

The Dilemma of Foreign Investment in South Africa

A TALK GIVEN BY JOEL CARLSON

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As the first speaker on this panel it is necessary to place squarely to you what the real dilemma is for any good man who asks the question.

Should I invest in South Africa?

Should I continue my investment in South Africa?

If the question only concerns the profitability of the undertaking no more need be said. There are few areas where more profit out of cheap labour can be made so obviously for a profiteer, in profit terms, the answer is simply "Yes". But I am not concerned with such exploiters.

Today the answer is not gained without an examination of the framework of South Africa.

In 1961 South Africa became a Republic. It is governed by a Parliament of 166 members — all white, elected by white voters in South Africa and South West Africa — Namibia.

The latest population of this area is just below 22 000 000. The voters on the roll number 2 028 000. In 1971, 1 495 000 voters voted for the 4 white parties.

96,5% of this electorate voted for apartheid or white supremacist rule. 3,5% voted for a few moderate changes within the framework, and returned one moderate conservative politician more on her personality than her party's platform. The whole electorate wish the status quo maintained but differ in details of the application of white rule.

White rule is enshrined not only in the Republican Constitution. race classification is part and parcel of the law and framework of society. Every person born, alive and dead is classified. Blacks are classified further according to race, tribal origin, place of resid-

ence, finger prints, etc. Even voting rights and a voting record is to be kept. The delay in implementing all this is that the Government has yet to computerize it. I do not know whether the computer will be supplied by English, French or American firms.

The residence and regimentation of Blacks as migrant labour units is enforced by Pass Laws. Pass Laws make crimes of a unique kind — crime relating to skin colour, crimes committed only by Blacks. Over a ten-year period, 8 000 000 out of the 15 000 000 Black population has been arrested and jailed under the Pass Laws.

Every day, 365 days a year, an average of 2 500 Africans are arrested under the Pass Laws and brought to an average two-minute hearing of their trial in Court. The yearly total is at least 750 000.

The daily average prison population on latest figures is 90 555. In Britain it is 38 000. Britain's population is 55 000 000; South Africa's is 22 000 000.

In 1969, 4 000 mothers with babies were admitted to prison — African mothers as Pass Law offenders.

25 000 lashes are inflicted as corporal punishment; 24 663 on Blacks.

47% of the world's hanging take place in South Africa, which for years has held the world's record in hanging people.

455 policemen have been convicted of assault in South Africa for 1, 2, 3 or 4 convictions and everyone of them retained in the police force. In Britain, 7 policemen out of 96 000 were convicted for assault over the same period and all 7 dismissed.

Punishment without trial, arbitrary arrest, and detention is an everyday occurrence.

That people should be punished without charge or trial is repugnant to all men in civilized societies. In South Africa it is necessary to uphold the society and an essential part of the framework. 1 000 people have been banned, house-arrested, banished without any charge or trial. After people have been punished by Courts, or acquitted by Courts, the Security Police still revenge themselves on these people, ban them, harrass and intimate them and try to destroy their morale. 17 people are known to have died while in detention.

Indefinite detention in solitary confinement incommunicado is imposed at the discretion of the Security Police. Detainees are questioned interminably and allegations of torture have been frequently made. It has been said by authority that 7 of those who died hanged themselves while police have said of the other deaths that "they slipped on a piece of soap", "fell down stairs", "slipped in the showers" and one we know jumped from the seventh floor window of his interrogation room. Ahmed Timol died in a fall from a 10th floor window.

In the richest land in Africa with a storehouse of mineral wealth making it a land of great promise, what has 50 years of economic development and growth achieved? In its great mining and industrial enterprise, what is the record?

1969 in mining, Whites received an average income pre month of \$416, Black miners earned an average \$25,20.

In 1969 in Commerce the same figures are Whites \$364 per month, Blacks \$66.

In Industry, in Mining, in Commerce, all show the poverty gap widening — the whites getting richer, the blacks poorer. Most Blacks live below the breadline today. All figures indicate an increasing deterioration of the position. Whatever the arguments that economic developments brings about improvement the facts show the reverse to be the case.

In Health:

Infant mortality for Africans is shown as 124 per 1000, for Coloureds 132 per 1000 and for Whites 21.2 per 1000.

Kwashiorkor, a malnutrition disease, showed a 600% increase over a four year period in Port Elizabeth, where General Motors is established. In the neighbouring Bantustan of the Transkei, 40% of all African children die of Kwashiorkor before reaching the age of 10.

In some areas of the Transkei the incidence of tuberculosis is 20% of the population, and Health officers say that poverty and the disruption of family life caused by the migratory labour system are major elements in this high incidence of T.B.

And so on and on. This is the framework in which all investors must work and have worked. After all our development, this is the picture in 1970 after increases in the amount of Foreign investment. After the increases the position in South Africa deteriorated for the Blacks.

The Blacks, however, will not forever be without a voice and without power. The White South Africans can strive to keep the Black down and keep the structure a white supremacist one. Every investor has a stake in keeping the structure white. In order to make his profit he must support the structure, even improve its efficiency.

The African sees this. The African in South Africa recognizes it. The African outside South Africa recognizes it and of course, a change will come. The partnership of the White South African and the foreign investors will be recognized for what it is, a partnership inevitably resulting in the suppression of the Blacks in their struggle in South Africa for legitimate rights.

The foreign investors will therefore have a vested interest in the alienation of the rights of Africans in South Africa. They will lose the sympathy of Blacks everywhere. They will have to pay the price for such alienation and they may find that the profit now enjoyed by them is not worth the price.