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An Appeal to thinking South Africans

A Fresh Attempt to Understand and Uproot an Old Evil

THE PASS LAW AS AT PRESENT ADMINISTERED IS A SYSTEM WHICH EDUCATES THOUSANDS OF YOUNG MEN IN CRIME.

"For very little general advantage—for they can be and are very easily 'got around' by the clever Native criminal—these laws are causing vast expenditure of public money, are congesting the Magistrates' Courts, filling the prisons, demoralising the police force in its contact with Natives, destroying imprisonment as an effective sanction against real crime, and undermining one of the most valuable and useful Bantu characteristics—respect for law and its agents."—*Professor Edgar H. Brookes in "Coming of Age."*

CONSIDER:

1. That EVERY YEAR OVER 40,000 NATIVE MEN AND BOYS IN SOUTH AFRICA SPEND A LONGER OR SHORTER PERIOD IN GAOL, THEIR ONLY OFFENCE BEING FAILURE TO HAVE A CERTAIN PIECE OF PAPER IN THEIR POSSESSION WHEN STOPPED BY THE POLICE.

2. That THE MAIN BUSINESS OF PROTECTING LIFE AND PROPERTY IS NEGLECTED, while Police inspect Native Passes on the street corners.

Meanwhile SERIOUS CRIME IS INCREASING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

LIBERATE THE POLICE FOR THEIR REAL JOB!

3. That THE NATIVE IS RAPIDLY LOSING RESPECT FOR THE LAW OF THE WHITE MAN.

THE STIGMA WHICH ATTACHES TO "GOING TO GAOL" AMONGST CIVILIZED PEOPLE IS BEING REMOVED by hustling thousands of Natives into gaol for what can only technically be termed "offences."

INNOCENT NATIVES, BY GAOL CONTACTS AND BY THE BITTERNESS ENGENERED BY THEIR TREATMENT, ARE BEING TURNED INTO CRIMINALS.

4. The Pass Laws are a CHIEF CAUSE OF NATIVE UNREST.

DO THE PASS LAWS PROTECT AGAINST CRIME?

The Clever Native criminal LAUGHS at the Pass Laws.

His passes are always in perfect order.

He bribes another Native or a white man to register him at the Pass Office, where he gets his "big pass."

He pays the monthly pass fees himself.

He forges his "special" and night passes, or someone does it for him.

Thus the Native criminal passes freely through the police pass-searchers.

For one criminal discovered by examination of passes, dozens of innocent Natives are introduced to crime through being compelled to associate with criminals in gaol.

The CAPE PROVINCE has no "Pass System."

THE ONLY REAL USE OF THE PASS IS AS A MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION.

For this purpose the present *multiplicity of passes* is quite unnecessary.

1. There should be a SINGLE CERTIFICATE to serve the purposes of a passport.
2. This should contain all the information necessary fully to identify the owner, and should be replaceable at a small charge.
3. The Police should be empowered to demand the Identification Certificate only when engaged in *definite investigation of crime*.

This would: (a) Liberate the police for other and more important work.

(b) Do away with the congestion in the lower Courts.

(c) Empty the gaols of hundreds of Natives who have committed no real crime.

(d) Remove a chief cause of Native unrest.

4. A single certificate of this nature was proposed by the *Inter-Departmental Pass Law Committee* of 1920.

WHY DON'T WE GET THIS REFORM?

The Government has power, without further reference to Parliament, to *modify the Pass Laws* by regulation.

The Native Affairs Department has declared itself ready to go as far as public opinion will allow.

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

APPEAL TO THE MEMBER FOR YOUR
CONSTITUENCY TO PRESS FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION.

THE INTEREST OF BOTH EUROPEAN AND NATIVE DEMANDS THAT THE PASS
SYSTEM BE MODIFIED.

Issued by—The Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans
and Natives.

The Witwatersrand Church Council.
The Transvaal Missionary Association.