

Health care in SA is 'sadly deficient'

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Own Correspondent

DURBAN — Health care in South Africa was "sadly deficient" and did not meet the needs of communities who suffered the greatest burden of disease.

This was the message of researchers from the Centre for the Study of Health Policy in the Department of Community Health at the University of Witwatersrand.

Their paper on health care was delivered to delegates at the 19th annual congress of the Association for Sociology in South Africa, being held at the University of Durban-Westville.

The researchers said blacks were the least healthy population group with unacceptably low life expectancy and nutritional status, and unacceptably high infant mortality rates.

Preventive care was unsatisfactory and a large proportion of the population was not immunised. For

example, in 1984 only 39 percent were fully immunised against measles; 44 percent against diphtheria; 44 percent against tetanus and 63 percent against tuberculosis.

In many urban areas there was an inadequate supply of doctors, hospital out-patients departments, clinics and day hospitals.

"Even in the metropolitan area, access is very much determined by race and social class. In the rural areas and the homelands, the situation is much more bleak," the researchers said.

The ratio of doctors to patients varied from 1:14 000 in Lebowa and kwaZulu to 1:32 000 in Kangwane.

"These are huge ratios, particularly given the fact that many of these doctors are located in the hospitals providing secondary care."

The majority of people in the homelands were thus dependent on clinics staffed by clinic sisters for primary care.

The researchers said in a typical homeland area, there should be one clinic for every 10 000 people.

However, in kwaZulu there was only one clinic for about every 27 000 people — the worst ratio in the homelands — and one clinic for about every 17 500 people in Lebowa.

"To provide adequate care, each clinic serving 10 000 people would need to be staffed by two qualified primary health care nurses."

The researchers found that health care services did not give priority to those most in need.

Studies showed that in 1985 the per capita expenditure on health care varied from R115 for blacks to R249 for coloureds, R245 for Indians and R451 for whites.

"According to the Browne Commission, in 1984 and 1985 only 12,7 percent of public expenditure went to the homelands where perhaps 40 percent of the population lives."

In Natal there were 5,9 beds for every 1 000 whites and 5,3 for every 1 000 blacks. However, in the homelands there were 2,7 beds for every 1 000 black patients.

COMMENT

Blunt instrument

NOW that the dust has settled on the proliferation of strikes, stayaways and labour protests that marked the last several months, a more balanced analysis of events is possible. What quickly emerges is that what initially appeared to be union successes may in fact be quite the opposite.

Certainly the organised labour movement demonstrated its ability to apply pressure. It was able to bring the economy, if not to a halt, then to a crawl. Politically, it was able to pull the crowds, whether through support or because of fear of reprisals. But that aside, what did the unions actually gain?

The Labour Relations Amendment Bill, ostensibly one of the main targets of the three-day stayaway, has whipped through Parliament unchanged, with little more than polite noises from the Minister concerned that he is prepared to discuss future amendments with unions. Whether or not such amendments actually materialise is another matter.

Meanwhile, for the next round of stayaways — and there will be a next round — employers have in place legislation which does exactly what Margaret Thatcher did to drive back British unions bent on self-destruction: it confines the activities of trade unions to the workplace.

The choice for unions is clear: if industrial action is restricted to labour issues, they are acting within the protection of the law. If their motives are political, they run the risk of severe penalties, including

court orders confiscating their assets.

Some on the left may scoff at the idea of business actually resorting to this mechanism. But beleaguered managers are growing impatient with the argument that, because government is so short-sighted as to deny black political aspirations normal expression, unions should automatically become substitutes.

Profits for many, many businesses in this country are marginal. Take away that margin — for example, by stopping production for three or four days a month for several months in a row, often in contravention of negotiated agreements — and benign attitudes towards unions tend quickly to sour.

It has not gone unmarked that the stayaways were noticeably less effective in those organisations that took a hardline "work or be fired" approach. As with the mine strike last year, it was the more liberal employers — the "soft targets" of radical unionism, one might say — that bore the brunt. This is now working its way through in the form of new agreements being hammered out in many industries on far less beneficial terms for the unions than was the case six months ago.

The point is that unionists must be aware of their dilemma as they plan future strategies. They can achieve the dubious political gains of mass action any time, and on virtually any pretext. But against this they must weigh the industrial cost, in terms of lost negotiating ground, lost support and, finally, lost jobs, of using the labour movement as a political battering ram.

ANC terrorism

THE car bomb which exploded at Ellis Park on Saturday gave point to the recent threat from the ANC's Chris Hani to end the "sweet life" in South Africa by attacking white civilians. The ANC has made the descent, as such organisations inevitably do, from a policy of violence to a policy of naked terrorism, succumbing to a barbarism greater than the evils it purports to fight.

For success, its policy of terrorism depends on white South Africans permitting fear to govern their responses. All hope of peace in Algeria was lost when French *colons*, in similar circumstances, retaliated

by massacring innocent Arabs in the streets.

That stage, thank heaven, has not been reached in South Africa. Whites, knowing they are a target of the beastliest kind of attack, can still steel themselves against the fear and rage which those attacks are intended to induce. They can still resolve to resist the view, recently attributed to an embittered Israeli soldier, that "hatred can be answered only by hatred".

A civilised outcome remains in prospect as long as South Africans distinguish the perpetrators of atrocity from the decent, humane people who constitute the majority of all races in this country.

BUSINESS DAY

5 JULY 1988

Dukakis or Bush: does it make any difference to SA?

SIMON BARBER in Washington

IF A poll were taken, I imagine most readers of this newspaper would say they favoured Vice-President George Bush to succeed Ronald Reagan. Their opinion is understandable. It is also mistaken.

Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, the Democratic presidential nominee, has taken a predictably craven stand on SA, bowing as all candidates must to special interests.

To appease the Reverend Jesse Jackson, his seconds have agreed that the country should be labelled "terrorist" in the party manifesto and that "a date certain" should be set for the departure of all remaining US companies.

The candidate's own position paper on SA is equally risible.

He supports the Anti-Apartheid Amendments Act of 1988 even though it would deprive him of almost all policy-making power in southern Africa, should he be elected. He vows to press for total sanctions in the UN Security Council.

Unlike the Soviet Union, Cuba, the MPLA, Unita, most of Africa, the European allies and the current administration, he is in favour of delinking Cuban withdrawal and Namibian independence, thus aligning himself with P W Botha's most bullet-headed advisers.

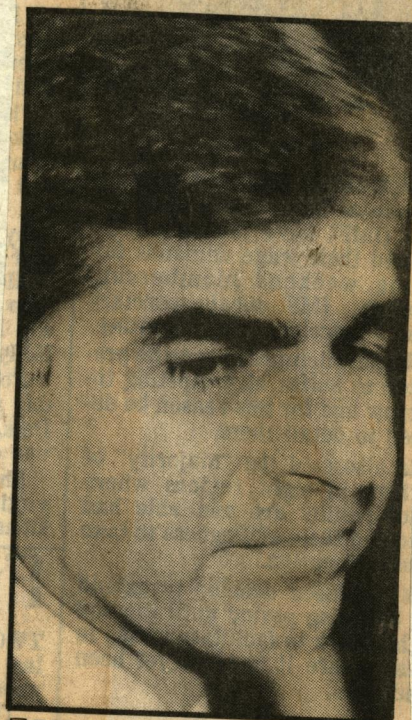
Bush, by contrast, advocates continued "engagement". Early drafts of the Republican platform talk of "democratic enhancement" and of finding "tough, rational answers for what we can do" to strengthen black bargaining power through support for education, unions and private enterprise.

Both candidates are lying. Neither will be able to fulfil his campaign promises once elected. Both agendas are the purest political fluff.

The most important thing to remember about the SA debate in this country is that it is almost entirely unconnected to SA. An analogy might be the dispute over the wording of Nicene Creed. In theory, the question was how Christians might most effectively communicate their devotion. What actually was at issue was the allocation of temporal power between ecclesiastical factions.

Until November 1985 — and Reagan's landslide re-election — SA was largely a marginal matter, of significance only to such marginal interests as students, clergymen and a few city and state legislators, most of whom, being marginal, saw in it an opportunity to make themselves less so. Even civil rights groups placed it low on their list of priorities.

Reagan's crushing victory



□ DUKAKIS ... predictable stand

changed that. His opponents were in desperate need of new ideological weapons to claw their way back. SA, or to be more precise the beguiling myth that a US administration could end apartheid within a political timeframe if it so wished, was an obvious choice.

It was an obvious choice for several reasons.

First, it had to do with race and race is the one subject that has only to be whispered to turn the white establishment to guilt-ridden jelly.

Second, it involved a policy, economic sanctions, that in this particular instance no sentient western government would ever willingly adopt,

5 JULY 1988

so there was little risk of the Reagan administration invalidating the weapon by caving in.

Third, inasmuch as there was such a risk and the demand for sanctions might be met — as it was with the President's executive order in 1985 and the comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act the following year — it could safely be assumed there would be no positive effect in SA itself sufficient to kill the issue.

Fourth, there was in particular no chance that apartheid would dissolve during Reagan's last four years in office. In short, here was the political equivalent of a perpetual motion machine, an ideological gun with an infinite magazine.

Should Bush be elected, the gun will still be needed. And because he will maintain his predecessor's opposition to further sanctions, it will still be available.

Whatever he and his advisers now say he will do, Congress, whose continued control by the Democrats is guaranteed, will at best persist in immobilising him, at worst drive him back, year by year, new sanction by new sanction.

If, on the other hand, Dukakis wins, the weapon is no longer required. The party of those who have had to resort to it will be in power, and SA can once again slide off the scope — which, truth be told, is where most mainstream Democratic politicians, Dukakis included, would prefer it stayed.

But what about Dukakis's campaign promises, you ask.

The fact is that in American election politics, there is no such thing as a solemn oath. Platforms are generally torn up as soon as the election is



□ BUSH ... looking for answers

over, and inasmuch as they are not, their planks are valid in direct proportion to the extent they touch on American voters' material well-being.

The only people who will notice when the language on SA disappears into the ether are the activists who forced its insertion in the first place. And since their candidate will have won, they are unlikely to carp excessively.

An exception might be Jackson. He will demand compensation for SA not being declared a "terrorist" state, but that was part of his plan from the start. He is what is known in the trade as a shakedown artist. His *modus operandi* has always been to

extort impossible concessions so that he can extort again when they are not delivered.

A list of those Dukakis might be expected to consider as replacements to Chester Crocker would include Don McHenry, the former UN ambassador; Pauline Baker, the former staff director of the Senate Africa subcommittee when it was chaired by Senator George McGovern; Michael Clough, study director of the Secretary of State's advisory committee on SA; Stephen Davis, author of "Apartheid's Rebels", Investor Responsibility Research Centre analyst and Dukakis's chief Africa adviser; Robert Rotberg of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and, a long shot, Nancy Stetson, current staff director of the Africa subcommittee.

Apart from Stetson, an unpopular figure who is also one of the most ardent sanctioners in the Senate, and Rotberg, whose views seem chiefly driven by fashion and career opportunity, the rest all have doubts about sanctions and the current legislation in particular.

Baker talks about surgically targeted pressures. McHenry manages to appeal to Dukakis's flaccid internationalism and hedge at the same time by appealing vaguely for concerted allied action, claiming it is the only way but knowing full well that it probably won't happen.

Davis takes a bit of Baker and spices it with the idea of encouraging the ANC to offer a vision of post-apartheid SA that whites can live with. Clough, rather more bravely than the rest, says that more (unspecified) sanctions may be necessary but the real focus should be on "black empowerment" in much the same manner as the draft Republican platform.

Whoever is selected will have to contend with a permanent bureaucracy that broadly favours the current approach and will continue to contest hotly any intrusion on its foreign policy prerogatives. It will take the newcomers aside and tell them what they can and cannot do.

Of course, Dukakis will be tempted to make zealous noises if and when he takes office. Something of the order of Vice-President Walter Mondale's "one-man-one-vote" betise in 1977 has to be expected. But Dukakis, like Jimmy Carter, will learn and SA will fade, once more, into the background.

Surely that is better than having an endless series of sanctions battles between Congress and the administration, which there will most assuredly be if Bush succeeds?

A lesser of two evils, perhaps, but face it, a sound American policy on SA is an ontological impossibility.

No meeting for Mabuza and Boya

Dear Sir,
I REFER to the front page report in Business Day on June 24, in which it was stated that Mr Boya of the United Municipalities of SA (Umsa) would be meeting me to discuss his proposed United Forum to oppose the National Council.

It is regrettable that Mr Boya went to the Press and implied my possible involvement in his initiatives without prior consultation with me.

I would like to state that there is no basis whatsoever for a meeting or discussion between myself and Umsa.

ENOS J MABUZA
Chief Minister
Kangwane