

THE BLACK SASH.

JOHANNESBURG ADVICE OFFICE.

ANNUAL REPORT : OCTOBER 1972 to SEPTEMBER 1973.

During the last year 4505 people have come to the Advice Office for assistance and there have been many who telephoned or written for advice who are not included in the statistics. The average number of interviews per day has risen from 21,3 to 24,9. The percentage of successful cases has risen from 17,4 to 21,04 but the figure is certainly higher than this. Many people do not come back to tell us when they are given a permit. Sometimes we find out some years later when they are again in trouble with a different problem or when they bring friends and relatives for help.

There has been a marked increase in the number of people seeking permission to live in the area or to prove they have a right to remain (Residential Permits), and in the number of people with housing problems and in unemployed people from outside the area wanting permits to work.

SUCSESSES.

Of the successful cases 42 concerned people who had permission to be in the area but wanted to prove that they had a right to remain permanently in terms of Section 10(1)(a) or (b) of the Urban Areas Act. In most cases this was important to enable them to be accepted on to the waiting list for a house. Some men wanted 10(1)(a) proved because they wished to get permission to register as self-employed and some women, who had been widowed, wanted to appeal to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner to be allowed to stay in their houses.

39 people who had been refused issue of a reference book obtained one : 3 families successfully solved their housing difficulties. In all cases these were married men whose parents had died and who had been ordered to vacate the house after the death of whichever parent had been the registered tenant.

4 women who had been told to move into the Alexandra hostel were allowed to remain with their families to await resettlement to family accommodation in Tembisa or Diepkloof. 4 people were able to obtain birth certificates after having difficulties. This is one category where we are certain the number of successes must be higher. Some people who have difficulties obtaining birth certificates find themselves in trouble because they do not have a reference book in which case the Bantu Commissioner demands they get a reference book first. (Sometimes they are told to produce the birth certificate before the application for the reference book is accepted). Others have had difficulty in furnishing sufficient proof of birth if the birth did not take place in a hospital or clinic. In this case, two supporting affidavits must be produced from the mother, if possible, and the woman who assisted her at the birth.

This can be extremely/---

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This can be extremely difficult. Miss. Fokane has been trying to obtain a birth certificate in order to prove that she is a South African citizen. She was born in 1918, her mother is long since dead and she has had to trace people who were living in the house at the time she was born.

10 families have managed to get permission for their children to live with them in the area and 25 women were given permission to live here with their husbands.

In 79 cases the authorities recognised rights of permanent residence. Many of these people had previously been endorsed out or refused residence and work permits. Another 55 people, most of whom had been endorsed out were not given a permanent right to remain but were registered in their employment. These people often find themselves in difficulties again when they leave their jobs. They may be endorsed out again and have to go through the whole process once more of proving that they really have nowhere else in the Republic where they may legally be. Some of them actually have rights to remain in the area in terms of Section 10(1) but have been unable to prove this to the satisfaction of the authorities.

#### HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

Husbands and wives who are by law forbidden to remain together remain the most horrifying and heartrending of all the cases dealt with in the office. This year 90 people came who had been ordered to leave the area where their spouses live legally and another 244 were seeking permission to live with a husband or wife. Almost all of these are women although there are a few men whose wives are lawfully in Johannesburg but who themselves must work on annual contract and therefore have no control whatever over whether they will be offered work in this city. Some of them have no hope like the man who is registered as a workseeker at a labour bureau in the Hammanskraal district which is closed to recruitment from Johannesburg. It is therefore impossible for him to work in Johannesburg and so live with his wife. Another husband works in Sandton and lives in Alexandra legally but because he does not qualify as 10(1)(a) or (b) his wife who is 10(1)(a) in Johannesburg and lives lawfully in Soweto is not allowed to live with him in Alexandra, nor is he allowed to live with her in Soweto. Of these 334 married couples only 25 have managed to get permission to remain together and in most of these cases the wife actually already had a legal right to remain but had to prove her residence in the area since before 10th March 1959.

When Dr. Koernhof, then Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, made the announcement of his "concession" at the beginning of 1972 the Black Sash welcomed his statement that men who qualified in terms of Section 10(1)(a) or (b) and who had suitable accommodation would be allowed to bring their wives from the platteland or homelands to live with them. We had reservations at the time that this announcement was made because of public uneasiness at the enforced separation of married couples rather than out of any real concern for the sanctity of family life. It seems our doubts were justified. Many people made such applications through the Johannesburg Municipality's Non-European Affairs Department.

They have waited for months on temporary permits for "investigation" and are now being told that permission is refused and they must take immediate steps to leave the prescribed area. As we work with these distressed people and explain to them that it is impossible for them to live together legally our cynicism about Government promises grows. We note that Mr. Punt Jansen has now said that employers would be allowed to provide accommodation for certain of their key workers to live with their wives provided their children are well cared for in the homelands. This would allow the wife to have the company of her husband whenever she desires without restricting her from visiting her children in the Bantu homeland at any time". What kind of sick society offers women the choice of living with their husbands or their children.

#### HOUSING PROBLEMS.

The Government's policy of restricting the building of family accommodation for Africans in the common area of the Republic means that the shortage of housing and overcrowding in existing houses grows more acute each year.

327 people with housing problems came to the Advice Office during the year. Of these we were able to help only 3 families that we know for certain were given the permission they were seeking. Many of the people coming with other problems also have nowhere to live and are unable to find lodgings. The housing regulations are so rigid and the pressure on accommodation is so great that all kinds of abuses are common. Every African person who lives in the prescribed areas must have the names on a residential or lodger's permit or occupy a hostel bed or other authorised accommodation. This is the proof of lawful residence. Many families find a room in someone's house but the legal tenant will not allow them to get a lodger's permit. Sometimes the lodging family is paying the whole rent for the house each month or even larger sums of money. The tenant may be too frightened to go to the Superintendent's office to give his consent to the lodger's permit because there is some irregularity in his own family circumstances. One old lady would not allow her lodgers to ask for a permit because she had never reported her husband's death. She knew that to do so would mean that she would be evicted and have nowhere to live or to keep her furniture.

If the registered tenant does allow another family to ask for a lodger's permit in his house he can at any time have this permit cancelled by telling the Superintendent he no longer wishes to share his house with another family. This obviously means that he is able to demand money from the lodgers who are in no position to argue.

There are, of course, hundreds of people who are living in grossly overcrowded conditions because they are generously willing to share their homes with homeless people.

they may be allowed to work on contract in Randburg or Sandton but we have to tell most of the women that there is nothing to be done to help them. They may register at home as workseekers but most will wait in vain to be offered employment.

Those who are lucky enough to be registered in Randburg or Sandton must sign an undertaking that they will not introduce their children into the area ; the penalty - the termination of their contract. Mr. Jansen said this undertaking had become necessary because it had been discovered that of about 6000 women registered as single domestic servants in Randburg and Sandton between 4000 and 5000 were married. These sudden "discoveries" become inevitable, when the Department of Bantu Administration will persist in regarding workers as labour units instead of members of a family. Perhaps one day it will dawn on the authorities that almost all people have husbands, wives, children, parents, brothers or sisters.

#### WAGE COMPLAINTS.

It has been very interesting to note how the growth of awareness of the value of worker organisation has led to a significant increase in the number of people who realise that they are being paid far too little or who come in to ask if they are not entitled to sick leave, leave pay, unemployment insurance, long service pay or overtime. Sometimes a telephone call to the employer can help to resolve the cause of dissatisfaction but more usually there is very little we can do.

#### BANTU AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION BOARDS.

It is still too early to comment on how these Boards will affect the lives of African people. One difficulty which is beginning to rear its ugly head is the fact that if a person is endorsed out of one prescribed area he is deemed to have been ordered to leave all prescribed areas within that Board area. Before the Boards began operation if a man who was legally entitled to remain in Johannesburg tried to move to Roodepoort he would be endorsed out of Roodepoort but could merely accept this and resign himself to finding work in Johannesburg where he had rights. Now such a man will have to appeal to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner to be allowed to remain in the Board area at all. It remains to be seen whether a large number of people will be affected by this. One hopes that the new rigidity over allowing registration of women by disabled employers and the Randburg/Sandton undertaking mentioned above are not indications that the Boards mean to operate an even more rigid system than people have had to suffer up to now.

#### PASS LAW ARRESTS.

Early morning raids on houses in residential townships and police drives to round up pass law offenders in the city and the suburbs continue as usual. It is true that all these arrested people are now

"processed" by the/---

"processed" by the Aid Centre before appearing in court and some of them thus avoid prison sentences but the raids remain one of the most offensive aspects of our traditional way of life. They are an essential part of the system. There would be no use in the vast panoply of pass laws if they were not enforced by such action but this surely should be one of the convincing arguments for doing away with the system altogether.

"ENRICHING THE URBAN AFRICAN'S ENVIRONMENT".

This is the stated aim of the Government as propounded by Mr. Jansen in August. Earlier in the year he invited suggestions from the public as to ways and means of improving conditions. The Black Sash remains firmly convinced that there can be no justice or morality as long as the pass laws exist but we did send a memorandum to the Deputy Minister making certain suggestions within the existing legislative framework. This memorandum was posted in the middle of August but so far we have received no acknowledgement or reply.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

The Black Sash owes a great debt to our legal adviser who has given unstintingly of his time and skill to help us in the Advice Office and to act for those people who have found themselves quite unable to have their legal rights recognised without his assistance.

We have learnt a great deal through working with him and the fact that many people have been sent to us for help by officials in both the Labour office and the Bantu Affairs Commissioner's office is recognition that through his tuition we have become more knowledgeable and more efficient. We are also very grateful to two other attorneys who have offered their help this year.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION.

We could not operate at all without the dedication of our office staff. Penny Burrow, Margaret Kirk (who is back with us on a part-time basis) Henrietta Radale, Mable Manabatlani and Adelaide Pholosi give of themselves to enable us to run an office at all. This is exacting and demanding work and none of them have ever grudged their time or their involvement.

CONCLUSION.

It is always difficult in an annual report like this to select the aspects which are of particular significance. We only wish that more white South Africans would visit the office and sit there for a morning absorbing the horror of the controls we impose on the majority of our citizens. Every single person we see has a serious problem which he or she would not have if they were citizens of any Western, democratic, Christian country. We claim to be all these things yet we administer one of the most destructive systems ever devised by any group to keep power, privilege and wealth in our own hands.

JOHANNESBURG ADVICE OFFICE - ANNUAL REPORT

F I G U R E S.

1ST OCTOBER 1972 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 1973.

There were 1245 New Cases	which involved 2085 Interviews
do 1405 Continuing Cases	do 2204 do
do <u>1855</u> Inquiries	do <u>1948</u> do
TOTAL <u>4505</u>	TOTAL <u>6237</u>

Cases successfully closed 262 i.e. 21,04 % of all new files opened.

Average number of interviews per working month : 567 (Taking December and January as one month)

Working days : 250. Average number of interviews per day : 24,9

A N A L Y S I S.

<u>PROBLEM</u>	<u>NEW CASES</u>	<u>INQUIRIES</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>1971/72</u>
Ordered to leave the area	431	175	606	613
Issue of reference books	167	111	278	255
Housing problems	58	269	327	210
Foreigners	44	98	142	116
Work Permits	95	375	470	354
Residential Permits	306	308	614	361
Section 10 Qualifications	107	70	177	106
Ex Prisoners	12	24	36	49
Contract Problems	2	86	88	76
Miscellaneous	<u>23</u>	<u>339</u>	362	312
TOTALS	<u>1245</u>	<u>1855</u>		

N.B. Miscellaneous problems include complaints about wages, queries as to how to get pensions, workmen's compensation, birth certificates, divorces, and bursaries and the tracing of missing relatives.

ADVICE OFFICE REPORT - SEPTEMBER 1973.

F I G U R E S.

Working days: 19

Average number of interviews per day : 30,7

Cases successfully closed : 20 - 9 men and 11 Women.

There were 111 New Cases	which involved 193 Interviews
do 124 Continuing Cases	do 201 do
do <u>177</u> Inquiries	do <u>190</u> do
TOTAL <u>412</u>	TOTAL <u>584</u>

A N A L Y S I S.

<u>PROBLEM</u>	<u>NEW CASES</u>	<u>INQUIRIES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Ordered to leave the area	42	24	66
Issue of reference books	21	14	35
Housing Problems	4	27	31
Foreigners	3	10	13
Work Permits	5	22	27
Residential Permits	20	41	61
Section 10 Qualifications	11	2	13
Contract Problems	-	4	4
Ex Prisoners	1	2	3
Miscellaneous	<u>4</u>	<u>31</u>	35
TOTALS	<u>111</u>	<u>177</u>	