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editorial

When Lewis Carroll's Rabbit looked at his watch and said, 'Oh dear! I shall be too late', his reasons for haste and his destination were unclear. But Alice's curiosity was aroused by his air of purpose so she followed where he led, and continued to explore after the Rabbit disappeared.

With this issue of SASH the editorial committee intends that an important exploration will be set in train. Economic issues and options may seem labyrinthine and, to many, arcane but the urgency of addressing them scarcely needs to be explained. Whether one is more concerned to conceptualise the process of transition to a future South Africa, or to understand the linkages between economic pressures and political change, or to cope 'on the ground' with problems of joblessness and poverty (the list is endless), the question requires a grasp of economics. We are grateful to our guides - the numerous contributors to this magazine who have been at pains to present complex issues in accessible terms.

The exploration begins with a discussion of alternative economic systems. No 'destination' is prescribed, but critical considerations are outlined and the 'acid test' of any system is defined as 'Will it fly?' Economists, historians and political theorists debate, or simply share their perceptions of long-term trends, recent turbulence and what the future holds. The sanctions question has the potential to divide the Black Sash, as it has done in the wider society. Mary Burton describes the way in which the organisation strives to 'encompass diversity'. It is also noted that 1989 will be the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution. The comic side of similarities between that 'revolutionary' situation and our own cannot conceal the tragic repetition of doomed patterns from the past.

A focus on a vast subject such as economics can be introductory at best. Though the 'Rabbit' bows out, the road to further exploration is marked, for example, by reading lists which point the way for independent quests.

Candy Malherbe