

## Apartheid at work

is young looking. He tells me he had been in the army for six years. He is concerned about the "terrorist" activity of the ANC (African National Congress) reaching the urban centres. Only last year the ANC had struck a sub-power station in Pretoria.

Urban political violence has many Whites worried. Once the downtown business areas become vulnerable to bomb attacks the white community will no longer feel that it is invincible.

While Pretoria is a clean and organized city there is an air of distance from reality. As in Ottawa, civil servants pour out in droves, form lines at the bus stops and within a short period the city core begins to look deserted. At the bus stops there are benches marked "WHITE BUS PASSENGERS ONLY." The buses are exclusively for Whites and driven by white bus drivers!

### An Asian view

One evening we drive south from Johannesburg to Lenasia — Land of Asia! This place is home to about 200,000 Asians. Asians working in downtown Johannesburg have to make about a 30-kilometre trip each way by car or take the train. As one drives along the highway to Lenasia one sees the signs for Soweto. Immediately one is filled with images of funerals, rock-throwing and clenched fists. One becomes a little nervous. We approach closer. One sees rows of neatly arranged houses. Smiling children. No funeral or a demonstration today. One crosses the highway to Lenasia and one sees opulence. This is no Soweto. One sees street lights, while back across the highway there are those overhead lights that light up whole areas. The meaning is clear: the Asians are the buffer zone

between the Blacks and the Whites. The display of material well-being is a daily reminder to residents of Soweto across the highway, while the luxury of the Whites is hidden away in the northern parts of Johannesburg.

I spend the evening with an Asian family. The sons tell me that a growing number of Asians, especially the young ones, are identifying with the political goals of the ANC and the black majority. I am told once again that the House of Delegates for Asians does not have the confidence of the Asian community. Only 4 percent of the eligible voters cast their votes.

A tricameral Parliament was created under a new Constitution which came into force in late 1984. Under the new arrangement Whites are represented by a House of Assembly, Coloreds by a House of Representatives and Asians by a House of Delegates. The majority of the population — the Blacks — have no elective chamber.

The Lenasia family informs me that no substantial reforms have taken place. There is a lot of talk to appease the international community, but no action is being taken on the domestic front. One of the sons went to watch a rugby match with some of his white coworkers earlier this year. He, not being White, was turned away from sitting with his white coworkers.

There is almost universal feeling that the situation in South Africa is going to get much worse before it improves. There is no immediate danger of civil war but it is approaching. The feeling is that unless the international community — especially the West — undertakes to bring about a negotiated settlement through the aegis of an international constitutional conference, South Africa is poised on the brink of a bloodbath unlike any yet seen on the continent. □

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