

MABILETSA Deborah

1. Deborah Mabiletsa was born in 1928 and grew up in Alexandra Township. She was educated at Inanda Seminary, and qualified as teacher at Adams College. She was totally opposed to the introduction of Bantu Education in 1953, and resigned. Through UNISA she obtained the degree of Bachelor of Social Science, and became the first African director of the Entokozweni Welfare Centre in Alexandra.

Cartoon: Deborah supervising work at the Entokozweni Centre

2. In 1964 with the aid of a bursary she continued her studies in social work at the University of Philadelphia. She returned to Entokozweni and next was given a bursary by the World Council of Churches to study marriage counselling at Melbourne University in 1974.

Cartoon: This is difficult. What do you suggest? Deborah carrying her books under the skyscrapers of Philadelphia or Melbourne? Deborah in a class in America or Australia? I bow to you.

3. When she returned home she was appointed director of women's work for the South African Council of Churches. Her work involves programmes for domestic workers, centres of concern, marriage counselling, and advise for those unemployed or in need. When Fatima Meer was banned, Deborah became president of the Black Women's Federation. But she does not allow her family life to suffer, and does not neglect her husband and three children. She is deeply concerned for the future of her country, and of all black people. She is one of South Africa's outstanding women.

Cartoon: Deborah making a calming gesture to an angry husband and an equally angry wife, sitting opposite her at a table.