

in this issue . . .

EDITORIALS	1. REMOVALS AND URBANISATION IN NATAL	2
	2. THE OPPOSITION IN NATAL	3
NATAL / KWAZULU - THE ROAD AHEAD - by David Robbins		4
RURAL POVERTY IN KWAZULU by Jill Natrass		12
"HOMELAND CONSOLIDATION"		16
TWO POETS IN NATAL by Colin Gardner		18
THE ROLE OF LAW AND LAWYERS IN AN UNJUST SOCIETY - CURRENT TRENDS by Richard Lyster		24
THE INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS IN NATAL		27
THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT THE EDUCATION FOR BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA by A.J. Thembela		30
THE DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL WEALTH IN NATAL by M.D. McGrath		33
THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIVING HISTORY AND VIEWS ABOUT HISTORY by Chief M.S. Buthelezi		36
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE NATAL WITNESS		
COVER PICTURE: WYNDHAM HARTLEY		

Articles printed in **Reality** do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editorial Board

EDITORIALS

1. REMOVALS AND URBANISATION IN NATAL

Professor Jill Natrass in her article in this issue discusses the devastation already visited on the ecology of black rural Natal and the lives of its people by the migrant labour system. She argues that the only sensible way to deal with the disaster is through urbanisation. She says that this is what would have happened naturally anywhere else in the world but that here it has been prevented by the enforcement by law of an ideological myth, propagated by various governments since 1910. This myth has it that the towns are the white man's creation and preserve.

Another article discusses the further devastation threatening black rural Natal and its people through the Nationalists' programme for homeland consolidation and resettlement. This programme is based on other ideologically-inspired myths. One of these is that the homelands can, in some

miraculous way not yet revealed to non-Nationalists, become largely self-supporting. A second is that history justifies white South Africa in claiming 87% of the country as its own, and that black South Africa must find its home, and express its political aspirations, in the other 13%. A third myth is that black South Africa will be satisfied with this arrangement. In order to bolster the myth, black communities which an entirely white Consolidation Commission decides are living in the wrong place, will have to move. If in the process long-established homes are destroyed and treasured title-deeds torn up, bad luck.

One of the non-ideological arguments for moving black communities is that it is necessary to do so to preserve an overcrowded environment from further degradation. This

argument has recently been advanced once more by white farmers in the upper reaches of the Tugela River basin in Natal. They want the black people moved, whether Kwa-Zulu- or freehold-based. We suggest that before they press this campaign further they visit a few resettlement areas to see what happens at the other end of the process they are advocating. There they will find a burgeoning ecological and human disaster of potentially catastrophic proportions. If their campaign succeeds all they will have done will have been to move the problem they are complaining about somewhere else and out of sight, where it can continue and grow unchecked.

No one would dispute that many black areas in Natal are in a state of ecological crisis. They are often overcrowded, overstocked, seriously eroded and badly managed. There are good historical reasons for this. One is the restriction on the free purchase of land by Africans since 1913, which has forced them to crowd more and more closely into those areas which offer some prospect of security. Another has been the denial to them of access to the financial assistance for building and farming so freely available to whites. And another has been the legal restrictions placed on the normal urbanisation process which have pinned so many black families, who would by choice by now be townspeople, into the migratory labour cycle.

The answer to the Upper Tugela farmers' cries is not to move their problem somewhere else but to try to solve it where it is, on the basis of a long-term strategy worked out together with the black people concerned. Of course this will be difficult and take a long time, but who imagines that it will take anything but a long time to rebuild devastated ecological systems even if there are no people left in them? And what recompense may not one day be demanded of the white perpetrators of these removals by

their present victims? For they will not forget them. Nobody who has not experienced such a thing can possibly imagine the psychological shock which flows from the destruction of each home, and the tearing apart of the intimate community ties, which are inevitably parts of every forced removal. Surely we can do better than this?

Like many other parts of the world South Africa faces a threatening national ecological disaster, and it is not being caused only by black people. It is not they who are pushing the frontiers of the Karoo further and further into formerly rich farming areas each year. But the black contribution is compounded by laws which relate to them alone. Let the laws which restrict black access to land be lifted for a start. And let influx control be abolished, so that the process of urbanisation, which Professor Nattrass so convincingly argues provides the only long-term solution to our problems of rural poverty and devastation, can take its natural course. Dr. Gerrit Viljoen, new Minister of Co-operation, Development and Education, said recently that the government was giving a high priority to black urbanisation and that influx control should be seen as an instrument to ensure that it happened in an orderly fashion. We hope the first part of this statement reflects a change in government thinking. As for the second part, we would suggest that the best way to achieve reasonably orderly urbanisation is through the provision of properly supervised site-and-service schemes wherever there seems to be a need for them. The Urban Foundation should have some useful experience to pass on here. As for the old bogey of cheap labour undermining existing wages and security, the new trade unions should be able to handle that.

But as Professor Nattrass remarks, the political dimension to our rural/urban problem remains paramount, and it is likely to remain so until black people have the vote. □

2. THE OPPOSITION IN NATAL

Natal politics which, until not long ago, in terms of its white citizens anyway, were never in the vanguard of anything much worthwhile, have taken a decided turn for the better.

Not only does the province have a solid block of Progressive members in the white Parliament these days but in the boycott of the Indian and Coloured elections, spear-headed so successfully by the United Democratic Front, it registered the lowest poll of any province. Since then it has occupied the international headlines, first through the Natal Supreme Court's decision that the ministerial "detention-without-trial" orders served on 8 boycott

leaders were invalid; second through the six of those leaders with UDF affiliations taking refuge in the British Consulate in Durban.

So, as this special Natal edition of REALITY goes to press, opposition to apartheid there is alive and well. What is glaringly lacking is any indication of any prospect of the various components of that opposition getting together. Each one is so locked into its own "principles" and, dare one say it, prejudices, that there seems small chance of that.

It will need a very big person to break that log-jam. □