

LESSON FROM GANDHI

Passive Protest In Africa

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa —Passive resistance to imperialist oppression is raising its voice again in South Africa where Mohandas Gandhi first experimented with the movement.

Dr. Alfred Xuma, noted African medical practitioner and leader in the fight for the emancipation of the African people, stated this week that passive resistance will probably become widespread among the native population.

"South African natives have learned through bitter experience not to attempt to fight the white man in his own way," Xuma said. "We have no arms. All we can do is fight with the one weapon we have; the stubborn determination to achieve a better life for our people."

Patients Mostly White

The noted African medic whose practice is principally among the prejudiced whites of South Africa came to America in 1930, was graduated from Tuskegee Institute, Ala., finished Marquette University in Wisconsin and Northwestern Medical School in Chicago.

Samuel Insull, late public magnate, became interested in Xuma while the latter was in Chicago, and sent him to Vienna where he attended leading medical post-graduate schools. He continued post-graduate study in Scotland, from where he returned to Africa.

In discussing the plight of his countrymen under British rule, Xuma said that at present the population lacks the organization

necessary to carry out a resistance campaign, but that in the last 18 months there have been indications that they are beginning to rebel collectively against their condition. **A "Squat" Strike**

Inadequate streetcar and bus services operated in Johannesburg for them have been boycotted. Only two weeks ago more than 1,000 Negroes squatted for 10 days in a communal area of a native suburb outside Johannesburg in protest against the acute housing shortage they are suffering.

"We have a long road before us," said the native leader. "In the United States racial prejudice is a symptom confined to individuals, but here it's nationwide, the whole principle of government being one of discrimination.

"Discrimination was conceived here by the Afrikaner pioneer, but it's quietly been taken up and nourished by the British. They could uproot it if they so desired. Instead they go on reaping the rich benefits from it."

Xuma said that through a careful study of legislation one can see what the South African Negro faces.

What Negro Faces

Despite the fact the Negroes outnumber the whites 4 to 1, they are allowed only to elect four members out of 44 in the union senate. They also elect three members to the Cape provincial council. All their delegates must be white. No Negro is allowed a seat in either house.

The land act of 1913, passed three years after South Africa became a British dominion, fixed by law areas in which the natives could purchase or hold land. Recently steps were taken by the government to enlarge native holdings by 15,000,000 acres. If and when all this addition is turned over to them, 8,000,000 natives will have 13 per cent of South Africa's total area, while 2,000,000 whites control the remainder.

Urban natives face similar discrimination. The urban areas act of 1923 adopted the already recognized principle that, Negro and white areas must be separate. It directed municipal authorities to choose the areas for the natives, appoint officials to manage them, and control the number of natives living therein. Further amendments nine years ago gave local authorities the power to remove from such areas any unemployed natives. The act also prohibits the natives from ever acquiring ownership of a plot of ground in such a location, compelling them to be renters all their lives.

Other laws successfully prevent the Negro from ever achieving a good paying position. White trade unions have forced the government to pass the "color bar act" which provides that no person may do

skilled work without a government certificate. The same act prohibits the granting of certificates to Negroes. Other laws effectively prevent Negroes from organizing their own trade unions or strikes.

Every Negro Taxed

Even the lowest paid Negro does not escape taxation. Under an act passed in 1925 every adult male must pay \$4 a year as poll tax. If convicted of non-payment, a native commissioner can force the Negro to take work at wages prevailing in the district, then the tax is deducted.

The "pass laws," originally created in pioneer days to give the fearsome whites control over the natives, today serve additionally to immobilize Negro labor and prevent it seeking to advance its position, thereby insuring a plentiful supply of cheap labor which is the basis of South African economy. Here is how the laws work:

A native wishing to travel from one area of the country to another must obtain a travel permit from a native commissioner's office. If he is coming to Johannesburg to look for work he must immediately upon arriving obtain a pass from the office here, allowing him to seek a position. Such a pass expires in six days, but may be renewed at the discretion of the pass office. If he is unable to find a job, he must sign a contract of service with some employer, which he must carry at all times or be subject to arrest.

If he is out after the 11 p.m. curfew he must have additionally written permission from his employer to be on the streets. Finally he must have a receipt showing he paid his annual poll tax.

The net effect of this total legislation is that the Negro faces a blank wall whichever way he turns in his fight to earn a living.