

# “LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER”

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# "LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER"

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# "LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER"

## FOREWORD

By THE REV. ERIC RICHARDSON

**T**HE WORDS CHOSEN for the overall title of the Forum on Migrant Labour recently arranged by the Black Sash are obviously recognizable as the latter half of the dominical injunction upon which is based the Christian view of the indissolubility of marriage. It is not to be imagined, however, that the experts who contributed their opinions necessarily approached their subjects with any specifically religious bias. All that may be claimed is that, confirming the religious connection in this matter, they would appear to accept the importance of the family as a basic unit of our culture, and consider that it is important for the preservation of society that its stability be not impaired.

From the Christian point of view, there is not likely to be much disagreement with the resolution of the 1958 Lambeth Conference "that the idea of the human family is rooted in the Godhead". From their unanimously high conception of the family and from their knowledge of the Scriptural sanctions upholding it, there can be little surprise that the Conference should have passed a further resolution in which they declared that, recognizing the family as the God-given unit of human life and society, they condemned "those systems of migratory labour that break up family life by enforcing the unjustified residential separation of man and wife or parents and children". It is difficult to conceive that Christians should be unable to appreciate that, by condoning circumstances operating against the family unit, they are both assenting to what is manifestly against the will of God and also prejudicing one of the declared aims of a stable family life — that of bringing up children in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

But it is not only the Church that is concerned with the stability of the family. The State has an obvious need to ensure that the nurseries of future citizens are such as will best produce integrated and stable personalities. Since for this is required strong family life created by the dual influence of a father and a mother figure, we might expect the State to do all in its power to assist and not hinder the firm establishment of such.

Again, all those concerned with the maintenance of an efficient labour force know from long experience that the wise employer will be particularly interested in securing a stable family environment for his employees, since nothing can so inhibit a man's labour potential than uncertainty and insecurity in his private and family life. And welfare workers, who have hardly yet finished clearing up the wreckage caused by the family separations of the last war, know well that the merely physical withdrawal of the father for lengthy periods can have serious effects on the emotional security of the children. The absence of a father for all but three weeks in a year makes nonsense of "fatherhood", and makes the long-term effects on future generations not a matter of anxious conjecture, but an evil which will in time bring its own nemesis.

There are, of course, two points of view from which callousness with regard to the African family might understandably arise. One is the view that children should be taken from their parents anyway, and brought up by the State. The other is that the Africans — that section of the population most affected by the legislation under discussion — are less than human beings, and that therefore humanitarian considerations may justifiably be ignored. A further argument, similar to the Marxist justification of a period of oppression before the ideal society is achieved, is the contention that gross interference with the basic human unit of the family has to be accepted as the cost of securing the benefits of the fulfilment of the ideology of those in power.

Certainly for a Christian these arguments are repugnant, and it is highly probable that they do not represent the views of the majority of citizens.

If, therefore, it is clearly evident, from your study of the problem, that the legislation under discussion does have the effect of prejudicing the family life of the majority of the nation, then it is surely the concern of all who uphold the family to do all in their power to persuade the legislature (who are in theory responsible to them) to reconsider the methods they are using in carrying out the policy to which the Government considers itself committed.

# THE FORUM

## ON THE

### ADVERSE EFFECTS OF MIGRATORY LABOUR

### ON AFRICAN FAMILY LIFE

**T**HE TWO-DAY FORUM arranged by the Black Sash to consider the effects of the migratory labour system in South Africa on African family life was held in Johannesburg early in June. For many years the Black Sash has been deeply concerned about the effects of apartheid legislation on the African family, and at our Annual National Conference last year it was decided that we should organize a campaign to inquire into the break-up of African family life.

#### Contributors

The Forum was convened by Mrs. Jeanette Davidoff, National Vice-President of the Black Sash, who received much valuable advice and assistance from Dr. Ellen Hellmann, Mr. John Blacking and Professor Julius Lewin. There are so many factors besides the migratory labour system that affect the stability of African family life, that it was decided to make the meeting a fact-finding forum instead of a conference. It was felt that all aspects of the problem should be investigated and examined, and information co-ordinated.

As well as the main speakers, all experts in their own particular fields, a number of other prominent citizens contributed to the Forum as Guest Chairmen. They were Mr. Henry Kuiper, until recently Managing Director of S.A. Associated Newspapers, still a member of the Board of Directors and now Managing Director of the City Merchant Bank; Mr. Richard Hacking, a leader of commerce and Managing Director of a large engineering concern; the Very Reverend P. H. F. Barron, the Dean of Johannesburg; Mr. W. P. Graham, Assistant Editor of the "Financial Mail" and a former Financial Editor of the "Star"; and Mr. Francis Hill, Technical Director of one of the largest mining groups, and a world authority on pressure bursts and rock movements.

#### Black Sash Advice Offices

In her opening address, Mrs. Jean Sinclair, National President of the Black Sash, outlined the background to our decision to investigate the effects of the migratory labour system. After giving a brief account of the establishment and

work of the Black Sash Advice Offices, she continued:

"Through our work in our Advice Offices, we come into contact with many Africans whose homes and families have been broken up through laws which restrict their right to be in the urban areas. We find that men who live and work in these areas as 'migrant' labourers are unable to have their wives and families living with them, although in many cases they have been so long in the urban area that they are really town dwellers. It is true that Africans who were born in an urban area, or who have lived there continuously for from 10 to 15 years, have the right to remain in the area and to have their wives

#### MR. W. P. GRAHAM

It is with deep regret that we record the sudden death on July 17th of Mr. William Peter (Ossie) Graham at the early age of 46. Mr. Graham was a good and valued friend of the Black Sash, and Guest Chairman of the economic section of this Forum.

He was a financial expert, a former Financial Editor of the "Star", the Assistant Editor at the time of his death of the "Financial Mail", and author of a best-selling book on the Stock Exchange. He was deeply interested in public affairs and a leader of the Progressive Party in North West Rand.

To Mrs. Graham and her family we extend our sincere sympathy.

living with them, provided they can prove that they 'ordinarily reside' with their wives. There are, however, many thousands of Africans who are not so fortunate. Forced by economic circumstances to come to the towns to work, they are obliged to leave their families behind in the country and to live in urban hostels."

### **"Labour Units"**

The major findings of the Forum were that, in the words of Mr. Blacking, "African family life is adversely affected not so much by migrant labour in itself, as by the laws which reduce Africans in general, and migrant labourers in particular, into mere labour units, and deprive them of personal freedom." It was pointed out by Professor Mayer that while migrant labour is by no means the only factor leading to the division of families, and while in many cases Africans prefer to leave their families in the country, the great hardship lies in the fact that "the filter of personal choice is not allowed to operate."

### **Economic effects of system**

Many speakers, from the platform and from the floor, stressed the economic effects of the system, particularly the poverty of the Africans themselves and the poverty of the reserves. The wages paid to migrant workers are in most cases still based, as Dr. Ballinger said, on "the illusion that a great industrial working force is really an established peasantry in disguise", the assumption being that their earnings are augmented by subsistence farming. The opposite is actually the case. Initially, migrant workers living off the land in the reserves were "induced" by the imposition of taxes to seek work in the towns, simply to earn money to pay the taxes, but now they are forced by the extreme poverty of the reserves to work in the towns to support those at home.

And in turn the absence of the men at their most productive time of life impoverishes the reserves, dependent on agriculture, still further. Figures quoted from the Tomlinson Report showed that 447,000 persons were temporarily absent from the reserves in 1936, and 590,000, of whom 503,000 were males, in 1951.

"While the absent males form only 12% of the total population, they represent more than 40% of males between 15 and 64 years of age. At least two thirds are between 20 and 39 years old, and nearly 90% are younger than fifty years . . . Nearly all males are employed outside the Bantu

areas at one time or another between their 15th and 50th birthdays."

Noting the percentage increase between the years 1936 and 1951, and bearing in mind the great increase in industrialization in the Republic in the last ten years, it may be assumed that the figure has since risen steeply. Since the Forum, a correspondent has suggested that from these figures, and from employment figures given, a warning can be deduced that during the last decade the number of men on migratory labour has very likely risen to 1,000,000 out of the 2½ to 2½ million African males employed in the Republic.

### **Development of the reserves**

Speakers commented on the Government's failure to develop the reserves in accordance with the recommendations of the Tomlinson Commission, and their refusal to allow the establishment of industries in the reserves by White entrepreneurs. Commenting upon Dr. Verwoerd's statement that "those who obtain knowledge and skill by experience and training within the White area will use it in their own areas where there is further progress and opportunities of using their knowledge and skill", Dr. Ballinger pointed out that Dr. Verwoerd had not explained what skills a migrant and unstable labour force usually succeeded in accumulating, or when the opportunities for the use of any skill acquired by these "pseudomigrant workers" were likely to appear.

On the whole, the experts were agreed that in time ideological considerations would give way to economic pressures, and "all the citizens of South Africa would be drawn into the Western type of society we are creating here." (Mr. Bradlow)

### **Destroying morale and integrity**

There was a good deal of discussion on the costs in health arising from the migratory labour system, the spread of venereal disease, the cessation of medical services upon the return to the rural areas, the adverse effects on health arising from the absence of the male head of the family.

Most speakers, however, including the two who attempted to answer the question, "What can we do?", placed most emphasis on the affronts to human dignity, the loss of self-respect, the feelings of insecurity engendered by a system "which is destroying the morale and integrity of large sections of the South African population, and incidentally making a mockery of Christianity in a supposedly Christian country."

“The progress of a course which has come to deny rights of domicile even to those Africans born in the towns which their labour helped to develop.”

# THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE MIGRATORY LABOUR SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

By MARGARET BALLINGER



SINCE THE FIRST DAYS of our industrialization, South Africa has maintained a system of migrant labour. The original emergence of such a system is understandable. In ordinary circumstances—that is where there are no external forces to dictate—industry adjusts its labour pattern to the labour supplies available. What calls for explanation is the continuance of the system in changed and changing circumstances in which its original *raison d’être* has ceased to exist; and what calls even more for explanation is the extension of the system to economic and social areas where it has no obvious justification, where indeed it would appear to run counter to every sound economic principle and to defy every law of good government. Beginning with mining, it spread, through the Urban Areas Act and the segregation policy which inspired that Act, to the emerging urban African population, and is ending, in terms of present day policies, by covering the whole African population throughout the country. This is the canvas it seems to be my function today to fill in in historical terms.

## Sudden demands of industrialism

Industrialism, as you know, was not a gradual growth in South Africa. It did not grow out of the community, gradually transforming that community in the process. With the discovery first of diamonds and then of gold, it burst upon a rural society quite unprepared, emotionally and every other way, to meet the demands, particularly the labour demands its peculiar character was to make. The whole population was small — less than a million Whites and between two and three million Blacks. It mainly lived very near the subsistence level, on land that could not be called rich and was often not even hospitable, but which provided plenty of space to compensate, encouraging extensive systems of grain and cattle raising. These, with a bit of hunting, satisfied the modest demands of the majority of the people and gave an easy pace to life that in itself discouraged change. The new type of mining which the particular character of our precious mineral deposits initiated, called on the one hand for a high degree of skill begotten of experience, and on the other for a considerable amount of rough labour to do the heavy work. The first demands the country

obviously could not produce. It had to be sought abroad, at a price that would attract, making it a high cost factor in new and still uncertain industries.

The unskilled labour had to be sought at home, and what more promising source of supply than the “large” native population?

But if the South African White population had nothing to draw them into these new enterprises in their pioneering days, the African population had even less, with wants even less developed and land still sufficiently open and accessible to provide all their needs. Here even money, and more money, could not attract. In fact, for the man who could be induced at all to leave his home and go down into the bowels of the earth, the more money he got the sooner his wants were satisfied and the sooner he went back to his kraal, his family, and the way of life he was accustomed to.

## Pressures

So the early history of industrialism in South Africa, on its human side, is a study of attempts to exercise or to create pressures that would induce the local African male population to come

**DR. MARGARET BALLINGER** was educated at the Holy Rosary Convent in Port Elizabeth, at Rhodes University and at Somerville College, Oxford. From 1918 to 1919 she was head of the Department of History at Rhodes University, and in 1920 she became a senior lecturer in History at the University of the Witwatersrand.

In 1934 she married Senator William Ballinger, a Native Representative in the South African Senate, and in 1937 she herself entered Parliament as the Native Representative for the Cape Eastern circle.

Mrs. Ballinger remained a Member of Parliament until 1960, when the Government abolished African representation in the South African Parliament.

In 1962 the University of Cape Town conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Laws on Mrs. Ballinger, and in June this year Rhodes University honoured her by conferring upon her a Doctorate of Laws of that University.

out to work, pressures of which the most conspicuous and the most insistently applied were reduction in the accessibility of land (culminating in the Land Act of 1913) and the imposition of direct taxes in money that could not be obtained except through the labour market.

However, even with these pressures, progressively provided by successively sympathetic governments, it was difficult for the new industries to maintain a regular flow of labour, and impossible for them to build up a stabilized labour force. Indeed, down to the end of the first quarter of this century, in spite of the many changes that had by that time taken place in the needs and conditions of the African population, it was difficult for industry, by this time highly organized, to draw in labour, to keep its unskilled workers for more than six months at a time.

### **Recruited contract labour**

Out of these circumstances, there grew up the system of recruited contract (indentured) labour, living in compounds — closed in the diamond mines, open in the gold mines — which is the all-over pattern of the mining industry today. It is a system within which at any moment now 500,000 Africans are employed, about half of whom are our own people (mostly from the Transkei). The other half are contracted labourers from neighbouring territories, the recruiting areas having

been progressively extended as the industry expanded, and increasing calls on our own resources have made it more and more impossible for us to satisfy the needs of the industry on the established level.

In the meantime, the period of contract has significantly lengthened. Before 1924, it was six months. In 1930, according to the Native Economic Commission which reported in 1931, it had lengthened to 10.88 months. By 1942, the average period of service had risen to 13.6 months based on a new contract of 382 shifts. The period between contracts had also tended to contract significantly. The Mine Native Wages Commission which reported in 1944 in fact recorded that 20% of those who came to the mines more than once, had been away for what could be regarded as merely a normal holiday.

In the meantime, the character and conditions of the African population had changed with the changing of the character of the whole community. Is it not then surprising that the labour pattern of this great industry has not also changed? In a country with an expanding economy, are there not more economical ways of using so vast a labour force? And does it pay us, in the conditions of the modern world and of changing Africa, to be so dependent on outside sources of labour supply for one of our great primary industries?

### **Mining industry's second thoughts**

The mining industry itself had second thoughts about the system in the early years of this century. The result was a revolution on the Witwatersrand in 1922. Giving greater scope to the lower ranks of the labour force, that is, bridging the gap between skilled and unskilled, which has been the normal development within industry generally, was seen as a threat to the privileged position of the upper ranks, and the challenge was resisted with all the force that privilege could command. The final result was the Colour Bar Act of 1925, the amendment to the Mines and Water Act of 1911, to establish clearly and effectively the position of the African worker on the mines and to re-entrench that position at whatever cost to the community, the determining force here being White labour.

A quarter of a century later, when fortuitous circumstances — the rise in the price of gold and the discovery of the Free State reef — had falsified all the dreary prognostications of mining as a wasting industry, which had tended to operate

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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Cont.)

against change, another tentative effort was made towards modifying the system. This was the Anglo-American Corporation's proposal to aim at some 10% stabilized labour, that is family labour, on the new mines in the Free State. But the scheme had scarcely begun to get under way with a preliminary 3½% objective when the force that has now dominated our lives for more than a decade weighed in to put a stop to that. Dr. Verwoerd as Minister of Native Affairs had two main objections to the proposal. In the first place, it involved the provision of married quarters on the mines. These, he contended, would just become Black spots in White areas when the mines should close down, an extended invasion of the policy of apartheid. Secondly, in the meantime these family settlements, as they would be in effect, would become the source of new increases in the urban African population which it was the policy of the Nationalist Government to prevent, since the children of these privileged African mine workers would pretty certainly not become mine workers themselves but would slip into the main body of the urban African population.

### **Illusion**

And so the migrant labour system remains the backbone of the largest single industry in the country, carrying on the illusion that a great industrial working force is really an established peasantry in temporary disguise — for while the mining industry was initially anxious to reduce the alternative resources for livelihood of the Africans for their own ends, they built a system based on the assumption that the African worker had some alternative source of income and paid him accordingly. He was in effect supposedly a subsidized worker.

### **The "poor Whites"**

In the meantime, the idea of the African as essentially a migrant worker had spread to the great new fields of employment that had followed in the wake of the mining industry. The contingent development of services for the industry, of which transport was not the least important, and of other subsidiary industries, blossoming in due course into the extensive industrial diversity which puts South Africa in a class by itself in Africa, had exercised its revolutionary influence on all our population groups, drawing them in increasing numbers and at an ever increasing tempo into the new urban areas under pressures which

they were not in a position to resist. It was a change in the social and economic set-up that the community was again not equipped for, either administratively or emotionally, and in the circumstances of the time, it gave rise to two serious points of political conflict between the politically dominant White group and what, except to some extent in the Cape Province, was essentially the subject African group. This was the emergence of "poor Whites," and the growth of major slums where competing poor Whites and poor Blacks rubbed shoulders with one another in a social contact which in the context of South African society was full of explosive political material.

It is difficult now to remember or to appreciate the dark shadow which "poor White-ism" cast over the country in the 20's and 30's of this century. Yet it was the formative force in the standardizing of the relationship of Black and White in the country. The very pressures that had been and were still being applied to get Africans to come to the developing industries to work were forcing Whites off the land and into a labour market where they had nothing to offer that the African could not offer, and in some cases not so much as he had, for example brawn. To appreciate all the social implications, it has to be remembered that it was a period of great economic instability in which the alternations of boom and depression, and more and more serious depressions, aggravated all the strains inherent in the process of urbanization among communities so ill-prepared for and as yet so ill-adapted to the new way of life.

### **"Back to the land!"**

The resulting situation afforded a particular challenge and a particular appeal to different sections of the politically privileged, all alike untrained to appreciate the nature of the change in progress and the economic forces at work. To political Nationalists, the instinctive reaction was to support the claims of their own people to special protection. To the paternalists, this was part of the story but not the whole. Whites must of course be protected but Blacks also had their claims. The two groups, which between them represented the major political forces of the day, met in the cry of "Back to the land". But while for the Whites attempts were made to provide land, for the Blacks the assumption was again made that they had homes that they should remain in or at least return to. But the cry ran counter to the main economic forces at work in our society, and the process of urbanization went



on among both groups, calling for something more to meet the actual facts of the situation.

### **Emergence of idea of "White" areas**

The groping after that something more came to a head in 1918, when, on the back of the first world war, the ravages of the Spanish influenza epidemic, particularly among the urban African population, put the spotlight on the social aspects of the situation. The result was a commission of enquiry, under the chairmanship of Colonel Stalard, who all his political life was a convinced segregationist. The determining finding of this commission was that Africans did not belong to the towns and should not be allowed to establish domicile there. If they came to the urban areas, they should be allowed to do so only as "visitors", as migrant workers, putting down no roots that could — and would — justify political claims. Such claims must be avoided at all costs. Here is then the first formal political emergence of this idea of urban areas as "White" areas.

These findings found their formal acceptance in the Urban Areas Act of 1923, to be given new body and substance in due course by a White labour policy under the Pact Government which came into office in 1924. In terms of this Act the African worker in secondary industry became legally a migrant worker for whom nobody but the public authority could provide housing, out of which he could be turned, not when he ceased to be able to pay the rent, but when he ceased to be employed in the service of the dominant community.

In 1932, the labour service contract system, for which the Urban Areas Act had provided, was extended to rural labour which was in any case implicitly migrant, and increasingly explicitly so also.

This machinery became the framework of the segregation policy finally formulated by the Hertzog Government and extended to the Cape Province in 1936 and 1937. In this later year, African women were legislatively excluded from urban areas except under special provisions, and African rights of purchase of property, which had survived by an oversight, were formally removed.

### **Permanent African town-dweller**

But while succeeding years saw progressive tightenings-up of the Urban Areas Act, the process of urbanization went on apace, and both legislatively and administratively there were implicit acceptances of the fact that the African worker was becoming a permanent town-dweller and that he had, or should have, some rights as such. The

*Cheap migratory labour . . . is cheap only in the short-term sense. From the health angle alone, the Union will in the end have to pay an enormous price in order to liquidate the debt.*

**Dr. G. W. Gale, Secretary for Health  
—Report of Native Laws Commission (Fagan Commission) 1946-1948.**

Urban Areas Act itself, while it made provision for locations for the housing of the most recent arrivals from the country, without knowledge or experience of the conditions and requirements of healthy living in close communities, also provided for the release of areas for purchase by those who had learned these lessons and in doing so had acquired some substance and become truly urbanized. And as you know, there were administrative rules for the acquisition of domicile by those who could measure up to the standards laid down, while the right of those born in the urban areas to be regarded as belonging and having rights of domicile, was progressively explicitly recognized.

It was this situation that the Fagan Commission explored and on the basis of which they recommended the recognition of the process of African urbanization as both natural and healthy, a proposition which implicitly cut at the roots of the migrant labour idea except as a passing phase in the life of the individual.

### **Denial of rights of domicile**

Then came the change of government in 1948 and the progressive repudiation of all claims of the Africans to stability in the urban areas. By this time, poor White-ism had been conquered, become a thing of the past, not through White labour policies and segregation of Africans, but by industrialization itself, increasingly assisted by African consumers' demand. But the political motive, never entirely absent from the economic history of South Africa, was also well to the fore, to revive and re-enforce any and all claims that the African had no integral part in South African society.

It is not my job to trace the legislative progress of the course which has come to deny rights of domicile even to those Africans born in the towns which their labour has helped to develop, and, abolishing all property rights within those areas which might suggest permanence, argues

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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Cont.)

that the worker on whom the whole edifice of the South African economy is raised is not integrated — any more than the ox or the ass or the tractor — into South African society. The idea of the migratory character of the African population has now been extended to cover the whole African population, and as far as I can see, for all time. Yet the urban African population continues to grow. More and more of that population knows no background other than the town and the city and can find a livelihood nowhere else. At the same time the platteland gets blacker and blacker and the production of the nation's food passes more and more into the hands — and control — of Africans.

### No separate economy

All this assumes a special significance when it is viewed against the background of one fact which seems to me to have attracted all too little attention, that is that whatever separation the makers of Nationalist policy have been prepared to concede (and the field seems to have widened over the last 2 to 3 years), it does not apparently include separate economies — which goes some way towards explaining the conspicuous absence of any real economic preparation for that African self-government to which the Transkei is supposed to be leading the way. But how does a community keep its whole working class on a migratory basis? Let me remind you of what Dr. Verwoerd says about it. It may make more sense to you than it does to me. In recent years I have so often found myself wandering in a strange world, in a maze of words that don't convey any understandable idea or shape to me, that as a political person, with hopes and, I hope, ideals of my own, I scarcely know how to get to grips with what is happening to us.

Confronted in the debate on the Tomlinson report in 1956 with the question of what was to happen to the 6,000,000 Africans who, it was estimated, would still be in so-called European areas at the end of the century even with the most dynamic plans the commission could offer for the development of the African "heartlands" (practically all rejected by Dr. Verwoerd, because he knew better) he said, (Hansard Vol. 71 Co. 5311):

"As far as the second group is concerned, namely the 6,000,000 who will still be in the White area in the year 2,000, various points have to be taken into account. The first is that the assump-

tion is unfounded that the same person will always be domiciled here permanently. I foresee an interaction between the White area and the Bantu area; that those who obtain knowledge and skill by experience and training within the White area will use it in their own areas where there is further progress and opportunities of using their knowledge and skill. In other words, this interaction between the White area and the Bantu area is of great importance in considering the question as to whether we are dealing here with 6,000,000 permanent inhabitants." It is incidental to the present theme — or is it? — that he added, "Let me remind honourable members that of the 6,500,000 or thereabouts, 4,000,000 will in all likelihood be on the platteland; in other words in a place where the problem of apartheid is maintained locally." He went on:

### "Anchor in homeland"

"A further fact, however, is that these people all have their anchor in their homeland. These 6,000,000 will also have their anchor in what they regard as their homeland. The developments which are being set in motion now, the closer connections which are being established, will take care of that." Then he added a gambit the protagonists of apartheid have relied on a lot. "They will be like the Italians who go to France to take up employment there. They remain Italians and they remain anchored in their homeland; that is where they seek their rights; they do not expect and ask for rights in the others place. **Moreover, these people will be in the White area from their own choice; they will be there because it will pay them and because it is useful to them.**"

### A symptom of poverty

Dr. Verwoerd has repeated this theme since 1956. He has not yet explained two things: (i) what skills a migrant and unstable labour force normally succeeds in accumulating; (ii) when the opportunities for the use of any skill on the part of any number of these pseudo-migrant workers are to appear. Migrant labour is itself a symptom of poverty which all modern countries strive to obliterate. But here I leave my theme in the sorrowful reflection that if I had known 30 years ago when we began our campaign against migrant labour that we should be where we are today, I doubt if I would have found the courage to face so doomed a course. But who could have conceived either such a situation, or the arguments by which it is supported? I feel it to be due to my own intelligence to say, "Not I!"

“A substantial rise in the earnings of Africans is the only way to safeguard the way of life of the Europeans.”

# INDUSTRY COMES TO SOUTH AFRICA

By E. P. BRADLOW



**W**HITE SOUTH AFRICANS may be forgiven if they are somewhat confused. Economic progress has destroyed within the space of a few years the colonial type society which they had expected would last indefinitely, and they are being called upon to solve problems the nature of which they do not fully comprehend. It would indeed be surprising if some difference of opinion did not exist as to the policies to be followed. Time will have to elapse before the consequences of industrialization will be fully realized, and in the interim there will be considerable reluctance to surrender privileges inconsistent with the new order.

In 1910 when the Union of South Africa was formed very few people could have foreseen the nature of the development that would occur here. At that time farming and mining were the main forms of economic activity and there was every reason to believe this position would continue. There seemed no likelihood, therefore, that Africans would settle permanently in the cities in large numbers. The real problem seemed to be to obtain sufficient migrant labourers for the primary industries.

In South Africa, as in most other countries, war was responsible for the beginnings of secondary industry. Cut off from foreign supplies by the outbreak of the first world war, the country was compelled to produce some of the goods it had previously imported. The growth of manufacturing, however, for a long time was very slow.

**MR. E. P. BRADLOW** is a B.A. of Witwatersrand University and an M.A. of Cambridge. For some years he was a Barrister at Law of the Inner Temple, London, and is now Chairman of Bradlow's Stores, Johannesburg.

Mr. Bradlow is a Past President of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce, the Immediate Past President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, and at present Vice-Chairman and on the Executive of that body.

During the inter-war years South Africa continued to be a mainly primary producing country dependent on outside sources for most consumer goods.

## “Poor White” problems

Nevertheless, during this period the government recognized the necessity to foster secondary industry by active measures. Tariff protection on a modest scale was introduced and a Board of Trade was formed, the main function of which was to secure balanced industrial growth. This action was probably taken because an expansion of the economy was regarded as necessary to provide new employment opportunities for Europeans. Throughout the twenties the “poor White” problem was causing considerable concern to the authorities. The great depression which began in 1929 had disastrous effects upon the White population, many of whom found themselves workless and destitute. It was hoped therefore that the factories which were being encouraged to start would employ mainly Europeans.

## Illusion of two economies

The possibility of a shortage of labour which would necessitate an influx of Black workers seemed remote, and it appeared possible that industrialization could be achieved without a complete change in the structure of society. South Africa would continue to consist of two economies

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## INDUSTRY COMES TO SOUTH AFRICA (Cont.)

— a subsistence economy in the Bantu areas and an exchange economy in the remainder of the country. As a general rule Africans would not be part of the latter. Their services would be required in certain spheres, but it was not contemplated that those who came to work in the European areas would sever their ties with their homelands. When they had earned sufficient cash for their immediate needs it was thought they would be anxious to return to their farms.

But the second world war completely shattered this illusion. The acceleration of industrial development caused by that event transformed the labour situation. The problem of unemployment among Whites disappeared. Instead businessmen and the authorities were hard put to it to find labour for the new factories which were springing up everywhere. To an ever-increasing extent manufacture began to rely on Bantu workers. Owing to a fortunate concomitance of circumstances these were in plentiful supply. At the very time they were needed by industry over-population was forcing many of the inhabitants of the Native Reserves to seek new ways of earning a livelihood. As alternative occupations were not available in their own territories they migrated in their thousands to the cities.

### Prosperity is indivisible

In South Africa, as elsewhere, there has been no return to pre-war conditions. By and large since the cessation of hostilities in 1945, economic progress here has been continuous. It is true there have been periods when our growth has been comparatively slow, but they have been of short duration. During almost the whole post-war period full employment has existed for the White population, and the enlargement of our productive capacity has depended in no small measure on the availability of African manpower. The fiction that the Bantu is not a permanent part of the exchange economy can no longer be maintained. The withdrawal of their labour would cause a collapse of most of our industry and spell ruin for the Europeans.

The fears entertained that the economic advance of the Native peoples would undermine the position of White workers have proved groundless. **It should be abundantly clear to all today that in South Africa prosperity is indivisible and that an improvement in the position of one race group always results in an improvement in the position of all the others.** The rise in the number of economically active Africans has widened our

"Fore!"



market and made it possible to produce locally many articles we previously had to import from abroad. In consequence opportunities for Europeans have increased and the poor White problem has disappeared.

### Expansion of secondary industry

It is generally accepted today that it is necessary to expand the secondary industry sector of our economy in the interests of all the population. What is more, it is clearly recognized that most of the labour that will make this possible will be drawn from the Bantu areas. It is for this reason the Government is attempting to encourage industries to establish themselves on the borders of these territories. It apparently believes that if its border area policy is successful we can have our cake and eat it: industrialization can proceed without an increase in the Bantu population in the cities. I do not want to create the impression that I am opposed to attempts to decentralize industry. There is much to be said in favour of bringing the factories to the workers instead of the workers to the factories, especially when those affected are backward individuals who will suffer much hardship if they are forced to move from their homes. Later in my address I shall endeavour to explain the objections to the Government's policy in this regard. At the present moment I merely want to emphasize that it is a recognition of the fact that further industrialization will augment the number of Africans engaged in industry.

It is obvious, however, that the authorities have

decided that despite the risks involved an expansion and a diversification of our economy cannot be avoided. New measures to promote our industrial growth are constantly being introduced. At times it seems as if it is the intention to make South Africa self-sufficient at the earliest possible moment. Certain economists consider that some of the steps taken may adversely affect our future development because they are encouraging the production in South Africa of goods which can be purchased more cheaply abroad. Nevertheless, although there is no unanimity as to the means to be employed to achieve the purpose, there is broad agreement on the necessity to foster local industry.

### **Ambivalent approach**

It sometimes seems to me, however, as if our attitude in South Africa to industrialization is rather like that of a man who woos a girl and loses his nerve when she is just about to succumb to his blandishments. As soon as our efforts to further it seem to meet with success we draw back in horror, fearful of the consequences. Because of this ambivalent approach, government measures often tend to cancel each other out. At the same time as inducements are offered to entrepreneurs to encourage them to embark on new ventures, laws are promulgated which seek to limit the supply of labour. Restrictions similar to those which in pre-Industrial Revolution England were designed to ensure a static society, are being introduced here at a time when it is our avowed aim to modernize our economy. Influx control and work reservation are attempts to preserve a social order which is being undermined by our determination to increase our national wealth. It is not always easy, therefore, for outsiders to understand the South African situation. It often appears to them as if we are holding back our own advance.

### **Economic forces not contained by laws**

In actual fact the economic results of the repressive controls are not as serious as many people believe. Economic forces cannot be contained by laws. History records many instances of the failure of legislation to check the effects of technological progress. In England in the sixteenth century, for example, when sheep farming made necessary an increase in the size of farms, there was much concern lest the countryside became depopulated. Parliament, anxious to preserve the smallholders, passed a number of Acts to prevent enclosure. All, however, were ineffective and had eventually to be repealed. New circumstances required new

agricultural methods and the Government was powerless to prevent the changes that were taking place.

Perhaps more important from our point of view is the failure to arrest the course of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain of the Trade Guilds and the Statute of Artificers. The latter was designed to safeguard the position of skilled craftsmen by compelling anyone wishing to practice any trade to undergo a long apprenticeship. The Guilds reinforced the effect of the statute by confining certain occupations to their members. The invention of power driven machinery, however, made imperative an enlargement of the labour force and the new industrialists found little difficulty in evading restrictions which were against the spirit of the age. Ways were found of employing people who were not qualified journeymen or members of guilds, and the structure of England's society was altered despite the laws protecting privileges.

In South Africa our growth has continued although legislation appears to be hindering it. The reason is that in practice ideological considerations have been subordinated to economic necessities. Prohibitions have not been enforced in such a manner as to interfere with the needs of industry. When a work reservation order is made there are many exemptions from its provisions. Reclassification of jobs constantly creates new opportunities for Africans. Even influx control is operated in such a way as to ensure there is no real labour scarcity. The transformation of backward agricultural workers into factory operatives has therefore gone on apace, and the African population of our cities has continued to increase.

### **A potential source of unrest**

Can it then be argued that the restrictive measures are unimportant and should be ignored? I think this inference would not be warranted from what I have said. Their social consequences are profound as they cause a sense of frustration in those they affect. Non-Europeans become disheartened about the future because they fear they are going to be excluded from the benefits of progress. Moreover the enforcement of regulations which make it illegal for people to live in certain areas or work in certain occupations causes racial friction. It becomes necessary to grant arbitrary powers to officials to control the lives of people. Who can doubt that there are occasions when those powers are wrongly exercised? In addition, acts which have no criminal intent render people

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## INDUSTRY COMES TO SOUTH AFRICA (Cont.)

liable to prosecution. Peaceful citizens, therefore, come to regard authority with hostility.

What we must realize is that if security is denied to those who man our factories it will be difficult to create the impression that ours is a stable economy. A proletariat whose future is obscure will always be a potential source of unrest. In the long term, of course, political factors will affect our rate of expansion. We can only develop into a rich country if the mass of the population are made to feel that they are going to share in the wealth which is being created.

### Border industry policy

The border area policy of the Government is, in my opinion, an admission by it that negative measures are failing to achieve their purpose and will eventually have to be repealed. The objectives of the policy are far from clear. It is, however, a positive step to slow down the migration of Africans to the towns by providing them with work near their homes. If the Government had attempted to encourage the establishment of industries in the Bantu areas by White entrepreneurs, its action would have enjoyed universal support. From all points of view the development of those backward territories is highly desirable. In the first place, as I have already indicated, it would be much in the interest of Africans, many of whom would be saved the inconveniences inseparable from a change of environment. But more important, by slowing down the flow of Africans to the cities it would enable influx control and the pass laws to be jettisoned.

The policy of limiting development to the border areas, however, seems to indicate that an attempt is going to be made to preserve the system under which European industrialists in the White areas operate their undertakings with cheap Black labour. It is apparently hoped that the siting of factories near the Bantu homelands will enable industrialization to continue without the Africans becoming detribalized. This attempt to modernize our economy, and at the same time preserve an archaic institution, is doomed to failure. In the course of time all the citizens of South Africa will be drawn into the Western type of society we are creating here. South Africa cannot continue to exist half modern, half backward, because then it will be a house divided against itself which must fall.

Whilst there is general agreement that efforts should be made to disperse economic activity more evenly throughout the country, I do not think any-

Top-heavy

(Rand Daily Mail)



body should be under the illusion that this would entirely halt the flow of Black workers to the so-called European areas. It would be unrealistic to believe that all future development will take place in or near the Bantu territories. For a variety of reasons many manufacturers will desire to site their factories in existing towns. Furthermore, the situation of our natural resources determines to no small extent the location of new industrial plants.

### Sheltered position of Whites

Struggle as we may we will not escape ultimately from having to answer the fundamental question as to whether the White man's interests are better served by protective devices or by industrial expansion. I do not doubt what the answer will be once the nature of the problem comes to be understood properly. Halting our expansion will imperil the economic and political security of the European. Opposition to the employment on an ever-increasing scale of Africans in industry will therefore be more apparent than real.

Nevertheless, the reluctance of the Whites to abandon their sheltered position will have profound consequences for the country. Because of it the period during which a sizeable proportion of the population remains poverty-stricken will be unnecessarily prolonged. The repressive laws will perhaps prove less harmful in the long term than will our failure to take positive action to provide the Africans with new skills.

In the past a scarcity of capital and foreign exchange slowed down our progress. For both of

these we had to rely heavily on the foreign investor, always a somewhat fickle individual. When, for any reason, we lost his confidence, it became necessary for the Government to damp down activity. His assistance is still necessary if we are going to achieve our full economic potential in the near future. But we are less dependent on him than we were. It seems likely now that our own savings will be sufficient to supply most of our capital requirements. The healthy state of our Foreign Exchange Reserves makes it improbable that deficit on our balance of payment account will necessitate the imposition of restraints.

### **Main factor limiting growth**

A shortage of skilled workers will, I think, therefore be the main factor limiting our growth. **Many projects will have to be postponed because of a lack of qualified personnel. This need not have been the case had our attitude to the training of the Africans been more in harmony with reality.** The technicians needed could then have been drawn from their ranks. Establishing freedom of entry to all occupations will serve little purpose if we do not provide educational facilities to enable people to equip themselves for new tasks.

It is understandable that Europeans in the Republic should be fearful that an exposed position will endanger their living standards. Because the overall supply of labour exceeds the demand there is always a danger that a rush of new entrants into the labour market will depress wages. In the past it has not been found possible to find non-agricultural work for all those forced off the land in the Bantu areas. For this reason a state of full employment has never prevailed in the Republic. What is more, the number of persons who will have to be absorbed into secondary and tertiary industry is likely to increase greatly in the near future, because it will be necessary to remove many families from the soil if farming in the Reserves is to be conducted on an economic basis. The Tomlinson Commission estimated their number at 300,000 but it is possible that this estimate was too conservative.

The existence of a large army of unemployed holds down non-European wages and threatens the security of the White worker. **A substantial rise in the earnings of Africans is the only way to safeguard the way of life of Europeans.** The disappearance of a plentiful supply of cheap labour will enable workers of all races to demand a living wage. The rapid industrialization necessary to

bring this about will only be possible if we allow and assist every man, irrespective of his colour, to use his talents to the full.

### **Testing time ahead**

There is no policy we can follow in South Africa which is free of danger. The greatest risk we face, however, is that inertia may prevent action. In the words of President Roosevelt: "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts". A policy of drift will be disastrous because of the speed with which events are now moving. Destiny has provided a unique opportunity for those now living in the Republic to ensure the happiness of future generations. But high optimism, great courage and stern resolution will be needed if we are to accomplish the task fate has selected us to perform. I am confident that in the testing time which lies ahead we will not be found wanting in these qualities.

### **No monopoly of wisdom**

I must emphasize that tolerance of opposing points of views is essential if we are going successfully to solve our complicated problems. No group of people in South Africa should believe they have a monopoly of wisdom. Nor should they impute wrong motives to those who think differently from them. Our situation is without parallel in history and dogmatism about it should therefore be avoided. All citizens of the Republic should be mindful of Oliver Cromwell's famous exhortation to the Puritan pastors who were assailing him — "I beseech you, Gentlemen, to think you may be mistaken". The hurling of abuse at each other will certainly achieve no good purpose. If the great debate which is taking place about the future shape of our society is conducted with restraint it need not be a cause of disunity.

We should understand that we are masters of our destiny to a very limited extent. Historical trends cannot be resisted for long. Forces over which we have no control will determine the future history of the South African nation. The present generation should avoid bedevilling the lives of posterity by arousing implacable hatreds. In conclusion I would like to quote some famous words of Abraham Lincoln:

**"With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in."**

“Control of African labour is a cornerstone of Apartheid.”

# CONTROLS WHICH FORCE LABOUR TO BE MIGRATORY

By FELICIA KENTRIDGE

**A**DDRESSES have been delivered today on the growth and crystallization of the policy of migrant labour. Tomorrow there will be discussion of and comment upon the social and economic effects of this policy. I have been asked to describe the legislative controls which enforce it and I have decided to deal in the main with the Native Labour Regulation Act and the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act No. 25 of 1945 as amended by the Bantu Laws Amendment Act now awaiting promulgation.

I have chosen to approach the subject in this way partly because it seems to me that influx control and the control of employment contracts are the basis of the present system, partly because I am sure that the speakers tomorrow will wish to comment on the new Act and partly because it is not possible to discuss satisfactorily in one session the numerous other acts of legislation which bear directly upon labour and are relative to the administration of South Africa as a White man's land with Africans limited to temporary working sojourners in it.

## Exiled from home

Furthermore, “migrant labour” is a sociological term rather than a legal one and I am able to address you only in a legal fashion. In its older usage, migrant labour meant perhaps seasonal labour or labour coming from another place for a specific and limited purpose and then presumably returning whence it came. This older concept lingers on in the thinking of those concerned governmentally with the administration of African labour — so many enactments provide that Africans must on certain conditions return “home”. But there is also now official realization that there are in fact Africans who have no hinterland “home”. When these Africans are deprived of their permission to remain in a White area they are required to go to an African area, as though it were their home. For such people such compulsory movement is not a “return home”, it is an exiling from what was in fact their home.

## No free movement

It is also not possible to talk about migrant labour with reference to Africans, as labour which moves in response to economic needs. There are so many obstacles in the way of an African wishing to move from one White area to another that mobility is one of the assets noticeably denied African workers. A change of employment is a greater hazard for an African than for a White. The African worker has a strong incentive to remain with his employer; but this incentive is often weakened by difficulties which he may face in establishing a home for his family. And over him

**M**RS. FELICIA KENTRIDGE was born in Johannesburg, and educated at the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand. She was brought up and lives in a legal atmosphere, both her parents and her husband being lawyers. She herself is one of the few women in South Africa with a B.A., L.L.B. degree.

One of Mrs. Kentridge's great interests is the Legal Aid Bureau, which does much to give free legal advice to those who need it.

always hangs the threat of loss of his employment — not for economic reasons or for causes over which he has any control, but for administrative or political reasons. Indeed, I find that I have modified the term “migrant labour” to mean temporary labour, in the sense that it may be interrupted by bureaucratic action.

Men specially recruited to work on the mines may still fulfil the original concept of migrant labour in that they come to the mines under contract and are returned home when the contract comes to an end, but mining legislation is a field in itself, not to be dealt with today.

## Other legal restrictions on African labour

I must, however, make at least a passing reference to some other statutes which are relevant to my subject in that they restrict the natural development of African labour. **The Group Areas Act** controls racially the use to which property may be put; one of its incidental consequences has been to prevent Non-White professional men from working among their colleagues. Another odd consequence of this Act is that the legal fiction that limited liability companies have personalities has been embroidered to endow them also with race and colour. There are White companies and Black companies and fictitious Black persons like their natural brethren suffer from economic disabilities designed to direct Black away from



White. The **Industrial Conciliation Act** contains a total prohibition on the right of Africans to strike, forbids them to belong to registered trade unions (i.e. the only bodies which are statutorily recognized as having collective bargaining powers) and empowers the Minister to reserve jobs in any industry to members of one racial group only. The **Mines and Works Act** and the **Native Building Workers Act** contain restrictions on the level of skill at which Africans may be employed in these industries. The **Master and Servant Acts** in force in the four provinces make poor service into a crime. For some Africans it is a criminal act to fail to commence service at the stipulated time or to absent oneself from work without cause, or to disobey a command or work negligently. For a complete picture of the forces restricting the natural development of African labour it would be necessary also to study the political and social pressures which exist in this country. **Indeed, control of African labour is a cornerstone of apartheid and is bound at all points to the legislation and life of South African society.**

### **Bantu Laws Amendment Act**

However, I shall at least attempt to analyse the most important provisions of the **Native Labour Regulation Act**, No. 15 of 1911 and the **Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act**, No. 25 of 1945 in the light of the amendments contained in the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964. I must make it clear that I do not attempt to deal with every provision of these Acts. Nor can even the main provisions be analysed in all their niceties. There are certain beneficial (or potentially beneficial) provisions, such as the amendment which provides that failure to produce a reference book on demand is no longer inevitably an offence, which fall outside the scope of this paper. The provisions with which I shall deal (and which I consider to be of the greatest importance) are those relating to the control of African labour in White areas.

Since 1948, the administration and direction of African labour have become increasingly comprehensive and rigorous. With the amendments contained in the 1964 Act, the two principal Acts now provide a structure whereby it is theoretically possible to control administratively the entire life of all Africans living in South Africa outside African areas, and the Acts have been so designed that the control shall be uniformly in accordance with Government policy and subject to supervision by the central government. The Urban Areas Act is no longer a measure intended to control the influx of African into urban areas in the interests of health or good order. It is a massive instrument for the control of African labour and enterprise and so, indirectly, for the control of the whole economy.

### **Fundamental principle**

The fundamental principle to be extracted from these two Acts is that residence in a White area by Africans is normally tied to their employment. Africans may be in White areas while they are engaged in approved work. And their dependants may in some cases remain while the breadwinner satisfies this criterion. "White area" is a loose

translation of the technical term "prescribed area". South Africa is divided into "prescribed areas" and "released or scheduled areas". The latter are African lands in terms of the Natives Trust and Land Act, 1936. All urban areas are *ipso facto* prescribed areas and all other parts of South Africa outside the released or scheduled areas may be declared to be prescribed areas.

**No African has an unqualified right to be in a prescribed area and the manner in which he may acquire or be deprived of a limited right to be in such an area is the basis of labour control in South Africa.**

Sec. 10 (1) of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act contains the general prohibition: "No Bantu shall remain for more than 72 hours in a prescribed area". To this there are four exceptions. An African may remain in a prescribed area if he can prove:—

- (a) that he has since birth resided continuously in that area; or
- (b) that he has worked continuously for one employer in the area for 10 years or has been lawfully and continuously resident within the area for 15 years and does not work outside the area and has not while so working and residing been sentenced to a fine exceeding 100 rand or to imprisonment for a period exceeding 6 months; or
- (c) that she or he is the wife, daughter or son of someone qualifying in terms of (a) or (b) and, having entered the prescribed area, is ordinarily resident with such a person within the area; or
- (d) that he has permission from a labour bureau officer to be there.

### **Inertia of immobility**

On the face of it the first two exceptions (to which I shall refer as protection by birth and long residence or employment) would appear to produce some stability of labour in regard to those workers who qualify under them. But instead of the positive element of stability there is only the inertia of immobility. Movement outside the one prescribed area in which rights have been laboriously acquired may lead to forfeiture of even those rights. Immobility caused by fear of the consequences of moving is not the equivalent of stability arising from satisfaction with freely chosen employment. And supplementary control such as control of employment contracts and control on the entry of families in fact reduce considerably the apparent freedom of those so qualifying to remain in permanent employment in the areas of their choice.

### **Labour Bureaux**

The most simple yet far-reaching provisions of these Acts is that no person may enter into any contract to employ a Bantu in a White area save through a labour bureau. [New Sec. 10 *bis* (1)]. All Africans seeking employment must register with the bureau; all employers seeking to fill vacancies must notify the bureau.

All contracts of employment in which an African is the employee must be approved by the official

(Continued overleaf)

## CONTROLS OF LABOUR (Cont.)

managing the labour bureau for the area. [See new Section 10 (*bis*) — s. 48 of amending Act]. This same official has the power in certain circumstances to cancel employment contracts. It follows that through these bureaux all African labour may be controlled and directed.

The hierarchy of labour bureaux and of the officials managing them is set out in the new sections 21 *bis* and *ter*, of the Native Labour Regulation Act. It now stands as follows:—

1. a local bureau in each prescribed area managed by a municipal labour officer;
2. a district labour bureau managed by a district labour officer;
3. a regional labour bureau under the control of the regional labour commissioner, and finally
4. a central labour bureau in the office of the Director of Bantu labour.

District and municipal labour bureau officers must conduct their bureaux in terms of the regulations made under the Act and on the instructions and under the supervision of the regional labour commissioner or the Director.

In terms of Sec. 23 (i) (o) of the Labour Act, regulations may be framed to cover conditions under which work may be taken up and the classes who must register with the bureaux as well as the details concerned with the administration of these bureaux. There is, however, one important proviso to the very wide scope of the empowering section:

“Provided that a Bantu shall not be refused permission under any regulation made under this paragraph to re-enter an area after an absence therefrom of not more than twelve months, for the purpose of taking up employment, if a vacancy exists, with the employer by whom such Bantu was last employed in such area before leaving such area, or, if such vacancy has ceased to exist, and if the Bantu Affairs Commissioner has no objection, with any other employer in such area.”

### Cancellation of contract

An officer exercising his power to approve of employment will do so subject to regulations which may be framed by the Department. But the grounds on which an official may cancel a contract of employment are set out in the Act itself. The grounds for cancellation are:—

- (i) that the contract of employment with such Bantu is not *bona fide*; or
- (ii) that such Bantu is not permitted under any law to be in the area of the labour bureau concerned; or
- (iii) that such Bantu has not been released from the obligation of rendering service under an earlier contract of employment or labour tenant contract; or
- (iv) that such Bantu is not permitted by this Act or any other law to take up employment; or
- (v) that such Bantu refuses to submit himself to medical examination by a medical officer or, having been medically examined, was not passed as healthy and vaccinated as prescribed or is found to be suffering from venereal disease or from tuberculosis or from

any other ailment or disease which in the opinion of the medical officer is dangerous to public health; or

- (vi) that such employment or continued employment impairs or is likely to impair the safety of the State or of the public or of a section thereof or threatens or is likely to threaten the maintenance of public order, provided the Secretary concurs in such refusal or cancellation; or
- (vii) that an order of removal has been made under any law, against such Bantu.

An African whose employment contract has been so cancelled or who has been refused permission to enter into employment may be referred to an aid centre and may even in certain eventualities be required to leave the prescribed area. This power may be exercised even in the case of those who were previously protected by their birth and long residence or employment in the area, but the order requiring such persons to leave the area must be confirmed by the chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner. If such an order is disobeyed the right (*sic*) acquired in terms of Sec. 10 (1) (a) or (b) is destroyed (See Sec. 21 *ter* (8).)

### Casual labourers and independent contractors

In addition to control over those in regular employment the Bantu Laws Amendment Act has tightened control over casual labourers and independent contractors. No African may carry on business as a hawker, pedlar or street trader, etc., outside an African residential area without the permission of the urban local authority (this is apart from acquiring a licence) and the urban local authority must in turn have received permission from the Minister to give consent. (New 27 *bis* of Act 25 of 1945.)

In February 1963 a circular was issued by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development relating to trading by Africans in White areas. The main provisions of the circular were the following:—

1. Africans will not be allowed to trade in an urban area outside an urban African township. No further Africans must be licensed to trade in such areas as pedlars, hawkers or speculators in livestock or produce. Where such licences have already been granted endeavours must be made to restrict the activities of the holders to African residential areas.
2. Where, owing to distance or other factors, it is necessary to grant trading rights in urban African townships such rights must be granted to Africans only. But the Government's overriding policy is not to allow an increase in the number of Africans in such townships who are not in paid employment. Therefore when it is possible without undue inconvenience to satisfy the needs of township residents from existing businesses in the towns, no reason exists for the establishment of trading concerns in the townships. This policy applies mainly in cases where the townships are small and are not far removed from the towns.
3. If it is necessary to provide trading facilities in the townships the trading rights must be

granted only to those who qualify to remain in the area concerned under section 10 (1) (a) or (b) of the Urban Areas Act. No foreign Africans may be granted such rights.

4. The carrying on of more than one business, whether of the same type or not, by the same African may not be allowed, not even in different African townships in the same urban area.
5. No business which does not confine itself to the provision of daily essential domestic necessities must be established. New licences for dry-cleaners, garages and petrol filling stations, for example, should not be granted. Persons already holding such licences can continue to operate until "the opportunity arises to close" the concerns or to persuade the owners to move to a Bantu homeland.
6. The establishment of African companies or partnerships must not be allowed in urban townships. Existing companies must not be permitted to take over or open further businesses there. Nor must African-controlled financial institutions, industries or wholesale concerns be allowed in such areas.
7. Africans granted trading rights must not be permitted to erect their own buildings. All buildings necessary for trading purposes must be erected by the local authority for lease to Africans at economic rentals.
8. The showing of films for entertainment in urban African townships must in future be undertaken by the local authority only. Other bodies already authorized to do so may for the time being continue.

Such directives will presumably be embodied now in regulations framed under Sec. 23 (1) (o) which empowers regulation of "the conditions under which a Bantu may be permitted to work on his own account in any remunerative activity or as an independent contractor." Such restrictions are also authorized by the new Sec. 37 bis of the Urban Areas Act.

Apart from the restrictions on business and employment opportunities which flow directly or indirectly from these Acts there is also the ingenious dissuasion from property investment which is a result of the withdrawal of freehold rights from African in urban areas. People residing in African residential areas within prescribed areas do so under a variety of permits. The most long-term is that of a site permit which allows a 30-year occupancy of the site and the right to dispose of his interest in the house on the site. As the time remaining on the permit decreases so must the value of the right of occupation which can be sold. No one as yet knows what the situation will be or what measures will be taken when these 30-year leases terminate, but whatever the position then may be, **it is clear that property investment for Africans has none of the security with which it is usually associated by the White population.**

● *Immobility caused by fear of the consequences of moving is not the equivalent of stability arising from satisfaction with freely chosen employment.*

● *Even though it is an inescapable fact of South African life that Africans live and are needed in the White areas, these Acts ensure that no African may with any complacency contemplate his future and that of his family in a White area.*

● *Property investment for Africans has none of the security with which it is usually associated by the White population.*

## Summing-up

To sum up, the position of Africans working and living in a prescribed area is this:

1. **They may live in a prescribed area** (1) if they qualify by reason of birth and long residence or employment or, (2) if they have conditional permission to do so (the condition being in general that they be employed by a specific employer) or, (3) if they are the dependants of those qualifying under (1) and are permitted to live with the breadwinner.
2. **Africans may work in a prescribed area** as long as their employment continues to be acceptable to the labour bureau officer. If the employment fails or ceases to have the approval of the labour officer, any African ultimately may be required to leave the prescribed area. Furthermore an African long out of work runs the risk of being declared idle or undesirable and as such may be sent from the prescribed area to his home (if he has one) or to an African scheduled or released area.
3. They cannot in any substantial manner accumulate or invest capital in a prescribed area.

In fact in the White areas of South Africa there are no established African communities with the amenities necessary to settled population.

The facts with which I have been dealing in themselves acknowledge the existence of a class of urban-born and bred Africans. Nevertheless, while these statutes remain in force African workers are ultimately at the mercy of officials, African businessmen are under pressure to move to African areas. At all times the declared policy of the Government is that Africans must go back to their homelands; here is the machinery by which this can be achieved. Even though it is an inescapable fact of South African life that Africans live and are needed in White areas, these Acts ensure that no African may with any complacency contemplate his future and that of his family in a White area. His presence there is always dependent upon good behaviour and upon the needs of the White population. And it is these conditions, which are operative in the case of all Africans outside released or scheduled areas, which make the whole pattern of African labour migratory in the sense referred to earlier.

**“African family life is adversely affected not so much by migrant labour as by the laws which reduce Africans . . . into mere labour units.”**

## **SOME SOCIAL EFFECTS OF MIGRANT LABOUR ON RURAL AFRICANS**

By JOHN BLACKING



**I**T IS NOT EASY to speak with authority on the effects of migrant labour on the family life of rural Africans in the Republic, because too little research has hitherto been done on the subject. In his book on “Migrant Labour and Tribal Life in Bechuanaland”, published in 1947, Schapera reported that most of his African informants painted a very gloomy picture of the adverse effects of migrant labour. On the other hand, migration was by no means the only cause of the changes that had occurred in Tswana life: “the activities of the administration and of the missionaries, traders and other Europeans living in the Reserves (had) also interfered with ancient tribal institutions, sometimes deliberately.”

Migrant labour is, in fact, only one aspect of the general treatment of labour which exists under the prevailing economic system, and especially in one without effective African trade unions. The remedies suggested by Schapera, and later in the Fagan and Tomlinson Reports, and the policies advocated by both the Government and the parties in opposition, are therefore at best only temporary solutions to a situation which is destroying the integrity and morale of large sections of the South African population, and incidentally making a mockery of Christianity in a supposedly Christian country.

### **No rural paradise**

When cheap labour was first needed on a large scale to develop South Africa's economy, very few rural Africans were interested in joining the industrial economy. But by the time that the poll tax had been introduced as a device to bring them into the labour market, conditions in the rural areas had begun to deteriorate, so that increasing numbers of peasants were, in fact, anxious to migrate to the urban centres.

To their inhabitants, the rural areas were never the paradise that they are to the romantic tourist: people often had to walk miles every day to collect water, firewood, or wild vegetables for cooking; in many areas, crops and livestock were in constant danger from the ravages of wild animals; and during the nineteenth century there was for many the threat of invasion and upheaval by the imperialistic ventures of Chaka and his successors, or the encroachment of land-hungry White farmers.

Nevertheless, in spite of the general level of poverty of their subsistence economies, life was tolerable, and even pleasant, for rural Africans,

because of the essentially democratic nature of their social systems, in which chiefs and headmen were simply distributors of land, and organizers of labour and ritual, for autonomous territorial groups; and in which much authority was vested in corporate descent groups, composed of people whose active co-operation was based on the theory that they were united by unilineal descent from a common ancestor.

### **Rural African family life**

It should not be assumed that because clans, lineages, extended families, and families are based on recognition of the biological facts of procreation, they are necessarily any more fundamental than groups based on other theories, such as common occupation, common religion, or common language. The family presupposes the lineage; and lineages and clans presuppose groups of people living together and working to enjoy the products of certain areas of land. Thus social organization by means of families and lineages is simply one method of organizing economic production, and by no means the only method, nor necessarily the best.

**MR. JOHN BLACKING** was born in England and educated at Sherborne. During the second World War he was sent to the far Eastern theatre, where he fought guerilla warfare in Malaya. After the war he went to King's College, Cambridge, and the University of Paris, where he studied musicology and the piano.

For a time Mr. Blacking was a school teacher in Singapore, and then came to South Africa as a musicologist for the International Library of African Music. He did two years' field work on the Venda people in the Northern Transvaal and has also done field work in others parts of Africa.

In 1959 Mr. Blacking became a lecturer in Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Furthermore, it should not be assumed that rural African family life was and is automatically harmonious: for instance anthropologists have shown that in many parts of Africa witchcraft accusations, which are signs of tension and friction, are most frequently made by people against members of their own lineages. Thus it may be argued that even in the traditional environment kinship-based social and economic organization was not ideal; that other and better methods might be devised; and that migrant labour, by destroying certain aspects of traditional African family life, may in the long run, have contributed, in some indirect way, to the ultimate welfare of the people of South Africa. This may sound like unscrupulous casuistry; but it is essentially the same argument as that taken by most Christian missionaries and evangelists, who are concerned with long-term results when they divide families in order to secure the church loyalty of one of their members.

### **Neighbourhood relationships**

Thus it was not so much the warmth of prescribed family life which made life tolerable in the rural areas, as the security of a relatively equal standard of living and of mutual co-operation in local economic enterprises, and the warmth of voluntary relationships between people who happened to live near each other. The importance which both rural and urban Africans attach to **neighbourhood** relationships and friendship is well illustrated by the regular borrowing and lending of domestic equipment and mutual assistance in entertainment, which takes place amongst neigh-

bours; and the fact that a visitor is welcome at any time of the day or night. During fieldwork in the Northern Transvaal, I found that the arrival of members of the family was not always greeted as enthusiastically as that of neighbours, because of the obligations involved in such relationships. In fact, it must be admitted that migrant labour has been welcomed by many rural Africans as an opportunity to escape from the fetters of prescribed family relationships.

### **Attractions of migrant labour**

Migrant labour has also been welcomed as an opportunity to escape from serfdom; or from the influence of tribal chiefs, who became increasingly autocratic as a result of the presence and support of foreign administrators and the introduction of money into an economy in which tribute had been paid in perishable goods, so that no one could amass exceptional wealth.

Migrant labour became a means of redressing the minor imbalances and inequalities of the traditional social systems, which had become exaggerated as a result of contact with Europeans. Europeans came to interfere with traditional life in one way or another: they wanted converts, consumers, or labourers, and their interference was inevitably selective and dependent on the interests of certain groups. If they won over a dominant group, they antagonized those who were opposed to it; and if they recruited the opposition, they estranged themselves and their recruits from the dominant group. Just as Europeans used Africans for their own devices, so Africans were generally interested in Europeans only if they could use them to improve their social position within their own society. But because of the disparity between European and rural African economies, many who had set out simply to improve their position in the tribal system soon found themselves economically and culturally separated from the system. The presence of some people with a noticeably higher standard of living was a novelty in tribal life, which made many dissatisfied with their own condition. Migrant labour therefore became a desirable means to the end of earning money to satisfy new needs.

Similarly, social life was affected by the control or destruction of ancestor-worship and initiation rites directly by missionaries and administrators, and indirectly by the local use of African labour, and by contact with an economy centred on profit rather than on human relationships, in which wealthy people, rather than the old or the

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## MIGRANT LABOUR AND RURAL AFRICANS (Cont.)

dead, therefore became important. A young man no longer had to abandon his sweetheart to an elderly polygamist, as he could impress her parents with the wealth he acquired in town. In Venda-land, there is a certain salem-pore cloth called "Lamba Mukalaha", which means "Refuse the old man"; a song about it explains how young men can buy nice clothes for their sweethearts with money earned in town. Again, the excitement of urban life, in which things are constantly happening, even if they are not always pleasant, and the desire for adventure and change encourage young men to work in town; so that a period of migrant labour has in some respects become a substitute for the tribal initiations which were banned.

### Unbalanced economical structure

Thus, although the institution of the original poll tax was an unscrupulous act, and one of the causes of migration from the rural areas has been the economic necessity of paying this and other taxes, many other factors in time precipitated migration, and the seeds of the system were cultivated by the activities of traders, administrators, missionaries, and the other Europeans living in or near the Reserves.

I do not apologize for the length of this preamble to a brief outline of certain adverse social conditions in the rural areas, because I think it is by no means certain that these conditions are caused specifically or solely by migrant labour. Both the social conditions and the migrant labour are rather part of the structure of an economy which is unbalanced in terms of human relationships; and since traditional African economies were based on the principle that production and distri-

### AN EVIL CANKER AT THE HEART OF SOCIETY

*Migratory labour cannot suddenly be abolished, because the very survival of both White and Black depend upon it, but it should be recognized for what it is — an evil canker at the heart of our whole society, wasteful of labour, destructive of ambition, a wrecker of homes and a symptom of our failure to create a coherent and progressive economic society. But a realistic view should be taken and it must be recognized that for the foreseeable future some migrant labour is likely to remain.*

**D. Hobart Houghton** — "The South African Economy".

bution should be managed primarily in terms of human relationships, it is not surprising that rural Africans should suffer most from the intrusion of an economy based on the profit motive.

### Varying social effects

Furthermore, just as I have suggested that the pattern of change in rural areas has invariably been influenced by pre-existing conditions, so it must be appreciated that the social effects of migrant labour vary according to the social background of the migrants. For instance, I have the impression that the family life of Nguni peoples is generally affected more adversely than that of Tswana peoples: Nguni social systems are more authoritarian and hierarchical, whereas Tswana systems are more democratic and segmented. Thus the family life of the Fokeng of Rustenburg does not seem to be very adversely affected by the migration of their women, who work in Johannesburg, usually as domestic servants, until they have had three or four children and have saved enough money to build a home. They then settle in Rustenburg, where their husbands visit them for one or two weekends every month, if they are working in Johannesburg. This is not an ideal situation, of course, but the kinship system of the Fokeng has always worked in such a way that children are frequently looked after and loved by mother-substitutes: I even know of cases where a woman has been brought up by relatives and been married from their home, because her parents were sorry that these relatives had few or no children of their own. Such a situation is perfectly acceptable in a society where individuals are essentially members of large, co-operative kinship groups; and the system can survive the temporary absence of several members, especially when the distances involved in migration are small.

On the other hand, reports from the Ciskei and Transkei, and other Nguni areas, where families seem to be more isolated in their relationships, demonstrate quite clearly the ill-effects that can follow the absence of the head of a household, or the able-bodied males who should be looking after the cattle or ploughing.

### Independent migrant labourers

Again, the kind of labour that migrants perform, the conditions under which they work, and the proximity of their work to their rural homes are other factors which affect their own and their families' welfare. For instance, the majority of the Venda whom I have studied in the Northern Transvaal refuse to work on the mines; but many

will work under contract for municipalities, or for manufacturers such as Kempton Park Potteries or Curtis Brickfields, Pretoria. Above all, they have preferred to migrate and find work independently: this has usually been achieved through relatives or contacts in town, and it was not difficult, because the Venda are a small and loyal group. Independent migration is almost impossible today, because of restrictive legislation.

My observations of the family conditions of migrant labourers in Vendaland were not detailed; but I am confident that further research will support my tentative conclusion that the **independent** migrant labourers and their families were better off socially and financially than both the contract labourers and those who found work locally in Vendaland. By far the worst off were those migrants who had been virtually "sold" by their headmen or chiefs to farmers, who come in trucks to collect cheap labour at various times of the year. Young Venda were only prepared to give farm labour a trial, in the hope that they might be able to run away or move on to town and find labour independently.

### **Deprived of self-respect**

**The Venda situation emphasizes the important point that African family life is adversely affected not so much by migrant labour per se, as by the laws which reduce Africans in general, and migrant labourers in particular, into mere labour units and deprive them of personal freedom. One might even allow that certain restrictive aspects of family life had to be disrupted to allow rural Africans to advance smoothly into a modern economy; but there is no justification for a system which has deprived people of their self-respect, and driven them to take refuge in customs and attitudes which have no place in a developing economy.**

It is a tragedy that a husband or a father should have to insist on asserting his authority over a member of his family, even when he knows he is in the wrong, simply because this is the only field in which he is allowed any authority. Anthony Barker has shown in his book, "**The Man Next to Me**" (originally published as "**Giving and Receiving**"), how lives can be lost as a result of such obtuse, but understandable, behaviour (p. 123). Similarly, families may refuse to act in an emergency without the consent of an absent household head, and by the time his permission is obtained, it is too late: such tragedies occur partly

because the head of the household is absent as a migrant labourer, and partly because families have become almost destructively conservative as a desperate response to legal restrictions on their freedom and self-respect. Again, the custom of *lobolo* is both a cause and a result of migrant labour. The desire to marry, the rising "cost" of marriage, and the increasing poverty of the rural areas, have driven men to town to seek money to marry. On the other hand, the legal deprivation of self-respect has caused Africans to attach undue importance to *lobolo* as something specially African and worthwhile, whereas in the normal course of events it should have become redundant in the context of a modern economy. There is a distinct difference between the positive *négritude* of West Africa, which represents a fusion of ancient and modern in the language of African culture, and the negative tribalism which has increased in Southern Africa as a response to restrictions on personal freedom: one is an advance, and the other is a retreat.

### **Proximity to area of work**

I have already stressed that the family life of independent migrants from some areas, such as Rustenburg and Vendaland, does not seem to have suffered greatly; and, of course, in cases where whole families have been able to migrate, their troubles are probably due more to the process of urbanization than migrant labour. The more satisfactory state of family life in Rustenburg may be the result of not only their social system, as I have suggested, but also their proximity to the area of work. In the Ciskei and the Transkei there seems to be a relationship between the pattern of family life and the distance of migrants from their work. Where migrants work near their homes and can visit their families regularly, adultery is strongly disapproved of and rarely takes place; but where they work far from home and can only visit their families once a year, adultery is accepted, and there are even associations which enable married women to meet their lovers socially. It does not follow that the former necessarily have a happier life than the latter; but it does mean that their family life is functioning better in the generally accepted manner.

### **Emotional needs of women**

The tolerant attitude towards adultery in areas far from the scene of the migrants' work has its positive aspects: it represents a growth of respect

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## MIGRANT LABOUR AND RURAL AFRICANS (Cont.)

for the status and emotional needs of women, who in the traditional tribal situation were victims of the theory, still popular even in modern European society, that a man can do what he likes sexually, but a woman may not. Married women, in fact, bear the brunt of the adverse effects of migrant labour. Children can get along well without fathers, especially in the communal atmosphere of rural African life; and fathers can manage without their wives and families — in fact in many parts of the world, men have devised an elaborate system of golf, fishing, Freemasonry, Rotary clubs, and so on, largely in order to escape their womenfolk. But it is hard for women to live without men in societies where the woman's chief functions are to be a wife and mother, and her self-respect is derived from her success or failure in these careers. Thus it is immensely important that a married woman should have children, and this is not always easy if her husband comes home occasionally, and only for a few days or weeks at a time. Amongst the Zulu, for instance, there is the tragic spectacle of women suffering from pseudocyesis, or hysterical pregnancy. As Anthony Barker writes, sometimes "the pseudocyesis goes on to spurious labour, a catastrophe of abdominal pains with no visible result: the stage is set for the great performance, the minor actors are in their places, the audience hushed and expectant; only the principal actor fails to appear, for he does not even exist".

### Children wanted

Children are wanted in the rural areas not only because they are loved and lovable, and because they bring prestige to men and women by making them parents and grandparents, but because they are economically important. Sons and daughters maintain and increase the wealth and security of a family by looking after its livestock and tilling its fields: when they marry, daughters bring in more wealth in the form of *lobolo*, and sons continue to increase the families' wealth, as well as providing a home for the aged and economically useless. The economy depends on the personal relationships of kinsfolk, so that it collapses when the economically important persons are absent; and the result is destruction of the land, and insecurity for the families who live on it. The money that they receive from town may exceed greatly the value of their traditional economic output, but

*The migratory labour system can be seen both as a symptom and a cause of most of the economic, social and political problems which beset our community; and this perpetual mass movement of people is a dramatic illustration of our failure over the past century to create a unified and coherent economy.*

D. Hobart Houghton — "The South African Economy."

it does not compensate for the loss of personal security. Furthermore, it is generally the poorer families who suffer most, because they cannot hire workers to help them cultivate their land, or herdsmen to look after their cattle, which are therefore more easily lost. There is also the dilemma of the migrant father who needs to have more children than would have been normal in the past, so that some can work at home and some can work in town; but who cannot spend enough time at home to ensure that these children are borne and reared. Again, both the fertility of men and the survival of babies is threatened by the spread of venereal diseases which, though adequately treated by some organizations who use migrant labour, are not adequately treated when the worker is at home or when he has ceased to be of use to his employers.

### No increase in lawlessness

The most remarkable and significant result of these and many other changes is that there has been no increase in lawlessness, nor any deterioration in the co-operation and fellowship which exists between neighbours in the rural areas. Migrant labour is not the sole cause of changes and new tensions in rural African families, and in some cases it may even have a good effect in helping conservative people to adjust to a new way of life. As long as co-operation between neighbours remains an essential feature of their life, changes in the family structure of rural African societies may in the long run be of great benefit to them.

At any rate, there is little that can be done about migrant labour and the plight of families who suffer from it, as long as Africans are content to remain an inexpensive item of the movable equipment of a profit-directed industrial economy.





**"The position in South Africa is that all Africans outside the Bantu reserves are regarded as though they were citizens of a foreign country."**

## **THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF MIGRATORY LABOUR ON THE URBAN AFRICAN**

By ELLEN HELLMANN

**M**IGRATORY LABOUR, in the sense of the movement of workers for limited and often recurrent periods of varying length between their places of permanent residence and of temporary employment, occurs over the whole face of the world. But in no country except South Africa, as far as I am aware, is migratory labour regarded as a desirable system on either economic or social grounds.

The circulation of labour is one of the consequences of uneven rates of economic development, both industrial and agricultural, of differences in the rates of population growth, of conditions in a "plural" society where people, certainly during the initial phases of culture contact and economic development, continue to live in the two worlds of tribal and of western society. This tide of workers flows back and forth across international boundaries and within the same country; from Mexico to the orchards and vineyards of California, from Italy to the factories of Switzerland, from Gambia and Senegal into Ghana, from what was Ruanda Urundi into Uganda; and internally it flows from southern to northern Italy, from north to south in Ghana. Inter-territorial migrancy seldom takes place on a family basis. Internally, the practice varies. In some areas it is chiefly individuals who circulate, in others there are migrant families. Many of us will remember the exposure of the conditions under which family migrancy took place in certain areas of the U.S.A. in Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath".

Obviously enough, in view of its developed mining, industrial and agricultural activities, South Africa has acted as a magnet, drawing migrant labourers from outside its borders, and within the country both permanent townward migration of all racial groups and migrancy of Africans has increased with economic development.

### **A major phenomenon of our times**

Population movement is a major phenomenon of our times, partly in the form of migration from

country to country, but chiefly in the form of internal migration from rural areas to the ever-growing towns developing throughout the world. Apart from the direction of labour practised in communist countries, and labour conscription introduced in communist and non-communist countries during wars, both temporary migrancy and permanent transfers within one country are usually a matter of individual decision, prompted by a variety of "push and pull" factors. Both migrant labour and permanent immigration across national boundaries are regulated by the host country. **The denial of freedom of movement within the country of citizenship is widely regarded in the west as a denial of a basic human right; the practice of selective immigration is not.**

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**D**R. ELLEN HELLMANN was educated at the University of the Witwatersrand, where she took her degree as Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. Hellmann was the first South African to do research work on the urban African, and has written extensively on the Urban African and on Race Relations. She has also edited a book on Race Relations.

She is a Past President of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, and for many years was the Treasurer of Entokozweni. Some time ago she attended a Conference organized by U.N.E.S.C.O. on Urbanization and Indoctrination.

## MIGRATORY LABOUR AND THE URBAN AFRICAN (Cont.)

The position in South Africa is that all Africans outside the Bantu Reserves are regarded as though they were citizens of a foreign country and entitled to no greater freedom of movement and of residence than aliens elsewhere in the western world. In point of fact, official policy explicitly repudiates any claim by Africans to rights of citizenship outside the Bantu areas. The ideological basis on which this repudiation rests is not at present under discussion. **But it is, I believe, relevant to point out that Africans are precluded by present laws from exercising many of the rights accorded to foreign visitors and immigrants.** Furthermore, there is for the African in South Africa no equivalent of naturalization, whereby an alien, provided he fulfills certain conditions, can acquire full rights of citizenship. **There are Africans in the towns of the Republic who have no permanent right of residence in that town or any right to live anywhere else.**

### No accurate figures

There are no accurate figures of the number of migrants in this country. The Tomlinson Commission estimated that there were 503,000 men and 66,000 women temporarily absent from the Bantu areas in 1951. The men constituted just on 14% of the *de facto* population of the Reserves, and over 40% of the men between 15 and 64 years of age. Two-thirds of them were between 20 and 39 years of age. If the proportion of temporary absentees remained the same, the number of male migrants would have been some 565,111 in 1960. As Professor Hobart Houghton points out, this is the number absent at any one time, but they represent a total pool of more than twice this size. How many of these men are migrants to the town we do not know. Nor do we know how many of them are migrants because they are not permitted to remain permanently in the town and bring their families to join them. Research has made it clear that among the migrants is an appreciable proportion who come to town only to work and to earn, remain rurally-orientated and do not want to settle permanently in the town with their families. Professor Mayer says that in East London they probably constitute between 1/3 and 1/2 of the total male working population there. It seems clear that migrants of this nature are found in all urban areas. I believe, however, that their proportion varies, and that it is probably much higher in coastal towns such as Port Elizabeth and particu-

larly Durban, which are comparatively near to Bantu areas, than in inland areas like Johannesburg and Kimberley.

This system of migratory labour dates back to the opening of the diamond and gold mines. At that time, when land was sufficient and wants limited, this system appears to have been the only way in which labour could be induced to offer itself. The sugar-cane growers of Natal, only some years earlier, had resorted to indenturing workers from India for lack of availability of Zulu labourers. And so it remained for a long time. At the turn of the century, when Johannesburg's African population was just on 60,000, the ratio of men to women was 12 to one. In 1911, with an African population of 100,000, men still outnumbered women by 10 to one. The wage structure was based on the needs of a single man, the assumption being that a man came to town to supplement his livelihood from the land. Today, when the reverse position frequently prevails, many urban families subsidizing rural relatives, the wage structure has still not emancipated itself from its origins.

### Changing pattern

It was only in the thirties and the forties, after the stimulus given to manufacturing first by the departure from the gold standard and then by the war, that the pattern started changing.

By 1946, when the total urban African population was 1.8 million, there were .64m women, i.e. 36% as compared with 1921, when women formed 19% of the urban African population. In Johannesburg by 1946 the rates of men to women had fallen to just over 2:1. The pattern in towns was visibly changing from an almost exclusively migrant and predominantly male population to one in which growing numbers of migrants were becoming permanent urban-dwellers, living under conditions of family life. It was becoming increasingly common, in Johannesburg, to find that a man, after several spells of temporary work and contracting a marriage in a Reserve, brought his wife to Johannesburg and became a townsman. To many of us, observing the situation at that time, internal migration trends seemed to be becoming similar to immigration trends into the United States at the end of last century: first the man came to establish himself and the family followed later. We talked of "our immigrants".

You may ask, knowing that the Natives Urban Areas Act is of venerable age, how this could come about. It must be remembered that pass

laws did not then apply to African women and that while the powers to exercise a considerable degree of control existed (though obviously by no means as cast-iron a system as today) these were at no stage fully imposed.

### **Encouragement**

The point I want to stress is that the stage was at that time set for the deliberate encouragement of permanent urban settlement. Pressure of population in the Reserves, the growth and diversification of employment opportunities in the towns, the requirement of industry for a more skilled and hence stable labour force, as also the preparedness of a substantial section of Africans both to make the town their permanent residence and to adopt western patterns of life, all combined to support this as the direction of policy for the future.

The White population, then as now, was divided. The Fagan Commission was appointed to go into the question, to investigate the operation of the Urban Areas Act, the pass laws and migratory labour. You will remember that it accepted the inevitability of the townward migration of Africans as a normal economic phenomenon and urban Africans as an integral part of the urban population. It recommended easing the pass laws in a number of ways: for instance, extending exemptions from their operation. It expressed itself clearly on the desirability of limiting the migratory system to specific categories of people, to young unmarried men, for limited periods, and to those cases where the place of work was near enough for a man to live in a Reserve bordering a town, as in the Durban of yesterday which is the border industry area of today. The Fagan Commission did not, it stated, "find one single argument for maintaining the migratory system in respect of Natives who no longer have a home in the Reserves". (para 60).

### **Reversal of policy**

Although the government that then came to power followed a policy which is the reverse of what the Commission recommended, townward migration has continued because the developing economy of this country required it. And if the number of women is any indication of permanent urbanization, then this, too, has increased. In 1960, women constituted 41% of the urban African population of 3.4 million.

But this took place in the teeth of official policy, and repeated efforts, culminating in this Session's Bantu Laws Amendment Bill, to tighten the laws so as to define the status of Africans in towns more precisely. What this status is, the

Deputy Minister for Bantu Administration and Development made clear in the House. He said:

"Our policy for a long time has been that Bantu may be present in the urban areas and are justified in being there for the labour they perform there. That is a guarantee to the Bantu. That is one of the securities he has, and in that respect he is properly protected in this legislation. Large numbers of these workers qualify in terms of Section 10(1) (a) and (b) and (c); in other words, those Bantu have been born in that particular urban area, they have worked there for a long time for one employer or for different employers. All these Bantu are not affected at all as long as they are not there illegally, as long as they are not work-shy, as long as they are not undesirable and as long as they are not superfluous." (Hansard 6/1964, Col. 1862.)

What meaning "guarantee", "security", "protection", can have when qualified in this way escapes me entirely.

### **Three categories**

There are, accordingly, three major categories of Africans in the towns. There are Africans who are migrants by choice and do not wish to settle permanently in the towns. Chiefly, I believe, they are to be found on the mines, working on brickfields and timberyards, as cleaners and domestic servants. But they are also present, though I do not think in large numbers, in industrial occupations.

Then there are the migrants by compulsion, that large category of workers who have obtained the requisite permission to seek work in town and, once work has been found, to be registered, as well as those allowed into town on conditional employment, that is, permitted to remain in the town only as long as employed by a specified employer. They have no right to bring their wives with them. After they have been in employment for two years, visits by wives may be paid if the necessary permission is given by the official of the labour bureau. It seems unlikely that, under present rigorous administrative conditions, many of these migrants will qualify for permanent residence. They are likely, as many have families in the country, to break the continuity of residence required to qualify. The implication is, if strict influx control continues to be imposed, that recruitment to the "permanent" group of townsmen will diminish. What the actual proportions of the different groups are, is not known; nor their marital status. An investigation of African workers  
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## **MIGRATORY LABOUR AND THE URBAN AFRICAN (Cont.)**

undertaken in Capetown showed that 2/3 of the 650 men in the sample were married, and of these less than one third had their wives with them. How many would have brought wife and dependants with them had the choice been theirs is not known. The information from the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, where married quarters are provided and mineworkers have a free choice, suggests that the proportion might be high. At Luanshya, 64% of the men had wives with them; only 15% were married men who had left their wives at their rural homes.

Finally, there is the third category, that consisting of Africans who qualify to remain in the towns, provided, of course, that they are not "work-shy, undesirable or superfluous". In Johannesburg, a couple of years ago, it was roughly estimated that 175,000 out of a total of 225,000 registered African men belonged to this section. In the coastal towns, the proportion will most assuredly be lower.

These Africans are not migrants but equally they are not free urban residents. They cannot move to another town without forfeiting such rights of domicile as they have won. The Minister this Session again rejected the request to regard the Witwatersrand as one labour area. Theoretically the man who owns a house in Dube and works for an employer who has moved his factory to Alberton has no right to remain in Dube. In practice, the tyranny of the law is tempered in its administration.

I suggest that any consideration of migratory labour must include all three categories, because they are all affected by the network of laws designed to prevent Africans from acquiring permanent rights of domicile in the so-called "White areas". The most an African can acquire is a conditional right of domicile, conditional upon the requirements of the Whites.

### **Divided families**

The main immediate effect of a migratory labour system — apart from its undesirable repercussions on the economy — is clearly enough on the family. Migrant labour means divided families. It means husband parted from wife for lengthy periods frequently during early manhood. It means children deprived of the presence of the father. In the towns the presence of a disproportionately

large number of men creates precisely those conditions characteristic of any large seaport, where the population composition is similar. The larger the unattached number of men, the more women are attracted to meet the sexual and domestic needs of these "single" men. Sexual promiscuity proliferates, the spread of venereal disease is facilitated. Many of the men form temporary alliances at the termination of which they frequently abandon the woman, leaving her to provide on her own for the children of the union.

### **Not a stable community**

This situation would be one of grave concern if the urban African community as a whole were an established one with a reasonably stable foundation of family life. It would be analogous, as Professor Monica Wilson has pointed out, to the conditions that developed in European cities with army camps on their fringes during the last war. But the urban African community is by no means yet a stable one. The elementary family, which has become the prevalent social unit in the towns — as contrasted with the extended family which constituted the tribal homestead — is under strain in this period of adjustment to a new environment. Family relationships are brittle, marital relationships unstable, the youth undisciplined. Former sanctions have lost their force, new ones are only in the process of formation. It is a situation — as many observers have pointed out — comparable to that obtaining in England during the industrial revolution. For this population to be constantly subjected to the impact of new waves of migrants accentuates difficulties. "In Langa," says Professor Wilson, "the percentage of single men has increased very rapidly in the last eight years, as men who were living scattered round the Peninsula have been compelled to move into new single quarters, and it is no accident that, as the proportion of single men has increased, the insecurity of life and racial antagonism have increased enormously. In 1954 residents in Langa were already commenting on the increasing insecurity created by the numbers of single men, . . . and the contrast in atmosphere between 1954 and 1962 is painfully obvious. In that period the proportion of men to women has risen from 477 men to 100 women to 866 men to 100 women. A vernacular newspaper, commenting on POQO, asserted that there is no POQO anywhere where married Africans live with their families and go to work daily, and suggested that single quarters should be turned into museums".

## No security

For townsmen themselves there is no security. Even though they live in an urban world, they are not accorded the right to be of it. Geographically and psychologically, they are on its fringes.

Even the right to marry a woman not entitled in her own right to be in the town is uncertain and questionable. It depends on the availability of approved accommodation and that particular local authority's interpretation of the ambiguous phrase setting out that the wife of a qualified African is exempt from the 72-hour rule "if after lawful entry she normally resides with that African". Mr. van den Berg M.P. stated very explicitly what the purpose of the legislation is: "African family life in the industrial areas like the Witwatersrand should be limited to the minimum" was what he said in the House in 1963.

## No freehold property rights

Freehold rights in land are denied African townsmen. Such freehold rights as were acquired before the 1937 legislation was passed have either been extinguished or are in the process of extinction. If, instead of the elimination of freehold title, there had been an extension of freehold rights, the building societies would have entered the field of African housing, and have given an impetus to African home ownership comparable to that given to the White community. Land ownership is important to Africans as, indeed, it is to other groups. I believe that making it possible for Africans to acquire this stake in the towns would have had an important effect in promoting stability not only of residence but of social relationships. The response there has been even to the present form of qualified home-ownership on the 30-year leasehold basis now available, and the indications of the greater "rootedness" that is developing, seem to confirm this supposition.

## Disincentives multiply

But incentives towards permanent settlement were precisely what official policy did not propose to provide. Instead of incentives to permanent settlement, disincentives multiplied. Pass laws and influx control were applied more effectively and strictly. Between 1956 and 1963, a minimum of 464,719 Africans were endorsed out of the 23 main urban centres of the Republic. (Hansard 10/1964, Col 3541) I have no breakdown of the number of endorsements out per year. I believe that is increasing as the machinery of super-

It becomes necessary to grant arbitrary powers to officials to control the lives of people. Who can doubt that there are occasions when those powers are wrongly exercised?

Mr. E. P. Bradlow.

vision becomes more effective. In Johannesburg alone 19,650 Africans were endorsed out last year.

Successful traders who were showing initiative and enterprise in extending their businesses in the Townships, were told that they should look to the Bantustans for further expansion now that they had acquired the necessary experience, that no further garages, filling stations and dry-cleaning establishments could be started in the townships, that traders would in future be limited to one trading stand, that they would no longer be permitted to erect their own premises but must rent them.

## Double-rootedness

I believe that this policy of impeding the normal process of permanent urban settlement has left its imprint on the individual and on the community. It has perpetuated among even the most urbanized Africans, physically settled in the town and culturally committed to its western way of life, a double-rootedness born not of attachment to the country but of urban insecurity. A large number of Africans who have no intention of voluntarily leaving the town in which they have lived a lifetime retain a toehold in the country in the form of rights to arable land or to a residential plot. What they are doing is keeping open an escape route in the event of illness, unemployment or some other circumstances threatening their always precarious rights of urban domicile.

## The law falls into disrepute

It is my belief, too, that the fluctuating nature of a large section of the urban population and the insecurity of so many apparently fully urbanized Africans has delayed the development of the new patterns of social life and the new communal institutions appropriate to urban living. Two factors, taken in conjunction, have, I suggest, hindered the emergence of generally accepted forms of behaviour, supported by the sanction of public opinion, without which an ordered community cannot come into being. The one factor is the

(Continued on Page 32)

**“The social harm is in the way in which labour migration here is being manipulated, exploited and artificially stimulated to suit the supposed interests of the White population.”**

## **THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF MIGRATORY LABOUR — SOME CONCLUSIONS**

By PHILIP MAYER



**T**O me there falls the task of summing up what are already two very admirable summaries in themselves, and of drawing conclusions where many illuminating conclusions have been drawn already. Let me begin by re-stating an argument which seems to run through Dr. Hellmann's and Mr. Blacking's papers alike: both suggest that what is doing harm to African men, women and children, and indirectly to this country as a whole, is not labour migration as such. Labour migration is a world-wide phenomenon and is socially neutral in itself. The social harm is in the way in which labour migration here is being manipulated, exploited, and artificially stimulated, to suit the supposed interests of the White population.

We White people, it appears, want to have efficient urban workers, and that means workers who have had time to get fully adjusted to town; but yet we do not want to recognize the African urban worker as a full fellow-citizen in our cities. This selfish paradox is the problem of the status of the urban African generally. It is not specifically the problem of labour migrancy.

### **Enforcement of rigid pattern**

At this stage of today's meeting we are concerned with the social consequences of this abuse of the migrancy pattern, not with its ideological or political justification, or lack of justification. These have been dealt with by other speakers. I want to bring out three main points: (1) that labour migration as such could have good social consequences, not only bad ones; (2) that its good consequences will depend on there being freedom of choice which our present system denies; (3) that some Africans are able to fit willingly into our present system — even when it demands separation of families — while others most certainly are not. **The evil of the present system is that it forces the same rigid pattern on the willing and the unwilling alike.**

### **World-wide phenomenon**

It is clear that labour migration was not invented in South Africa or by the present government; that it results from familiar economic pro-

cesses; that it was not, in the first place, wilfully imposed on the African as an instrument of exploitation. Labour migration happens wherever in the world there is an imbalance in economic development, with some areas going ahead economically and industrially while other areas near them remain poor and undeveloped. From another angle, labour migration — regarded as a world-wide phenomenon — is a feature of the economic and social adjustment of less-developed populations in the face of economic changes. Any form of rapid change, and the social adjustment that it requires, is liable to draw conflicting comments from different observers. It may be perceived in terms of breakdown, corruption and suffering; or it may be perceived in terms of renewal, advance and exhilaration.

Labour migration in Africa in particular can be seen as a means whereby the tribesman is gradually drawn away from his limiting environment into the wider spheres of modern society and economy. Many people would see that as a good thing. On the other hand it can be seen also as a destructive force that undermines the security and human decency which tribal life can provide.

It has rightly been claimed that the migratory system can serve as a cushion shielding the primitive subsistence economy initially from the full force of the modern economic impact. The Fagan Commission report also spoke of a “bridge”.

**PROFESSOR PHILIP MAYER** was born in Germany and was educated at Heidelberg University and the University of Oxford, where he obtained a Doctorate of Law and Philosophy.

He taught at the Universities of London and Cambridge, and was Government Sociologist in Kenya before he came to South Africa as Professor of Social Anthropology at Rhodes University.

In recent years he has made a special study of Urban Africans and of labour migration, and *inter alia* edited a series of three volumes called "Xhosa in Town", published in 1961/62/63 by the Oxford University Press. Dr. Mayer himself wrote the second volume, called "Townsmen and Tribesmen".

"Cushion" and "bridge" both seem good similes, when we want to look at the favourable aspects of migration. But both omit what may be the most important thing: **that migration ought ideally to act selectively.** It ought, insofar as it is a force for good, to be a filter: those who are ready to face life in modern industrial and urban conditions should pass through the filter, those who are not ready should be held and sent back. In terms of the individual, this selectivity depends on the freedom to choose, which is found when labour migrancy operates in a favourable setting.

### **Voluntary migrancy**

A number of Africans in this country do manage to express their own choices within the framework of our migrancy system. These are the people who come to town more or less voluntarily to earn money; and who then go back voluntarily because they have remained what I have called "country-rooted". Town to them is a place to work, but home is in the country. Town life is, after all, an acquired taste. I personally have sympathy with anyone who is willing to quit the urban scene and return to the rolling hills and green valleys of Zululand or the Transkei — even without watertaps. There definitely still exists this type of conservative African peasant, to whom it seems a moral axiom that one **must** return "home", and not "melt away in town" as the Xhosa call it. Among conservative Xhosa this is a powerful cultural directive, sanctioned by the expectation of the senior kin and friends at home, by the consensus of the group of "home-boys" among whom one moves in town, and ultimately by the demands of the ancestral spirits.

Thus the African who lives in town but is spiritually, so to speak, a citizen of his home reserve, is not a complete invention of the Nationalist press. The invention is to suppose that **all** Africans are like this. As Dr. Hellmann has said, the type is probably much rarer in Johannesburg than in some of the coastal towns. And for those who do not belong to this type, it may be impossible to express one's own choice within the framework of our law.

### **Willing recruits to town**

Africans who have had some school education do not usually feel internal moral pressures to return "home". They feel free, morally speaking, to prefer the life in town. Many will decide to go back to the country, if they have land rights in the reserves which would be lost by settling in town. But many are fully ready to pass through what I call the "migrancy filter". They would be willing recruits to town. As it is, however, they find an all-pervading insecurity which is enough to turn them against town after all. This insecurity is not entirely, but is largely, produced deliberately by our present system which is consciously aimed at discouraging permanent urban settlement.

### **Two patterns of migration**

As Dr. Hellmann says, one can distinguish two patterns of migration — one of men alone, the other of men with their families. I think it is specifically important to remember that while African working men differ in their personal preferences for town or country, they differ also in their ideas about which is the proper place for a family. To some of them the separation of a family seems a lesser evil than the exposing of women and children to the influences of an urban environment. To others, family life in town seems right and desirable.

Many conservative tribal people in the Cape and Natal genuinely regard the country homestead as the only proper place for bringing up children, and the place where the highest duties of a wife will lie. They also genuinely feel that a man who takes his wife and child to town with him has trodden the first reprehensible step on the road to "melting away" entirely, and cutting off from rural ties for ever. That is why separation of families seems a lesser evil to people of this type. They are obeying a clear and overriding cultural directive; their women must not be brought to town, other than for short visits, and their children must not be reared in town.

*(Continued overleaf)*

## SOME CONCLUSIONS (Cont.)

The more progressive people, or those with a higher standard of formal education (in the Cape they are generally called "School people") do not have this clear cultural directive. They are more likely to be swayed by straightforward economic considerations. To some it will seem good that the wife should migrate with her husband because she can earn money in town as well; or on the other hand it may seem uneconomic for families to be together in town, because in town the whole family have to subsist on earned income while in the country "they eat mealies which they plough themselves".

### The filter of personal choice

The broad principle, I would say, is that compared with having men go to town by themselves, having wives and children go too is seen as potentially a far greater cultural break. It seems likely to trigger much deeper changes in habits, outlook and values. A man, on his own, is often seen to slip back quite happily into his old rustic ways after a period spent in town. For a couple, or a couple with children, this may not be easy at all. Often this is expressed by the semi-stereotyped remarks of country people, that when women go to town they get new ideas, become more independent, less submissive to husbands, in-laws and senior kinsmen, less observant of tribal norms generally. All these statements about the effects of town on women probably hold a great deal of truth, but of course different values can be attached to them. They are likely to seem morally good to a person of progressive outlook, morally bad to a solid conservative, and morally neutral to people who are thinking mainly in economic not social terms. **It is hard indeed on migrants that the filter of personal choice is not allowed to operate in this connection.**

Dr. Hellmann has quoted some figures relating to Johannesburg. A couple of years ago, she said, it was roughly estimated that 175,000 out of a total of 225,000 registered African men in Johannesburg qualified for urban residence, i.e. could stay in town, unless they were judged by the authorities to be workshy, undesirable or superfluous — and could obtain permits for their families to come to town. That is about 78%. If really 78% of all African men in Johannesburg had **full rights** in town — if they could freely choose whether to stay or go, and whether to bring in their families or not — then indeed the hardship and compulsion entailed by the system

would be less *de facto* than it sounds in theory, and much less than is sometimes implied by critics. But the snag, of course, is that even these qualified urban residents are never fully secure in town; that they cannot go through any process analogous to the naturalization of a foreign resident, but must remain in a sense always technically foreign. And this applies with even more force to their families. For a woman to get the full benefit of her husband's qualification as an urban resident (under Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act) the woman herself must have been "ordinarily resident" in that town.

### Temporary permits

What it comes down to is that if a country-born man marries a town-born woman he can be fairly sure of her being allowed to live with him in town, but much less so if he marries a girl from the reserves, or if he was married to one before he came to town. The correct interpretation of this clause is still controversial. At present the practice in Johannesburg seems to be to allow country-born wives in town to be with their qualified urban-resident husbands, but only on temporary permits that have to be renewed every three months.

### The extended family

How much harm is actually done by the separation of families? This is not as cynical a question as it may sound. It is as well to realize that for many of the people concerned the ideal of "the family" is not exactly what the English, American or White South African person normally has in mind. Family ties are indeed exceedingly strong among conservative rural Africans, but not the ties of the isolated conjugal or nuclear family. Red-blanket Xhosa, for example, set tremendous store by the extended family comprising three generations; so much so that they would find it outrageous for a young husband to insist on taking his own wife and baby to town with him — an outrageous disruption of the family, meaning the three-generation family. The young husband does not call his wife "my wife", but "wife of my home"; in the early stages of marriage there is much more stress on her duties as a daughter-in-law than on her duties as a wife. Far from setting a value on conjugal closeness, the etiquette of this conservative section of the Xhosa actually forbids a young married man to be too intimate with his wife, or to appear to monopolize her, or to speak to her too often or with too undisguised affection.



In a broader perspective the essential thing is that man and woman have sharply-defined separate spheres of activity among many peasant peoples, and indeed many urban working classes. The separateness of their spheres is such that they do not have the same social and emotional dependence on one another as in the English or American conjugal family: the dependence is on a wider circle of kin. Among the Red Xhosa, too, there is traditionally a total prohibition of sexual intercourse for the young mother during the two years or so when she is still suckling her child. As for the children, again the norms are different from ours. Kin other than the parents are much more readily accepted as foster-parents, and much readier to act as such. It seems more "natural" to a Red Xhosa to let his children be brought up by grandparents, uncles and aunts in the country, than to take them into town so as to keep them with their own mother and father.

### Coercive laws

I have been putting it to you that just as some Africans really prefer to go back to the country after working in town; so some really prefer the separation of their families as a lesser of two evils: they will choose to leave their wives in the country while they are in town themselves; or will prefer their children to remain with relatives in the country, or be sent there even if the wife is in town as well as the man himself. But let me emphasize two points once again:

(1) What is true of some Africans is not true of **all**; what I just said applies principally to tribal conservatives, and to simple rustic people with little schooling. It may be that in the Cape these categories add up to a half of the population; but whether they are a half, or a little more, or a little less, there is unquestionably a large section which feels otherwise, and which is subjectively ready to pass over the migrancy bridge, or through the migrancy filter, into permanent urbanization. This latter section is subjected to definite hardships by the present system. It is a great pity that we do not know the proportions; in this sense we cannot assess the magnitude of the harm done by coercive regulations that divide families.

(2) However, apart from the actual number of cases involved, the mere fact that such coercive laws exist is reprehensible. It suggests all too clearly that the welfare or happiness of the people being regulated is not a prime object.

However many do prefer the system which entails the separation of their own families, I do not think it right for anyone to be **compelled** to undergo this separation, as against choosing it voluntarily: no more than I think it right for anyone to be **compelled** to leave a town as distinct from leaving it voluntarily.

### Social evils

When I raised the question how much harm is done by separating families, I had also another point in mind. We have no right to assume that migrancy, and the separation which it entails, is completely and solely responsible for the well-known social evils of the urban townships: for adultery and sexual liaisons, for illegitimacy, for neglected children, for juvenile delinquency, and so forth. Up to a point every large city seems to have its slums where these things happen on a disproportionate scale. Given the fact that we have here a large town-dwelling African population which is respectable and law-abiding, and another element in the same townships which is not, how can we say that the abolition of migrancy alone transforms the latter type into the former? We do know that where life is poor and hopeless, where no escape seems possible from an extremely low social status, even non-migrant populations seem to be prey to the same evils. A study of poor families in British Guiana has suggested that one key factor is the inability of men to rise in the total social scale. Marriage goes by the board or becomes insignificant — so the argument runs — because the man, as husband and father, can contribute so little to the household group: he cannot bring them much of an income because his wages are kept low, he cannot bring them enhanced social status because he is not allowed to rise above a certain occupational and social level himself. Therefore he becomes a marginal figure in the context of the home and family, and women can feel that they do just as well to bear and rear children without a legitimate father. I am not saying that this hypothesis is fully proven even for the field where it was first worked out, but I think it can suggest lines of thought which may be profitable to us here. **There seems to be difficulty in maintaining the institutions of family and marriage anywhere, below the socio-economic level which is broadly called "respectable working class". If we want decent family standards we must therefore aim at this as the minimum socio-economic level — migrancy or no migrancy.**

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### An objective view

It emerges from any discussion of labour migrancy how difficult it is to get an objective view. For those economists and urban employers who say that the overall aim is to hasten commitment to urban employment, migrancy is an archaism and an economic evil which ought to be abolished as soon as possible. For those politicians and journalists who say that the overall aim is to keep the towns White, and the African committed to his rural "heartland" migrancy is a present necessity and not by any means an unmitigated evil. We know all this; but what is the feeling of the people principally concerned — the Africans themselves, the migrant workers and their families? We may see the question coming to the fore soon in what was Northern Rhodesia. Will Zambia be able to do without influx control?

### Need for humane control

You have heard the comparison drawn between African urbanization today, and the urbanization of England during the industrial revolution. In defence of influx control and all that goes with it, one might very well point out that the miseries of the English industrial revolution were due to too little control not too much — they flowed out of the *laissez-faire* attitudes of the day. I think we would all admit that some form of control could well be beneficial during this industrial revolution of our own. But we would have to add that control as such is not enough. Control to what purpose? in whose interest? and with whose welfare and happiness as its primary aim? Will anybody say that the controls we enforce here, at present as a part of the migrant labour policy, have as their primary aim the welfare and happiness of the worker himself? I think not; but if not, then what we need, I suggest, is not to abolish controls altogether, but to find a better and more humane system of controls whose hardships and benefits would be spread more fairly between the various classes and groups involved in our industrial situation.

In practice, the effects of these harsh laws are tempered by a little mercy — and a good deal of inefficiency in administration.

Dr. Hellmann.

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### MIGRATORY LABOUR AND THE URBAN AFRICAN

fluctuating population. Mobility of urban populations is universal today and would have continued to characterize a considerable section of the African population under any circumstances. But a permanent nucleus could have been brought into being more rapidly and more securely. The other factor is the deep antagonism which this whole network of discriminatory laws arouses and the tendency, certainly among urban youth, in their rejection of discriminatory laws, to reject the exercise of authority as such. When a people is forced to live under laws which are palpably discriminatory, the law itself falls into disrepute. What moral validity can be expected to attach to pass laws, to the laws of influx control? Which person, convicted under the Urban Areas Act and endorsed out, will feel that justice has been done? **To compel a community to live subject to unjust laws — and these laws are unjust in intent and in practice — is an open invitation to that community to make evasion of the law an approved social practice.**

### A flawed society

I do not suggest that migratory labour and the insecure status of all African townsmen are in themselves the sole causes of family instability and the other forms of social maladjustment which are so evident in the urban African community. What I do suggest is that in this difficult period of transition, in which major economic, social and cultural changes have to be wrought, the measures the government imposes to prevent stabilization and perpetuate migratory labour accentuate and exacerbate all these difficulties. "If families are broken", says Monica Wilson, "the community reaps the whirlwind in disorder". Enforced migratory labour is a potent force breaking families. **When the state imposes laws which are totally unacceptable on moral and social grounds to the community to which they apply, the moral foundations of the community are undermined, and the whole society of which it forms part is flawed.**

**“In South Africa the migrant worker is increasingly demanding political rights, and those rights are refused on the basis of the fiction that he is a citizen of some ‘homeland’.”**

# **THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF MIGRATORY LABOUR**

By P. V. PISTORIUS

**I**T WOULD BE neither easy nor wise to predict the effects of our migrant labour system by extrapolating the effects of such systems in other countries on the South African situation. Many European countries make use of migrant labour, but then such labour is mostly only seasonal and the workers are citizens of another country. What is more, at any given time the proportion of migrant workers in relation to the total labour force is very small. At no time, for example, could it be said that the economy of Britain would collapse if the migrant labour force were to be taken away. If that were to happen, only a small sector of the economy would suffer, and normally that sector would be in the field of agriculture.

## **Permanent feature of economy**

In South Africa the situation is of course totally different. The migrant workers, notwithstanding the limited Transkei venture towards separate independence, are mostly citizens of the country. There may be seasonal fluctuations in their numbers, but such fluctuation would be hardly noticeable. On the whole one can say that they are a permanent feature of the country's economy, and this is clearly proved by the fact that their numbers increase in direct relation to the expansion of the economy. Between 1951 and 1960, for example, the African population of the five largest urban areas in South Africa increased by 363,000 from 906,000 to 1,270,000, and in view of official policy of allowing entry only to essential workers, one can safely assume that the vast majority of this increase was absorbed in the economy of the country.

A mere glance at the numbers of Africans employed in the various sectors of the economy, and their ratio to the total number of workers, is sufficient to show that if they were to be withdrawn, the economy as a whole would collapse. In the period 1962-63, for example, the employment figures in mining, manufacturing, construction, transport, communications and public authorities were 452,000 Whites and 1,255,000 non-Whites, and obviously the vast majority of these non-Whites would be Africans. To all intents and purposes every sector of the economy would immediately collapse if the migrant labourers were withdrawn.

Perhaps the only point of similarity between migrant labour as we know it and as it obtains in European countries is that the migrant worker is restricted to certain types of employment. In both cases those restrictions are imposed to protect the non-migrant worker or to fill a need in certain sectors of the economy where there is a shortage of workers, but even here there is a difference in the sense that **in South Africa there is a blanket**

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**P**ROFESSOR P. V. PISTORIUS was born in Rustenburg, and studied at the Transvaal University College, at Stellenbosch University and at Leyden University, Holland.

He served as a Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church for five years before he returned to Pretoria University, where he is now Professor of Greek.

Professor Pistorius is the author of a book, "No Further Trek", which is a scathing indictment of Apartheid and the state of mind which produced it. He first became a public figure in 1955, when he was one of the 13 Professors from Pretoria University who signed a protest against the Senate Bill. Since then he has campaigned constantly for moderation in politics.

He objects strenuously to group formations and group domination, and maintains that the world has taken a major step forward on colour issues and that there is no going back on that advance.

## **ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF MIGRATORY LABOUR (Cont.)**

**restriction of the migrant worker to unskilled work.** Only within that over-all restriction are individual migrant workers restricted to specific types of employment.

It is not only in the economic sphere that this difference between our own migrant labour system and that of other countries will make itself felt. In the political sphere the migrant labourer in Europe will neither have nor will he demand political rights in the country where he performs his migrant work. In South Africa the migrant worker is increasingly demanding political rights, and those rights are refused on the basis of the fiction that he is a citizen of some "homeland". Socially the European migrant worker is not restricted, except by the normal restrictions found in any society.

### **Policy militates against economic law**

Apart from the dangers of extrapolation in assessing the possible effects of our migrant labour system on the economy, there is yet a further problem, and that is that **the policy of the Government militates against the normal laws of economics.** As early as May 1954 the then Minister of Labour said in Parliament that the laws of economics had to fall away, even if they were good laws, because they jeopardized the position of the White workers, but economic or any other type of natural law does not always fall away merely because a Cabinet Minister has said that it should. **Natural processes may be retarded by legislation, but they are rarely if ever halted.**

It is easy to see how official policy and economic law militate against one another. In an expanding economy it always happens that the unskilled worker acquires skills, and because of his higher productivity and consequent higher wages he becomes more valuable both as producer and consumer. That in its turn has a stimulating effect on the economy, creating yet further infiltration of the unskilled into the skilled ranks to satisfy the increased need for consumer goods.

### **Board of Trade report**

In South Africa this law is not allowed to run its natural course because of Government policy. In her speech to the House in June 1954, when job reservation was introduced, Mrs. Helen Suzman quoted from a report of the Board of Trade and Industries which reads as follows: "The optimum allocation of resources requires that each worker shall be employed in the sphere and in the capacity

in which he is most productive. Any policy which is not in conformity with this criterion but which restricts the opportunities of individuals or of sections of the population from using their capacities to the fullest measure, must inevitably retard the expansion of production and the growth of the national dividend."

The operative word in this quotation, from our point of view, is "retard". Our production, our standard of living, our national dividend, would have grown far more rapidly if no artificial restrictions had been imposed, but even with those restrictions it is in fact growing, and one could safely predict that if the whole issue were investigated, the investigation would show a very close correlation between this growth and the infiltration of African workers into the skilled ranks.

### **Tendency to acquire skills**

Migrant labour need not necessarily mean unskilled labour, although the migrant labourer, because he has no vested interests in his work, would normally tend to be unskilled, but that would be far more true of the genuine seasonal migrant worker than of the migrant worker in South Africa. **Here the worker is to all intents and purposes a permanent resident in the place where he works, and the essence of the migratory nature of his sojourn is rather that he is separated from his family and that he is restricted to certain fields of labour, normally unskilled.** But because of the fact that he is more or less permanently and even uninterruptedly at work, and that he is so integrated in the economy that the economy would collapse without him, he tends to acquire skills, and Government policy is often powerless to prevent him from using those skills.

That is true for a variety of reasons. The power of the Government to restrict the African migrant worker rests mainly on the Colour Bar Law of 1925 and on Job Reservation. Since the passing of the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964 this power is implemented in various ways, but it remains to be seen what effect it will have on the acquisition and use of skills by African workers.

### **Ineffective measures**

If we now examine those measures we can see that they must almost inevitably be ineffective today. The 1925 law dealt mainly with types of work that have become less important in the stage of mechanization in which our industries are today. The painter need no longer mix his paints. He need not even paint at all. He can use a spraying machine, requiring very little skill. What is

more, the people practising the crafts affected by the 1925 law no longer constitute the majority or even a significant minority of our labour force.

Job reservation has proved equally futile. I am confident that an investigation of this matter would indicate that job reservation has been effective only in those spheres where it has been applied to give protection to such White workers as are incapable of doing skilled work and have to be given what is in effect protected employment. Those spheres are ordinarily those that have the least effect on the economy of the country and they have affected a comparatively small number of people. Where job reservation has been proclaimed in more vital sectors, the policy seems to have been that it would operate only when there was a number of White workers in that industry who were unemployed. In an expanding economy such as ours is at the present time, such an eventuality is only remotely possible, and the result is that in practice the field has been left open for the entry of Africans into the skilled ranks.

What is more, industry has become so complex, and the types of work so numerous, that it would be extremely difficult to apply job reservation, even the futile type of job reservation of which I have just spoken.

All that remain are the new powers given to the Government under the legislation of 1964, but even here one can safely predict that notwithstanding protestations to the contrary, and notwithstanding the gloomy forebodings of the editor of "Die Transvaler" in his recent book, the powers of the Government will be used in exactly the same way as job reservation. The needs of the economy will come first, and this impression is strengthened by recent utterances by Cabinet Ministers.

### **Plans for industrial expansion**

In his Republic Day speech the Prime Minister said that there were vast plans for industrial expansion, reaching to the end of the century. Now even a child can see that such expansion must involve a vast increase in the skilled as well as in the unskilled labour force, apart from the fact that the increasing mechanization of industry will bring about a higher ratio of skilled to unskilled workers than is presently the case.

The second Ministerial utterance was in a letter written by Dr. Muller, the Foreign Minister, to the President of the Security Council. In that letter, which was released to the Press, he said

### **AMBIVALENT ATTITUDES**

*The ambivalent attitudes of the Whites is nowhere more clearly seen than in the matter of the reserves. The great cultural gulf between them and the Africans, and the fear naturally engendered by a century of conflict, made the Whites anxious to keep the Bantu tribes as far away as possible. On the other hand, the need for workers on farms, in mines and in industry made it desirable to have them on hand. Thus when tribal reserves were adequate to support their population in the traditional manner, it was necessary to attract African labour by recruitment agencies or to impose money taxes, the payment of which necessitated the African's acceptance of wage-earning employment. When, however, the reserves were inadequate or became so through natural increase accelerated by the introduction of modern medicine, legislation was introduced to restrict the right of entry and to circumscribe African employment opportunities in "White" areas. This "come-hither-voertsek" policy was based upon deeply held but mutually irreconcilable desires.*

**D. Hobart Houghton — "The South African Economy".**

that the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964 did not mean that there would be any restriction of the entry of the African into White industry, except the availability of employment. He even assured the President that the Government would look for work for these Africans.

It has been calculated that even with the present trend of development there will be a need for 3,300,000 skilled workers and upwards by 1980. If one calculates that at most 38 percent of any community can be economically productive, then the Whites would be able to contribute only about one and a half million, even if one acts on the assumption that all Whites are capable of reaching skilled rank. That would mean a deficit of about 1,800,000 workers of skilled rank, and obviously these would have to come mainly from the Africans, who are now classed as migrant workers.

### **Lip-service**

The question here is whether official policy or economic law will win. The issue seems to be strongly influenced by the fact that in many ways the Government is paying only lip-service to its own policies. To what extent Black infiltration into skilled labour has already progressed, it is difficult to say. This is the only sphere in which

*(Continued overleaf)*

## ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF MIGRATORY LABOUR (Cont.)

official census figures are unreliable. The reason is that when a certain type of work is done by Africans, it is classed as unskilled. When the same work is done by Whites, it is regarded as skilled or semi-skilled.

### No vested interests

But many other factors remain which are bound to have a profound effect on the economy of the country. Because the migrant labourer has no vested interests here, he lacks the impetus to exert himself. He has no Joneses to keep up with. He cannot own freehold property. He cannot go on holiday to the coast with his family.

This not only makes him politically unstable, it also makes him economically lethargic. One industrialist told me that where Africans do skilled work at very good wages, the greatest problem is often absenteeism. Whether that is true or not, I would not know, but I can well believe it.

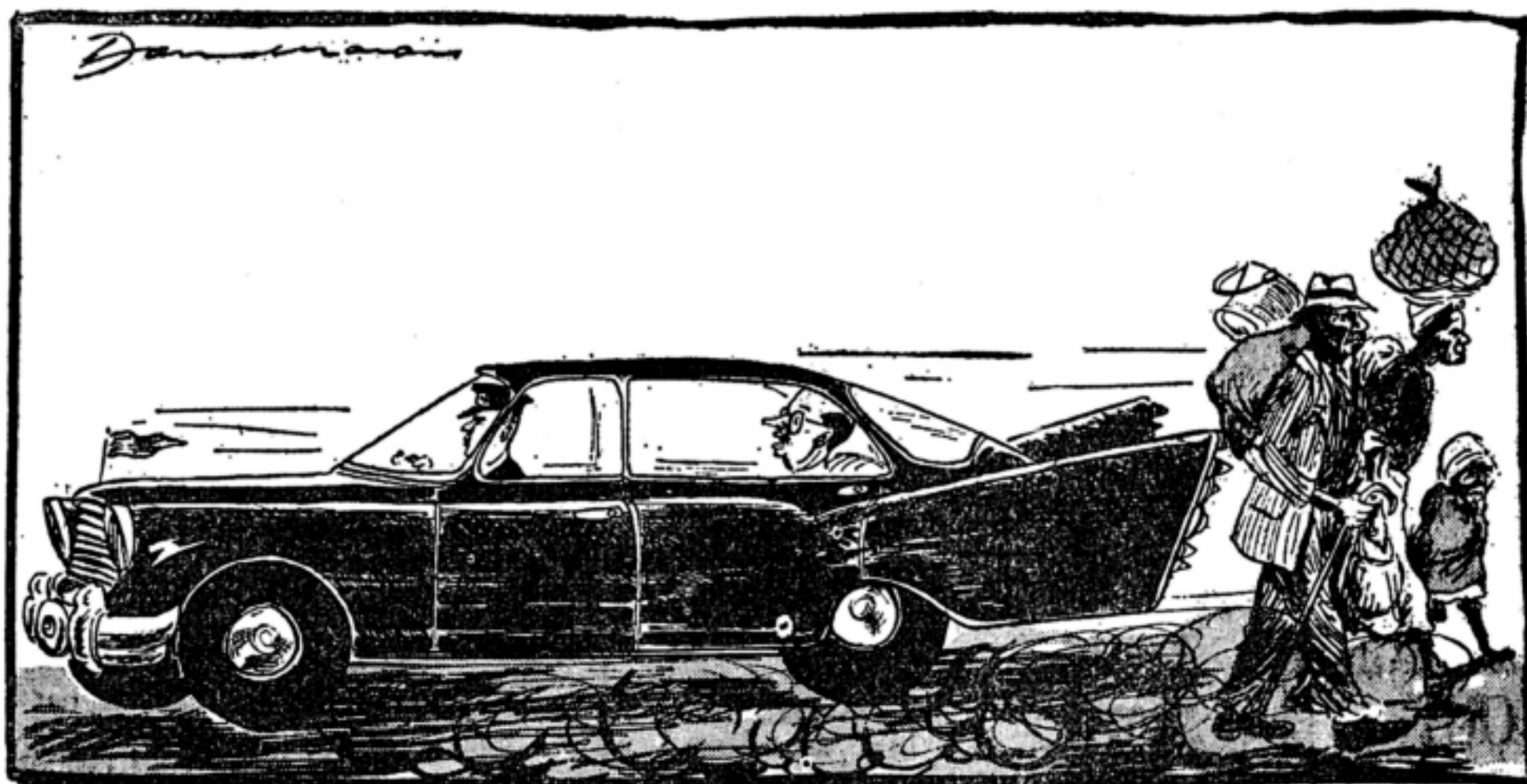
### We must educate the African

The second disturbing factor is that a community can contribute skilled workers only in the measure in which that community is educated. Unless the Africans as a whole have reached a certain average level of education, they cannot produce the skilled workers of which our economy is in such great need. Britain was in the same

predicament in the nineteenth century, and a British statesman then said to Parliament: "Gentlemen, we must educate our masters." Unless we educate the African — and he should be educated to maintain himself in the same environment in which the Whites have to maintain themselves — our economy must suffer.

I have done no more than touch on certain trends and probabilities. I have assumed that the present government will remain in power and that its policy will remain unchanged, and neither of those assumptions is necessarily valid.

My own belief is that, unless there is outside interference or internal revolution, economic law will win. **The greatest enemy of apartheid and of racial superiority is prosperity.** That is one of the reasons why we should oppose to the utmost any attempt on the part of other countries to bring about change by coercion. For example, if sanctions were successfully applied, it would bring our industry to a standstill. There would be large-scale unemployment among Africans especially, and the result would be a tailor-made situation for the implementation of apartheid. We would not need the African worker and he would be sent back to his "homeland". But when there is increasing prosperity and an expanding economy, the whole concept of apartheid becomes an absurdity. And South Africa is well on its way towards that situation.



"Another political demonstration, I suppose." (Cape Times)

# THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM

By JESSIE HERTSLET

(By Courtesy "Evening Post")

**T**HE CUSTOM OF MIGRANT LABOUR, provision for it and even legal foresight for its continuance — all this is unique in South Africa. Other newly industrialized countries put up with it for a period, but soon make arrangements for normal family life to continue among the labourers.

There must be definite reason for the difference here. The long distances from kraal to gold and diamond mines started it; African docility endured it; the "Get-Rich-Quick" principle consolidated it.

Now we have scores of barracks, housing so-called "bachelors" near to the factories, docks, mills, mines and even plantations or other enterprises, scattered over this land and acting as dormitories for the workers.

Even as near as Rhodesia, the normal family plan adopted in European industrial lands can be seen. It is rumoured that some of our entrepreneurs have studied these centres of home life, seen their advantages, and have begged to be allowed to provide the same manner of workmen's villages inside our borders.

But such is the worship of apartheid that such villages filled with the happy life of Blacks are obnoxious when within sight of White inhabitants.

A couple of breaks — perhaps more — have been made, with great success, but life in barracks is the fate of most African workers.

There are certain evils in this system which must inevitably work out their course.

The character of our Africans, the subtle something which makes them the labourers desired by industrialists from abroad, will not survive an unnatural life.

With ordinary men the early years of married life are an invaluable education; responsibility is learned; virtues are acquired and passed on into the very core of the race.

But the "bachelor" living in barracks becomes again a selfish child, concerned only with himself — except in those rare cases where an association of friends is made to care for each other.

The strength and firmness of the family-man is foreign to him and, in his short visits home, he cannot acquire full manhood.

Do we connect in our minds the incredible number of inmates of our prisons — said to be 63,000 out of our small population — with this evil system which deprives young boys of their fathers' control? If anyone thinks about it, perhaps they imagine stern control in the kraals.

They could not be more mistaken. The able-bodied men are mostly away and the neglected children no longer honour old age.

Migrant labour has persisted for two generations, and is largely helping to furnish the supply of undisciplined African lads who have never known the father-image as a guide through life.

Apart from those who have an absent father, are the tens of thousands nowadays who are not owned by any specific father, but are the illegitimate by-blows of the Bantu maidens at work within reach of the barracks. These babes are generally handed over to ancient relatives in the country.

They probably get a smattering of education, but the loving daily discipline of parental family life, with its sense of security, is lacking for too many children produced by our work system.

The irony is increased for those of us who know the excellence of African family unity and discipline — before their world was crumbled by the White man's demands upon them.

Much could again be restored, before the old ways are forgotten. Enough remains of the inherent African character to salvage this fine race of people, could the example of the few successfully humanitarian industrialists be followed.

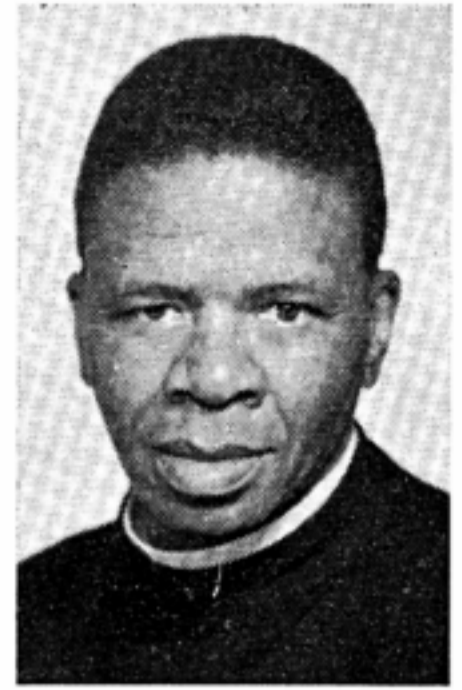
Tongati village in Natal is a model of happy home-life, so are the Wankie coal mines; Phalaborwa in the Transvaal promises to be another such centre of good living. Vanderbylpark on the Vaal demonstrates what an industrial township can be for all races.

An attempt has been made this year to interest every thoughtful woman in the Republic in the danger and disgrace of migrant labour. The number who have responded promises a new climate. They will urge their menfolk to insist on our working class having the amenities of home-life, proper food, and the family relationship which alone produces people worth their salt.

**“We must develop a social conscience which will make itself felt against this policy which is plainly disruptive of family life.”**

# **WHAT CAN WE DO? THE AFRICAN POINT OF VIEW**

By **FATHER RAKALE**



**WE NOW COME** to the most important and urgent question of all — what can we do? I can well remember Archbishop Clayton when he was Bishop of Johannesburg saying to some of his younger Clergy, “I agree with you. I do not like the Colour bar. It is a positive evil, but what do you think we should do about it?” Needless to say there was a stony silence. I suppose this is how some of us feel this afternoon, faced as we are with the same question after hearing about, and discussing for two days, some of the adverse effects of migratory labour on African Family life.

It is no exaggeration to say that this system is the cause of much suffering and blank misery to the African throughout this land. We are all agreed it must go and go as quickly as we can make it, but the question still remains — how are we to set about it? There is no point in deploring this system and of doing so in the strongest terms without at the same time trying to think how best we can rid ourselves of it.

## **No real hope**

Given the fact that one is an African, voteless and voiceless in the country of his birth, the naked truth is that the African feels that there is no real hope that there is anything he can do at present to put this mischief right, the more so that he is conscious — dreadfully conscious — that for more than half a century he has taken every legitimate means to improve his lot and that of his family, and to have these wrongs redressed, without success. Do we then wonder that he is almost in the depth of despair that he can ever reverse this system and all its associated evils? There seems to be little that he and his White friends who wish him well can do.

The more one thinks of this system the more it becomes clear that we should be certain in our minds and bring it home to others what is the true nature of man, for it is only after we have carefully considered what man is that we can rightly treat him as he should be treated. In

other words, we cannot know how man should be treated until we know who he is. What, then, is an African? Is he a man, or merely a specimen of manhood, or some other creature or animal?

## **Less than a human being**

Our treatment of anything in the last resort depends on what we think it is. Hence we treat plants and trees in one way, cats and dogs and baboons in another fashion and we do so simply because of what we think they are. To the question, what is an African? the answer is that he is a human being, a person, a man. Despite his colour he possesses the same dignity as other men and is a living image of his Creator. It is this Divine element in him which gives him his worth and his dignity. Apart from the adverse effect of migratory labour, “one of the worst things which anyone can ever face in this world is contempt”, Professor Brookes once said, “and contempt is the daily bread of the African in his own country, and to find one treated less than a human being is a terrible experience”. Migratory labour is an evil because it is the failure to recognize the sacredness of human personality which is in itself a mirror of the Divine Personality.

Man's life, because he is a human being, should therefore be conducted and ordered with this point in view. The State should not treat him as having value only in so far as he serves its political and economic ends, as the Totalitarian States do. All



**FATHER RAKALE** was born in Springs, and educated at St. Peter's School, Rosettenville, Johannesburg. He went straight from there to the Theological College at the Priory, where he became a clergyman.

He worked as a clergyman in Sophiatown for three years at the Church of Christ the King, and in 1943 he went to Rosettenville for novitiate, becoming a member of the Community of the Resurrection in 1947, after which he went to the headquarters of the Community at Mirfield, Yorkshire.

From 1948 to 1950, Father Rakale served at a Mission in Southern Rhodesia run by the Community of the Resurrection. Returning to Johannesburg in 1951, he was Warden of St. Peter's School until 1954, and thereafter head of the Community House at Orlando until 1958.

During the removals from Sophiatown under the Group Areas Act, Father Rakale was at the Church of Christ the King there, and in 1959 he went back to Mirfield, where he remained until June, 1963. Thereafter he returned to the Priory at Rosettenville, where he is at present.

men, we say, are equal. But in what are they equal? There is not a single instance in which they are, or in which any two of them are equal. Is the phrase "all men are equal" therefore, absolutely meaningless? I think not. All men are equal in the sense that they are all involved in being just one thing, namely man. If this fact is disputed, then it can only be that we have forgotten about forced labour camps in Russia and the scientific experiments on living men in German concentration camps of a few years ago. Speaking of equality, one writer, (I cannot recall his name nor his book) says "Something even more obviously practical than human equality is at stake, namely human rights". The phrase "rights of man" too often means what it is good, or humane or socially useful to concede to him. Rights are what man is entitled to, not what society is willing to give him. But concessions, however liberal, are not rights. Rights belong to man because he is man and are valid even against society. Unless they are this, they are not rights at all, but only a more or less hopeful expectation of society's kindness. But has man rights? That depends on what we think man is.

## Persistent demands

Any ordering of the life of the community which does not consider persons as persons is condemned. But we must not be only aggressive in condemnation. We must make constructive demands for justice on behalf of man and get rid of, once and for all, the system of migratory labour. We must not be discouraged or despair when the State, as so often, turns a deaf ear to our appeals. We should be persistent in our demands for a redress of this wrong. We should develop a social conscience which will make itself felt against this policy which is plainly disruptive to family life. We will probably provoke unpopularity and in some instances abuse when we speak boldly and act courageously against this measure, but in the end we shall obtain justice and freedom for the human family if we are faithful in carrying out this duty. We who are committed to rid this country of this system should also see that there are houses available for the worker and his family within his means so that the family can be brought up in health and happiness, decency and dignity proper to man. We should feel we have a responsibility in this matter the more so because most of South Africa has not. Now at anyrate we should do all we can to arouse public opinion which will lay it before the Government.

## Opportunities for full development

In conclusion, every man has his calling and sphere of work in the world. By its nature this calling sets the man who follows it in a particular relation to every human family. Certain political and social obligations fall on men alike; the use of the franchise is one and the care for freedom and the rights of man is another. Other obligations vary from man to man according to his calling. The professional man has his professional Association, the artisan his Trade Union, the trader or commercial man his grouping. Even the voteless and voiceless man has his own grouping in which decisions have to be taken for or against the human family.

These decisions should pass into some direct action in the interests of the general good of the family. This kind of action is desperately needed in South Africa today more than ever before, not only for a man and his wife but also for his children who should not be condemned to grow to maturity with their faculties stunted by migratory labour which denies them the opportunities for full development.

“We must reject the ‘herrenvolk’ concept, the belief that one race or nation is inherently superior to any other.”

# WHAT CAN WE DO? THE WHITE MAN'S POINT OF VIEW

By R. T. HOFMEYR



I SHOULD like to say at the outset that this will be a rather personal contribution. Our attitudes to the people around us are the product of a complex set of inter-reacting circumstances and experiences, and it takes a brave man to spell out exactly what White South Africa, as a whole, should do about the issues discussed at this conference. There are, however, certain simple guideposts that we cannot ignore without losing our way completely, and these are the things I want to talk about.

## Formulating values

I feel the first thing we must do is to get our own values straight as individuals. Unless we have some clearly formulated philosophy of interpersonal relations, we may find ourselves an easy prey to the specious arguments that assail us and the bigotry and prejudice that are so rife in South Africa.

There are certain things that are crucial.

First of all we must surely accept the concept that every human being has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Secondly, we must recognize the fact that every human being has needs that must be satisfied. Here we think not only of biological needs but of the equally important social needs — the need of a person to feel secure from harsh and arbitrary invasion of his rights; the need for approval and recognition; the need to be accepted by those around him; the need to realize the potentialities that lie within him. We must realize also that a man's feeling of self-esteem is vital and that he can make his proper contribution in society only when his feeling of self-esteem — of amounting to something — is maintained or enhanced by the actions of those around him.

In the third place, we must reject the

‘herrenvolk’ concept, the belief that one race or nation is inherently superior to any other.

We must believe fervently that it is character and not colour that counts.

We must concern ourselves with individuals and not stereotypes. Nothing militates more against sane thinking than the belief that all Americans are brash or that all Africans are ungrateful.

We must recognize that deprivation of the rights of those around us is our intimate concern and a source of humiliation to all of us.

We must believe, finally, that courtesy and consideration are due to every man, and that to assault a man's dignity is one of the more vicious sins.

## Fantastic jig-saw

Having formulated our own philosophy regarding our behaviour towards our fellow men, we must next see how it accords with the race relations situation as it confronts us in South Africa today. Although this conference is devoted to a consideration of migratory labour, I am going to regard it as just another piece of the fantastic jig-saw that is taking shape in our country. The legislation that makes labour migratory stems, after all, from the same philosophy that creates

**MR. R. T. HOFMEYR** is one of the seven brilliant sons of a former much-revered headmaster of Pretoria Boys' High School. His own education was interrupted by the second world war, and after the war he went to Stellenbosch University where he obtained a B.A. degree.

Mr. Hofmeyr was recommended to one of the largest mining groups as a possible personnel officer, and thus became the first personnel officer on the mines. Becoming deeply interested in the work, he took a special course in personnel management, and he is now chief personnel manager for his group.

job reservation, withholds bargaining rights, declares group areas and manifests in a thousand and one ways White South Africa's attitude to the man of colour.

Let us examine, then, the attitude of the present government and the vast majority of White South Africans towards our Black fellow-citizens. The feeling quite clearly is that the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is very much the prerogative of the White man; that the African has no right to feel secure — on the contrary he can be endorsed out at the stroke of a pen. His right to realize his potentialities and take his rightful place in society is limited to some Bantustan with which he may have no links whatsoever. As for his self-esteem, the feeling seems to be that it is presumptuous of him to have such a thing.

### **Stereotyped thinking**

The 'herrenvolk' mentality is everywhere. The government can talk itself blue in the face about separate development but basically its whole policy is one of discrimination.

The place a man takes in society is not determined by his character or merit. Basically his colour is the deciding factor.

White South Africa does not concern itself with individuals — it thinks in stereotypes all the time. The African is not to be trusted; he is incapable of showing gratitude; he is primitive; any polish or sophistication he may acquire is no more than a veneer; give him an inch and he'll take a mile,

and so on. The product of this stereotype thinking is that Africans become regarded as so many chattels to be herded, exploited and circumscribed as the Government dictates.

Far from recognizing his human dignity, we treat him with anything from feudal paternalism to outright contempt.

Against the background sketched above we are now confronted with a crucial decision. We can shrug our shoulders and declare ourselves powerless to do anything about it in the face of the tremendous forces ranged against us. Too often, and I say it to my shame, this is the defeatist attitude I myself take. Our alternative is to do something about it, and these are some of the small practical things that present themselves.

### **Plan of action**

Firstly, we can get our own inter-personal relations with our fellow-citizens right, and this is no easy task in the climate of fear and prejudice in which we pass our days.

Secondly, we can indoctrinate our children. It is a thousand pities that this has to be done, but since there is no lack of indoctrination on the other side we have no option but to retaliate. How do we indoctrinate them? We must let no act of discourtesy towards an African pass unchallenged. We must try to transmit to them the set of values which I outlined at the start of my talk; and — though this is not pleasant — we must convince them that Whites who take the opposite view are either misguided or immoral or both.

We can try in our work situation to develop healthier attitudes to men of colour, and seek out opportunities of using something approaching their full range of talents and abilities instead of a small fraction of what they have to offer.

We can associate ourselves actively and positively with people holding similar views so that our voice may not go unheard in South Africa and the outside world.

We must remind ourselves constantly that such responsibility and status as we enjoy have not been earned in fair competition with all South Africans; that by virtue of the colour or our skin, we are in a privileged position. This to me is one of the most humiliating things of all and I cannot rest content until this unhappy situation is remedied and I find my true level on the basis of the talents I possess.

*(Continued overleaf)*

## WHAT CAN WE DO? (Cont.)

We must understand our African fellow-citizens' motivations, aspirations and reactions, and try to appreciate the extent to which their behaviour is the product of the frustrations to which they are subjected.

We must realize constantly that we all have a contribution to make towards an enriching relationship with one another — some by virtue of their cultural background and their knowledge; others by virtue of their vitality, cheerfulness and tolerance. And heaven knows there are many Africans who possess these qualities in rich measure.

### Challenge

The last thing we can do is to harass the enemy, and we can do it in many ways.

We can challenge and fight the equivocator who searches feverishly for some sort of ethical justification for the discrimination which he practises. I can live with the man who admits quite frankly that there is no moral justification for the doctrine of White supremacy that he espouses, but I cannot abide the person who silences his conscience and persuades himself that it is perfectly ethical to maintain the White man's privilege.

We can fight the sections of the Press that studiously avoid the use of the term "African" or cannot bring themselves to prefixing the word "Mister" to an African's name.

We can fight the individual who feels that he demeans himself by shaking hands with an African or regards a well-dressed African as an affront to the White man.

We can fight the patronage one so frequently encounters among people who say "look how well I treat my servants" and then believe with the greatest smugness that they have discharged their duties in the race relations field.

These things we can do and more besides. If we fail to do them we must accept the possibility of falling into a state of moral decay.

You see, so many of us seem to feel that race relations in South Africa are a political issue and are subject as such to a rather special set of rules. They are political issues, it is true, but even more are they moral issues. Unless we accept this fact and are prepared to place our laws and our practices on the firm ground of fair dealing, we must be prepared to sink deeper and deeper into the morass that constantly threatens to engulf us.

## AFRICAN WAGES

**S**OUTH AFRICA is surely the only country in the world which imports two-thirds of the unskilled labour required in its major industry.

Africans in the Republic will remain reluctant to work in the mines until wages and conditions are improved.

The present low wages are due to two main factors. The first is the belief that the Native reserves can be relied on to subsidize the wages paid to Africans. Yet everyone who has looked into the question knows how poverty-stricken the reserves really are and how hard and costly it is to reconstruct them.

Years ago the Lansdown Commission declared that "the combined income of the mine worker from his wages and his allotment of land in the reserves should be such as to provide him with a proper livelihood, to enable him to maintain family life and tribal association, good health and the control of his land".

To this day, however, mine wages, plus income produced in the reserves, are far from giving Africans a decent minimum standard of living.

The second factor which keeps wages low is the opposition of the mine owners to trade unionism. It is rather late in human history to have to reassure the fearful that trade unions are not dangerous radical organizations determined to destroy the industry which employs them, and that Africans in industry are not as primitive and irresponsible as Europeans are inclined to imagine.

But perhaps I may be allowed to recall that 20 years ago when a trade union for African miners on the copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia was first advocated, men of experience said to me, with a patronizing smile, that it would take 100 years to come. In fact, however, it took less than ten years for an African trade union to come — and to become a respectable and rather conservative body accepted on all sides. Nor did its coming ruin the copper mines.

Only when Africans are granted the universal human right of collective bargaining (which all European workmen can exercise) will the question of wages be determined in the way it should be, which is by full consideration of all the issues by all concerned.

*(From the "RAND DAILY MAIL", August 31st, 1961: extract from a letter by Professor Julius Lewin of the University of the Witwatersrand, commenting on the editorial of August 28th, which discussed the Minister of Mines' proposal that the mines should become less dependent on African labour brought in from other territories.)*

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# THE STORY OF THE BLACK SASH

## The Women's Campaign for Justice and Good Government in South Africa

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**T**HE BLACK SASH came into being in May 1955, at a time of great political unrest in South Africa. After four years of repeated crises, caused by Government attempts to remove the Cape Coloured voters from the common Voters' Roll by unconstitutional means, the country had once again been thrown into a turmoil by the proposal to "pack" the Senate, in order to circumvent the entrenched clauses of the Constitution as embodied in the South Africa Act of 1909.

### The Background to the Senate Act.

The Nationalist Party, supported by a minority of the voters, came to power in 1948 with a slender Parliamentary majority. The new Government lost no time in consolidating its position, and in implementing the policy of *apartheid* which had won the election. From the outset, much of the legislation passed curtailed the freedom of the individual, limited the protection of the Courts and conferred wide and arbitrary powers on Cabinet Ministers. Little regard was shown for the constitutional forms upon which our Parliamentary system was based. Public misgiving mounted, and was finally expressed in country-wide protests in 1951, when the Separate Representation of Voters Act, designed to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll, was passed with a bare majority.

The Cape Coloured people had enjoyed common roll franchise rights for nearly a hundred years. At the time of Union, the franchise in the Cape was non-racial, and non-Whites enjoyed the same qualified voting rights as Whites. The preservation of these rights was regarded by the Cape delegates to the all-White National Convention of 1909 as a moral obligation, and they were adamant that they be recognized in the new South African constitution. The existing Cape franchise was accordingly entrenched in the Constitution, together with the Dutch and English language rights, the entrenchment providing that these two clauses could be altered only by a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament in joint session.

The protests against the Separate Representation of Voters Act were therefore based on two issues, one legal, one moral — the violation of the legal provisions of the Constitution, and the breaking of a solemn pledge to the Coloured people. The Government maintained that the Statute of Westminster, in conferring sovereign status on the South African Parliament in 1931, had invalidated the entrenched clauses, and they pointed

out that the Cape Africans had been removed from the common roll in 1936. This removal had, however, been agreed to by a two-thirds majority of both houses of Parliament sitting together, as laid down in the Constitution, although there was considerable opposition to it on moral grounds. Moreover, at the time of the enactment of the Statute of Westminster, the Nationalist Government of the day (which included many members of the Government that now repudiated the entrenched clauses), had re-pledged its faith in these entrenchments, declaring them to be "a matter of honour".

In 1952, the Separate Representation of Voters Act was tested in the Supreme Court of Appeal. The Court ruled that the entrenched clauses were still binding upon Parliament and declared the Act invalid, to the great relief of many South Africans whose faith in the integrity of their courts of law was thus confirmed. The Government, however, refused to accept the ruling of the Court, and proceeded to re-establish the "sovereignty of Parliament" by passing the High Court of Parliament Act, which provided that all the members of Parliament, sitting together, should constitute a special High Court, with power to set aside judgments of the Appeal Court. In 1953, this Act, too, was declared invalid by the Supreme Court.

### The Senate Bill

In the General Election of 1953, the Nationalists were again returned to power, with an increased majority, although still with a minority of the votes cast. The Prime Minister, Dr. Malan, made no further attempt to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll, but upon his retirement from active politics at the end of 1954, he was succeeded by the strong man of the Nationalist Party, Mr. J. G. Strijdom, "the Lion of the North".



**Marching up the hill to the Union Buildings, Pretoria, to present the petition to the Prime Minister's Deputy.**

Early in 1955, Mr. Strijdom announced his party's intention of taking advantage of another provision of the Constitution and reconstituting the Senate or upper house, "packing" it with nominated Nationalist Senators, in order to give the Government the two-thirds majority it could not obtain by normal means. The intention was, of course, to use the spurious two-thirds majority to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll.

The people of South Africa seethed with anger and resentment at the mockery that was being made of their Constitution. Mass protest meetings were held throughout the country. The Senate Bill was attacked in and out of Parliament, in the Press, in public halls, in private homes.

It was at this stage that six women met for tea one morning in mid-May at a house in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Like thousands of other South Africans, they were filled with indignation, and with a sense of frustration and personal helplessness. "What can we do?" they asked. And suddenly realizing that there were thousands who were asking themselves the same question, they decided that there was something they could do — they could organize a women's protest march. They telephoned their friends, who in turn telephoned *their* friends, and a preliminary meeting was arranged. Pamphlets were printed and distributed, the co-operation of the Press was

sought, banners were prepared, and on the afternoon of the 25th May, 1955, 2,500 White women assembled at the Scottish War Memorial near Joubert Park, and then marched silently through the streets of Johannesburg, led by one drummer girl, to the City Hall steps. In response to public demand, the Mayor of Johannesburg had called a citizens' meeting there, and thousands of people had assembled to listen to several speakers, including the late Dr. Winifred Höernle, whose inspiring address moved many to tears.

### **The Women's Defence of the Constitution League**

So deep was the emotion aroused in that historic march, that a meeting was called for the following week to consider further action. Fifty women attended, and a committee of twelve was elected. It was decided to launch two petitions, one to the Governor-General, asking him not to sign the Bill, and the second, to be presented in the event of his refusal, to the Prime Minister, petitioning him to repeal the Act or to resign from office. The petitions were to be signed by White women only.

The protest was confined to White women because it was felt that the responsibility for much that was wrong in South Africa, and the duty of

trying to put it right, belonged to the White South African electorate. Later on, membership of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League was restricted to South African women voters, (and therefore White women), for the same reason.

The Senate Bill was then being debated in Parliament, and this newly-formed Women's Defence of the Constitution League had just two weeks in which to collect the signatures. The preamble to the petition to the Governor-General, a piece of fine prose and reasoned argument drawn up by a well-known South African writer, was hurriedly printed, and petitions were sent out to 290 towns in the Union, to unknown people, in the faith and belief that the women of South Africa must feel as the women of Johannesburg did. That faith was not misplaced. In spite of postal delays, difficulties of communication, amateur organization and lack of money, 100,000 signatures were collected in ten days.

On June 16th, the Secretary of the League flew to Cape Town with the petition forms, which were presented to the Governor-General — in vain. The Bill was signed, the Act became law, and the Parliamentary session ended.

## The Vigil at Union Buildings

The Prime Minister was then asked to meet a deputation in Pretoria, to receive the second petition. He refused, but appointed Mr. Ben Schoeman, Minister of Transport, as his deputy.

On the 28th June, a bitterly cold day, women from the length and breadth of the Union gathered at the Zoo Lake in Johannesburg and drove in two motor convoys to Pretoria. Then, carrying banners which bore the name of every town and village where the petition had been signed, they marched silently up the steep hill to the Union Buildings. After a short service of dedication in the amphitheatre, a delegation of six women presented the petition to Mr. Schoeman in his office. He received them courteously, but made it quite clear that his Government had no intention of considering any request to alter the Senate Act.

The League's next move was to mount a two-day vigil in the grounds of Union Buildings, to demonstrate continued opposition to the Senate Act. More than sixty women slept in the open on that first bitter night; on the second night there were more than a hundred. The dramatic 48-hour vigil captured the imagination of the public, and



A cheering crowd at the Johannesburg City Hall welcomes the demonstrators after their 48-hour vigil at Union Buildings.

when the women returned to Johannesburg on the 30th June, they received a tumultuous welcome from the thousands of people assembled outside the City Hall to meet them.

That might have been the end of the story — it was actually only the beginning. The Senate Act had been placed upon the Statute Book, the petitions had failed, the vigil was over; but the women who had come together from the four provinces of the Union to oppose the threat to their Constitution were determined to remain together to fight the Act to the bitter end.

### The Black Sash

On the 18th July, four women, representing the four provinces of the Union, began a vigil at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, a vigil that was to be maintained on every working day until Parliament re-opened in Cape Town in January. They wore black sashes across their right shoulders, bearing the words „Eerbiedig ons Grondwet” (Honour our Constitution). The following day, Mr. Eric Louw, then Minister of Finance and Foreign Affairs, was met at Jan Smuts Airport upon his return from Europe by twenty-four silent women, again wearing black sashes as a symbol of mourning.

From then onwards, Cabinet Ministers were constantly “haunted” in their comings and goings about the country by groups of “Black Sash” women, silently reproaching them for their part in dishonouring the Covenant of Union. The idea caught on, and day by day more and more women came forward to join the League, which grew and spread to towns and villages throughout the Union. The attentions of the ubiquitous sashers appeared to embarrass the Ministers, who went to considerable lengths to avoid them.

### The Bull and the Sash.



Bob Connolly

(Rand Daily Mail)



The Great Protest Trek.

(Rand Daily Mail)

Demonstrations were planned for all important political occasions, especially those connected with the implementation of the Senate Act. On August 10th, when Transvaal Nationalist Party Senators were nominated, Black Sash women surrounded the Raadzaal in Pretoria, where the nominations were taking place. On November 12th, after the dissolution of the old Senate, demonstrations were held in thirty-five South African cities and towns. In the larger centres, thousands of women marched through the city streets, carrying great books, symbolizing the Constitution, draped with a black sash. This symbol was later adopted as the official badge of the Black Sash, and designed by Mr. Bob Connolly the *Rand Daily Mail* cartoonist. On November 25th, the day of the election of the new Senate, demonstrations were held in four Provincial capitals, while smaller centres held silent vigils.

When Parliament was re-opened on January 13th, 1956, nation-wide demonstrations and vigils were again held. The regular vigils were discontinued at the Union Buildings but resumed in Cape Town outside the House of Parliament, to provide a constant reminder to the Government and the public that the Constitution had been violated.

### The Convoy to Cape Town

Soon after Parliament assembled, the Government introduced the South Africa Act Amendment Bill, which would enable them to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll. The Bill also took away the right of the Courts to test certain legislation. The newly constituted Senate assured the Government of the necessary two-thirds majority at a joint session of the two houses of Parliament, which they had been unable to obtain through the ballot box.



To coincide with the joint sessions, the Black Sash organized a large-scale demonstration. On the evening of the 12th February, convoys of over 100 cars, carrying Black Sash women from all over the Union, converged on Stellenbosch. Some had travelled over 1,000 miles, from the Northern Transvaal. Two days later, they were escorted by 50 cars from the Cape into Cape Town, where cheering crowds thronged the pavements as the procession of over 150 cars drove slowly up and down Adderley Street.

For the next 48 hours, relays of Black Sash women lined the railings outside Parliament in a continuous vigil, mounting guard over a large Book of the Constitution draped with a black sash. Simultaneously, demonstrations were held all over the country by members who had been unable to travel to Cape Town. During that week, mass protest meetings were organized in Cape Town, numerous Black Sash vigils were held, and the Convoy travelled throughout the Peninsula. Cape Town members of the Black Sash maintained an unbroken vigil outside Parliament until the joint session came to an end.

The Cape Town convoy was the biggest and most spectacular demonstration ever staged by the Black Sash, and roused great enthusiasm throughout the country. Nothing could deflect the Government from its course, however, and the

South Africa Act Amendment Act was passed at an all-night session on the 26th/27th February, with eight votes more than the necessary two-thirds majority. The devious objects of the Senate Act had been achieved, and there was nothing more to be done but await the results of the test case which the United Party proposed to bring.

The Black Sash itself had considered testing the legislation in the Courts, and its leaders had gone fully into the question, when the United Party's intention was made public, whereupon the organization gave full moral support, and modest financial assistance, to the United Party's case.

### Development of the Black Sash

All these demonstrations were only the outward symbol of the work of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League. All this time, the membership was steadily growing, and the organization had formed itself into a number of Regions and Branches. A National Conference had been held in Port Elizabeth in November and a Constitution drawn up, defining the aims and objects of the organization and laying down rules for the conduct of its affairs.

When the United Party lost its test case against the Senate Act, and the Courts declared the Act legal, it was expected in some quarters that the Black Sash, having served its purpose in opposing



An early demonstration against the Senate Act, one of the many protests staged by the Black Sash on the Johannesburg City Hall steps, "Johannesburg's Traditional Forum". All gatherings on these steps have now been banned.

the violation of the Constitution, would be dissolved. But the organization had already embarked on a programme of action in line with its declared aims and objects, which were:

- (i) To conduct propaganda and enlist support and aid for the observance of
  - (a) Political morality and the principles of parliamentary democracy within the Union of South Africa;
  - (b) Civil rights and liberties.
- (ii) The political education and enlightenment of citizens of South Africa and other persons.

This was obviously a long-term policy, a programme of action directed against the undemocratic trends in Government legislation of which the Senate Act had been an extreme example. Country-wide demonstrations were held when the result of the test case was known, and in every large town and in many of the smaller centres groups of Black Sash women displayed posters which read: "THE SENATE ACT — LEGAL NOW BUT IMMORAL FOREVER."

Thereafter the organization, now known officially as the "Black Sash" a name given to it by the Press, continued in its acknowledged rôle as a political pressure group.

## Pressure Group

At the time of the initial two-day vigil at the Union Buildings, the members of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League were simply South African women from all walks of life. Although some of them were lawyers, politicians, historians and social workers, the majority had up to then taken little interest in politics as such, and had little knowledge of the historical and political background to their Constitution. Forty-eight hours of close association at the Union Buildings, however, had roused in them the desire and determination to learn more about the political affairs of their country. The immediate result was the organization of a series of public lectures on constitutional matters, for the information of themselves and others.

Soon they began to realize that the constitutional issue in South Africa was only a part of the pattern — that the real problem which the country had to face and resolve was its attitude to race relations. "Apartheid" legislation began to be seen for what it was — restriction on the freedoms of a section of the population which would sooner or later recoil upon all sections.

From then on, the Black Sash kept a close watch upon the policies of the Government, and legislation or its implementation which had the effect



Again the Johannesburg City Hall steps — the Senate Act is declared legal.

## JOHANNESBURG



Part of a demonstration against the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1957. A deep-toned bell, tolling at intervals, was used in this demonstration.

of limiting the rights of any section was vigorously opposed at every stage. Through the years that have followed, innumerable protests and demonstrations have been launched against the Group Areas Act, the Pass Laws, Race Classification, banishment without trial, University Apartheid and the Government's Education policy, etc. Since the apartheid legislation of the Nationalist Government has borne more heavily on the non-Whites than on the Whites, a great many of these protests appear to have been made on behalf of Africans, Coloureds and Indians, but, in fact, the Black Sash early perceived that freedom is indivisible, and all its protests were based on that principle.

### The Pass Laws

These laws, which have been described as "the greatest single cause of African unrest", are the mainstay of the apartheid system. They apply only to Africans, and under their provisions all Africans over the age of 16 are obliged to carry "passes" at all times. This obligation was extended to African women in February, 1963, after many years of widespread protest, especially from the Africans themselves, under a measure ironically called the Abolition of Passes and Consolidation of Documents Act, which "abolished" passes merely by re-naming them "Reference Books".

Together with the associated influx control regulations, which control the entry of the African into certain prescribed urban areas, restricting his free movement and his right to seek work

and to reside where he chooses, the pass laws are a source of tremendous hardship to the Africans. Failure to produce a pass upon demand by any policeman or official may result in summary arrest, followed by imprisonment or a fine. Official figures given in Parliament some time ago showed that over 3,500,000 Africans were convicted of pass law offences during the ten years 1951-1960. These are merely statutory offences, but the offenders are treated as criminals.

For many years the Black Sash has waged constant war on these laws, mounting innumerable demonstrations to draw attention to the hardships caused to Africans: the break-up of family life, the constant harassment by police, the drain on pitiful economic resources caused by fines or imprisonment, with consequent loss of employment. One Black Sash slogan used was "Money for food becomes money for fines". Numerous articles have been published, pamphlets and leaflets issued, meetings and symposiums held, in efforts to awaken the public conscience to the evils of these laws and their cost in human suffering as well as their cost to the country in cash and manpower.

Recently there has been some relaxation in police demands for the immediate production of passes, but the Pass Laws remain a very heavy burden upon the African.

## CAPE TOWN



A protest outside Parliament against the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill. The passer-by is Dr. Margaret Ballinger, who was a Native Representative for 25 years, until African representation was abolished in 1960.

## The "Volunteer" Farm Labour System

One of the by-products of the Pass Laws was the "voluntary" farm labour scheme, which engaged the attention of the Transvaal Region of the Black Sash for many months some years ago.

The attention of the Black Sash was drawn to this system by a Johannesburg member, whose African gardener's young son "disappeared". After extensive inquiries, the boy was traced to a farm in the Eastern Transvaal, where he was serving a "sentence" of farm labour for non-production of a Reference Book, although he was not yet of pass-bearing age. The Black Sash was greatly assisted in these inquiries by a Johannesburg lawyer who had been making investigations on his own account into the operation of various farm labour systems. A writ of *habeas corpus* was obtained, the boy Moses was brought back to Johannesburg along with an even younger boy, and the whole iniquitous business was brought to light.

It appeared that a semi-official arrangement existed between certain farmers on the one hand and the police and Bantu Affairs Department officials on the other, whereby Africans on the Witwatersrand arrested for pass offenses were given the option of appearing in court or serving a "sentence" of several months' farm labour. It was

one way of easing the congestion in the prisons and at the same time providing the farmers with much-needed labour, at a very low cost. The conditions under which these prisoners laboured on the farms was found upon investigation to be deplorable in many cases, and in some cases they were treated with the utmost cruelty.

The system seemed to have been in operation for some time, as the Africans knew of it, and referred to the process as being "sold" to the farmers. Although they were supposed to be given the option of "volunteering" for this labour in lieu of an appearance in court, most of them obviously did not understand this, and there is reason to believe that it was not always explained to them.

The Black Sash investigated the position thoroughly and publicized its findings. The Press co-operated and full publicity was given to the case of the boy Moses and to the whole system, stress being placed on the by-passing of the courts, the arbitrary nature of the "sentences", the lack of official supervision on the farms and the inhumanity of the whole scheme, whereby men could be whisked away at a moment's notice, to disappear for months, without being given the opportunity of notifying their families.

As a result of the publicity, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development ordered



A demonstration in Johannesburg against the Group Areas Act, one of the many protests against this measure staged by the Black Sash at different times, in various parts of the country. Shortly after this demonstration, a group of Indian women, staging an orderly protest march and appeal to the Prime Minister at Union Buildings, were dispersed by police dogs. A Black Sash deputation lodged a written complaint with the Prime Minister protesting against this inhuman treatment of women.

the immediate suspension of the scheme, and instituted a departmental inquiry. The Black Sash, among other organizations, was invited to make representations. A comprehensive memorandum was drawn up and submitted to the Commission of Inquiry and a Black Sash delegation was subsequently invited to appear before the Commission.

The findings of the Commission were never made public, and the Black Sash was unable to obtain a report, but the "Volunteer" Farm Labour Scheme was abandoned by the authorities.

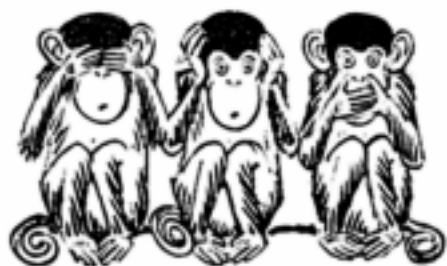
## Magazine

In pursuit of their aim of enlightening themselves and others on political matters, Black Sash groups in all parts of the country have organized lectures, forums, brains trusts and public meetings.

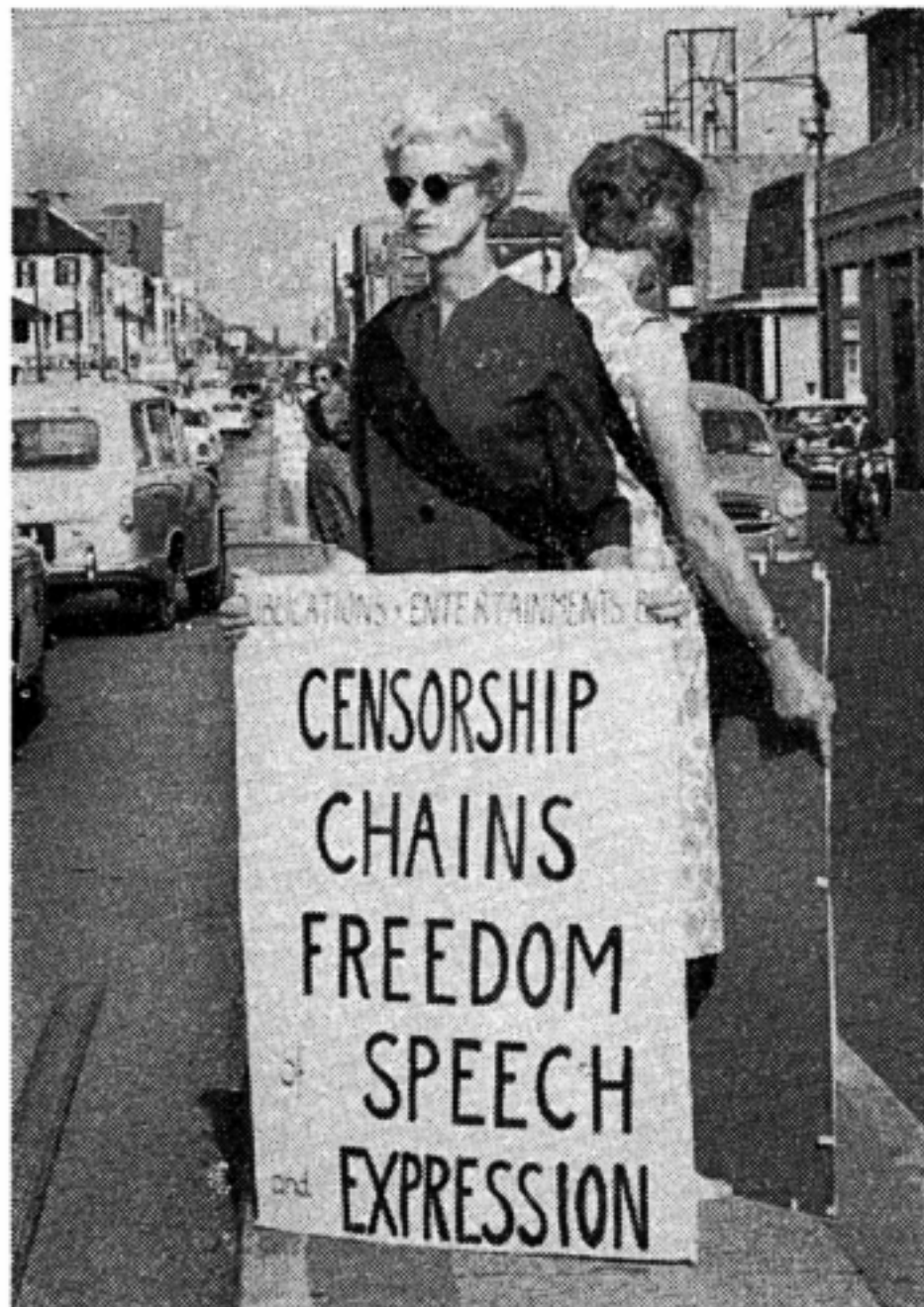
They have made investigations into such matters as induced farm labour, group areas, political banishment, the pass laws, the operation of the Native Commissioners' Courts, and in many cases made representations to responsible bodies. They have consulted and worked with other organizations on education, the Pass Laws, the Group Areas Act, malnutrition and censorship and publicized their findings.

Since January 1956, the organization has published a printed Magazine, "The Black Sash", which has been widely read in our own country and also overseas. Originally registered as a newspaper and published monthly, the magazine is now issued quarterly, and contains articles on a variety of political subjects of general interest or of special interest to the Black Sash, articles on topical and controversial matters and reports on Black Sash activities.

Special issues have been published from time to time: one devoted entirely to articles on educational matters reached a wide public, and an outstanding special issue on the implementation and effects of the Pass Laws provided a valuable aid to our campaign to draw attention to the inhumanities of these laws and the hardships that result from them.



**What is evil? De Klerk will tell you.**



**A protest in Cape Town against the Publications and Entertainments Bill. In a demonstration against this Bill in Johannesburg, badges similar to the sketch at the bottom of the page were handed to members of the public.**

## The Athlone Advice Office

As has been pointed out, the Abolition of Passes and Consolidation of Documents Act, far from abolishing the Pass system, actually extended it to African women, in spite of long-continued protests by the Africans themselves and by many White people who understood how strongly the Africans feared and resented any interference with their womenfolk. As a slight concession to these protests, the Government agreed to suspend the implementation of this provision until such time as the other population groups were compelled to carry Identity Cards. The date upon which these regulations came into effect was 1st February, 1963.

In spite of this concession, however, officials in the Western Cape demanded production of Reference Books by women, or permits to be in the area, before the fixed date, and used the system to carry out the Government's "Eiselen Line" policy (under which it is proposed to remove all Africans ultimately from the Western Cape). African women whose reference books or permits were not in order were arrested and summarily

imprisoned, often leaving small children at home uncared for. The Athlone Advice Office in Cape Town was originally established by the Black Sash in 1958 to help some of these women to obtain bail, so that they could return to their homes and children.

Since then, the removal of Africans from the area has been speeded up, and thousands of men and women have been summarily "endorsed out", i.e. ordered to leave the area and return to their "homelands", regardless of the fact that most of them have been living and working in the Cape for many years, and have lost all touch with their place of origin. Indeed, many of them were born in the Cape.

The Athlone Advice Office is now being run jointly by the Black Sash and the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, and has widened its scope to provide advice not only for men and women "endorsed out" or in other difficulties with the influx control regulations, but also for people with a variety of problems arising from the mass of legislation that affects the lives of the non-Whites. Some seek assistance because of exploitation by unscrupulous employers, who take advantage of anomalies in the contract system, others have housing or rent problems, or wish for advice on

how to obtain pensions or compensation due to them.

There are troubled women who come for advice on how — or whether — to divorce their husbands, who have been "endorsed out" of the urban area. These are women who qualify in their own right, by reason of birth, long residence or length of employment, to remain in the area. As married women they lose these rights, and must leave with their husbands, but by obtaining a divorce they regain their own rights of residence. Thus they have before them the heart-breaking choice between deserting their husbands and retaining their own rights and those of their children, or following their husbands into exile, to areas where there may be no amenities — no houses, no schools, possibly not even opportunities for making an adequate living.

### Six Black Sash Advice Offices

The Black Sash now runs six Advice Offices in various parts of the country, opened as and when the need for them became apparent.

The Athlone Advice Office is still by far the busiest, and deals with thousands of cases a year; but the Transvaal Region Advice Office opened in Johannesburg early in 1963 is already dealing with



South Africa leaves the Commonwealth, 15th March, 1961.

a considerable number of cases, and the volume of work is steadily increasing as the existence of the office becomes more widely known and the "endorsements out", unhappily, increase. The four other Advice Offices, opened early in 1964 in **Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London and Elgin, Cape**, are still feeling their way.

All six offices are being run on the lines established by the pioneer Athlone Advice Office. No financial assistance is given, but all advice and help are given free of charge. It is carefully explained to those who seek advice that no attempt can be made to evade the law, but that every effort will be made to establish their rights within the framework of the law.

Voluntary workers check up on their legal position, advise them of their rights, arrange interviews for them with officials, assist them to apply for permits to remain in the urban area — in short, do all in their power to help them to establish the limited rights to which they are entitled within the vast and complicated structure of the Bantu laws. And these laws are indeed so complicated that even the officials themselves have difficulty in interpreting them. It is not surprising, therefore, that most of the people who come to the Black Sash for advice are deeply confused, ignorant of their rights and harried by regulations they do not understand, especially as many of them are illiterate.

The Black Sash has made it its business to protest against unjust laws, and although it has been unsuccessful in changing them so far, an attempt is being made in the Advice Offices to see that those affected at least do not lose the rights they still possess, and to direct them towards such assistance as is available to them.

### **"The Crime, Apartheid—the Penalty, Isolation"**

After the first wide and enthusiastic publicity given to the Black Sash demonstrations against the Senate Act, interest in the organization here and overseas waned somewhat, but revived from time to time when anything of particular interest occurred. For instance, the march in protest against South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961, when the Black Sash was the only organization to protest openly, received much publicity, especially in overseas newspapers.

The slogan used on that occasion, "The Crime, Apartheid — the Penalty, Isolation", was chosen to underline the fact that our country's growing isolation was the direct result of her apartheid policies. In the years since then, South Africa has withdrawn or been excluded from one international organization after another, and apartheid has been condemned throughout the world. The slogan has become even more apt than it was when it was first used, and the Black Sash has used it as the central theme of two magazines, a National Conference, and several demonstrations. For the demonstrations, posters were used listing the many inhumanities which add up to the crime, apartheid, and the many ways in which South Africa has already been isolated.



**Petition table in Cape Town.**

### **Petition against slanted broadcasts**

Towards the end of 1961 and early in 1962, the Black Sash again came into the news when it organized a country-wide petition against the use of the S.A.B.C. as an instrument for propagating Government policy. Tables were set up at various points in towns and villages, and the Black Sash confidently expected to get hundreds of thousands of signatures in a very short time, as people everywhere were complaining about the biased and distorted broadcasts. In the event, they experienced great difficulty in obtaining signatures as a result of public apathy and fear. Twenty-five thousand radio subscribers were, however, sufficiently concerned about the position to sign the petition.

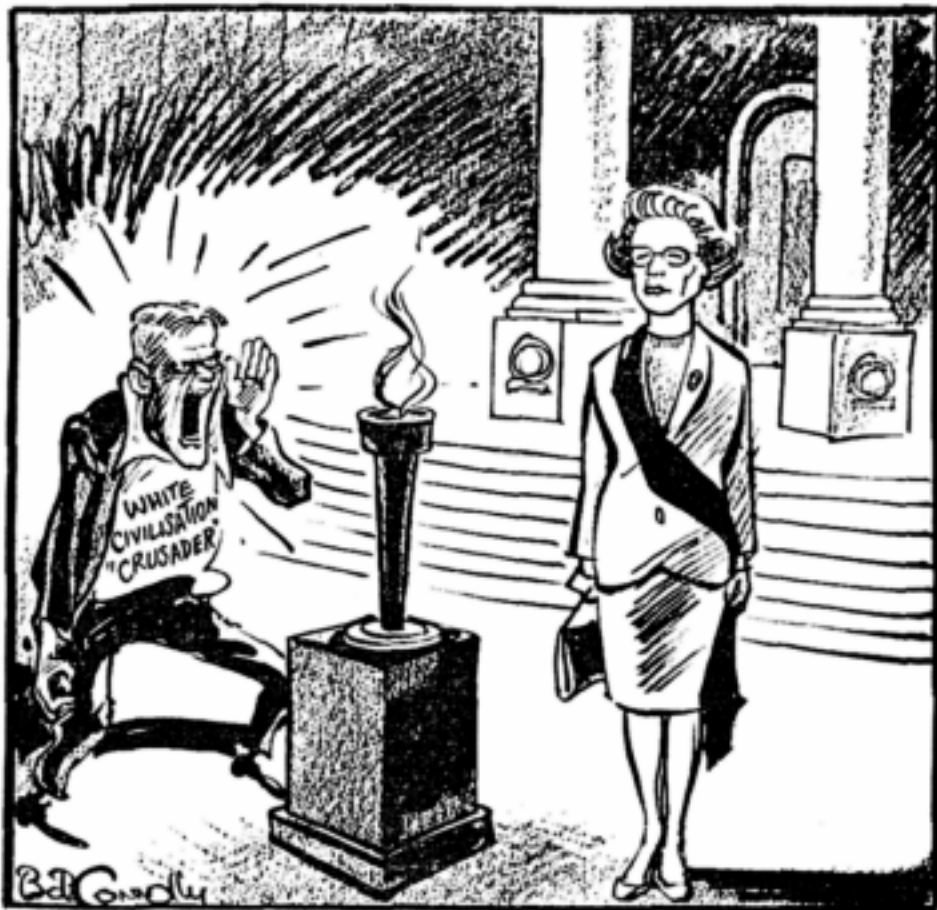
The petition was sent to the Prime Minister, and was shortly afterwards acknowledged in a petulant letter signed by his Secretary, to the effect that the Government had no confidence in the Black Sash, and could therefore not be impressed by any petition sponsored or instigated by it. In a

leading article, a prominent Johannesburg newspaper pointed out that the implication of this unceremonious rejection was that the Government would only take cognizance of the views of those with whom it agreed; and that "the essence of the democratic system and the characteristic which distinguishes it from all others" — the acceptance that the rights of minorities must be as jealously guarded as those of the majority — clearly went by the board when there was a refusal even to consider the views of those who thought differently.

The Black Sash has since come to the conclusion that the launching of the petition was premature, for less than twelve months later public indignation at the now blatant party political propaganda had risen to such a pitch that thousands more would have welcomed the opportunity to protest. No public protests have been made, however, and gradually listeners are becoming inured to the slanted broadcasts, and the insidious propaganda is having its effect.

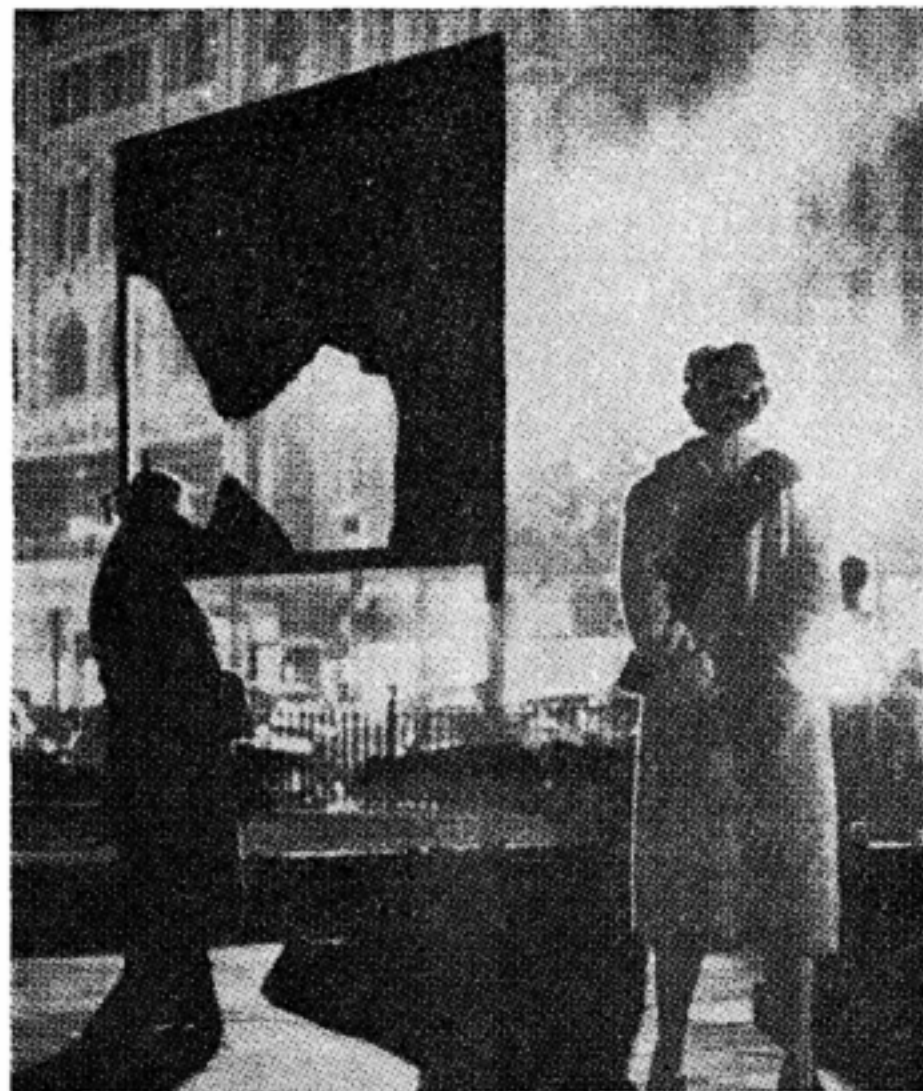
### The "Sabotage" Bill

In May 1962, almost exactly seven years after the formation of the Black Sash, the protests against the "Sabotage" Bill again focussed worldwide attention on the organization. The General Law Amendment Bill of 1962 was published on the 12th May, and for a day or two the country considered the implications of its drastic and far-reaching provisions. Then the protests began, and newspapermen, politicians, businessmen, churchmen, lawyers and laymen all combined to condemn the wide terms and definitions and the harsh penalties of the Bill, and point out the danger of placing wide and arbitrary powers in the hands of one Minister and his unknown successors.



The Contrast.

(Rand Daily Mail)



The damaged poster.

The Minister of Justice claimed that this was a measure to combat sabotage and curb communism. The Black Sash, as an organization, had repeatedly declared its opposition to the creed of communism, and accepted that it was the duty of a responsible government to deal severely with any person found guilty of sabotage or violence. Nevertheless, it considered that this Bill constituted a threat to fundamental democratic freedoms and principles, and therefore decided to hold continuous vigils to demonstrate total rejection of the measure.

### The Flame of Freedom

The demonstration in Johannesburg started at dusk on the 16th May, with the ceremonial lighting of the "Flame of Freedom" on the steps of the City Hall. Relays of Black Sash women guarded the flame night and day, and a poster was displayed, reading, "Reject the Sabotage Bill, the Bill to end all liberty".

The first night passed without incident, but on the second night a gang of White hooligans "discovered" the demonstrators and extinguished the flame — which was promptly re-lighted. For the next three days and nights groups of hooligans baited the women with foul abuse, screamed obscenities at them, pelted them with eggs, tomatoes, raw fish and other missiles, contemptuously lighted cigarettes at their flame and tried to put it out, and twice destroyed their poster, which had to be replaced. The women stood firm and silent, offering no response and no resistance.



On the sixth evening, when an ominous-looking crowd began to assemble, the National President decided, upon the advice of City officials, to withdraw the women for the night, for their own protection. The Flame of Freedom was carried proudly away, and the Johannesburg vigil came to an end, after five days and nights. To the joy of the women, however, Cape Town members of the Black Sash commenced their round-the-clock vigil that same evening, to mark the beginning of the second reading debate in the House of Assembly. As the "Rand Daily Mail" said, "a flame died, but another flared." The Cape Town members lit their flame of freedom outside the gates of parliament, with posters reading "**Vorster's Bill Stifles Legitimate Opposition**". An unbroken vigil was maintained there for a full week, until the end of the debate.

The Johannesburg vigils on the City Hall steps were continued in the daytime for two more days, but as the hooligans intensified their attacks, and scenes of violence involving passers-by followed, it was decided to seek other venues. Daily vigils were therefore held at various points in the city until the second reading debate came to an end.

In the meantime, Black Sash members in the other large centres had been holding their own "Flame of Freedom" vigils, but all demonstrations came to an end at the same time.

When the provisions of the "Sabotage" Act were later implemented at various times, mostly through impositions of house arrest, further Black Sash protest demonstrations were held throughout the country, again with the flame.

## The City Hall Steps

The publicity given to the "Flame of Freedom" demonstrations and the attacks on the Black Sash by the hooligans focussed a good deal of sympathetic attention on the organization, at home and abroad, while the "Sabotage" Bill came in for much additional adverse comment. Perhaps this was one reason why the Minister of Justice decided to ban all gatherings on the City Hall steps.

The ban closed a chapter in the history of the Black Sash, which may be said to have opened on the City Hall steps over seven years before when the 2,500 women who had marched to the City Hall in protest against the Senate Bill received the inspiration that led to the formation of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League. In the years that followed a good deal of the history of the Black Sash was played out on those steps: innumerable meetings and demonstrations were held there, starting with demonstrations against the Senate Bill, continuing over the years with protests against various pieces of unjust and restrictive legislation, and ending just one week before the imposition of the ban with a demonstration in defence of the freedom of the individual, arising from the provisions of the "Sabotage" Bill.

The Black Sash did not always find it easy to obtain the use of the steps, which were looked upon as "Johannesburg's traditional forum" — in fact they had to fight very hard at times for "the freedom of the City Hall steps", as permission to hold meetings there was sometimes withheld by the City Council for various reasons, and only Black Sash persistence won the day.



The Flame of Freedom flares in Cape Town.

However, there were never disturbances at any of these meetings and demonstrations, until the protest meeting against South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, when White hooligans made unprovoked attacks upon non-White bystanders. Hooligans were again responsible for the disturbances arising from their sustained attacks on the Black Sash demonstrators against the "Sabotage" Bill, so perhaps, as a Johannesburg newspaper said, Mr. Vorster's decision to ban meetings on the Johannesburg City Hall steps could be claimed as a notable victory — for hooligans. It was tragic, however, as the newspaper said, "that their victory should now get Government approval".

The ban on the City Hall steps lapsed after a year, but was renewed shortly afterwards in a more restrictive form, banning all gatherings "in the vicinity of the City Hall". In between the bans, however, the Black Sash managed to stage a demonstration, again with the "Flame of Freedom", using a poster which read, "We continue to protest against injustice and discrimination". There were no incidents.

### The 90-day detention clause

In 1962, when the Minister of Justice was questioned in Parliament about the very extensive powers he was asking for under the General Law Amendment ("Sabotage") Bill, he explained that he did not want to keep on coming back to Parliament for more and more "necessary" powers. Yet in 1963, and again in 1964, he introduced further General Law Amendment Bills giving him still greater and even more arbitrary powers, again to deal with "sabotage and Communism".

The General Law Amendment Bill of 1963, the "No-trial Bill", burst upon the country so suddenly and was so hastily enacted that it had become law almost before anybody had time to protest. The Black Sash did protest, however, and so did numerous other groups and organizations, against its harsh and arbitrary provisions and its encroachments on the rule of law. However, the acceptance by the official Opposition that it was "necessary" for the preservation of law and order ensured its speedy passage through Parliament, and this draconian measure was placed upon the Statute Book.

Since then hundreds of South Africans have been detained under the now notorious "90-day clause", which enables any police officer to arrest and imprison any individual without warrant and without trial, and to keep him in prison for questioning for up to 90 days until such time as he has "satisfied" the authorities. In spite of assurances that nobody would be detained for more than 90 days, many people have been imprisoned for two and even three periods of 90 days, and kept in solitary confinement.

There have been constant and widespread protests against this clause: churchmen have protested on moral and humanitarian grounds; lawyers have protested against the abrogation of the



(Daily News)

rule of law; a group of 60 psychiatrists, psychologists and physicians protested on grounds of the dangerous effects of solitary confinement on mental health; but all protests have been dismissed by the Minister of Justice as coming from "leftists and near-Communists".

At the time of the passing of the Bill, a prominent Member of Parliament, Mr. Hamilton Russell, resigned from Parliament and from the United Party in protest. Since then he has travelled all over the country campaigning for the repeal of the 90-day detention clause.

The Black Sash has protested constantly and vigorously against the measure. Before the Bill was passed, prolonged vigils were held in all regions, with posters which read "Detention without trial is not justice", "The Minister of Justice Destroys Justice", and "Protest against Vorster's Bill". As a last resort, a telegram was sent to the State President, asking him not to sign the Bill, but in vain.

Deeply disturbed at the application of the 90-day detention clause and its effects upon detainees and their families, the Black Sash and the National Council of Women planned a joint campaign to urge the repeal of the clause. To this end, a memorandum was drawn up dividing objections to the clause into two sections, humanitarian and legal; and this was submitted to the Minister of Justice, with a letter asking him to receive a deputation from the two organizations. The Minister

refused to receive a deputation, and sent a discourteous reply through his private secretary, brushing aside these two well-known women's organizations as "leftist", and implying that they had no regard for the safety of the State.

Undeterred, the Black Sash and the National Council of Women went ahead with plans for a campaign in 1964 to have the clause repealed when it came before Parliament for review at the end of May. They supported Mr. Hamilton Russell in his campaign, and organized well-attended meetings in all the larger centres which were addressed by Mr. Russell in memorable and hard-hitting speeches. The Churches were drawn into the campaign, and they took the lead in calling public meetings all over the country, which were addressed by leading churchmen of the various denominations, all urging repeal of this obnoxious measure.

Yet in spite of all these protests, and in spite of pressure by the Opposition when the clause came up for review at the end of the 1964 session of Parliament, the 90-day detention clause was renewed for another twelve months.

In view of the Government's claim, after the Rivonia trials, that all underground activities had been scotched, it had been hoped that the clause would be considered no longer necessary. But the Minister of Justice asked for its renewal, hinting, however, that it might be possible to repeal it within a short time.

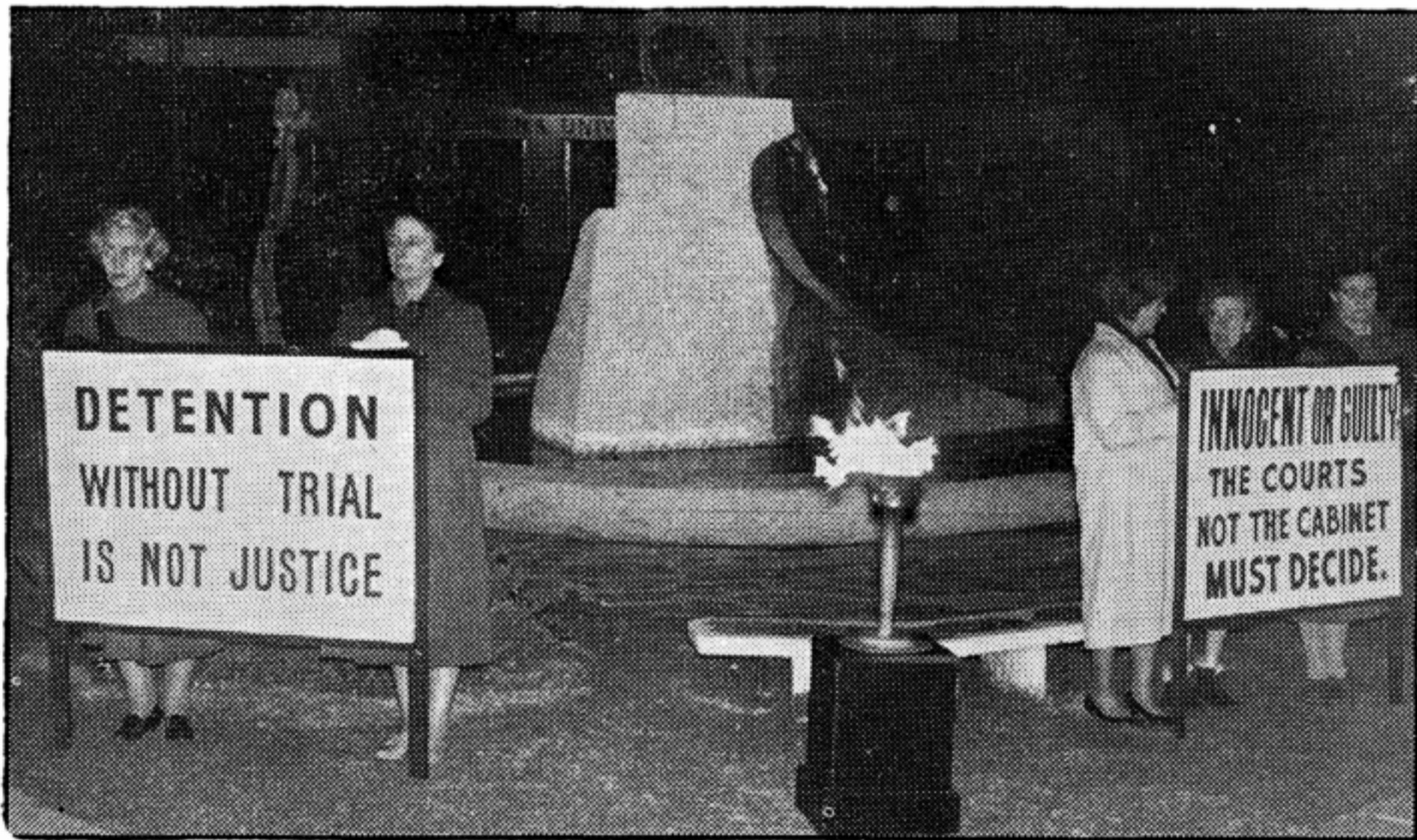
Yet hardly had the session ended before there was a further wave of arrests under this clause in

the Transvaal and the Cape, together with a series of dawn raids upon the homes of hundreds of people, including numbers of distinguished citizens, well-known anti-Communists whose respectability and regard for the law could not be questioned. The arrests and raids continue, and nobody knows when they will end.

There have been further outbreaks of sabotage, including the recent bomb outrage at the Johannesburg station. The Black Sash has always condemned violence and sabotage, and believes that those who perpetrate these crimes must be brought to justice. Nevertheless, it does not believe that arbitrary 90-day detention, which is outside the rule of law, is defensible. The public cannot know whether there is evidence of subversive activity against all those detained, or whether the Government is using its powers to silence those who openly and legally oppose its policies. Only when individuals are charged and brought to trial in open court can the full facts become known, and justice be seen to be done.

### The Bantu Laws Amendment Bill

Early in 1963, the Minister of Information held a special Press conference to give advance publicity to a Bill drawn up by the Bantu Administration Department. Mr. Waring had not yet read the Bill, but he represented it as a measure designed primarily to promote healthy race relations, to eliminate obsolete and overlapping provisions of existing Bantu legislation, and to ease the lot of the African worker. When the



The Transvaal Region of the Black Sash begins a 48-hour vigil against the implementation of the General Law Amendment ("No-trial") Act.

draft Bill was published a few days later, its provisions were found to be harsher and more oppressive than ever, while it gave the Government drastic and far-reaching powers to control all African labour.

Comments upon the Bill prior to its revision by the Cabinet were called for by the Department, and many organizations and individuals availed themselves of this invitation, mainly attacking the Bill on the grounds of its inhumanity, its interference with labour and with the powers of local authorities, and the hardship and inconvenience it would cause both Black and White citizens.

Deeply disturbed about the implications of the proposed legislation, the underlying purpose of which was to establish the Africans permanently as a migrant labour force with no rights of residence in the "White" areas, Black Sash women all over the country spent endless hours studying the draft Bill and the slightly modified version which was later placed before Parliament. Two memoranda on the draft Bill were submitted, one from National Headquarters and one from Cape Western Region, attacking the Bill mainly on the grounds that it would lead to a further breakdown in the already unsettled family life of the Africans; remove the small measure of security hitherto enjoyed by them in the urban areas, creating an insecure and rootless people; interfere with the free movement of labour, and increase racial friction while causing economic uncertainty.

Large-scale demonstrations were planned in every Region to coincide with the second reading debate, posters were prepared, informative pamphlets were printed. Not since the days of the protests against the Senate Act had so much endeavour been concentrated upon a single measure.

In the meantime Black Sash Headquarters sent a telegram to the Prime Minister, asking him for an interview so that their objections to the Bill might be explained and amplified. He referred them to Mr. de Wet Nel, Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, who replied asking the Black Sash for a Memorandum setting out the basis of their objections. At short notice, therefore, a third Memorandum was drawn up by Headquarters with the collaboration of Cape Western Region, and sent to the Minister.

Shortly afterwards, however, the Government decided not to proceed with the full 143 clauses of the Bill during the 1963 session, and an abridged Bill of 33 clauses, which omitted many of the provisions which gave the greatest concern, was placed before Parliament and duly enacted.

The Black Sash received a letter from Mr. de Wet Nel saying that the discussion with the Black Sash could take place "at a later date".

Many people, including members of the Black Sash, regarded the withdrawal of the major and most contentious parts of the Bill as a hopeful

sign that the Minister was at least prepared to consider objections to its provisions. A Black Sash deputation was in due course accorded an interview with the Minister and his advisers, and given an opportunity of expressing Black Sash views and presenting concrete evidence of individual cases of hardship, gleaned from the records of the Athlone Advice Office. They were listened to with courteous and careful attention, congratulated on their thorough study and understanding of the legislation, and the Minister expressed shock at some of the case histories related, asking that in future individual cases of hardship be referred to him personally. (This has since been done in many instances.) They left the interview with high hopes that their representations would have the effect of ameliorating future legislation.

But it was not to be. The Bill that was introduced in Parliament during the 1964 session was substantially the same as the original Bill. The Black Sash protested, and many other protests and objections were made inside and outside Parliament, but little attention was paid to all these protests, and the Bill was passed with only minor amendments.

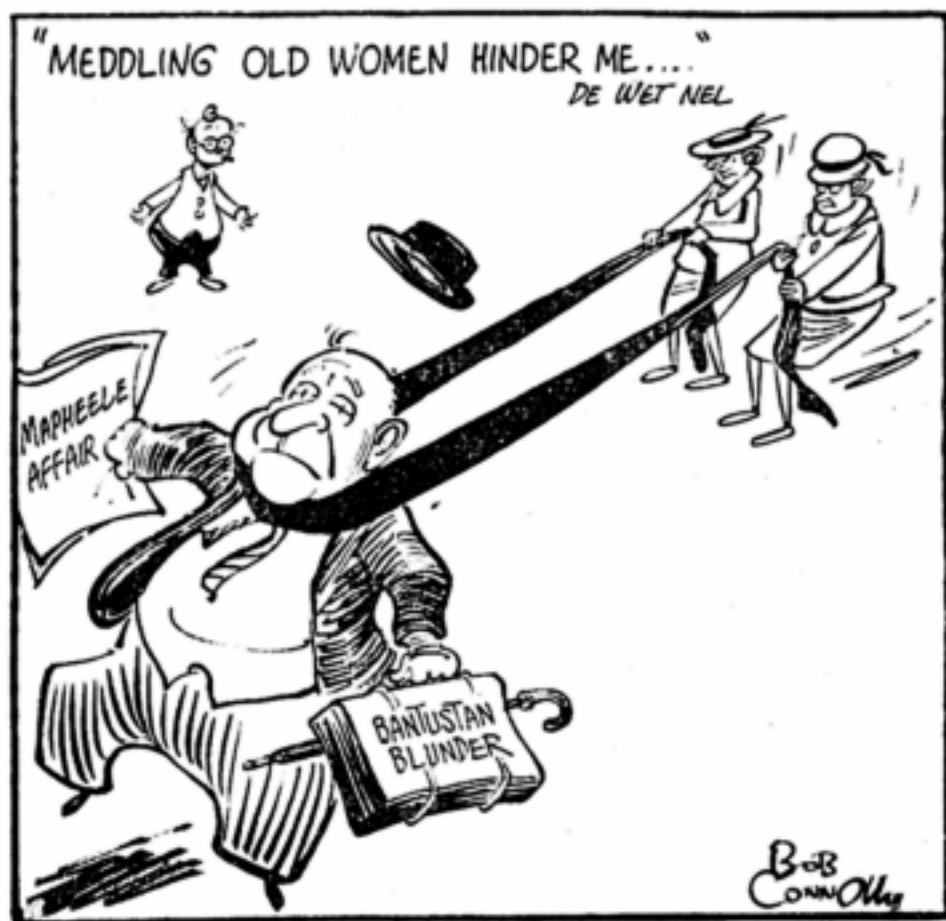
This legislation is obviously an essential part of the Government's whole apartheid policy, the complement of the Bantustan "independence" plan. As the "Rand Daily Mail" pointed out at the time of the publication of the draft Bill, the measure gives the Minister 'complete control over the movement, residence and occupation of every African living outside his "homeland" . . . it is a *quid pro quo*, a strict bargain. Limited self-rule in the Bantustans, and, in return, nothing at all in the White areas.'

It was recently pointed out to the Black Sash that one of the provisions of the Bill, which enables officials to send "idle" Africans to camps where they can be offered "suitable" employment which they are more or less obliged to accept, is in effect a legalization of that old enemy of the Black Sash, the "induced" farm labour system.

### "Meddling old women"

Like many other responsible citizens and organizations in South Africa the Black Sash has for many years been deeply concerned about the effects on the African of the group of laws known as the "Pass Laws", which bear only on the African, and are generally acknowledged to be one of the main causes of racial friction in the country. From time to time, the Black Sash has made representations against these laws to responsible authorities, and these have, in the main, been courteously received.

At the time of the publication of the draft Bantu Laws Amendment Bill, feeling that the ever-increasing severity of these laws and their implementation constituted a serious danger to race relations in South Africa, the Black Sash decided to make a further appeal to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development to relax the



Black Sashed.

(Rand Daily Mail)

existing laws and reconsider the proposed legislation.

Accordingly, a well-considered letter was addressed to him, pointing out the evil effects of these laws from every point of view. The letter was dismissed in a curt reply from the Minister's Private Secretary, accusing the Black Sash of "meddling" in a matter of which it knew nothing.

Some time later, when the Minister was being questioned in Parliament about his decision in the Mapheele case, he complained that he was being hindered in his work by "meddling old women", referring to the Black Sash Advice Office workers. He repeated his complaint on a second occasion, and even accused the Black Sash of unlawful and immoral practices, suggesting that it might be "furthering the aims of Poqo". These charges were refuted by the Black Sash in a letter to the Press, and have not since been repeated.

### The Black Sash opens its ranks

When the Black Sash first came into existence in a spontaneous explosion of moral indignation caused by the Senate Act, that political manoeuvre which removed rights from South Africans of colour to the advantage of the Whites, it seemed reasonable and proper to most members that the Black Sash should be an organization of women voters, and therefore White women. They saw themselves as the conscience of the White electorate whom they held primarily responsible for the state of affairs which had been allowed to develop in South Africa.

In the years that have followed, the Black Sash has continuously campaigned for justice for all South Africans. In the course of this work members have learned that the basic injustice in our

country is the policy of discrimination on grounds of colour; and that while the rest of the world is rejecting racial and colour discrimination more and more, South Africa alone is intensifying it and perpetuating it by law.

With their own categorical rejection of the principle of racial discrimination came the question as to whether they could remain a body of voters, an organization of White women, since the franchise in South Africa is restricted to Whites. There was a decided division of opinion on this point.

The members of the Black Sash had come to realize that a happy and peaceful future for their country depended upon a broad concept of South African nationhood embracing all its peoples; and many of them felt that the Black Sash should give expression to this concept by opening its ranks to all South African women. They felt, too, that since all legitimate avenues of protest had been closed, one by one, to non-Whites, non-White women should be given an opportunity of sharing in the peaceful and legitimate activities of the Black Sash.

Yet there were many other members, who, while they fully subscribed to the Black Sash rejection of colour discrimination, still sincerely believed that they would have a better chance of righting wrongs brought about by the arbitrarily enfranchised Whites if they remained the "conscience" of the White electorate, a **voice of protest from within**. They felt that as a group of privileged White women obviously seeking no material advantage for themselves in their work for justice, the Black Sash would have greater strength than as a mixed group in which many women would be fighting to establish their own rights.

And after nearly four years of discussion and soul-searching, the issue was decided in October, 1963, at the Annual National Conference. By a majority of more than two-thirds, the Black Sash decided to open its ranks to all women of the Republic of South Africa.

### Spirit of protest

In response to the many inquiries we are constantly receiving about the origin of our organization and the reasons for its continued existence, we offer this brief outline of the history of the Black Sash. It is of necessity brief, and many aspects of our work have been merely touched upon, or omitted entirely. But it will, we hope, give some indication of the present scope of our activities and objectives, and at the same time provide an answer to those people who think that the only activities of the Black Sash lie in its now somewhat sporadic public demonstrations.

These public appearances are now only a part — yet still an important part — of our work. It is a long time since we expected our Black Sash demonstrations, no matter how well-timed, how emphatic, or how long sustained, to have any real

effect upon the unjust legislation against which we protest; but they do provide a visual reminder to the public of the need for constant protest, and visible evidence that the spirit of protest is still alive in our country.

## Achievement

And what has the Black Sash achieved? It is true that, in practical terms, we can claim no spectacular success, and much of our hard work over the years seems to have come to nothing. However, we can and do claim material success in at least two instances — our protests against the iniquitous induced farm labour scheme in the Transvaal a few years ago led to the abandonment of the scheme; and the small successes of the Black Sash Advice Offices, particularly the Athlone Advice Office, have brought comfort to some of our less fortunate fellow citizens. If the Black Sash has achieved nothing else, this help to the helpless, little though it may be when measured against the appalling defencelessness of the Africans in general, more than justifies its existence.

But something else has been achieved. It is a remarkable fact that many of the women who started out with the Black Sash more than nine years ago are still as active and as enthusiastic as ever. These women have grown and developed with the Black Sash, and have learned many

valuable lessons — to think honestly and objectively about the problems of their country, to accept changing ideas in a changing world, to try to cast aside prejudice and intolerance, to protest against injustices wherever they find them, and to uphold their principles firmly yet without violence. And surely the development of such a group of women is a real and worthwhile achievement in a country torn with racial prejudice and intolerance, where change is resisted by the dominant group, and where men are turning to violence under stress of unbearable injustice?

## History

In this brief outline of Black Sash activities, we have dealt in some detail with the legislation on which our protests are based, mainly because we believe that these laws are influencing South Africa's destiny. Memories are short, and we wish to preserve a clear record of Black Sash motivation and actions in these momentous years.

And so we play our small part in the history of our troubled country as it unfolds before our eyes. When that history comes to be written, no matter how little we women of the Black Sash may be found to have influenced the course of events, perhaps it may be remembered that all our work and protests were based solely on moral issues, and, in the words of our Dedication, "History and our children will defend us."



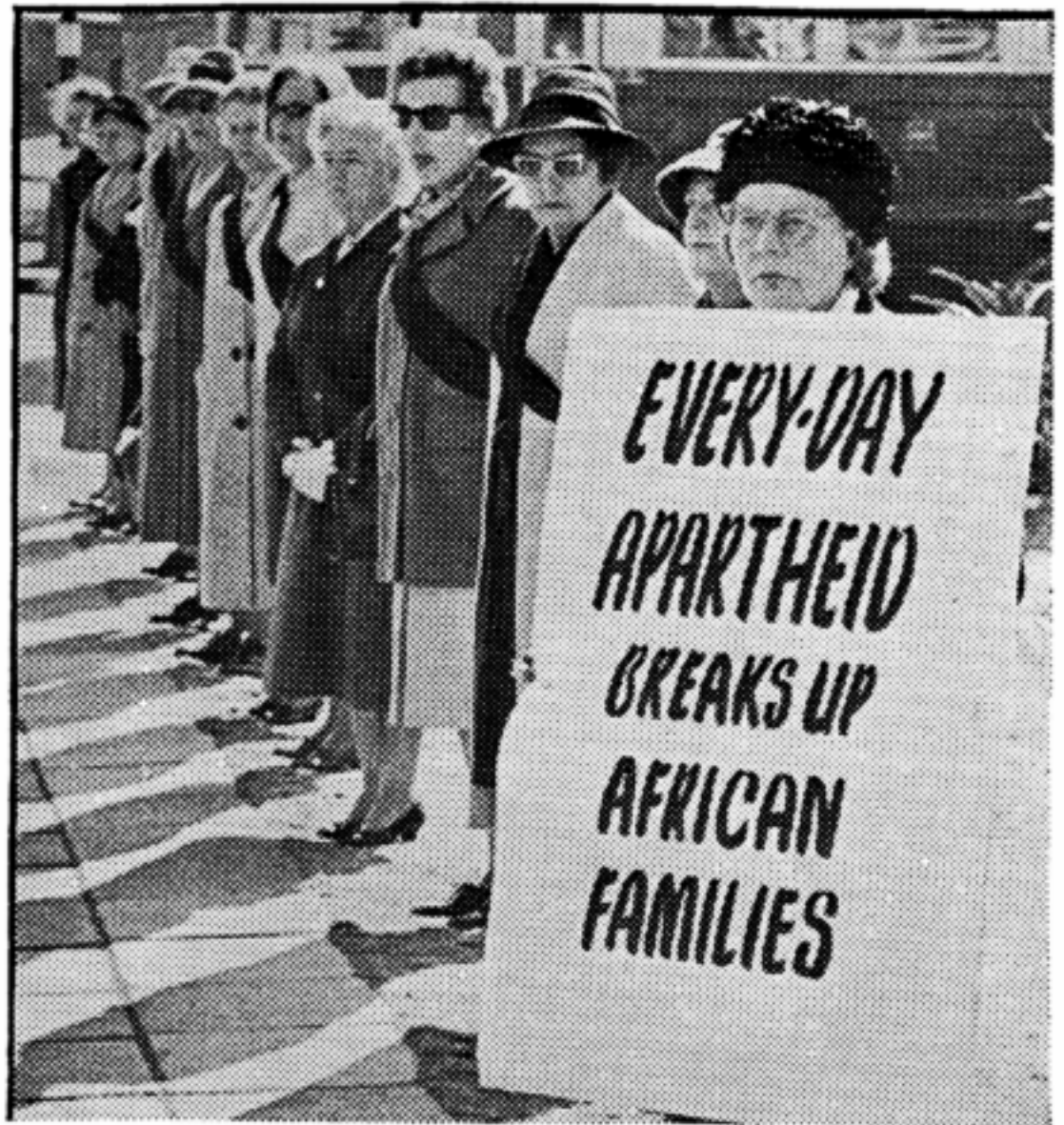
The last demonstration on the Johannesburg City Hall steps.

**FAMILY DAY  
IN A COUNTRY THAT DISRUPTS  
FAMILIES**

The Black Sash has for many years been deeply concerned about the break-up of African families caused by apartheid legislation.

The picture on the right shows part of a demonstration on July 13th, "Family Day", an annual public holiday in South Africa dedicated to the promotion of happy family relationships.

In the picture below, Cape Town members demonstrate against the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill of 1964.



## *Dedication . . .*

**I**N pride and humbleness we declare our devotion to the land of South Africa, we dedicate ourselves to the service of our country. We pledge ourselves to uphold the ideals of mutual trust and forbearance, of sanctity of word, of courage for the future, and of peace and justice for all persons and peoples. We pledge ourselves to resist any diminishment of these, confident that this duty is required of us, and that history and our children will defend us.

So help us God, in Whose strength we trust.

## *Toewydingsrede . . .*

**M**ET trots en nederigheid verklaar ons ons gehegtheid aan die land van Suid-Afrika, ons wy ons aan die diens van ons land. Ons belowe plegtig die ideale te handhaaf van onderlinge vertrouwe en verdraagsaamheid, van die onskendbaarheid van beloftes, van moed vir die toekoms, van vrede en regverdigheid teenoor alle persone en rasse. Ons beloof plegtig om ons te verset teen enige vermindering hiervan, oortuig dat hierdie plig ons opgelê is en dat die geskiedenis en ons kinders ons sal regverdig.

Mag God ons help, op Wie se krag ons ons verlaat.