

AM6

BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACT

(BLA)

Rev. "AM 64"

INTRO: The aim of this pamphlet is just to tell you about the BLA and its background and NOT to deal with possible ways of organising against the new "Town Council" system.

Before the 1976 June revolts, the townships were controlled by the administration boards and their puppets, the "URBAN BANTU" Councils.

After and during the 1976 revolts these Urban Bantu Councils came under heavy attack from the people. As a result administration offices were burnt down and the councillors on the councils were forced to resign.

The government realised that they were losing their control over the townships and so they introduced the "Community Council" system.

These community councils operated only in African urban areas ..

These community councils had very little power. EVEN THOUGH they could distribute houses and administer sport and libraries, everything they did was still subject to the wish of the Department of Co-operation and Development.

2/ ... The community

The Community council system was not a successful one. The voting percentage in the 1977 Community Council elections show that their popular support was very little. Soweto had a poll of 6%, Port Elizabeth had a poll of 11% and Daveyton and Kwa Thema had 19% each.

The community council system was obviously a failure. This forced the government to look for another method to control the townships.

They came up with the Black Local Authorities Act. The Act provided for elections to be held for councillors to form a Town or Village Council.

These town councils will replace the existing community councils.

The government says that these new "councils" will give people in the townships more control over their own affairs. However when one looks at the powers which the new town councils have it is easy to see that they too will be puppets dancing to Pretoria's tune.

The Act gives Town councils the powers to :-

- 1) provide and maintain services like water, electricity and sewerage
- 2) the clearing of squatter settlements
- 3) the distribution of housing and lastly the power to form their own kind of police force.

They do NOT have the powers to decide on transport or education. In any event the Minister of Co-operation and Development has the power to :-

- 1) establish or dissolve a council
- 2) change the status, size or even the jurisdiction of the council
- 3) give them any extra powers
- 4) appoint councillors to vacancies on the council
- 5) appoint local committees where no councils exist
- 6) announce elections and lay down election procedures
- 7) authorise all budgets and money matters of the council
- 8) intervene in the matters of the council whenever he wants to.

He can even remove councillors from office or dissolve the council.

It is important to note that these Town Councils are meant to be able to support themselves.

So it is clear that there is no control being given to township residents.

It is also clear that there is no democracy in the way that the councils are meant to operate.

HOW DO THE POWERS GIVEN TO BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITIES
DIFFER FROM THE POWERS GIVEN TO WHITE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITY

1. Can let houses and collect rentals.
2. Has no power and control over transport.
3. Budget must be approved by Minister. Minister can also reject their budget.
4. Can charge residents for water and lights only.
5. Has no control over education.

WHITE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. Can buy land, build houses and rent or sell houses.
2. Has its own transport system and full control over buses.
3. Prepares and approves its own budget.
4. Can build facilities for all services and can also charge residents for all services.

5/... WHAT WILL

WHAT WILL THE BLACK LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACT
MEAN TO RESIDENTS :

1. As these Town Councils have to support themselves, the councils will have to get the money from the residents. So they will probably :-
 - (i) make rents higher
 - (ii) make site and service charges higher.
2. It means that residents will still have no control over the conditions in which they live.
- 3) It means that if there is dissatisfaction with living conditions in the townships the residents will be more likely to see the Town Councils as a target than the government.

CONCLUSION:

Township residents are now being asked to finance and administer the terrible conditions in which they live.

The town councillors of the town councils will be the new "administrators" and will certainly prove to be no better than the last bunch of community councillors.

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