

Urban blacks committee invite came as surprise

THE DAILY NEWS

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Mr W. Mtshali
Daily News Reporter



Prof. C. S. Nyembezi.

AT least three prospective members of the Durban/Pietermaritzburg regional committee to aid a Government investigation into the plight of urban blacks are unaware of the invitation extended to them.

The composition of the six regional committees, including the Natal committee, was announced in Parliament by Dr Piet Koornhof, the Minister of Co-operation and Development.

The Durban/Pietermaritzburg committee to be appointed to advise the Cabinet committee considering the position of urban blacks will consist of 11 blacks and 18 whites (excluding alternative members).

Three of those invited, Mr Wellington Mtshali, Professor C. L. S. Nyembezi and Mr S. Kwela, were unaware of the Government announcement when approached by The Daily News.

Mr Mtshali, assistant regional marketing manager at the Standard

Bank in Durban, expressed surprise when asked about the invitation. "Nobody has told me anything about it. I don't know anything about the committees.

"However, I am surprised at Africans giving aid to people as they themselves need aid," he said.

"The Government announcement is indicative of a re-think of the South African way of life," he added. "At least blacks are now considered to be prepared to give aid to all."

Professor Nyembezi and Mr Kwela, both directors of publishers Shuter and Shooter in Pietermaritzburg, had not been informed about the committee.

"I will be prepared to serve on it," Mr Kwela said. "I believe it will be useful to Africans."

Professor Nyembezi said his inclusion in the committee would depend on its terms of reference. "I will have to get the invitation before I can decide. It is an unusual way of deciding things," he added.

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desia when the majority of Conservative MPs wanted to oppose them, and more than a hundred did.

His number two, Gil-mour, has been closely associated with the anti-Rhodesian Conservative Left and one of his junior Ministers, the veteran Neil Marten, has been a consistent advocate of sanctions policy.

So is this line-up preparing to renege on the half-promise to recognise the Muzorewa Government? I am sure not.

For a start the manifesto on which the Thatcher Government was elected was most specific.

"The Conservative Party will aim to achieve a lasting settlement to the Rhodesia problem based on the democratic wishes of the people of that country.

"If the Six Principles which all British governments have supported for the last 15 years are fully satisfied following the Rhodesian election, the next government will have the duty to return Rhodesia to a state of legality, move to lift sanctions, and do its utmost to ensure that the new independent state gains international recognition."

Just before our election Mrs Thatcher received the written report from Lord Boyd of Merton who led her team of observers in

tute a valid test of opinion among all races, and that the remaining Sixth Principle has been met.

So the question facing Carrington is not WHETHER to recognise the new government but HOW.

In Carrington she has picked the man best placed to secure this, through his long history of personal relations with overseas leaders.

And the foundation stone of his new diplomatic edifice is to be the European community.

If European leaders can be persuaded to do the same in his presidential election year.

And if he backs the British moves, then the more pro-Western leaders of African states might be persuaded not to take too high a line against them.

A British envoy may soon be sent to Salisbury, but part of his message to Bishop Muzorewa will be not to expect dramatic developments too quickly.

The key to unlocking his door lies in Washington, and the key to Washington is being sought in Paris, Bonn and Brussels.

● Conservative Party MP George Gardiner's majority in Reigate rose in last week's general election from 13 584 to 21 313 and his share of the poll

The crossroads of decision

The Natal Witness



This article was the last written for The Natal Witness by Dr Edgar Brookes. It arrived from Dr Brookes's typist the day after his death, and was sent on to the Witness by Mrs Constance Brookes.

DR Koornhof's solution of the problem of Crossroads is a wonderful thing for Cape Town — a humane and Christian decision. In place of bulldozing those pathetic little homes, driving the wives of City workers into other irregular settlements, or sending them back to their "homeland", Transkei, he has promised to have a new village built somewhere in the Peninsula, where husbands, wives and children can live together in peace.

This is no more than an ad hoc solution of a particularly poignant and difficult situation in Cape Town. It would be wrong to make it a matter of political argument, to stress the inconsistency of building homes for workers' wives and turning them out of Port Elizabeth. We should recognise the goodness and kindness of this action and be grateful for it, even if it is an isolated one.

Permissible

In this spirit, and fully in this spirit, it may yet be permissible for us to consider the general question of migrant labour, of the system that separates husbands and wives for months, sometimes for years. Nobody has been more scathing in its comments on this system than the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk, and we cannot therefore be regarded as dangerous liberals if we ask the people of South Africa to reconsider the matter.

We do not ask for a whole sale condemnation of all migrant labour. If, for example, the gold mines

recruit labour from a distant and foreign area like Malawi, it may well have to continue. But when one influential mining company strove to recruit 10 percent of its labour from the Republic and to provide good homes for the men and their families, the Government stepped in and the scheme had to be largely abandoned.

With the migrant labour question is connected the complicated system of "influx control".

Real crime

To abandon this would mean that tens of thousands of Africans would be free from the danger of being imprisoned for short periods, that the jails would be half empty, that the police could concentrate their attention on real crime, that one of the deepest and most frequently occurring causes of racial bitterness would be removed.

And as regards migrant labour, there would be a general and inevitable moral improvement. There would no longer be the same place for prostitution in the towns or for homosexual unions in the men's hostels. Women would not fall into adultery in the reserves in the long absence of their husbands. Children would grow up under the wholesome discipline of both parents.

More villages

On the other side, more urban African villages would have to be built, but surely this is not an insuperable difficulty. Even financially much of the money could be found by reduction in the cost of police and prisons. But important though the financial side is, can it outweigh the health, happiness and moral standards of hundreds of thousands of people?

Retain influx control - Riekert

TAG Motor Witness

3 MAY 1979

CAPE TOWN — The Riekert Commission's report, tabled in Parliament yesterday, has recommended a move away from discrimination based on colour in labour legislation but wants influx controls retained.

The 276-page report of the commission of inquiry into legislation affecting the utilisation of labour was tabled by the Prime Minister, Mr P. W. Botha.

The one-man commission of Dr P. Riekert also recommended that:

- Ownership rights be granted to employers who wish to provide accommodation for their employees in Black residential areas;
- Influx control, which it says is essential to obviate social problems, be linked only with the availability of work and approved housing.
- Penalties applicable to employers of illegal labour be strictly applied and made more effective;
- The term "Administration Board" be changed to "Regional Board for Black Community Development" to fit the designation and spirit of the proposed Black Community Development Act.
- Labour bureaux exercise strict control over the admission of contract workers to provide a positive incentive for employers to use local labour.

(Details — Page 11)

It also says that sustained and purposeful attempts will have to be made to create employment opportunities in the Black states if the flow of migrant labour to the metropolitan areas and the concomitant social costs and problems are to be obviated.

Dr Zac de Beer (PFP Parktown) said the report was progressive but also extremely cautious.

He welcomed recommendations that:

- The 72-hour prohibition

on Blacks in prescribed areas be done away with;

- Black persons with Section 10 (1) (A) and (B) qualifications be allowed to take their wives and families with them;

- Section 10 qualifications be transferable from one urban area to another; and
- Curfew legislation be repealed.

Other Opposition spokesmen said the report was likely to open doors to a new deal for Blacks in the labour and economic sphere.

Mr Ron Miller, NRP spokesman on labour matters, said it could mark the turning point back to the free enterprise system.

"Indications are South Africa is all set to enter a new era in race relations and a definite conversion from sterile, expensive and wasteful control-orientated legislation to rational, effective, growth-orientated legislation," he said.

The report would have far-reaching implications for the Government's present political direction and philosophy based on the separation of peoples.

Mrs Helen Suzman, Black affairs spokesman for the PFP, said the recommendations would ease the lot of Blacks. Scrapping the 72-hour curfew on visiting would prevent the arrest of some 17 000 Blacks charged under these provisions last year.

The recommendations would also sharply reduce the number of arrests under the pass laws.

"Anything which helps to stop the arrest of a quarter-of-a-million people must be welcomed," she added.

Report by B. Pottinger and Sapa, Press Gallery, House of Assembly, Cape Town.

ANC men convicted in Swaziland on arms rap

POST 9 MAY 1979

MBABANE — Two former Soweto men convicted in Swaziland this week of carrying weapons of war claimed they crossed into the Kingdom from South Africa to escape pursuing South African security forces.

Abel Xakaxa (19) and Jerry Seleki (23) pleaded guilty before Mbabane resident magistrate, Mr Paul Shilubane to possessing the weapons in the Piggs Peak area on April 14.

Xakaxa, who was

found with a hand grenade and five detonators, was fined R750 (or 750 days) and Seleki, found with an automatic pistol and five detonators, was fined R550 (or 550 days).

The court was told the weapon and explosives were of Russian origin.

Two other former Soweto men who pleaded not guilty to the same charge were acquitted.

They are Mr Tabo Gwambine (25) and Mr Siphso Zwane (26).

In mitigation, Seleki and Xakaxa told the

court they were members of the African National Congress and had crossed into South Africa from Mozambique along a route they had used before.

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They realised they were being followed by South African security forces and were in great danger, they said.

They crossed into Swaziland because it was closer at that point than Mozambique.

Xakaxa was found by a Swazi defence force border patrol at 10 p m

that night and the other three men were found driving on a near road the following day. Two were found without any weapons.

Passing sentence the magistrate said he took into account the fact that the weapons were for use in South Africa and not Swaziland but the fact they were just passing through did not justify their carrying arms.

After the hearing, an ANC official told reporters outside the court his organisation would pay the fines. — **POST** Africa News Service.

3 City Blacks get Govt invitation

The Natal Witness

9 MAY 1979

Witness Reporter

THREE influential Pietermaritzburg Blacks have been invited to serve on one of six regional committees set up by the Government to aid a Cabinet investigation into the position of Blacks in "White" areas.

They are Professor Lincoln Nyembezi, a director of The Natal Witness and Shuter and Shooter (Pty) Ltd, who is also the chairman of the Edendale Advisory Board and a prominent Inkatha official; Mr Simeon Kwela, a former chairman of the Imbali Advisory Board and Inkatha office-bearer; and Mr Ben Jele, the current chairman of the Imbali Advisory Board.

Among the Blacks invited to serve on other regional committees are Mr Nthatho Motlana, chairman of the Soweto Committee of Ten; Mr Percy Qoboza, Editor of Post; and Bishop Desmond Tutu, secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

The chairman of the regional committee for Pietermaritzburg/Durban is Mr R. Blumick, the Chief Commissioner in Pietermaritzburg. Invitations were also issued to Government officials, policemen, academics and businessmen. They include the mayors of Durban and Pietermaritzburg, Cnr Haydn Bradfield and Dr Ashton Tarr.