewhere. Durban may need a Programme-Secretary.

The rôle of the European

In this organisation European influence is everywhere noticeable in its effects, though not in its causes. Europeans are "members",

participants/....

(1) "Mammie must come and explain", "Mammie must help us", "We need some help from Mammie".

participants like the Africans, but nowhere in the foreground. European leadership operates indirectly and beneath the surface; A European is not in the chair though sometimes one may be a secretary or treasurer at the request of the Africans. Never do they visibly take the initiative.⁽¹⁾ Through their direct participation "at the bottom" they are in closest touch with the Africans, they know "what is on". Nothing is openly forced, though high European standards are maintained. Nothing is allowed to be developed haphazardly, everything is minutely and carefully planned. Things are only allowed to develop, when it is felt that they are ready for such development.

In Durban there is still a European woman as President of the Council, but it is hoped that the African Vice-President will be ready, in due course, to take over.

African Opinion

African opinion in Johannesburg on the Zenzeles is unanimous in that Zenzele is "expensive", and "a select society" and "only for the upper classes". It is only for the "high-flown people" and the complaint about "snobbism" is general.

Some say they are "selfish and they are only doing things for themselves" But with the greater number it is clear that "many more people would join the Zenzeles if it were not so expensive", because "they have found something that pleases people", "because they are taught useful things to help themselves, and then they help each other; one has an idea and shares it with the others". Although some women feel - "it is only pleasure" because "they are doing nothing practical, they are only educating".

The reason why "the Zenzele-women want to be so swanky" is given without exception as: "standards are set too high for African society", because "she (the founder) simply cannot come down to the level of the African women" - although, generally, it is added that she (the founder) herself does not want it, she's trying very hard to fight against it". But "simple folk are afraid to receive her in their homes, and she'll see how poorly I am furnished."

Attitude to Europeans;/.....

(1) At last year's Annual Conference which I attended, the Executive Secretary's behaviour was that of a normal "visitor". The few Europeans present never showed any reactions, never expressed opinions, except when asked to do so, never showed astonishment, disagreement or approval. They do not even try to be "nice" or forth-coming. As the Member of the YWCA World Council explained to me: "we have as a rule that no effort should be made - Just behave normally, and the African will seek the contact, and then it will be a natural one". But they are there, all along, participating and sharing.

Attitude to Europeans: It was generally regretted that "She brought in the Europeans", but the gradually penetrating realisation of the YWCA's world contact as well as the quality of the Europeans has taken the sting out of the term "European". For "Zenzele" belongs to the Africans. They started it. And Zenzele does not give the Europeans any opening for paid jobs. In all other organisations the Europeans get the pay and the Africans do the work".

Future trends and developments

In the past year, Zenzeles have progressed greatly. Various new aspects have appeared, the purpose is deepening, the scope widening, Leadership, of a surprising quality, is emerging in a truly heart-rejoicing manner. Dependence on the general adviser is lessening, gradually and with that a great incentive to snobbery will, it is hoped, gradually disappear.⁽¹⁾ The youth programme is taking shape. Whereas the Johannesburg Youth-Zenzele, which was the first to be formed, is not doing so well and its membership is unstable, in other places Youth-Zenzeles are springing up and shaping well. Port Elizabeth has two Youth Groups which have arrived at the stage of being able to plan their own programmes. Umbumbulu has just started in a promising way, so also has Brakpan, Bloemfontein is amongst the most advanced in this respect. Whereas in Johannesburg, the girls are between seventeen and twenty-three, in the other towns a younger group, aged between twelve and seventeen, is catered for. Development of these Youth Groups is a desperate need, as I am told, Youth Groups which are not just "Gangs" but "Clubs", but they cannot make progress until leaders from the older Zenzeles become available. For the older Zenzele women must carry the responsibility and produce the advisers for the Youth Groups. A special Leaders- Course for Youth Leaders is planned for '56 mainly for strategically placed and creative people.

A beginning has been made with the drawing in of the coloured women. Last September, Durban had its first Leaders Training Course for coloureds, and the plan is to have the 1955 Annual Exhibition in Durban where it is hoped, that Whites, Blacks and Coloureds will meet and work together.

It is hoped/.....

(1) The Free State Clubs are gradually becoming independent of the Transvaal and receiving their full and separate affiliation. All indications are that they may soon surpass those of the Transvaal in strength and quality.

It is hoped that one day, Afrikaans-speaking women will co-operate. The symbol of the YWCA has been changed to include CVJV.

The programme of the Clubs, which were felt to be somewhat "ingrown", is now beginning to spread out and cover wider fields. A Leadership-Consultation Committee has been formed, (composed of 30 members from various countries, amongst whom the Adviser of the Zenzele YWCA's of the Transvaal) in order to develop a programme suitable for all and which can be adapted to local needs. It will also explore new possibilities for training leaders.

Also, within the Clubs in South Africa, the members are beginning to feel the need to apply their newly found personalities and capacities to to the needs of their community in various ways. Zenzele membership can have new and varied meanings. For one woman it may mean advising Youth Clubs; for another, teaching adult education classes; for another, leading a "young couples" club; for others it may mean serving the community in other ways. Women learn to ask: what else can we do? What needs are there?

The recurring problem of these Home-makers Clubs that new members want again to make the same puddings and canned peaches and cakes, will find its solution in one of the older members "taking them on" as a new group.

Some members are beginning to feel the need to develop relationships within the family. Mother - daughter activities have already been started, but a new venture will be the husband-wife relationship. "Young couples" clubs are envisioned which are intended to give new meanings to married life and partnership, and new interests in which both can share. Also mixed clubs for those not married are planned. The names have already been decided upon: "Co-Eds" and "Co-Weds".

That these Clubs supply fundamental needs does not require to be stressed. They must, however, be approached with great care. First the women must be quite sure that they can handle their own parties and entertainments elegantly and constructively.

The Paramount Chief of the Zulus was present at the Annual Exhibition at Vryheid in October '54. He promised to present the Zenzeles with a Cup. It still has to be decided for what achievement this cup will be presented, but many, among the Zenzele women have said that it should be for "the most beautiful piece of native craft". Thus, in their newly found security, they turn to what was good in their own culture, not as expression of an anti-European attitude, but as a natural outcome of a growing self-assurance.

In the following/.....

In the following, certain features which are of general occurrence in these HM clubs will be dealt with, as well as the needs which the Clubs attempt to satisfy. In accordance with the purpose of this investigation most stress will be laid on the HM clubs of the YWCA and the other clubs will be drawn in only for the sake of comparison.

COMMON FEATURES OF THE HM TYPE OF ORGANISATION IN
RELATION TO THE NEEDS OF THE WOMEN

- 1) These HM Clubs cannot fulfil their function unless the members have some financial resources.

Even for the simplest form of HM club, as one member put it: "You need some money for buying things for doing things". It is the general complaint of so many Welfare Workers among the poorer classes: "How can I teach them to cook more wholesome foods, if they cannot afford them, and how can I teach them to sew, if they cannot buy the materials"?

It is not in the nature of the HM Clubs to provide the materials for nothing. Even the poorest Zenzele, "the Bambanani" of Cato Manor (Durban) has to pay for the materials provided, though at a price below cost. Moreover free supplies place the women again in the position of "receivers of welfare" and "dependents on European charity", which must be avoided at all costs.

Thus these HM Clubs are necessarily restricted to a financially more secure section of the population.

However, expenses need not be high. Many of the articles made are sold. Amongst the Zenzele the tendency to make articles for sale is increasing, and I have found that amongst the few members who say that Zenzele is not expensive, all try to sell the pyjamas and the woven scarves made.

The real expenses of the Zenzele YWCA's are incurred in other ways:

- a) The articles demanded for exhibition are often very costly. When it comes to Men's Pullovers of Fair Isle wool and women's seersucker dressing-gowns⁽¹⁾ there are few women who can afford these.

2) The prizes are/.....

(1) This "seersucker dressing-gown" appeared to me as a permanent reproach wherever I attended Zenzele Clubs outside Johannesburg! It caused "Headaches to the European YWCA secretary in Durban, who, for demonstration purposes, had to buy the material herself and have it cut to her size. The cost of the required five yards was £1.9.7. The Lamontville Club in Durban was probably the only one that could afford this.

However, as Clubs increasingly plan their own programmes, the tastes of the Johannesburg "smart set" will be less determining. It must here be added that, of whatever material, a dressing-gown is as yet only a requisite of the "upper ten" and as such is practically a symbol of social superiority as are the umbrella and the non-washable dress!

b) The prizes are rather expensive. Moneys have to be provided for these by the clubs themselves. One club had to contribute £4.10.0d. in prize-money for the competition of that year. Some Town Councils outside Johannesburg give special grants for prizes which is what the women actually expect.

c) The venue of the meetings changes "from village to village". Johannesburg arranges this on purpose, in order to give women from Reef clubs opportunity for instructive participation. "It is one week in Graamers, then in Jabavu, or Sephiatown, then in Benoni or Germiston, and that means in one month you are far out and often away, and have paid much in travelling".

At a meeting in Johannesburg, a woman from Brakpan had paid 5/6 in bus and rail-fare to attend the meeting, but she "liked it very much. I learn a lot there."

Three women had come from Venterspost; it took them 45 minutes by train - and 45 minutes by bus, there and back to attend an afternoon meeting lasting two hours. But they seemed to think it worthwhile; they had had a "lovely afternoon".

No wonder, husbands often complain, when their wives are away for the greater part of exactly the day, Saturdays, when they are at home.

d) Visiting "from house to house" makes greater demands on the hostess! "If I haven't good furniture, I might want to buy new pieces to impress my important visitors" - "And the teas! after all you don't want to play second fiddle".

Most clubs outside Johannesburg, however, have realized that dangerous competition involved in "one desiring to outdo the others with more lavish teas" - and try and have their meetings in a public hall. Here, however, the lack of community halls and public rooms is a great handicap. Such halls as are available moreover, are not exactly conducive to creating a cosy atmosphere, and most of them have no facilities for conducting a cookery demonstration.⁽¹⁾

"It was the older members, the pioneers of the Zenzele in Johannesburg, who wanted meetings to be held in their houses, and they don't reason that it will develop a complex in the others".

Now, even though/.....

(1) There is one considerable advantage in this "house to house visiting" (if the catering can be kept within bounds) and that is that it does induce the "hostess" thoroughly to clean and tidy up!

Now, even though many clubs have their meetings in public halls "the character and reputation has been given to the Zenzeles and stays".

At a Johannesburg Branch meeting outside the city, which I attended, the hostess spent over £3 on refreshments. It was a "high lunch"!

e) A firm aim of the Zenzele YWCA's is to bring the women out of their seclusion to enable them to meet other similar-minded women and embark on human relationships which are stimulating. This, necessarily, involves travelling expenses. The Yearly Council-meeting-cum-Exhibition of the Transvaal is a grand occasion, much is made of its social aspect, and it all ends in a magnificent ball. Naturally, also, the women want to dress their very best: - "Her husband was complaining that she wanted a new dress for the exhibition in Bethlehem...."

To attend this Council Meeting, a woman spent, in transport alone, as much as £3.12.0d. but - "Don't you think it is worth it?", she asked.

It is no wonder that some Zenzele Clubs broke away from the Zenzele YWCA for this reason of expense. I know that many more women would join a movement which is essentially popular, if the atmosphere could be simpler.

It is arguable however, that human being always seem to have the money for something they like sufficiently well. Moreover, where so much money is spent weekly on Stockfels by women who are poorer, one can understand those Europeans who consider that they could just as well be taught to spend it on something "more useful and rewarding". But this is not always the African women's point of view. They argue:- "In 'stockfel' you get back all the money you spend", and "if you're clever you even make money", whereas with the HM clubs, "what is there to show for it?"

It is certainly necessary to teach women that there are other values than money and what money can buy.

2) These HM clubs, to be really beneficial, need members of an evolved mentality, or, more correctly, an evolving mentality.

"The very idea of improvement/.....

"The very idea of improvement is "un-African", - I have been assured of this by a well-known anthropologist. The desire to better oneself, and one's status and to improve one's skill, is so natural to Europeans that it is hardly possible to imagine that there are human beings in whom this desire is absent. Yet, the masses of African women have no such desire for self-improvement, for learning to do a thing better than they have done it hitherto, for learning something. "They're simply not interested to learn anything" - is the general complaint about the women. It needs what we call ambition or aspirations, which - natural to every European in our dynamic civilisation⁽¹⁾ - is something which the vast majority of African women simply have not got.

This is changing, however, and this first stirring of ambition is the beginning of the civilising process. That most women desire money and formal education, but as yet go no further, is a natural outcome of their contact with Europeans. In this the Africans' utilitarian instincts meet the Europeans' materialistic tendencies half-way.

But to reach beyond these most pressing economic, physical and educational needs, towards something higher - social, psychological and cultural wants - is as yet the privilege of very few women. There are, however, those very few who feel certain vague longings towards something though they do not quite know what it is.

"You have some ideas yourself - I don't know, just ideas..... you make imaginations about what you would like and you feel you would like to start something. You talk about it to your friend or neighbour and you get some other people interested. Then you make a meeting. You get them all together and maybe you get some more and other ideas, and you start talking about it....."
(Thus a woman who started a Home Makers Club.)

"To make a programme for your club - that is the most difficult of all. They may take a long time before you get that."⁽²⁾

It is/.....

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- (1) It constitutes the driving force of a civilised society and thereby one touches the defining factor of a civilised as against a primitive society.

Albert Schweitzer (On the Edge of the Primeval Forest) says of the African that "he is a free man". Freedom is absence of desire of wants.

- (2) The fact that even quite highly developed Zenzele clubs still follow Johannesburg's programme shows how difficult it is "to think up what you need".

It is something "cultural" they want. ("Well, I suppose, to know how to dress and how to behave is cultural in a way, isn't it?"). Or they hear the word "Art", and call what they want an "Arts club". (It is a sort of art, we make slippers, and very nice ones. That is art, what do you think?). It is a pathetic groping towards something which is no longer only a means to an end (survival), but an end in itself, a VALUE - "Because it is beautiful", or "because I love it too much".

Generally there is a friend who "has done something like that before", or "who knows somebody who was a member of such a club" elsewhere.⁽¹⁾ And quite often, in more recent times, and in these parts of the world, they have read something about Mrs. Xuma's activities, or seen a picture of her in the papers, and they seek out this beacon of progress and culture.

These first stirrings of an evolving mentality need direction, or else, after a while, the tiny flicker dies out. "That club, it has died a natural death" - the women then say, which always means, "the members got tired". Things bore them very quickly, they simply do not seem to get the pleasure out of these clubs which they thought they would. And then, to learn things is more difficult than they had thought it was.

"Because once they are gathered together and shown everything with patterns and so on, they won't have the patience to do it. They say - or some would say: I fail, I do not come right, what's the good".

"It is so that a native is always a native".

For the haunting despair that "it is all because we are black, we just can't do things like Europeans", is always just below the surface, ready to rise at any time and stifle every effort to advance.

They no longer know what to do with themselves. They may degenerate into a form of 'teaching-each-other' which becomes destructive criticism and sterile nagging:

"Oh, you know, we came together and one knew something and told it to the others. We criticised each other. That table should not be there but in the middle, and that photo-album must not be on top, but underneath the table, and so on." "And then, when they leave they start discussing and gossiping about the cups and plates...."

They find :

"Just getting together, that's bad. It leads to gossip and quarrels, and at the end you still have nothing....."

They become/....

(1) These are often Ministers' wives. Through their frequent transfers and high status they are important "culture-carriers".

They become a "Dinner-club", or another type of less upper-class 'Stockfel'.

To sum up, so far, these HM clubs, pre-suppose women who have a certain economic security as well as personal ambition. The desire to advance to become more Westernised, is as important as the financial capacity to do so. Hence a certain amount of "snobbery" can be a valuable incentive.

They also need evolved and creative leadership - ultimately European. For the programme must be varied enough to maintain interest, and not too difficult at first, in order to create the self-confidence which otherwise soon flags.

These HM Clubs furthermore demand:-

- 3) Sharing of knowledge and experience,
- 4) calling in of experts for lectures and demonstrations,
- 5) competitions,
- 6) Western organisational techniques,
- 7) a homogeneous membership,
- 8) emphasis on quality rather than on quantity of members.

3) Sharing of knowledge and experience

The HM Clubs, so to speak, "feed on themselves". The group of women who have come together are supposed to teach each other. As one woman explained to me, "I teach you and you teach me". When one knows a crochet stitch she teaches it to others. One who knows how to bake a particular cake demonstrates it to the others. One will know how to take away stains, another how to patch men's trousers, another can tell all the delicate details of how to serve a tea, to lay a table, or to arrange the furniture in the parlour. One has a pattern of a girl's dress, another of men's pyjamas. These clubs are not supposed to be classes with a teacher⁽¹⁾, but little "co-operatives" or "Mahodisanos" where the articles "pooled" are not goods or moneys, but little bits of specialised knowledge, information or skill.⁽²⁾

It is in this respect that most of the independent HM clubs tend to be unsure, and it is likely that many of these earlier attempts did fail, for the following reasons:-

a) The women's/....

(1) This is expressly stated in the abovementioned booklet by Mrs. Max Yurgan.

(2) Here is the possibility of sublimation of the sense of reciprocity on to another plane.

- a) The women's specialised knowledge is not extensive and varied enough;
 - b) They must still be taught to share knowledge; they are naturally inclined to be rather selfish about what they know.
- a) I have seen evidence of the truth of this statement often enough in the few independent HM, or so-called "HM" clubs, in and around the two towns studied. They cannot continue solely on the combined skills and knowledge of the members.

This seems to be a rash statement, but it appears that it is hardly possible for a European to understand how little the so-called evolved and apparently Westernised African woman knows of these matters of "home-craft" which a European girl seems to learn instinctively simply by being a member of her mother's household.

Firstly these young upper-middle and middle-middle class women are more often than not the "first generation in civilisation". They have become "evolved" or "Westernised" or "professional" by dint of education and personal or parental ambition, not because their mothers taught them anything which would suit them for their new Status and the kind of marriage that involves. The fact that a girl is able to afford a taffeta or silk dress, does not mean that she knows how to take out a grease-stain.⁽¹⁾

Secondly numbers of these women have grown up without ever having seen the inside of a European home.⁽²⁾ The time has passed when every African woman naturally goes into domestic service until she gets married. Domestic service gave the older generation whatever they know of European house-craft. But the younger generation receives none of that training. And they would no longer want it.

Hence there are seeming incongruities such as this: in a very upper-class "Home-makers" club with a membership of wives of school principals, School-Supervisors, shopkeepers, etc., the person of authority and importance is an elderly woman whose dock and washable cotton, contrasted sharply with the taffetas and flower-adorned hats of the other members, and whose title to her position was the fact that she had been, all her life, a cook in a "very rich Jewish family" and therefore knew recipes for all the exquisite chicken-dishes and

cream-puddings which she/...

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- (1) This seems silly, but is not. I have asked seven of those taffeta-wearing women, how one can take out a grease-stain, and only one knew that one "could use a little benzine": The wearing of non-washable dresses, which have to be sent to the dry-cleaners, can be a class-criterion of "the upper ten": When a Dry-cleaning firm has come to a Reef town location, the the "village is really progressive".
 - (2) Interesting evidence in support of this statement came from the Matron of MacCord's Zulu Hospital in Durban, who insists on the would be nurse producing two European references; but she finds this increasingly difficult to uphold since "more and more girls write that they do not know any Europeans".

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and cream puddings which she now taught to the other members!

It would seem to a European that nothing is easier than for an intelligent leader to look up a pattern or recipe in one of the weekly journals which generally give these in abundance. But in the clubs I know I have hardly ever found anyone who does this. African women, it seems, seldom know things which they have not been taught. They seldom find out things for themselves, and even less do they experiment.

b) There is an extraordinary reluctance on the part of those who know a special skill or craft to communicate this to others who do not know it - even to their closest friends.

An experienced missionary worker told me this:

"I know two girls. They are friends. One, Ada, is a teacher, the other, her neighbour, is a cook. The cook wanted to learn a crochet stitch and I told her that Ada knew it and she should ask her to show it to her. But Ada's mother did not want her daughter to teach her friend the stitch because she had paid for Ada's education. And so Ada refused to teach the stitch."

In the Paris Evangelical Mission's Home Makers Clubs, there is a clause in the constitution that no member is allowed to give recipes or patterns or ideas to non-members! This clause had been introduced at the women's own request and no persuasion from the European organiser could alter it.

Many a domestic-science teacher and dressmaker refuses to become a member of a Home Makers Club (even of the Zenzele YWCAs) because she is "not going to teach the others what she has paid for to learn".

As always, I have asked the women themselves for explanations - The basis is undoubtedly tribal

The secret "craft"

"Now dressmaking I have learned it by paying for it, they say.

Our African people, for a long time, they go to school to become teachers; it is to earn their living with it. Now, in tribal life, if I can mould a cup, for instance, I do not want to teach it to others. They they also start doing it, and where is my living?"

¶¶¶/.....

"For instance, our domestic-science teachers, they are not willing to join our club. They say: "We know scones, ironing, dressmaking, serving and entertaining. We have paid for it. (It is not true that they know, they can cook but they cannot serve the table). You want to learn it from us for nothing. If you want to learn it, call us but pay us".

"We have only one domestic-science teacher in our Club. But she's my cousin, and that's maybe why".

The system of age-grouping which was necessarily also a grouping according to the degree of knowledge about what were deemed to be the important things of life, (which were not only sexual matters) is a contributive factor.

"Amongst my people there is a great sense of grouping. The older ones know something more than the younger ones, and they dare not talk about it in the presence of the younger ones."....

"Why not?"

"Out of a sense of respect, I think".

"Why?"

"The little ones might not respect them any more. When they are knowing what the bigger ones know, they would then say: "I know what you know. So why should I respect you?"

Knowledge is "strength"⁽¹⁾

"Well - it is like this. When I know something or can do something, and the others do not know it, that is my strength. And I am not going to tell others the source of my strength."

The source of strength is knowledge or skill, and by virtue of these one commands respect and status in the community. Nobody likes to lose this status.

The European idea that sharing experience and knowledge is doubling knowledge is, for many African women, like teaching a school-boy that 4 minus four is eight.

4) The Use of Experts

It is one of the aims of these Clubs to obtain the help of trained and experienced people to give women demonstrations and

Lectures/....

(1) That the women here confuse two kinds of knowledge - knowledge as traditionally transmitted wisdom accepted by the tribe, and knowledge as school-taught, abstract information as conceived in European school education, and that certain attitudes connected with tribal knowledge are merged with European knowledge is, in my opinion, a typical transition phenomenon.

lectures. The limits are necessarily narrow. When members have heard the district nurse on baby care or care of the bedroom, the local doctor on medical problems, the agricultural demonstrator on gardening, and the school-principal and a few other notables on general problems, they have exhausted the local supply, and then these lectures become fewer, and the women are again thrown back on their own resources.

5) Competitions

I mentioned above the competitive spirit which must be awakened, and although it is exactly this which may often lead to those attitudes which are called "snobbism" - on the other hand, there is nothing like competition to make the women really work and try to work well.

Some of the Zenzele Clubs on the Reef would have for various reasons broken away, were it not that they "simply love the competitions". Others who regained, or acquired their independence, feel the lack of competitions very much.

Already, for this reason alone, an over-all organisation is necessary. Even the Paris Evangelical Mission Clubs and the American Board Clubs have such competitions with an Annual Exhibition where prizes are given. But everything in these Clubs is simpler than the Zenzele YWCA's, whose Annual Exhibition is a very grand affair. The women are childishly keen on getting prizes, and will work for these. ⁽¹⁾

Competitions are also necessary to raise the naturally low standards. Judgement should be accomplished by explanations of the criteria and reasons for the allocation of the prizes. This, through the limited capacities of the Mission Clubs, is not yet very much developed.

In the Annual Exhibition of the Zenzele YWCAs of the Transvaal, which I attended, I was astonished to see how completely and severely the judging was done. Here was, for once, no patronising shoulder-patting and kind praise. For once the truth was told, that the embroiderers, the sewers, the knitters, the canners, were slapdash and happy-go-lucky.

The woman who judged the exhibits, obviously an experienced person, judged according to European standards and her opening remarks were: "I presume you are all beginners; there is clear indication of this since nothing, but really nothing, is up to standard!" There

was/.....

(1) The progressive Reef towns and the newer locations all have such competitions, also some of the Mine married quarters. Amongst these, the "Home" and the "Garden" exhibitions are, in the opinion of the European Welfare workers of such localities, an excellent incentive to "improvement".

There was some good work, but there was not one article that was really neat, some were not clean or not ironed, and some were "not even finished"⁽¹⁾ There were, to give an idea - 87 pyjamas, 48 pairs of knitted mens' socks, 55 women's overalls "and not one of them was up to standard".....

To teach the African woman to do a job, (whatever it may be) as thoroughly as possible is what is needed. An attitude formed by a society where conformity and balance are valued, does not comport with the individualism and competitiveness of Western civilisation.⁽²⁾

Competitions and the application of European standards regarding quality are very much a need of the African women, who want to enter into the patterns of Western civilisation.

These competitions, of necessity, demand a certain uniformity of programme. When dependence on Johannesburg lessens, exhibition items will become simpler and more practical, so that they may fulfil the needs of all the clubs. Latitude can always be given for lectures and tasks according to the preferences of each individual club.

6) Western Organisational Techniques

To conceive of a club or organisation on Western lines is very difficult even for the most evolved women.

To plan a "Constitution" is almost beyond their capacities. One of the most advanced independent HM Clubs showed me its constitution which consisted of a review of the year's activities. It was, however, the year in which the club had been most active on a wide scale of subjects (through outside help), and this outstanding year had become the desired pattern for all subsequent years.

It seems that the weaker the feeling of mutual obligation becomes, the stronger the desire for a constitution. The "Home-makers" Clubs, on the whole, are run quite happily without it, on the strength of personality of the founder-leader. But the Home-makers Clubs want such constitutions, and here again as in the Funeral Societies, one can sense a groping towards something which, though impersonal, is as binding as a personal relationship. The women say: "We want to be properly constituted". "We must have a Constitution to show if somebody wants to see it".

The Mission Clubs/.....

(1) I was beginning to feel worried. The audience was tense. There were protesting murmurings. Then the women's sense of humour got the better of them, and they took it amazingly well. The general comment afterwards was: "You know, it is very good for us, now we shall work harder and neater next year".

(2) See mental attitudes and behaviour patterns. "The revolt against the exceptional". p. 84 ff

The Mission Clubs generally have their own constitutions, and the tendency amongst these women is to make ever more and stricter rules⁽¹⁾ whereas the European leaders tend to let the Clubs run on the basis of personal relationships.

Each new Zenzele YWCA Club is given a guiding constitution on which to pattern their own, but no new Club knows what to do with it. "It is too difficult" they say, and "We don't know what to do or discuss if we have to come together to make our Constitution".

The idea of sharing knowledge, and the equal give-and-take this involves, necessitates also a democratic participation in office and leadership. The natural tendency of these Clubs is to be "friends of Mrs..." The fact that the Zenzeles are in fact "the friends of Mrs. Xuma" is their main stay. It is also mainly due to this personal attachment that the adviser can succeed in persuading the women to let offices rotate amongst the members and in advising who should be next.

This rotation of office-bearers has two great advantages. Firstly, it develops local leadership; it induces the women to take on responsibilities and learn organisational techniques. Secondly, it is a great stimulus for the members; - "If you know you may become Chairlady next year, you have to learn very fast."

The Mission-Clubs, have to rely on "natural" leaders, because these clubs are dealing with a less "evolved" membership. But the powers of such leaders are held in check.

Difficulties in the way of realising an overall organisation and the delegation of power it necessitates, are equally great. To African women, Office-Bearers are not persons chosen by them and entitled to take decisions for the group. The habits of the Face-to-Face group die slowly. The members still want to take part in all the discussions and have a say in all directives.

"Before it was the YWCA, there was no Council, and everything was discussed at the bottom. Now everything is dictated from the top, and the decisions are brought to us cut and dried".

When it comes to contributing funds for this overhead organisation by the individual Clubs, there is "big trouble". Most women have no idea that it costs money to run a central office. And if there is "no office" (as was the case before the Zenzele YWCA had a room given to them in the Jan Hofmeyr school,) then women wonder even more "where are our moneys going to?"

Here is an/.....

(1) See pp.88 and 175

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