

Julia Wells (Additional research and compilation by **Sue Krige**): *We have done with pleading The women's 1913 anti-pass campaign* History workshop Topic series 3, (JHB Ravan Press, 1991). Dedication etc viii, 43 pp. illustrations, historical sources, further reading and acknowledgements. ISBN 0869754157.

A flood of books in which interviews with women about certain facets of their lives are published, have appeared on the South African market the past few years, e.g. *Vukani makhosikazi South African women speak* edited by Ingrid Obery (CIIR 1985); *Women of Phokeng* by Belinda Bozzoli (Raven Press 1991); *Vir 'n stukkie brood dokumentasie* deur Sandra Kriel (Minotaurus 1983) to name a few. *We have done with pleading* joins these ranks – and historians of the future may consider some of these

as primary sources if the material as such is used without necessarily taking the editors points of view into consideration.

The fact that conversations were not taped in *We have done with pleading* is a lacuna as also indicated by Julia Wells in the 'Dedication' p.viii. Photographic material is relevant, although that of women protesting outside the Bloemfontein Town Hall is used three times!

The author presupposes certain knowledge e.g. "Woman's Day" 9 August, as referred to in the 'Dedication'. Some background is necessary, where did this originate and is it still celebrated? On p. 40 a photo of the women demonstrating at the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 is published – is this perhaps where 'Women's day' originated?

Julia Wells writes in the "Dedication" that this book is meant as a "tribute to Lilian and countless others" and readers should keep in mind that no pretence is made of objectivity. On p. 1 the statement is made that "Because they had to carry passes, African and coloured women could be stopped, molested or assaulted anywhere at any time of day or night by policemen". The compiler does not explain why carrying a pass gave the police the license to "molest or assault" the women. On p. 21 it is stated that the women planned not to carry passes again until the police were ordered to behave more decently towards them, and on the same page reference is made to the 600 angry women who "paraded singing, shouting and dancing" into town and "They beat up the police who tried to stop them". To a casual reader it would seem that the police had a raw deal!

Unsubstantiated remarks are made, e.g. on p. 5 where "a striker" is quoted without any indication of the source; and on p. 16 where Sol Plaatjie is quoted without reference. On p. 18 "Katie Louw" is referred to without explanation who she is – only five pages later, on p. 23 the reader is told that she is the daughter of the Anglican minister. On p. 35 reference is made to "one historian", it would be academically more acceptable to know *who* this historian is.

Some sweeping statements are not sufficiently explained. On p. 6 in the box on "passes" is said that "... passes were used to force people to work for whites". On p. 13 the disclaimer follows that "The Bloemfontein Town Council never stated directly that it wished to force women into domestic service. Instead it said that passes for women were needed to detect and control "bad" women – prostitutes and illegal beer brewers in the locations." It was only in the Free State that black women were forced to carry passes. It is of interest that the women arrested for 'passive resistance' came from fourteen different black ethnic groups ..." The issue on p. 12 that "The council also tried to control the black population by demanding that they carry compulsory residential passes, and imposing special permits on just about everything from renting a house to owning a dog, to brewing beer at home" is not sufficiently analysed. Surely whites also had to get the necessary permission to rent houses, and had to pay dog taxes, etc? One of the

pitfalls of this type of book is that it is inclined to lose an ordinary balanced viewpoint.

To call this "a booklet", as on p. 2, is correct but proofreading and general care could be better. On p. 4 the spelling or typing error "January"; and "attorney" on p. 26 should be corrected. It is very frustrating that the text is repeatedly interrupted in mid-sentence by illustrations or asides without any indication that the main text will continue a few pages later.

Dione Prinsloo

University of South Africa

Diana Wylie: *A Little God: The Twilight of Patriarchy in a Southern African Chieftdom.* (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1991.) pp. 278. Sagteband, ISBN 1-86814-172-1. R50-55.

In 1948 het 'n huwelik tussen twee mense plaasgevind wat die wêreld lank daarna nog aan die praat gehad het. Dit was naamlik die huwelik van Seretse Khama, aangewese opvolger van die Bamangwato-stam in Botswana, met Ruth Williams, 'n sekretaresse wat werksaam was by die Lloyd's versekeringsmaatskappy in Londen. Gemengde huwelike was omtrent ongehoord in daardie dae, en die verleentheid wat dit vir die Britse, Suid-Afrikaanse en Rhodesiese regerings veroorsaak het, word weerspieël deur die feit dat Seretse 'n pensioen van 2 200 Britse pond per jaar asook 'n diplomatieke pos in die Bahamas aangebied is in ruil vir sy vrywillige afstanddoening as opvolger van die Bamangwato. Seretse het geweier, afgesien van die feit dat 'n Britse kommissie van ondersoek reeds aanbeveel het dat die afwesigheid van Seretse in Botswana gewens was weens die moontlike dispuete wat onder die Bamangwato kon ontstaan weens hierdie gemengde huwelik. Die gevolg was dat hy tot in 1956 uit Botswana verban is, waarna hy as private individu kon terugkeer. Hierna het Seretse hom binne die konstitusionele raamwerk begin opwerk en is hy later verkies as die leier van die Demokratiese Party. Op 3 Maart 1965 is hy aangestel as premier na sy party wat 28 van die 31 moontlike setels in die verkiesing verower het. Met die onafhanklikwording van Botswana in 1966, is Seretse Khama aangestel as die eerste president. Wat hy verloor het as erflike leier, het hy dus wettiglik teruggewen op politieke gebied.

Wylie se boek, wat gebaseer is op 'n doktorsale proefskrif, fokus hoofsaaklik op die gebeure binne en om die patriargale Bamangwato stam in die 25 jaar voor onafhanklikheid onder Tshekedi Khama, 'n oom van Seretse wat as regent aangewys is na die dood van Sekgoma II in 1921. Die jong Seretse was toe nog nie eers vyf jaar oud nie, en Tshekedi sou moes regeer tot tyd en wyl Seretse gereed was om die leiers oor te neem. In hierdie tyd het Seretse in Suid-Afrika skoolgegaan, 'n tyd lank aan Fort Hare gestudeer waarna hy Engeland toe is vir verdere studie. Sy lang afwesigheid en huwelik met Ruth het interne woelinge binne die geledele van die tradisionele Bamangwato ontkenen wat uiteindelik uitgeloop het op ernstige meningsverskille tussen hom en Tshekedi.