Beaufort West has many windmills -
A look at poverty in the town and
district of Beaufort West

by

David Schmidt

Carnegie Conference Paper No. 35
INTRODUCTION

I was in Beaufort West for altogether three weeks during 1983 to research "Economic change and social development in Beaufort West" and to do a study on poverty in the area.

This involved:

1. interviews with working people, unemployed people, community and religious leaders, social workers, farmers, officials, business people, teachers;

2. a survey of households based on a random sample of 160 houses in the coloured townships;

3. a smaller in-depth attitude survey of some of these households;

4. a very limited survey of the African township;

I emerged at the end with a set of statistics and other data on poverty for Beaufort West that allude to a rather sad situation, but which is not much different and probably not worse than many other places. One can use the data to invalidate or verify theories on what determines poverty. One can put it through a computer and observe the correlations. I am not sure how far it goes in penetrating and describing the complex of economic conditions, power relations, attitudes, idiosyncracies, history and struggle that is poverty.

The paper is a conglomeration of impressions, hard facts, anecdotes, quotes, statistics, extracts from interviews (that do lose something in translation) and probably the occasional rumour, that attempts to build up a picture of poverty in its different aspects in Beaufort West. It is necessarily schematic and thin in parts.

It has six sections.

1. The National road (which is how most people experience Beaufort West)

2. Economy and mythology;

3. Rustdene/.
3. Rustdene (which looks at coloured poverty)
4. The Location (Poverty amongst Africans)
5. Nelspoort (Farm workers)
6. Cape Town (Migration)

The surveys properly presented are to be found in the appendix.

Yet in the end maybe one can just say with George Orwell -
"But mere notes like these are only valuable as reminders to myself. To me as I read them they bring back what I have seen, but they cannot in themselves give much idea of what conditions are like in those fearful slums. Words are such feeble things. What is the use of a brief phrase like "roof leaks" or "four beds for eight people"? It is the kind of thing your eye slides over registering nothing. And yet what a wealth of misery it can cover! (The Road to Wigan Pier p.50)
"After Graaff-Reinet and Cradock, Beaufort West is the oldest of the upper plateau towns of the Cape. It has always been one of the foremost in enlightenment." – from the opening paragraph of "The History of Beaufort West."

"Industrial Area". A signboard on the outskirts of Beaufort West as you approach from Cape Town. It stands amidst a grey wasteland of Karoobos, broken only by a warehouse, a couple of truck inns where truck drivers can overnight, and "Prima Bande", a tyre retreading works that employs about ten people. It is Beaufort West's only industry.

Then across the railway line which is already starting to split into the many tracks of the railway works. On the left, another wasteland, another signboard. The wasteland ends in an oil storage depot. Adjacent to the depot is a Cape Corps base. For protection. The signs of the times are apparent even in the middle of the Karoo. The signboard says "Welcome to Beaufort West – land of space."

On your right, the suburbs proclaimed "Coloured". Essopville, Newlands, Rustdene. The big green building is the Karoo Hotel – owned by 'coloureds', for 'coloureds'. Rustdene people call it "die White House". Then a red and grey complex – the Nirvana bioscope and the Lipstick continental disco restaurant. Diametrically opposite it on the left of the road stands a church. A Sendingkerk with a large green lawn. The Church and Lipstick do not mesh comfortably. It is part of a broader conflict. What you might even call a church|State conflict. The owner of Lipstick and Nirvana is Mr Solly Essop, chairman of the Management Committee, long time CRC member for the district, and dominating political personality in the "coloured community".

"Pupils and youths sometimes get a bad reputation through attendance of bioscopes, especially Nirvana and also Lipstick disco. It is felt that some are negatively influenced." – A diplomatic presentation of the position of the Sendingkerk (and other Churches) on Lipstick|Nirvana and Solly Essop which you...
you can find in a "Community work profile" of the community.

Cross the Gamka River, a dry gash that sometimes comes down in flood and where small boys play, and you are in white Beaufort West. But just before it you might see, there beyond the Cripple Care Centre and a gravel soccer field, rows of houses that look like a cross between stables and small brick works. That's if a dust storm isn't blowing. This is "die lokasie". In 1953 it was declared unfit for human habitation and the coloured population was separated from the African and settled in the Rustdene housing scheme. 30 years later, maybe 6000 people still live in "die lokasie".

Ja-nee, welcome to Beaufort-West where the people are friendly, where the race relations are good, so the white folks will tell you, where you can get a full-time maid for R25.00 per month, where Nirvana is close to the National Road.

Beaufort West was due to have been bypassed by the National road, but in 1983 was granted a reprieve, after protests. So you still have to go down the Main street, Donkin Street, to get to Johannesburg. It starts just after you have crossed the Gamka, with Christmas lights that stay up all year ... year after year. It is ended a few kilometres later by the prison which celebrated its centenary a while ago. You have to go round the prison to get back on the Jo'burg road.

Donkin Street is where all the action is at. It has nine petrol stations, and five hotels. The Royal, The Sportsman, The Oasis ....

They cohabit with Kentucky Fried Chicken and the neon Cafes where you can buy "Die Patriot", or "Die Afrikaner" together with your hamburger and coke.

The banks, the divisional council, Agricultural Technical services, Coloured Affairs, the Agricultural Co-Op, the Post Office, the Merino Co-Op, the Chemist, the shops are all in Donkin Street. You will even find the office of the Eastern Cape Administration Board tucked into a pokey building just up from the Caravan Park. The previous office, together with the "Aloeshuis" - the beer hall run by the board - was burnt down in 1981. The arsonists have yet to be apprehended.

I go/..
I go into the office. A permit might be sensible if you want to do some research in "die lokasie". I get a permit, eventually. The B A A B man is exactly like you would expect a B A A B man to be. He looks dubious. "The location is not a safe place. I hope you are not going to go in there at night."

He would prefer it if a board constable were to accompany me. For protection.

On the wall of the office is a list with the candidates for the Community Council elections in November, 1983. F F Qwede; J Vumazonke; P J Oliver; E S Mtshula. They are all unopposed.

____________________

The Herino Co-Op is the shop where Beaufort West shops. The local business community have apparently "made it difficult" for the big city chains to expand to Beaufort West. There is an Ackermans, but it is closing down. The Herino is an aging departmental store-cum-supernarket with much wood panelling and grey haired attendants. The type you used to find in Cape Town 15 years ago.

But Herino is more than just a shop. It owns five of Beaufort West's ten petrol stations and has other economic interests. The Managing Director, Mr. Herman de Wit is Mr. Business locally. The other powerful financial concern in the town is Beaufort West Finance Company, a local syndicate that owns most of the hotels and overnight accommodation.

____________________

"If you want to find out about the black population, go and speak to Mr Vumazonke at the Trek garage." Jeffrey Vumazonke B.A. has been working at the garage, next to the Herino, for 26 years. He is now the Manager but he still wears that cap with the zebra on the front that his attendants wear. He is a self-made man, and he aims to please. Such is his stature in the town that many whites call him "Oom Jeff".

"Go and speak to Oom Jeff. He'll be able to tell you everything about the location."

Oom Jeff is chairman of the local Community Council, representative of the Ciskei in Beaufort West, Methodist lay preacher, and he only has to pass two more courses to get his LLB.

Oom//
Oom Jeff wants to resign as Ciskei representative. He has to send his children to school there, and Ciskei now wants to make them take out its citizenship. "How can they take away your birthright. We're not accepted in the homelands anyway. We're not one of them. They call us 'hotnots'. We've been in Beaufort West for a long time. We can speak Xhosa but you'll mainly hear Afrikaans spoken in the location. We don't belong in a homeland. Now that they are independent they can send one of their own people as representative."

"Equal opportunity is all we want here. We don't bother about Group Areas. We don't want to live with whites," says Oom Jeff. A young white male with matric could walk straight into an equivalent or more senior job with Merino as him, a man with 26 years service and almost a B.A LLB.

Solly Essop and Oom Jeff were in the same class at School. Today coloured and African education is separated. The location school only goes up to Std. 6. If your parents can afford it, you can go further at a high school in Ciskei. Most cannot.

Donkin St. is lined by historic pear trees. "The pear trees are unique", people say. White Beaufort Westers are proud of the pear trees. They are proud that Beaufort West was the first town in South Africa to be granted Municipal status back in 1837. They are proud of the late Eric Louw, MP and Foreign Minister. They are proud of Chris Barnard. Beaufort West can produce great men.

The museum is about halfway down Donkin St. where it occupies the old town hall, the old Sendingkerk and the original Sendingpastorie. In the first, two exhibitions chronicle the lives of Eric Louw and Chris Barnard. Chris donated the large and garish collection of presents, medals and 'awards he received to the museum. Louis Washkansky's original heart was on display until his family found out and complained. The old Sendingkerk houses a history of the local church and the pastorie has been restored to what it was when Dominee A.H. Barnard, Chris (and Marius') father was Sendingkerk predikant/..
predikant in the days before Group Areas pushed the coloured population to the other side of the Gamka.

If 'reform' continues apace, the museum may one day yet, open a section dedicated to Professor Richard van der Ross, chancellor of UWC and member of the Theron Commission. Old Mr. van der Ross, his father, is a petrol attendant at the garage next to the jail. He was about to retire when I was there.

The BP Garage at the other end of town is the hang out of the BP Smurf Family. Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night .. maybe you'll meet the Family. Maybe they'll be on 24 hour shift. It's a small Family right now. Usually about ten. Sometimes fifteen. Sometimes seven. The ranks have been thinned. Police and community action, the railways, age. They've all played their part.

"We are the car wash manne. We are the separate manne. We are the BP Smurf Family. That's us Mister. And we look at things through red eyes. Why is that? Because we don't have anything. Now, we're looking for it."

A meeting with the Family under a car wash sign. It's Saturday night late and the Café owner opposite looks at us strangely. Tonight just the A side are on duty. The ten regulars. The hard core Family. The irregulars? "They're the C side, Mister."

Piet Maaarsingen can talk. On the job training. Everyone laughs at the bit about the red eyes. Cryptically. His "mister" is half sarcastic. He doesn't try a "baas" or "meneer" on people. The Family does not beg.

A car with CA registration pulls in at the pumps and Gertjie and Leon rush across and begin to clean the windows with energy. Appearances count.

Piet is about seventeen. He's been Family for about eight years. "Long years mister. I've been here from the beginning. Long years. This garage wasn't this big and I was already here." He's more elder brother than godfather.

Then there's Gertjie Botha, Jacques van der Bank, Kosie, Leon, Tom, John... They're mostly 15 or 16. The youngest, Kleintjie is 12. He has a voluminous chest and a truncated body. T.B. He's shy. He's only been here three months. They've mostly been working the garage for a year or so. A couple for three or four years.

Gertjie/..
Gertjie and Leon return with nothing. They've hit a miss. Tonight's a bad night. Very few cars. It's off season and they make maybe five rand between them for the night. Three rand is a very bad night. Night means right through till morning. "On a good night in season time, it's R30.00 on the dot. We buy eats and take the rest home and make use of it."

"The money we get is for everyone. If you get a tip it's for you first. Then we put everything together and divide it. If the one's got then he also gives to the others". The redistribution mechanism is hard to figure out. You've got some claim to any money you get personally and sometimes there will be competition over who's going to get the money when the traveller wants to give three window cleaners a single 20c piece. Yet things seem to work out quite fairly at the end. And the Family is close, like a family.

"Sleeptime? We don't sleep at all, I can say. These manne aren't manne of sleep on a weekend. As Mister sees us now, we'll smurf right through till morning. On school evenings, we'll enjoy our sleep." Yes, they say they go to school. The junior secondary school. But then some of them will be sitting in the sun outside the Indraf Café opposite, on midweek, mid-mornings. They don't have a satisfactory explanation for that one. So they laugh.

A police van drives slowly down Donkin St. Everyone tenses up until it's passed.

A few years ago there must have been 30 to 40 members of the family. Piet was there. "It was a big family then. At its biggest, the whole lokasie was here. The others are now working at the docks in Cape Town. The big majority of them." The Family all come from "die lokasie" except for Piet who is from Rustdene. Have they all got homes? And parents? "We've got parents. They work very hard, mister. They get very little here in Beaufort. We come here to get a little more."

"My mother is at the hostel of the boereskool, up there. My father is on the railways."

"My father works on the road. My mother can't get work."

"My fathers dead. My mother does housework."

Three of the Family, in the C side, don't have homes.

"Last night they slept in my house," Kosie informs. Normally nine people live in his house. It has two rooms. They all live in houses with between 8 and 17 people. None of the houses have more than 3 rooms.

Friday/..
"Friday evening is bonanza time". They spread out from "the BP" to all parts of Donkin St. and beyond. Friday evening from 4 pm till dark, the Family sell the "Courier", the local weekly, established in 1869. You get 2c for each Courier you sell. That's R2.00 for 100, and R4.00 for 200. It's quite easy to sell that many.

"You get many 'tips with the Courier. You can make R6.00 altogether. Each of us."

Wednesdays and Saturdays some of them caddy at the gold course. You make maybe R4.00. There are a few other odd jobs like offloading Willards foods at the Cafés, and at the annual Beaufort West Agricultural Show. That and windscreen cleaning until you're old enough to go on contract to the docks in Cape Town.

The Family is not without its antagonists. They point out the Café owner opposite.

"The oubaas standing there, he's a bit insolent. If he sees us when the van comes by, he'll just stop it suddenly and tell them to chase us away from here in front of him".

They often get chased away. Most have been picked up by the police once. A couple twice.

"They don't take us to jail. They just 'karnuffel' a person, hit a person, spray a person with the teargas. They say we are not supposed to be here and we are also not allowed to beg. If they find money on us from begging, then they take that money. They say they take it for people who need money."

One Saturday night I go to say good-bye. I'm leaving the next day. The family are nowhere to be seen. I ask the petrol attendants if they've seen them. Yes, they have. Where are they now? No, they chased them away. How? Did you call the police? No, that guy hit them and chased them away. They point to another petrol attendant. Why? "Because they are full of nonsense. They come and wash the windcreens. That's our job. That's how we get our tips."
"Beaufort West is hard up and business is dead. The Municipal chest is insolvent and no more is heard of the town house. For a dreary down-on-your-luck retreat, try Beaufort West." - description of Beaufort West in 1959.(1)

The government's 1981 "Proposals for Industrial Development" delineates three types of decentralisation area: deconcentration points, industrial development points, and other industrial points.

De Aar and Upington, the two other major central/northern Karoo towns are placed in the second category. Beaufort West is excluded from this advantaged category and falls by implication under "other industrial points." It cannot thus claim the new concessions granted to De Aar and Upington.(2)

The Municipality and business community of the town are very concerned about this. Beaufort West, they argue in representations to the Government, complies as much as De Aar and Upington with the criteria by which development priorities are set, namely:
"the importance of job opportunity creation as measured by the present unemployment rate; the importance of a high living standard; the potential of a development region."

They are concerned about other instances of government favour accorded to for example, De Aar, such as the recent establishment of a large ammunition depot and an SADF horse training centre there. They dispute strongly a government estimate of the ten year economic growth rate, 1980-1990, for Beaufort West, of a mere 4.0%. (3)

Though strategic considerations are possibly involved, - De Aar is on the main railway line to Namibia; Upington is the major town close to the Northern Cape border with Botswana and Namibia - much of the blame for Beaufort/...
Beaufort West's "poor treatment" is attributed to the local MP, Mr. Poggenpoel. The MP for Upington is a cabinet minister. The MP for De Aar has influence where it matters. The MP for Beaufort West is weak and uninfluential.

There may be truth in this. For it reflects the central feature of the economic life of Beaufort West, namely that it is based primarily on the infusion of state money in the form of the railways (SATS) and government departments. More than 50% of the gross geographic product of Beaufort West and district, which includes agriculture, comes from these sources directly. Much of the remainder, including most commerce and construction stems from it. Any future economic development and growth depends on it, receiving more concessions and more money from government. Beaufort West does not contain sufficient seeds to generate autonomous independent, economic expansion. Hence Beaufort West as beggar. Hence, the problem of Mr. Poggenpoel, ineffective beggar.

Some notes on the economy

South African Transport Services employs about 30 per cent of working coloured males and 25 per cent of working white males. (4) It accounted for 41.8 per cent of gross geographic product in 1980. (5) But this pillar of the economy is not a growth sector, nor will it create new employment. An unpublished government statistical report projects a net decline of 0.6 per cent in transport over the next ten years. (6) Modern management principles and technological change such as the conversion from semaphore to electronic signalling and the phasing out of diesel traction for electricity on the Beaufort West - De Aar line, while increasing the employment of skilled workers, has led to a net reduction in the employment of coloured labour (7)

Agriculture's share of G.G.P has remained fairly constant over the past 30 years, around 14 percent, taking fluctuations into account. Employment though has been falling steadily. The coloured population on farms rose until 1970 but declined 14.8 per cent between the 1970 and 1980 censuses.

The white/...
The white population has been declining since the 1930's. Between 1970 and 1980 it fell 32.6 percent. (8)

Mining and industry have been the two sectors on which the hopes of the business community, that Beaufort West can generate its own growth and employment creation, have rested.

Wide scale uranium prospecting occurred in the early 1970's. Many farmers earned considerable money as companies bought mining concessions. Land prices were pushed up. There was a quixotic euphoria. "Uranium will make Beaufort West a second Johannesburg" headlined the Courier. (9) Beaufort West has many windmills. The uranium deposits were apparently not exploitable. By the mid - 1970's the geologists were gone. Mining's contribution to GGP in 1980 was zero.

Beaufort West is on the main road and rail links between Cape Town and Johannesburg and directly next to the main power lines of the ESCOM national grid. There is sufficient underground water and it is cheap. The Municipality actively encourages investment in industry. "What Beaufort West needs to provide employment and develop the town is some light industry," most people, poor and rich, will tell you. And yet, manufacturing was only worth R$40 000.00 (1.3 percent of GGP) in 1980, which was not much more than Prima Bande. The Nirvana/Lipstick complex used to be a soft drink factory until Solly Essop decided there was more money in entertainment than manufacturing. Which there is. The small local market, the vast distance to all the main centres and the lack of locally produced raw materials on which to base an industry, militate against manufacturing. The idea of a wool washery to process the district's only raw material enjoys a certain currency but it remains an idea.

Construction made up 7.1 percent of GGP in 1980, but is likely to decline in importance as the National road building in the area slows down. One of the major provincial road camps is being moved from Beaufort West to Graaff-Reinet in 1984.

Government services (14.8 percent of GGP), financial services (10.4 percent), trade (10.2 percent) and community services (0.5 percent) are all largely tertiary...
tertiary sectors of the economy and their potential to expand depends on growth in the primary sectors like mining, manufacturing or agriculture or a financial transfusion from central government, none of which seems very likely.

Beaufort West is hard up and business is not very healthy.

Some Demography

Table 1 shows population growth from 1951 to 1980 according to the censuses.

Table 1.

The population of the town Beaufort West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All races</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% change</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>11778</td>
<td></td>
<td>5174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>16442</td>
<td>39,6</td>
<td>7384</td>
<td>42,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>16823</td>
<td>2,3</td>
<td>8498</td>
<td>15,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>19880</td>
<td>18,2</td>
<td>12140</td>
<td>42,9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A municipal head count in 1982 gave a total of 4745 Africans, 14 360 'coloureds' and 6387 whites, all considerably higher than the 1980 census figures which suggests an under-enumeration in the census rather than a change in the trend of declining African and white populations since 1960. (10)

The rapid decline of the African population in the 1960's was due to removals to the homelands. About 150 families were resettled between 1960 and the early 1970's when removals ceased.

Between 1970 and 1980 while the total population grew by 18,2 percent because of the 42,9 percent increase in the coloured population, economic growth was 17,0%. (11)
If we add this demography to the economic equation, we get:

1. increasing numbers of 'coloureds' being drawn into higher income skilled and administrative jobs as both the absolute quantity of these jobs increases and the number of whites filling them decreases.

2. increasing coloured unemployment and increasing migration of the economically active population elsewhere. The young move out, the old and disabled from the farms and other more desperate dorps move in. Beaufort west, more and more, as dreary down-on-your luck retreat.

Compare the municipal census/survey of the coloured population of 1976 with the one of 1982:

| Increase in the total coloured population | (13 136 to 14 360) = 1224 | 9,2% |
| Increase in the number of pensioners/grant recipients | (1 106 to 1 599) = 493 | 44,5% |
| Increase in the number of children (aged =16) | (6 522 to 6 949) = 427 | 6,5% |
| Increase in the number of unemployed women | (445 to 674) = 229 | 51,4% |
| Increase in the number of unemployed men | (158 to 439) = 281 | 177,8% |

In the mythology of the white side of town these two processes of increasing incorporation and increasing marginalisation are explained as follows.

"There are two types of coloured here in Beaufort. There is the respectable coloured who is making great progress. Today you'll find coloureds in offices and serving behind shop counters which you rarely used to find. Many have their own businesses. Go to Newlands and many of the houses are better than the houses most whites live in. And then there is the other class of coloured - what we call, and don't quote me on this, the 'hotnot' or 'Boesman'. They are lazy, work shy, can't/..."
can't do a proper job and have no motivation. They just drink and breed these huge families and then they complain that they are poor."

This mythology permeates the coloured suburbs to some extent as well. Increasing economic inequality and class stratification divides. And it is evident that a large proportion of the marginalised have pronounced Khoi features while very few of the middle class of Newlands have. Often this engenders an implicit or explicit racist explanation for poverty. Some people are poor because they are racially inferior. Two women in 'better' parts of Rustdene, told me during the survey that they did not let their children play with the 'boesman' children further down the road.

They ignore a long and persistent history of subtle and not so subtle economic, educational and social discrimination against people of Khoi ancestry that has channelled them into the most menial and marginal roles. A history that begins with the way in which they were enslaved and subjugated to the white economy:

"The commando then trapped a second group of Bushmen who were busy stealing the livestock of David van Heerden. Again the burgers struck - two died and the rest were taken capture to serve from then on as workers on the farm." (from Die Gedenkboek van die Ned. Geref. Gemeente, Beaufort West 1945.) (13)

The missionaries John Campbell and Robert Moffat passing through the district in 1820 were surprised that there were still many "racially pure Bushmen" in the service of the farmers. Master Smit of the farm Dasfontein had "no less than 50". Campbell suggests that "these Bushmen were very well treated and seemed to be very happy on Dasfontein." (14)

This form of subjugation as opposed to "the many well-off coloureds' who moved to Beaufort West from the Soutrivier area east of the town - for example the Heynes, Esbach, Theron, Kelly, Smit and De Klerk families. The Theron family, who/..
who had before farmed on the farm Soutriviersvlei, bought the old toll house north of the town during the previous century and lived there for many years. The well-known Morkel - coloureds of Beaufort West married into this family. Among them we find today our respectable tailors, builders, plumbers, house painters and other tradesmen, as well as teachers, ministers of religion and clerks." (15)

The above extract is from a section in "Boëvlakte," a history of the town, detailing the 'origins' of 'coloureds' in Beaufort West. Origins are clearly important if the thesis is that prosperity and poverty are directly related to your quantity of Khoi blood.

From the pen of Dominee A H Barnard comes a final note on a history of racial discrimination even within the coloured population.

"Already in 1834, governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban gave a piece of land for a school for pagan children, but it was only thirty years later that Rev. Teske built the school. A part of the congregation rapidly objected that their children had to go to school with Bushmen and Hottentots. The result was that the proposed mission school was divided and a school for 'better class coloured children' was brought into being." (16)
"Poverty is just people not paid enough for what we done"
- May Alice Jeffers.

"When Beaufort was founded, many non-whites built their houses around the town. Consequently, as the town expanded they lived amongst the whites, especially in Bird St, New St, and the Bodorp." records 'Hooivlakte' (1)

In 1880 the town engineer Bruce Brand began to lay out a "location" for what he called the "zwart schepsels" on the other side of the Gamka. Residents had to build their own houses but still had to pay 2.6d monthly to the municipality. The population by 17 April 1900 was 466 adults and 514 children.

The town council did erect some housing in 1896 and again in 1918 when "it was necessary to encourage the non-whites in New St, where the market was to be erected, to move to the location."

The area was declared a proclaimed native location (the status it still has) in 1925 though most of the then residents were 'coloured'.

As the population grew and "the huts fell in ruins, the location became a great source of concern in the town - especially in the areas which were only separated from it by the Gamka." The council accordingly began to lay out a new coloured township further west. This was to be Rustdene. The first 300 sub-economic houses were built there in 1949. (2)


75 percent of the coloured population now live in Rustdene. Over 50 percent of them live below the minimum living level. Unemployment is over 25 percent.
The remainder live in the home ownership schemes of Newlands, Hoër-vlakte, Newtown and Essopville. By the early 1970's the last coloured families had been removed from Bird St and New St. Only 18 'coloureds' were left in the location by 1982. Encouragement had given way to compulsion. Group areas.

Overcrowding. A two roomed compartment in 'die Treine'. Nerina St. The window is boarded up. The walls inside are drab, ageing whitewash. Your eyes take a while to adjust to the darkness. Two beds sit opposite each other against the walls. One is piled high with old blankets. There is just one bed in the other room. A sick looking middle-aged man sleeps on it. The walls are bare. Not even a painted biscuit tin lid or a religious admonition. There is not a table or a chair. The floor is bare. You write "very poor!" on the bottom of the questionnaire.

The household head is out I gather from the old lady on the bed opposite me. Six or seven children crowd around. They answer most of the questions. 19 people live in the house. The household head, his wife (common law), her sister, two aunts, four daughters, eight grandchildren, a boarder. The man on the bed is a son-in-law. Is he regularly employed? "No, he just rides the blue train" says the old aunt. 'Blue train' is meths. 'White train' is OMO and meths. Bread and brandy makes 'gogga koppe'. Alcoholism is rampant in 'die Treine', the most depressed part of Rustdene. During the warm months ten sleep inside and nine, including the boarder, the son-in-law and daughter and most of the children sleep outside in the yard. Winter is another story. It takes three quarters of an hour to fill in the questionnaire.

Just a pensioner and her 13 year old granddaughter live in the next house you have to go to in Nerina St. The tradition of the 'voorkind' still lives on amongst some of the poor. The eldest granddaughter is given to the grandmother who brings her up. She in turn looks after the grandmother in her old age. Their rent is R13.30 per month, the starting amount for a two-roomed house. (For every rand the household head earns over R150.00 the rent goes up 30c, up to R33.75) They are two months in arrears.
Every month over 300 legal notices to renters in arrears are sent out. In January 1983, 29 houses were locked up because of excessive arrears. In March, 76. In August, 57. (3) The questionnaire takes five minutes.

Overcrowding.

1. There are 1689 houses in Rustdene. 902 of them, i.e. 53 per cent are two roomed (4)

2. 10 844 people lived in them in 1982 according to the Municipal census (48 per cent were children of 16 and younger.)

3. The average number of people per house is thus 6,4.

4. The shortage of housing is such that 16,8 per cent of the population board with other households. (5)

5. The waiting list for houses in Rustdene at the housing office in 1983 varied between 980 and 1020 families.

6. Between 700 and 800 of these applications came from people staying in the town. Most of the remainder were from people on farms.

7. 952 houses are due to be built when money becomes available. The building of the first 500 of these was officially approved in 1981, but only in December 1983 did funds become available. And they were sufficient for just the first ten houses.

The shortage of housing serves both as a further incentive for migration away from Beaufort West and a form of influx control that keeps labour on the farms. If you want to move to town from a farm you have to put your name down on the waiting list and a few years later when you move towards the top of the list, perhaps you move to town and board until a house becomes available. Squatting in land around the town is strictly prohibited.

Before/...
Before the Management committee came into office and took over the allocation of houses in 1965, the Town Clerk explicitly used housing allocation as influx control. A farm labourer had to furnish exceptional reasons if he was to get onto the waiting list. Under the Management Committee, influx control was gradually phased out and today a farm worker does not have to give reasons why he/she wants to move to town. In reality, it remains very difficult to get a house.

The drought of the late 1960's caused major unemployment in agriculture and farm workers streamed into Beaufort West. An emergency legal squatter camp was permitted with water and toilets provided in which eventually 40 families were living. The 1979 scheme provided the last of these squatters with proper housing.

Out from under the bed comes the shoebox. Onto the imitation pine-tornica table with matching chairs. The household Head shuffles urgently through the papers. She can't keep the Meneer waiting. She pulls out some yellowing birth certificates, the children; and a plastic green identity card with an image of a woman in whom you can recognize the H H. You tick as you talk. She hands them to you. You feel quite bad because you've been saying its not necessary to go to all this trouble because you only want the ages approximately, "net so omtrent", not exactly.

"1922. Then you must be ... 61 " Suckaes. You scribble. The daughter walks in from outside where she's been washing the nappies. She gives you her name and age - Sarah Frieslaar/24 - and those of the children. She's got a child of three and a baby of six months. She doesn't know where the father is. Seven people stay in the house. HH, D and the 2 GCs, plus two children (6 and 9) of another daughter who works in Cape Town, plus a son who is casualling for a building contractor. He gets R20.00 a week. "We're trying to get him into the camp, but he hasn't been accepted yet."

Camp?
"Ja, the es aah car car". The SACC. The Cape Corps

Up on the wall, in tinsel on black cardboard is inscribed the perennial "Wat is 'n huis sonder 'n Vader." What is a house without a father. It is almost a standard fitting in a Rustdene house. I never quite came to grips with...
with it. Where the number of children born "illegitimately" is in the region of 80 percent and 25,7 percent of households are female headed. (7)

What is a house without a father? It is usually a poor house, especially in Beaufort West. According to the Theran Commission, 53 percent of urban female headed 'coloured' households in Beaufort West were below the minimum living level in May 1974 as opposed to 23 percent of male headed households. This percentage was higher than any other area surveyed. Kimberley had the second highest: 47 percent. The weighted national average was 20,5 percent. (8) The results of my survey done in September 1983 indicated that 71,8 percent of all female headed 'coloured' households in Beaufort West were below the minimum living level and 90,6 percent were below the supplemented living level. The corresponding figures for male headed households were 47,9 percent and 64,5 percent. (See appendix). The only employment for unskilled 'coloured' women in Beaufort West is domestic work, apart from a handful of petrol attendant and shop counter jobs. Wages are relatively very low and jobs are scarce. The usual wage for full time domestic work is around R30.00 per month, although it varies. I found one domestic worker who got R60.00, two who got R45.00. The remainder were R35.00 and less, down to R25.00. The maximum daily wage for casual domestic work was R3.00.

A survey by the DMR in 1975 of Upington and Beaufort West found that:

"The average annual income of 'coloured' earners was 13 percent higher in Upington mainly because female earners in Beaufort West earned proportionately far less per annum. There is a 32 percent difference between female earners income in the two areas."(9)

Unemployment amongst women is far higher than amongst men. The municipal census of 1982 found that:

1. 40,6 percent of economically active 'coloured' women were unemployed;
2. 15,5 percent of economically active 'coloured' men were unemployed;
3. The economic participation rate of working age 'coloured' women was 58,7 percent.
My survey indicated that the unemployment rates were:

1. 45.8 per cent for women;
2. 10.0 per cent for men; and
3. the economic participation rate of women was 67.9 per cent.

And this underestimates the reality. Many women who were classed not economically active rather than unemployed because they were not looking for work said they would work if wages were higher. The "is it unemployment or is it poverty" debate. Or is it worth working for R30.00 per month.

Such is the nature of women's oppression that having "illegitimate" children becomes then for many women the most realistic way of securing an income. 18.2 per cent of households received maintenance grants in 1983. (10)

Before September 1983 you qualified for a grant as a single unmarried mother if you had at least two children. Two children would "earn" you R132.00 per month. Each additional child would bring in a further R21.00 (11)

In this context it would usually not pay a woman like Sarah Frieslaar to marry. If she were to marry a Municipal worker or have him move in the household would gain an additional person for only an additional net income gain of R10.00. The Municipality, the big source of work after SATS and almost an employer of the last resort, pays a labourer only R142.00 per month. She would lose the R132.00. Thus is love's labour lost.

Since September 1983 this system has been turned on its head. To raise moral standards and lower the population growth rate, Coloured Affairs now only gives single unmarried mothers a grant for the first child but for none thereafter. This does not apply to those already on the old system.

Mrs Frieslaar gets an old age pension. R83.00. The total household income is thus about R295.00 per month. They receive no remittances from the daughter in Cape Town, and no donations in cash or kind. The minimum living level income (for August 1983) for a household of seven people was R384.56 (12)

"If it wasn't for Coloured Affairs we would not survive," says Mrs Frieslaar.
"Coloured affairs is the 'guardian' of the coloureds", - a 'Courier' headline. And that is how it is perceived by a large number of Rustdene people. As a generous guardian, or even a fairy godmother who will give you more money when you are old, disabled or a single mother (be you widowed, divorced, or unmarried) than often you could earn in regular employment, certainly as a woman. Over 20 percent of all adults over 16 years receive an old age pension or a maintenance or disability grant. 14,1 percent of adults I surveyed were old age pensioners and a further 13,4 percent received a grant. The corresponding figures in the Municipal census (1982) were 12,9 and 8,6 percent. (13)

"So, were you born in Beaufort West?"
"No, I was born on a farm in the Murraysburg district."
"And how long ago did you move to Beaufort?"
"Now that was a long time ago. Just before the king was here."

You scribble down 1947. The questionnaire is complete.

Other older people, moved to Beaufort West during the times when the 'vetlampie' burnt. Hard times. The thirties. Or they were born during the Great Flu. Or they were this high at the time of the Great Star. Halley's Comet I surmise and guess it was 1911. Then there was the old man who was born during "the Second Freedom War." His father was three-quarters white he tells me. It transpired he was a Cape Rebel and went to fight for the Boers against the British. He was killed. His 82 year old son does casual work to supplement his pension.

48,7 percent of all coloured household heads surveyed were born on farms, largely in the districts of Beaufort, Murraysburg and Victoria West. 13,5 percent came from 'other towns' and the remainder were born in Beaufort West. Only 15,2 of those born elsewhere arrived in the last ten years, and most seemed to be pensioners. 42,4 percent had been there longer than 30 years. (See appendix for details of migration)
Daughter looks at you suspiciously, as you get up to leave -

"What's this all for?"

"As I explained to your mother" I explain, "I'm a student from UCT, nothing to do with the Municipality or the government, and I'm doing a survey of the town to find out how many people are unemployed, how many people live under the breadline, what kind of work people do, average incomes. That sort of thing. Because we know people here in Beaufort are very poor."

"Yes", she agrees, "The life is very hard - die lewe is maar swaar. They pay too little."

And you have heard it so many times already:

- Beaufort is darem nie 'n living nie.
- Beaufort is just for the whites, not for us coloureds.
- Here is Beaufort you have to work for an apple and an onion - ' appel en 'n ui.
- You can get maybe a job at the railways, a labourer job and you get maybe R240.00 That's the best job you can hope for. Or else it's the Municipality where you get only R140.00 And for a building contractor you're lucky if you get R100.00 a month.(68,5 percent of employed Rustdene men surveyed worked for SATS, the Municipality or in construction.)

- But that's our lot - 'dis ons lot'.

The syndromes of "dis ons lot" and "the omnipotent they" pervade Rustdene.

"You must just be satisfied with your lot. We are satisfied with it. They control us, so we just have to play it like it is. That's how it goes, all over the country. What can you do? If you talk too much, then they are going to take your house away. They have all the say. You know the park as you come into the town. We can't go there, but it's a public park. But we don't worry. We're used to it. Its our lot. Dis ons lot."

As was written in another context:

"This business of petty inconvenience and indignity, of being kept waiting about, of having to do everything at other people's inconvenience, is inherent in working-class life. A thousand influences constantly press a working person/..
person down into a passive role. He does not act. He is acted upon. He feels himself a slave of mysterious authority and has a firm convection that 'they' will never allow him to do this, that and the other. Once when I was hop-picking, I asked the sweated pickers why they did not form a union. I was told immediately that 'they' would never allow it. Who were 'they'? I asked. Nobody seemed to know; but evidently 'they' were omnipotent."

(George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier p.43)

You walk out the gate. It swings shut on a spring. The Frieslaar's house is the standard Rustdene sub-economic two roomer, with the improved fence and the "beware of the dog" sign. Community Development are planning to gradually sell off 1330 of these but this home ownership scheme has not reached them yet. They don't want to buy when it does.

"Who wants to own a house like this with only two rooms. And its joined to the house next door and the people there are not respectable" Sarah said. They don't know where they would get the money anyway.

There was an information cum protest meeting on housing at the Rustdene Hall the previous week organised and addressed by Solly Essop and his Management Committee where a rumour that people were being forced to buy their houses was dispelled. About 700 people turned up. The Frieslaars did not attend but a neighbour told them about it.

Poverty in Rustdene. One can write of many things.

Health. Table 2 shows the infant mortality rate of 'coloureds' in Beaufort West compared with the national rate for 'coloureds' and for Africans and whites in Beaufort West.

Table 3/---
Table 3. Infant mortality rates (in deaths per 1000 births)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Coloureds (BW)</th>
<th>Coloureds (National)</th>
<th>Africans (BW)</th>
<th>Whites (BW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>281/1000</td>
<td>112/1000</td>
<td>292/100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>164/1000</td>
<td>89.3/1000</td>
<td>211/1000</td>
<td>11/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>149/1000</td>
<td>78.3/1000</td>
<td>200/1000</td>
<td>12/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>99/1000</td>
<td>69.9/1000</td>
<td>83/1000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>83/1000</td>
<td>61.9/1000</td>
<td>137/100</td>
<td>11/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>61/1000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81/1000</td>
<td>23/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>102/1000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60/1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The main cause of death has been gastro-enteritis which has been substantially reduced in the last few years, partly because of better medical facilities.

"I used to bury mainly children. Now it is about even," a Minister of religion told me there.

Education. Rustdene is served by eight primary and pre-primary schools, one junior secondary school, and the senior secondary school, Bastiaanse High. Table 3. gives it's 1983 results.

Table 3. Final results 1983 - Bastiaanse High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Failed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One/..
One must write of Solly Essop because he presents himself and is seen by many Rustdene people as a solution to poverty.

"I am a friend of the workers. And here in Beaufort they get it very hard. Right at this moment there are two Trekkers from the farm outside my house and they're looking for a place to stay. I'm trying to sort it out."

A telephone call to Solly before going to Beaufort.

"I believe nothing is ever given to man and everything he needs on earth has to be produced and achieved. Creation comes before distribution otherwise there will be nothing to distribute. We do not require charity but to strive and thus achieve."

Thus did Solly conclude an address in which he attacked the Labour Party for its opposition to separate development which he said was the only logical and expedient way of bridging the gap between the white and coloured races. (15)

The year was 1970. He was then a member of the Federal Party which he left shortly afterwards.

In late 1983 Solly Essop announced, after years as an 'independent' both in the CRC and since, that he was joining the Labour Party and going into the "New deal."

"Solly will buy the bats and wickets and ball if you're going to play cricket, but he must be the captain. He'll buy the rugby ball for rugby but he must be captain. Otherwise he will take the ball away," a community leader told me. He also said Solly would consequently cause more problems for the Labour Party than he would solve.

Solly is captain of just about everything possible in Beaufort West and the Central Karoo. He is chair of the local Management Committee and the regional association of Management committees. He chairs the local school committee and the regional school board. He is the Farmworker's Union, the ultimate dial-a-quote, one man - one union. He is the Essop in Essopville. His is Nirvana and Lipstick and the Essop Shopping block, the main one in Rustdene. He has business interests in Cape Town.

And he is different things to different people.
Ask people in Rustdene about Solly. "Hy's ons Prime Minister."...
"Hy's precies op sy job"... he doesn't let a non-white down...
he's respected that man, very respected... he represents us at the
Coloured Affairs... he does his best to get us the things we must get...
you can go to him with any problem and he will try to help... he's the man
who stands up for the non-white here in Beaufort... he's our king...
he does his best but they don't listen to him.

In the in-depth attitude survey of 20 households in Rustdene, Solly was
familiar to all interviewees. 16 expressed strong approval of him, two were
neutral, one suspected he was "feathering his own nest" and one expressed
strong disapproval.

Ask the middle classes in Newlands. Generally the attitude is very different.
Solly is often greatly resented. Solly must control everything. Nothing can
happen here without his approval. He suffocates everything. Some people
fear him. For Solly is a powerful man. He could make life very difficult
for a teacher who tried to oppose him because of his positions on school boards.
General dealers and hawkers require a licence from the Management Committee.
Houses too are allocated by the Management committee. And you hear various
allegations of favours for friends which you are not sure have any basis in
reality.

And in the Minutes of a meeting of the Management committee in August 1982
at which a delegation from the town council was present, we find the following
point:

"P.J. du Toit (Council member), chairman of the Non-white Business Committee
said that the council did not want to get involved in the allocation of
houses over which the committee had full jurisdiction. But so many enquiries
were being made and suspicions voiced with council members and the town clerk
over the allocation of houses, that it had become necessary to have a
discussion— Especially after a serious difference within the Management
committee over the allocation of house No. 12 Barnard St to Mr. W Williams
ahead of the present boarder there, Mr. J Jones, whose application was the
strongest by an overwhelming majority of points. The council warned the
committee to be careful and left it with the committee to reconsider." (16)

Amongst the opinion formers on the white side of town Solly is no longer taken
very seriously.

Everything/
"Everything Solly says, they"say, "divide by ten."
"Sure, he's often an embarrassment and a nuisance and does not get Beaufort a good reputation, but still, better the devil you know than the devil you don't!"

And Solly has been an embarrassment. His exposures or allegations of exploitation that have hit the headlines in recent years include:

- the death from exposure of unemployed farm labourers under their donkey carts. (17)
- child slavery, where poor Rustdene children were to all intents and purposes sold to Cape Town families as servants. (18) (This seems to have stopped.)
- allegations - which he was not able to adequately substantiate - that farmers were going on holiday and leaving their farm workers without food.
- the sad case of a blind and workless farm labourer Mr. Maans charged with trespassing because his wife took a bucket of water from an overflowing farm dam. (19).

If you put these perspectives together what you get is Solly as prototype of the kind of politician that the state would seem to require to make effective the management committees and houses of delegates and representatives - structures that are powerless to effect any substantive change in the lives and status of the community as a whole, but are potentially very powerful as a vehicle for exerting political influence and domination within it, through its possibilities for co-ercion and patronage and the platform it provides for propagating a conservative populism. Which makes real organisation for change - be it via a civic association, a union, or teachers, student, and women's organisations - much more difficult. And Solly has realised this potential to a large extent.

Solly as noble knight, friend of the workers, man of the people, protagonist of the underdog, tilting at the worst excesses of an unfair system, exposing it in the press, putting the farmers on the defensive, sometimes effecting redress, but changing nothing is precisely what making reform work is all about./..
about. Which is not to say he is insincere or a stooge, for he is neither. This enables him to maintain his credibility and charismatic popular appeal in Rustdene, which is why he will be more successful in persuading people into the 'new deal' than Alan Hendrikse.

And the politics of Solly as King have a negative long-term effect on the ability of the poor to assert more control over their lives in areas like employment, housing, and social relations—For it is also the politics of passive non-participation of the masses, both of the "leave it up to Solly, he's doing the best that can be done" variety and a type based on the fear of organising anything because it would incur Solly's ire. The coloured townships have no civic, student or political organisations (except for the recent starting of a Labour Party branch). Even the ratepayers association does not function.

One can write of youth. And of the Lipstick, of its big city slickness and cool sophistication, the glass mirrors, carpeted walls, sleazy lighting, and spinning reflecting balls, and the Cape Town rules OK Deejay. Come Friday and Saturday night, sometimes 700 people turn up at Lipstick, which is probably only meant to take 300. At R2.00 a head, it means big money for Solly. Lipstick - in a Karoo cul-de-sac, a little bit of class and Cape Town, (where the grass is always greener). Lipstick as symbol of a youth sub-culture totally oriented towards the city. The gangs are the gangs of the city - (Beaufort West does have it gangs especially in the depressed areas around 'die Treine.') Mongerels, CTS, Hellas, T-birds, and Cape Town Scorpions. On Sunday, the soccer teams act out life in the city and Chiefs play Pirates.

So different from what the Rustdene temas were called in that different era the sixties - All Whites, Caledonians, Evergreens, Goldburns, Happy Hearts, Railway Blues, Roaring Fourties. (20)

And many of them will probably end up in the city. Only 54,5 percent of the children over 18 of surveyed household heads were living in Beaufort West and district. 23,9 percent were in Cape Town. 8,9 percent were in the Boland,

mostly//
mostly in towns, 3,8 percent were somewhere on the Witwatersrand. 8,9 percent were in 'other' places. (see appendix)

Almost everyone I interviewed agreed there was a problem of poverty. There were a few efforts to counter some of the symptoms mainly by the churches. Diakonale Dienste of the Sending Kerk employed three social workers and engaged in relief work as did the Church Men's Society of the CPSA and the Catholic St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Lack of employment and overcrowding were suggested by the social workers and church leaders as major causes of poverty. But the most frequent and basic explanation was a notion of a "culture of poverty". The apathy and passivity of 'dis ons lot', the alcoholism, illegitimacy, work shyness, lack of motivation, misspending of grants, high drop-out rates at school and the gangs were all pointed to as evidence of this. Until these problems were solved there would be end to poverty.

This explanation is not sufficient and is akin to racist theories of poverty touched on earlier in that it suggests that poverty is primarily explained by factors internal to the community that is poor. Here, learned behaviour that is passed on through the generations.

The economy can exacerbate poverty but is not the fundamental explanation for it. The power relations in the community; who owns what and why does he pay such low wages; an economy that requires so many skilled and unskilled labourers but not anymore and has to have some mechanism to channel people to particular roles or non-roles. These questions are not as important as have we got enough social workers?.

Yet it would seem that the political and economic forces bearing on the people of this dry and dead-end town objectively give them little power to change their status (and the authorities do control) and condemn most of them to a lifetime of dull, ill-paid employment at best, and that the apathy, passiveness and 'anti-social behaviour' is not so much an impediment to "the upliftment of the coloured and their full participation in the economic life of/..
of the community" as a reasonable, albeit very inadequate, response of people to their marginal situation, that recognizes that perhaps the only salvation right now lies somewhere between Solly Essop, Coloured Affairs and the Church (or the blue train or Nirvana on a Saturday night) and that hell is "die Treine". And a windmill is a windmill. As they slouch slowly towards their Bethlehem.

For it is a response not without a defiance and a momentum that expresses itself in subtle ways from support for the maverick Solly who seems not to be altogether beholden unto the white power structure and does embarrass it in his particular way, to the names people give to the places officially called Rustdene. The people know better than the officials.

The area behind the John Crawford Junior School is called "die Visblikkies" The fish cans. The houses all have cheap steel doors. The grey cement block houses of the later Rustdene developments are "die Ashuise". The ash houses. And then "die Treine" - the trains - the distinctively long thin rows of slum compartments in the railway brown behind Bastiaanse High.

Defiance and Momentum. Joseph Siyayo in Xerofits St, the last street in Rustdene, that overlooks the scrapyard perhaps summed it all up.

"You can tell if someone comes from the farm. They still use the word "baas". Here in the town, we no longer call a white man "baas". We call him 'maneer'. That's how things have changed."
THE LOCATION

"The housing for blacks can be regarded as completely inadequate, dangerous and unsuitable for use. The water and sanitary facilities are inadequate. The houses are in a state of ruin and strong winds and rain have resulted in collapses" – a description of the African township in a municipal report 1983. (1)

The African population of Beaufort West is probably nearly 6000. The figure given by the 1930 census was 2860. The Administration Board told me it was about 3800. The municipal headcount of 1982 suggested 4745. (2) People in the location told me it was more than this. The vast majority have been living in Beaufort West for more than ten years and have section 10.1(a) rights. They live in 632 houses. (3) Many of these are single-roomed. There is serious overcrowding. And absolute poverty is far higher than in Rustdene. Very few households have incomes above the minimum living level income. The middle class does not extend much beyond Oom Jeff Vumazonke.

Beaufort West lies south of the Eiselein line. It is a "coloured labour preference area". Consequently S.A.T.S and the municipality employ very few Africans. The major employment is labouring with provincial roads. For women there is just domestic work. Unemployment is very high. 50 percent at least, people will tell you. But that is just a figure that means 'a great deal!' Thus many men are forced to be migrant labourers, mostly on the docks in Cape Town. A pass endorsed for Beaufort West is valid for the Cape from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town. Beaufort West is thus a far better base for migration than a Bantustan.

The location is administered by the Eastern Cape Administration Board. Despite protestations from the residents and the municipality they have not yet built a new township. They did build a new sports complex costing R50 000.00 in 1983. (4) Mr Vumazonke, chair of the Community Council said at its opening that although there were many people who felt that houses were more needed than a sports complex, it was gladly accepted. He said too that although/...
although the Community Council had to make unpopular decisions sometimes, it acted in the best interests of the people. (5) The Community Council is not popular. And certainly the Board isn't. Residents call their officials the 'klipsuulie' The stone suckers. And they are certainly not a benevolent Coloured Affairs, generously handing out pensions and grants. That very important source of income to the poor of Rustdene is considerably less important in the location. African pensioners only get R86.00 every two months.

Very little data on the location is available and my survey was much too small to say anything more than the above. What I will focus on briefly is unionisation amongst provincial road workers as an important response to poverty in rural towns.

Scene 1. (5).

17 November 1982. Engineer Jordaan fires provincial road worker Nxolise Mbebe because of absence from work though he was ill and produced a medical certificate. Worker Nxolise Jones objects to this unfair treatment, and he too is fired. All Beaufort West's approximately 350 road labourers, African and coloured, refuse to work until the two are reinstated. The truck drivers do not join in. Jordaan then apparently fires the workers and calls the police. The police take statements but refuse to intervene. They tell Jordaan that if he has fired them, then he must pay them off and that is the end of the issue. Jordaan tells the workers to report the next day to get paid off. This they do but Jordaan wants them to sign a form in which they apparently admit responsibility for firing themselves. They refuse.

The dispute lasts about ten days. Two meetings of representatives of the workers, provincial road officials, a magistrate and Mr Solly Essop are held. At the second meeting the Chief Resident Engineer, Provincial Roads, based in Cape Town, declares the dispute a 'misunderstanding'. All the workers, including the original two are reinstated. On 30 December 1982 an elected workers committee of the Beaufort West roadworkers was recognized by provincial roads.

The history of the workers committee begins a bit earlier when engineer Jordaan established a liaison committee for road workers which he stopped three months later, whereupon the workers (in early 1982) established an independent workers/...
workers committee which in June became The General Worker's Union Committee of National Road Worker Beaufort West. In 1983, of the 350 workers, 247 belonged to the Union. Only 13 of the 50 coloured workers belonged. Workers claimed that engineer Jordaan intimidated them and said coloured people were not allowed to be part of a group with Africans. This committee formed the basis of the worker's committee elected on 30 December and recognized by provincial roads.

Scene 2. (6)

A letter of complaint about a foreman to Provincial Roads 19.5.83.

"Dear Sir

I have this complaint that on 19.5.83 at 9.45 a.m., I was coming from the watchman when Mr Nel appeared, swearing at us. He was saying, amongst other things, that he will 'run over these Kaffirs with a truck.' He then reversed the truck, whilst we were connecting the compressor to the truck. The way that he knocked the compressor would have meant injuring one of us, if we were not alert. He got off the truck and said that he will 'run down one of the Kaffirs'. "What is a Kaffir?" he asked and went on to say that a Kaffir is just a baboon. We nearly fought physically when he said 'my gat'.

When we approached the foreman, Mr Nel claimed that the 'Kaffirs' wanted to assault him. Mr Swanepoel, the foreman, said that we should go back to work and forget about the incident. After we had left the foreman, Mr Nel said that he was going to take the issue up with Mr. Jordaan.

This is why I wrote this letter, i.e., the fact that Mr Nel said he is not prepared to forget the issue, because Mr Jordaan is there. Moreover, he has said that he does not like Africans, he prefers Coloured people.

This is the fifth time that this person has been swearing at me. I would like you to do something about this if there is anything that can be done about it at all.

Yours faithfully,

(sgd)
The resident engineer replied that:

"1. It is felt that it was necessary for the foreman to speak to you, but not in the language that he used and we therefore apologise for his language.

2. He also received a written warning that steps will be taken against him if such complaints are made against him again."

Scene 3

A letter of complaint from a foreman to the local engineer:

Local Engineer,

Sir,

I would like to politely report to you that labourer Petrus Grootboom 4842 has already been warned 3 times and his behaviour is not good, he works other workers up and always talks back and is cheeky. When he is working he cant handle a pliers and when I try to set him right then he is cheeky. I am not his baas he says and then goes to you.

Sir, I will not fight during work, but such a type almost deserves a hiding. I thank you if you remove him from my team. Without him things will work out and work will go faster.

Sir, yes here is another worker who is insolent, stubborn and cheeky. On Friday afternoon he said he was going to donner me. Remember that I am a white man and will not tolerate such a thing and was for a long time an officer of law, but I don't want to fight during work and be criminally charged. He was Mr Olivier's labourer and was chased away from there. He is Frans Nquono 2420.

Further, my other 12 are right and ready and will do better if those 2 are removed and they can work in peace. I don't want the 2 any more.

Your willing servant,

J.P. After/
After numerous letters of complaint similar to this about Frans Nquono 2420 he was sacked and some workers told me he had been "repatriated" to the Ciskei.

Scene 4.

Saturday, 5 February 1984. A new six person National Roads Workers Committee is elected at a meeting of most of the road workers in a church hall. Invited guests include the new engineer who had replaced engineer Jordaan. He had previously asked for co-operation and said he was very happy to work with the worker's committee. The committee itself had to be very co-operative. It had over the previous year made representations, about:

1) UIF deductions - over difficulties workers had had over a long period of time, with these payments not being made, for example after long illness; being out of work, or deaths.

2) Pensions - interest not being paid on pension deductions.

3) Wage increases

But these have been of little effect.

The sketchy conclusions we can draw from these scenes are that:

1) Some worker organisation is possible and even acceptable to some management (at least of large provincial or national undertakings) in distant country towns.

2) It is beginning to happen, and this is significant.

3) It can effect redress in clear cases of 'unfair treatment' even by fairly senior local officials. By the same token however, foremen and local engineers can fire 'troublesome' workers with impunity. Worker organisation has this leverage because the labour relations policy of e.g provincial roads, regards such 'unfair treatment' as unacceptable.

4) Worker organisation has very little leverage in making wage and related demands beyond 'reasonable representations' which are unlikely to meet with much success. Strikes and other forms of worker action seem
very unrealistic due to:

- the more repressive climate of a country town
- the high rate of unemployment, the small size of the workforce and the unskilled type of work, which makes workers more easily replaceable
- the fact that, at least with provincial roads, any negotiations over wages would need to involve workers committees from the whole province or at least a union representing the majority of all road workers.
- the absence of a strong support infra-structure for workers.
Agricultural change and its effect on labour and consequently poverty is a vast area. The stock reduction scheme, increasing depopulation and the consequent ever bigger farms, the shift to short rotational grazing, feedlots and new methods of dealing with drought as well as easier access to the towns for farm workers and a falling birth rate all impact strongly on the lot of farm workers. A serious look at this would require a separate paper and this one is already getting much longer than planned. So this section consists essentially of two very edited transcripts of interviews I had with a retired farm worker and a young unemployed one, which are very typical of the interviews I had with farm workers both at Helspoort, which I will come to, and the 'uitspan plek', which you can find a few kilometres outside Beaufort West on the Graaff-Reinet road. Farm workers on trek in search of work will often overnight there. Alide Kooi has written a comprehensive paper on farm labour in the central Karoo and this does not require much updating. (1)

In the late autumn of 1983 the Sunday Times reported:
"The drought has brought a trek by unemployed farm labourers in the Karoo to the biggest town in the area. Roads to and from Beaufort West are laden with donkey carts and caravans ferrying entire families with furniture, poultry and their worldly possessions. Labourers are streaming in from towns like Carnarvon, Murraysburg, Victoria West, Laingsburg and Prince Albert Road."

The town clerk, Mr J van der Merwe, said the presence of the labourers was not a problem at present. "Most of them only come into town to buy their provisions, while others come here visiting relatives and looking for work. "But work is hard to find here, so they drift out again and stay on the outskirts of town in their donkey carts. "They have a sort of "community" out there," he said. "About 30 families are camping near Helspoort, about 60 km. outside Beaufort West." (2)
I visited Helspoort in September. There were only three families, and one pensioner, Piet Witbooi, left of the 'community'. The household heads of the families all had chest problems or bad backs and were receiving disability grants. The others had all returned to their districts or been given work by farmers. There does not seem to be long term unemployment in agriculture and many farmers say there is generally a labour shortage.

Piet Witbooi

I am Piet Witbooi. I was born in 1911 on a farm in the Richmond district. My father was a shepherd who lived on the outpost. My mother worked for the 'madoor'in the kitchen for a few days. Then on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday she would go to the outpost to help my father - clear things away and wash clothes. Then she would go back to the farm. That's how we lived.

In those days the sheep weren't loose. You had to mind them. Now they walk free. You just have to get on a horse, collect them together, bring them to the kraal; and check for worms, check for lambs. That's why the people are unemployed today. They don't use shepherds anymore.

In those times we still had the privilege of keeping a few goats. If you had a cow you could keep that and at least you could get milk at the outpost. Today we can't keep anything. Not a goat, not a sheep, not even a donkey.

Five of us children are still alive. Four have died. Two died during the Great Flu. We were then in Graaff-Reinet, 'Miet die rondtravle'. First came the Martial law and then the Flu caught us there. My father died after the Flu. In about 1922. He was a shearer.

Then my mother travelled and travelled until she settled in Richmond in the town. There she took another man. That stepfather brought us up on the outpost. When he got sickly we went back to live in the town. We had to sell all our stock. Goats, donkeys, the cart, everything.

I was then a young man of twenty and travelled round with my uncle on the shear. That's how I learnt to shear, so that I was able to shear alone. Then I bought a bicycle and went around on that because we had sold the donkeys and the cart.

If/..
If you had work on a farm then you got two shillings a day, half a crown a day, but life was cheap. We paid just three shillings, three bob, for a bucket of meal. If we bought a sheep it was just 12 shillings. But today we have to pay R30.00, R40.00, R50.00 for a sheep to get a bit of decent meat.

Today it is much harder than before. In those days we also did not have to travel so much. Today people trek round in donkey cars but they don't get work. Work is scarce. Look, since machinery came in, the work is less. There were no tractors before. It was donkeys, mules, oxen, that ploughed. I was a "touleier" when I was small. We got sixpence a day. That's 15 shillings in a month.

Yes, in those days we didn't have to travel so far. This baas is looking for a boy so I work for him. The work is finished. Then the baas says the jobbies are finished, now let us square off. Then he pours out maybe a bucket of meal and says take this meal and take this coffee so that you have food for the road. You trek further. Maybe the nearest baas is looking for a man. Then you work there. When that's finished again, the baas says thank you, everything's finished. Let's square off. You get perhaps five pounds or ten pounds and you also get food for the road. We just have to travel like that from this baas to that baas until you can't anymore. Then you have to go to the government. I had to and now I get an old age pension.

It was while going from farm to farm on the shear that I came to the Andrews. I worked for them for 40 years. Old Mr Andrews was a great speculator, buying sheep, selling sheep, sending them off to Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Durban ... I used to herd his sheep to the auction in Richmond. When I returned the baas would send me to another auction, maybe in Carnarvon, where he's buy sheep and then I would bring the sheep back. That is how you worked for that baas. You had to do a full day's work. I used to go to the auctions in Hanover and Cradock and Colesburg, all over. Everywhere you went you had to go by foot and herd the sheep forward. There weren't the lorries to do the transporting. Today the lorries transport everything. There are no longer such things as shepherds and sheep drivers.

Yes, there are far fewer people on the farms as before. The shearer is just here during shearing. Then he goes. The baas fetches them in his bakkie and
when they are finished, he takes them back into town and pays them. When I had been working for a while, I would go to the baas and say:

"I want to go visiting in Richmond. I want to take money to my mother and family."

Then I take the money that I saved from my sock and go and buy a decent pants, a decent shirt and a decent pair of shoes. You could buy all that with a pound then. Not today. You can go into a shop with a hundred rand and when you come out you can hardly see how much you've bought. Now when I get to my mother, I give her what I've got left. That's how I lived and when my mother died, then I didn't go to Richmond anymore, but just stayed on the farm.

Then the kleinbaas came here to live about four years ago. The oubaas left everything to him. He says to me that no, he can't keep me because I can't give nicely anymore. My legs are finished. The mountains finished them. You can't go with a horse in the mountains. You have to walk to watch the sheep there, checking for insects.

So that's that. That's how I got here to Nelspoort. Baas Ackerman found me here. He asked me if I was getting a pension. I said no, I'm looking for a place where I can put my stuff down so that I can go into Coloured Affairs. The baas said that I could stay here and I went to town with him to get the pension.

Japie Morrie, his wife, both 24 and their two children, of four years, and four months were sitting on the side of the road near Nelspoort with a donkey cart, two donkeys and a dog.

Japie Morrie

I've come now from the farm Kammaskraal. We were "losmense", casual workers there, doing piece work, I could say. But the work is now finished and I must find another place where I can get work. We've been on the road since yesterday. We're going from farm to farm. I'd make it about a week, about 14 days/...
14 days, before we find a place. We are now four men on trek. Yes, four men sitting without work right now. I left the other three back there on the first farm from here.

With this cart there's myself, my wife and two children. They're four years and four months. I'm now 24 and so is my wife.

I was born on a farm in the district. We've always been in the district going round the farms. My father also trekked like this. I'm used to it. But if there is a better way out, better work or something, that meneer has, meneer must say. People have to struggle here. Even if work is good or bad, if we can just get a place where we can squat, if we can just survive, that's how things work here in the Karoo.

It's hard to escape from this life of trek. There's nothing to go to in the town. The problem is the house which you have to get there. And there are also no jobs now. That's the problem. So we have to go from farm to farm to look for work. Maybe you're lucky but it is just for a while. Then we have to go looking again. That's how they treat us in the Karoo.

The longest that I've been on a farm is four years eight months. In March I had to leave that farm. We had to because the veld was so dry. We were then nine men on the farm. Then the farmer says that there are too many of us and he has to pay out too much money. He only wants four men. Five must leave. He gives you nothing except the money you earned. Not even food for the road. Then you must be off his property as fast as possible.

Work is hard to find, very hard. Recently it has been a bit dry and the white people don't want to hire. I don't know now. It looks a bit greener again. We don't know. We must just trek and find out where we can get a place.

My father is a regular farm worker. He's been nine years on the farm where he is now. He gets R68.00 a week. He gets more than the other men. He's the old man on the farm. He works with the machinery and that sort of thing. I can also work with machinery. I've followed his footsteps. I can shear a little as well, but not so much. About 40 sheep a day during the long days. With the hand and the machine.

I've also got eight brothers and four sisters. They're all still living but only half are on trek around the Karoo. The other six have gone to Cape Town.
My last piece of work lasted a month and fourteen days. It paid R4.00 a day. Everyone pays R4.00 a day. Food on the farm is shop price, meat is shop price. You have to buy everything you want. The farmer gives you nothing. It costs R40.00 a sheep between four men. He does not even give you a house. You have to build your own sink house. He gives you nothing. You have to pay everything back to him. Only wood and water are free. Everything else you have to buy.

I would say that things were a bit better ten years ago because then they used to give you meat and meal and sugar for free. But now everything has changed. You have to buy everything out of the money he gives you, so he keeps all the money himself. It must all go back to him. This all happened about eight years ago. All the farmers changed. They stand together. They all eat out of the same spoon.

There are also some farmers that beat the volk that work for them. We've found those kind of whites. Those are not nice things. There are also days when you suffer from hunger there on the farm.

I've borrowed this cart from Filjan Jonkers. It's borrowed stuff. At any time they may have to go back to their owners. If I wanted to buy it, he would ask R60.00 for everything, cart and donkeys. You can go about 18 kms. per day with then. That's usually from one farm to the next one. It depends on how close the one farm is from the other. But you must work it that the donkeys can rest, that they can eat, that they get water so that they can trek for you again tomorrow.

Sometimes I go out and catch a porcupine to get some meat. The porcupine comes out at night. You catch them when there is moonlight. I've caught quite a few. To catch them, the dog has to find their spoor and when you hear the dog bark then it's a porcupine. Then you just kill him with your club. Then you go a bit further, find another one, kill him also. Then you take them back and the wife cleans them in the morning. Then they are cooked. A big porcupine can feed us, the whole family, for about four days.

Cape Town/...
"And how did you come to Cape Town?"

"I came in a sheep lorry. There was only one sheep on that lorry, just one sheep. Now the baas who picked me up next to the road, he takes that sheep and puts it in the front. Then he says I must sit in the back of the lorry. That's how I came to Cape Town."

Pieter Olifant starts to laugh. The old lady next to me says to me seriously "It's lies".

"It's not lies" laughs Pieter with no conviction.

He is 37 and unemployed. He is unmarried with four children. They stay with his grandmother in Rustdene. He left Beaufort West three years ago.

"I came to the Cape because there is no work in Beaufort. If you don't have work you've got to steal something, and then you've got to go to jail. That's no good man. I wasn't brought up like that."

In Cape Town he worked at the Royal Hotel living in the "boys and girls quarters". He then worked as a nightwatchman at a building site until he was sacked after being arrested for alleged drunkenness. Since then he has stayed at a night shelter, unemployed with no source of income.

Jan Duimpies also lives at the night shelter.

"I was born in 1943 in the old location in Beaufort West. I was at the St Mathews school. I went as far as standard six, but then unfortunately my mother could not afford it any more. I then began to work on construction. We built that scheme, the new location. Rustdene. That's my childhood."

"The only jobs that you can get are actually labourer jobs. If you don't have work on the railways or on a contract then the life is very hard. You go and work there and you don't even get ten rand a week sometimes. What can you do with a ten rand. That's why people come mostly to Cape Town .. for perhaps a better salary."

"I'm a long time here already, though every year I do go back home and then come back to my job. My mother and whole family are there. That's my younger/.."
younger brother and four sisters. Two is passed away. There is a sister here in Cape Town. She came last year. She's almost twenty."

Jan is unmarried. He has no children. He has lived in the dormitory at the night shelter more than three years.

"My father's sister's children live in Lavistown. Sometimes my sister and I go there to visit. My sister does house work. She came here and then a friend got a job for her."

He works for building contractors. Then I spoke to him, he had just been laid off.

"Especially now in the winter, you can't actually get work. They have to lay lots of us off because there is only inside work."

There is something Jan wants to tell me.

"Years ago, you won't believe me, but do you know Professor Chris Barnard?"

I say I've heard of him but have never met him.

"I know him personally. We were young then in the Canga River. Do you know he was our friend. We were always causing mischief. You know what we used to do. We went down into the river and there are these little frogs which we catch, Chris Barnard and us. I'm not lying to you, my friend. Then we tie their legs together, so that they jump. The same Chris Barnard. He's now a 'groothas'. We like each other. Why? Well, we used to mix so much, in their house and garden. 'Dank nog dani jere.' Today there is not that understanding anymore."

Since 1979, 55 migrants from Beaufort West have passed through the social work system at the night shelter ....... (names and dates have been changed).

8/10/79 Wilfred Duimpies (34)
Born Beaufort West. Mother, brother and sister alive in Beaufort West. Unmarried but one illegitimate daughter (7) to support

Home: born Beaufort West. Mother, brother and sister alive in Beaufort West. Unmarried but one illegitimate daughter (7) to support

Education: Standard 4

Employment: Building trade. Unemployed since September.

Finance: Nil for September

Law: R20.00 fine for assault.

Drink: Does drink, not much.
1/4/80 Mickey de Bruin (52)
Education: Standard 5
Employment: Had sleep-in job but employer went overseas 9 months ago.
finance: -
Law: loitering
Drink: denies drinking.

24/4/79 Pieter de Bruin (45)
Education: Standard 5
Employment: scullery boy at Hotel
Right arm fractured. Sleeps outside.

John Appies (35)
Home: Born Beaufort West. Sleeps in bush with girlfriend. Both arrested for squatting
Education: Standard 2

7/9/1979 Stanley Lottering (24)
Home: born Beaufort West. 3 months in Cape Town. Never married, but 1 illegitimate child (2 years)
Education: Standard 3
Employment: Vasco Hotel Bar boy - now unemployed
Law: stone-throwing and loitering
Drink: drinks.
Sleeps all over Cape Town.

Pieter /.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catrina Horrie</td>
<td>(1933)</td>
<td>born Beaufort West. All family there. Has worked Guano Islands</td>
<td>Standard 4</td>
<td>Labourer, gardener</td>
<td>4 times for loitering</td>
<td>No where to go.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Daniels</td>
<td>(1937)</td>
<td>born Beaufort West. Left when 13 for Cape Town alone.</td>
<td>Standard 3</td>
<td>Gets a disability grant</td>
<td>9 - 15 yrs for assault</td>
<td>drinks since 2 strokes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>married to Wister Daniels for past 18 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wants to return to Beaufort West.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Daniels</td>
<td>(1950)</td>
<td>Came from Beaufort West a year ago. Has grandmother here.</td>
<td></td>
<td>casual labour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Living rough for approximately 3 months.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Finck</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>born Beaufort West. Family there. Came to look for work</td>
<td>Standard 2</td>
<td>Farm labourer in Beaufort West + 2 years on Dairy farm.</td>
<td>Casual labourer, now unemployed. No work, no UIF and ID card.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26/10/31

Jan Daniels (1950)

Home: Came from Beaufort West a year ago. Has grandmother here. Living rough for approximately 3 months.

Employment: casual labour

No other problems.

10/7/79

Charles Finck (43)

Home: born Beaufort West. Family there. Came to look for work

Education: Standard 2

Employment: Farm labourer in Beaufort West + 2 years on Dairy farm. Casual labourer, now unemployed. No work, no UIF and ID card.

Bossie/...
25/5/81
Home: Bossie de Klerk (1952)
Born Beaufort West. 2 children (3 and 5) by Mira August in Beaufort West.
Education: Standard 2
Employment: butchery Beaufort West (R30.00 per month), Elizabeth Hotel gardener (R11.00 per month), at sea (R80.00 per month, waste paper for last year (R35.00 per month)
Law: assault 12 months

Baba de Klerk (Bossie's sister)
Home: born Beaufort West. Never married No children
Education: Standard 3
Drink: All the time.
Lived with Bossie but he no longer has a place.

16/6/80
Martha Solomons (24)
Home: Born Beaufort West. In Cape Town ~ 3 years. Went back to Beaufort West for 4 months. Lost job. 2 children (5 + 3) gets support for 1.
Education: Standard 4
Employment: 2 char jobs a week.
No place to sleep
17/8/82 N back. Lost job.

20/3/80
Nico Maans (28)
Home: Born Beaufort West. Never married but 5 illegitimate children + 2 women (1 in Beaufort West, 1 in Cape Town) Supports all. In Cape town for 3 years.
Education: Standard 4
Employment: Casual labourer (irregular)
Drink: drinks - but no meths.
1/9/82 Lost eye in stabbing incident ~ 4 months ago. Left hand also affected. Now can't work.

Abraham/...
Abraham Samuels (20)
18/10/79
Home: born Beaufort West (uncle of Lena), co-habits with Sarah September in Beaufort West. 3 children (4, 3 and 2 years old) Arrived 3 days ago from Beaufort West to look for work
Education: Standard 1
Employment: unemployed since April
Law: Assault 2 years ago
Drink: drinks.

Lena Samuels (25)
7/11/81
Home: born Beaufort West. Mother and 3 children there.
Education: Standard 3
Employment: casual
15/11/81
Smelling of drink. Friends with Martha Norrie and others well-known to night shelter

Martha Norrie (44)
6/6/79
Home: Born Beaufort West. never married. 1 illegitimate child 23 years old.
Education: Standard 4
Law: Several convictions for drunkenness. Was in De Nova. Hopeless alcoholic. Part of Beaufort West gang and drinks with the crowd.
20/12/79
Son in law and daughter came to fetch her - very respectable.
1/12/32
Came from De Nova last week.

Margaret Jacobs (16)
15/10/30
Home: born Beaufort West. Parents there. Not married. No children Came to Cape Town for work as a domestic - unsuccessful
Education: Standard 4
Has been sleeping with Elsie Jacobs in yards in Porter St Desperate for accommodation. Very decent. Does not fit here.

Elsie/...
16/5/80  Elsie Jacobs (29)
Education: Standard 7
Employment: Domestic
Law: Loitering
Drink: Drinks
Sleeps in backyard with Lena Samuels

27/11/82  Anna September (1958)
Home: born Beaufort West (10 children in family) no work in Beaufort West
Education: Standard 6 - very bright person. Fluent english.
Employment: kitchen work
related to Lena (a pro who "works" Main Rd) Will start work unless she gets work.
No documents, no papers.
25/1/83 Has drifted into Lena's set-up.
This survey was done over 14 days in September 1983.

It's aims were:

a) To determine income patterns of 'coloureds' in Beaufort West relative to the MLL and SLL, as an indicator of the extent of absolute poverty;

b) To determine employment (by type and industry) and unemployment;

c) To collect data helpful in analysing what variables have a strong bearing on poverty;

d) To calculate the magnitude of immigration to Beaufort West from farms and smaller towns and from Beaufort West to the cities.
THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey questionnaire was based on the standard Carnegie poverty study questionnaire with a few additional questions on migration, income and personal history.

Respondents were requested to furnish information under the main headings set out below.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD AND OTHER PERSONS LIVING WITH THE HOUSEHOLD
- relationship to household head, sex, age, marital status, education, occupation and religious denomination.

EMPLOYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF WORKING AGE
- the number regularly employed, casually employed, unemployed, and not economically active; job type and sector of employment.

INCOME DATA
- salaries and wages, maintenance and disability grants and pensions, payments from boarders, remittances from family members living elsewhere, profits from own business, any contributions in cash and kind.

MIGRATION DATA
- birthplace of household head and year of arrival in Beaufort West, details of all the children of household heads over 18 and their city/town / district of residence.

HOUSING PARTICULARS
- number of rooms, rent, possession of television and / or car.
THE SAMPLE

A sample of 160 households was taken from the 'coloured' suburbs of Rustdene, Newlands, Hooyvlakte and Newtown. The sample frame was a Municipal map showing house stands. A number was given to each stand and 160 numbers were randomly chosen from them.

The total number of developed stands in the sampled area was 2083, slightly less than the total number of coloured households in the town, namely 2215. The additional houses were widely scattered, usually unmarked on the map and statistically insignificant. They were thus excluded.

The percentage of households approached with the survey was 7.68%. A random sample of 160 households should ensure a confidence co-efficient of 95% that the sample mean be within approximately 5% (+ or -) of the unknown population mean.
RELIABILITY OF THE RESULTS

1) All the interviews were done by the researcher and thus the problems involved in selecting and employing other interviewers was avoided.

2) Non-response error. Non-response amounted to 6 questionnaires, or 3.75 percent of the survey. 2 households refused to answer questions. 4 were away (2 in search of work in Johannesburg and the Boland, 1 to Windhoek for medical treatment, 1 on holiday.)

3) Response error. 3 completed questionnaires were rejected because the information furnished was obviously incorrect. But even in the adequately completed questionnaires inaccurate reporting resulting from memory errors, misunderstanding of questions and people's perception of the interviewer. A number of respondents in Newlands refused to give information on income but this was not a problem because it was clearly above the MLL and SLL.
A SUMMARY OF THE PERTINENT RESULTS

POPULATION

1) Of the 152 households from which adequate information was received, 113 had male household heads (74.3 percent) and 39 had female household heads (25.7 percent).

2) 1007 people were resident in these houses. 483 (48.0 percent) were male and 524 (52.0 percent) were female.

3) 180 males (37.3 percent of the male population) and 142 females (27.1 percent of the female population) were economically active. The total economically active population was thus 322, i.e. 32.0 percent.

4) The non-economically active population was made up of 500 children of 16 and younger, or still at school (49.7 percent of total population) 67 housewives (6.7 percent), 71 old age pensioners (7.1 percent) and 47 people unable to work due to illness or disability (4.7 percent).
Table A summarizes the employment / unemployment situation in September 1983 (as indicated by the survey of 160 houses) and also in February 1982 (according to the Municipal census.) The table suggests that male unemployment has fallen 5,5 percent over the period and female unemployment has risen 5,2 percent. Most of the rise in female unemployment would seem to be due to the difference in female economic participation rates.

**TABLE A**

**EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1983 Survey</th>
<th></th>
<th>1982 Municipal Census</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically active population</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>60,9</td>
<td>4494</td>
<td>75,28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>32,4</td>
<td>1662</td>
<td>59,45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>33,3</td>
<td>2832</td>
<td>34,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly employed</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>60,9</td>
<td>3383</td>
<td>75,28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32,4</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>59,45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>33,3</td>
<td>2395</td>
<td>34,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casually employed</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13,4</td>
<td>1013</td>
<td>22,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21,8</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>40,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6,7</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>15,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>25,8</td>
<td>1013</td>
<td>22,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>45,6</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>40,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10,0</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>15,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female economic participation Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td>67,9</td>
<td></td>
<td>58,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To give an indication of the level of absolute poverty, the total income of each household in September, 1983 was compared with the weighted average MLL's and SLL's for all 'coloured' households for August 1983 calculated by P. J. Nel of the Unisa Bureau of Market Research. These were as follows.

**TABLE B.**

**WEIGHTED AVERAGE MLL AND SLL FOR ALL COLOURED AREAS AUGUST 1983**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Household</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8+ Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLL (in Rands)</td>
<td>137.67</td>
<td>180.62</td>
<td>221.89</td>
<td>264.44</td>
<td>326.59</td>
<td>384.56</td>
<td>460.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLL (in Rands)</td>
<td>179.99</td>
<td>231.23</td>
<td>283.73</td>
<td>338.13</td>
<td>415.55</td>
<td>496.04</td>
<td>582.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Unisa DIR Research report No 105 (1)

Although this weighted average was only drawn up on the basis of households in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, the levels for Beaufort West are unlikely to be very different though they might well be higher because prices of commodities are generally higher in Beaufort West than the City.
Table C shows the number of households in Beaufort West with incomes below and above the YLL and SLL.

**TABLE C**

MULTIPLE HOUSEHOLDS BELOW AND ABOVE THE YLL AND SLL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Y YLL</th>
<th></th>
<th>Y SLL</th>
<th></th>
<th>Y SLL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Mr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963 Survey -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-headed households</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male-headed households</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All households</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theron commission (1974)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-headed households</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male-headed households</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All households</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of households considered was 147 which is 5 less than the 152 adequate respondents. These 5 were single households i.e. 1 person.

The YLL used by the Theron Commission in May 1974 was also calculated by the Unisa BHR (2). It would seem thus that the number of households below the YLL has decreased markedly by more than 20 percent since then. This is at variance with other poverty indicators like infant mortality rates.
MIGRATION

Tables D and E detail the number of household head who have moved to Beaufort West from elsewhere, how long they have been in Beaufort West and their birthplace as an indicator of migration trends. 4 households were not able to furnish these details because the household head was absent. i.e. only 148 household heads are considered.

TABLE D
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN BEAUFORT WEST - HOUSEHOLD HEADS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Since birth 30 years +</th>
<th>20 years +</th>
<th>10 years +</th>
<th>5 years +</th>
<th>5 years total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE E
BIRTHPLACE OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaufort West town</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm in Beaufort West dist.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm in Murraysburg dist.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm in Victoria West dist.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm in other districts</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other towns</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                       | 148    | 100%       |
Table F gives an indication of migration away from Beaufort West and the places to which people migrate.

**TABLE F**

**CHILDREN OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS AND THEIR PLACE OF RESIDENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Number (over 18)</th>
<th>Percentage (over 18)</th>
<th>Number (over 21)</th>
<th>Percentage (over 21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaufort West</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>54,5%</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>54,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Town</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>23,9%</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>23,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boland</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8,9%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9,72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witwatersrand</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3,8%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3,45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8,9%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8,76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>367</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>424</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOOTNOTES

ECONOMY AND MYTHOLOGY

1) Unattributed quote in The History of Beaufort West, unpublished author unknown p.3

2) J.L. Sadie Die Saak van ten gunste van Beaufort-Wes vir die toekenning van nywerheidsontwikkelingpuntvoordele, unpublished 1982 P.2

3) Unpublished regional statistics report.

4) SATS informed me that they had 530 white employees and 1324 'coloured' employees in 1983 which make up approximately 25 percent and 30 percent of the white and coloured male work force respectively.

5) Unpublished regional statistics report. All GGP and sector shares come from this.

6) Ibid

7) According to the General Manager SATS in Beaufort West. He did not have any statistics


9) 'The Courier' 6 July 1970


12) Municipal census summary.


14) Ibid p.5


1) M.G & S Vivier, 1969 p. 127
2) Ibid p. 125
3) Minutes of the Management committee. February, April and September 1983.
4) Municipal census
5) Ibid.
6) According to the housing superintendent.
7) Ibid.
9) Bureau of Market research (UNISA), "Income and Expenditure patterns of Coloureds in Upington and Beaufort West." UNISA 1975 p.1
10) According to my survey. See appendix.
11) Information from the Department of Internal Affairs
12) P. Nel, The minimum and supplemented living levels of non-whites residing in the main and other selected urban areas of the Republic of South Africa. Bureau of Market Research (UNISA) 1983 P.4 and P.10
13) Municipal census
14) Munisipaliteit - Beaufort-West Jaarlikse Gesondheidsverslag, 1983 Appendix
17) "Courier" 11 September 1970
18) Die Burger, 11 January 1982
19) Weekend Argus 12 April 1983
20) M.G. and S. Vivier, 1969 p. 129
'THE LOCATION'

1) Untitled social work priorities report 1983 p.2
2) Ibid P.1
3) Figure from Eastern Cape Administration Board.
4) Article headed "Sports complex opened" in 'Umso', Eastern Cape Administration Board 1983 p. 3
5) All the information in this section is based on interviews with the workers involved, except the letters which I got from other sources.

NELSPOORT

1) The Sunday Times, June 19, 1983
2) A Kooy, "Farm labour in the Karoo" in F Wilson, A. Kooy, D. Hendrie (eds) Farm Labour in South Africa, David Philip, 1977

APPENDIX

1) E. Theron Chairman 1976 P. 51
2) P. Nel, 1983 p. 4 and 10.
These papers constitute the preliminary findings of the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, and were prepared for presentation at a Conference at the University of Cape Town from 13-19 April, 1984.

The Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa was launched in April 1982, and is scheduled to run until June 1985.

Quoting (in context) from these preliminary papers with due acknowledgement is of course allowed, but for permission to reprint any material, or for further information about the Inquiry, please write to:

SALDRU
School of Economics
Robert Leslie Building
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7700