

A T E L O N E A D V I C E O F F I C E

(Under the auspices of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations
and the Black Sash)

REPORT FOR DECEMBER 1974 & JANUARY 1975

<u>ATTENDANCE RECORDS</u>	<u>DECEMBER</u> (½ month)	<u>JANUARY</u> (½ month)	<u>TOTAL</u>
Men with permit problems	5	12	17
Women with permit problems	4	5	9
Contract Workers	15	25	40
Housing & Miscellaneous	23	46	69
Old Cases Returned	<u>23</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>88</u>
	<u>70</u>	<u>153</u>	<u>223</u>

VISITORS: None during December, 3 from South Africa and 2 from abroad in January.

The year has opened on a note of top-level dialogue on the subject of our country's city-dwelling Africans, their urgent needs and aspirations and the deep frustrations experienced under existing legislation. The open acknowledgement of the fact that these problems are crucial is healthy and hopeful. But while change or at least talk of change is in the air, down in the townships and in the offices of the Peninsula Bantu Affairs Administration Board, there has been no noticeable change and none appears to be anticipated. Deputy Minister Janson's instruction that widows and deserted women in township houses be treated with sympathy and not thrown out should hopefully bear fruit.

The official Aid Centres have been credited with much useful work and a welcome drop in the numbers of people in prison has been noted. But the Peninsula Aid Centre has closed down, apparently because it was ineffective in this "coloured preferential" area. This tallies with the experience of the Advice Office, which found that the official running the Aid Centre was pleasant but completely unable to help anyone at all. Most Africans pay admission of guilt fines when arrested, usually without getting any receipt, and gaol statistics omit this factor of which there may be no full record. It would seem that the overnight cells at Langa and Guguletu remain crowded and that the people themselves have not noticed that confrontations with inspectors and police are fewer. The notorious episode concerning Miss Nohashe, whose infant died while she was waiting to appear in court on a charge of illegal presence in the area, did not come to the notice of the Advice Office except through the Press. Our bail fund would assist such people not to be separated from their children while awaiting trial, but we cannot subsidise fines.

Married couples making every effort to obtain permission to reside together in the area in which the husband has residential rights remain a principal concern of the Advice Office. We saw fifteen such

couples during the four weeks covered by this report. One wife, Mrs. Z. Mdl., is an epileptic in need of constant care, who cannot be left alone with her two small children. She has no relatives who can look after her anywhere except in the Peninsula, and is receiving extensions to her visiting permit on medical grounds. Meanwhile her husband pays lodger's fees and a visiting permit fee for her as well as his single quarters rent which he has not been allowed to cancel. Moreover he deposited R17 for a lodger's permit for himself which has not been refunded, although the permit was not granted, and is paying the full rent of the house in which they are now lodging together, the official "occupier" having died. His plea is, of course, that this house now be registered in his name, a procedure which would cut all the tortuous red-tape, but which is not allowed.

A large number of cases seen concerned labour disputes, almost always resulting in the employee's dismissal and in the case of each contract labourer (including a group of nine from a cold-storage firm) his early return to the rural areas, empty-pocketed and sad-hearted. Too heavy a penalty to pay for perplexity over wages which have disappointed his expectations.

January closes with most encouraging news, namely the success of Miss Elizabeth Pikashe's appeal in the Supreme Court. Justices Vos and Broeksma have ruled that her claim is valid. She is entitled to live and work in the Cape Peninsula in terms of Section 10(1)(a) of the Act. This favourable judgement is resounding confirmation of everything for which the Advice Office stands.

Maria Henderson

M. HENDERSON
Acting Director

B. Versfeld

B. VERSFELD
Secretary

The Athlone Advice Office, 5 Princess St., Howbray, Cape Province, 7700