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SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (INC.)  
SUID-AFRIKAANSE INSTITUUT VIR RASSEVERHOUDINGS (INGELYF.)

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JOHANNESBURG.

THE NURSING BILL OF 1957

(Memorandum prepared by the Institute's Technical Officer)

The Nursing Act of 1944, as amended in 1946, made provision for a Nursing Council which deals with the registration, training and discipline of nurses and midwives, and a Nursing Association which acts in the interests of the nurses, concerning itself with salaries, conditions of service and related matters. Control of the affairs of the latter body is vested in the Board of the Association.

Until now, Non-White registered and student nurses and midwives, have voted together with Whites in the election of nurses' representatives on the Council and of members of the Board. In theory, Non-White representatives could be elected (although this has so far never occurred in practice). Some branches of the Association have held mixed meetings, while others have decided on separate meetings for White and Non-White members.

The Nursing Bill of 1957 is a consolidating measure, but contains new and racially discriminatory features.

The Nursing Council

The Nursing Council is in future to consist of White persons only, some appointed by the Minister, some by the Medical and Dental Council and the Provincial Administrations, and others elected by White nurses and midwives.

Coloured and Asiatic nurses and midwives will elect the 5 members of an Advisory Board for Coloured persons; and similarly, African nurses and midwives will elect the 9 members of an Advisory Board for Native persons.

The Council is in future to keep separate registers and rolls for nurses, midwives, students and auxiliary nurses according to their racial groups, i.e. White persons, Coloured persons and Africans.

It is to be empowered to prescribe different qualifications for registration for different classes of persons or branches of nursing; also to prescribe different uniforms, badges or other distinguishing devices for White persons, Coloured persons and Africans.

The Nursing Association

All nurses, midwives and student nurses and midwives will be members of a common association; but separate branches or groups are to be set up in respect of White persons, Coloured persons and Africans.

Separate meetings must be held at least once every three years of members of each of these racial groups. White persons designated by the Board may attend meetings of the Coloured or of the African members, but they will have no vote.

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A decision of the majority of White persons present at a meeting of White members will constitute a decision of the Association. Decisions at meetings of Coloured and of African members will be considered by the appropriate advisory committee (described below), and will be conveyed by it, together with its recommendations, to the Board.

#### The Board of the Association

The Board of the Association is in future to consist only of White persons, elected by White nurses, midwives and students.

Advisory Committees for Coloured persons and for Africans will be established, elected in the same way as the Advisory Committees will be.

#### Employment of Nurses and Midwives

Any person who causes or permits any White nurse, midwife or student to be employed under the control and supervision of any Non-White person in any hospital or similar institution or training school will be guilty of an offence, and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £200.

#### Institute Action

The Institute sent a memorandum RR 40/55 to the Select Committee on the draft Bill, and two memoranda, RR 5 and 6 of 1956, to Members of Parliament and to the Press. It maintained that it was totally unnecessary to introduce colour bars, and thus artificially to create divisions along racial lines, in bodies whose common interests and common loyalties to their high profession had in the past over-ridden sectional or racial differences.

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (INC.)  
SUID-AFRIKAANSE INSTITUUT VIR RASSEVERHOUDINGS (INGELYF)

THE NURSING BILL

MAY 20 1957

The Nursing Bill of 1957, gazetted as a consolidating measure, contains new and discriminatory features. This Bill was originally introduced into Parliament a couple of years ago and submitted to a Select Committee after the second reading. The first Nursing Act which set up a Nursing Council and a Nursing Association was passed in 1944.

NURSING COUNCIL.

This was composed, in the original Act, of 24 persons of whom 14 were elected by the trained nurses and trained midwives of the country irrespective of race.

Under the new Bill the Council will consist of 31 Europeans of whom 15 are to be elected by registered nurses and midwives who are white persons. The Council is to keep separate registers and rolls of white, Coloured and Native nurses, midwives, auxiliary nurses and auxiliary midwives, and distinct bodies are to be prescribed for white persons, coloured persons and Natives. The Council will now not only prescribe the syllabus and authorise training establishments for trained nurses and midwives, and register others, but it will also prescribe the syllabus and authorise training establishments for auxiliary nurses and midwives and enrol them, thus taking over the work which has hitherto been done by Provincial authorities and, in some cases, local authorities.

ADVISORY BOARDS.

Under the contemplated Bill there will be set up an Advisory Board for coloured persons composed of 5 members, and an Advisory Board for Natives composed of 9 members to advise upon such matters as may be referred to them by the Council or which they may wish to refer to the Council.

S.A. NURSING ASSOCIATION.

Under the old Act the Association consisted of all practising or registered or qualified to be registered trained nurses and midwives, irrespective of race.

The governing body was a Board consisting of 10 members elected by the members of the Association irrespective of race.

Under the new Bill it is proposed that there shall be separate branches for white persons, coloured persons and Natives.

The Board will be elected by the members of the Association who are white persons and there is provision made for Advisory Committees for coloured persons and Natives.

Finally, under Section 49 (perhaps the most important of all), any persons

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who cause or permit any white person who is registered under Section 14 or enrolled under Section 15 to be employed under the control of supervision of any person who is not a white person, in any hospital or similar institution or in any training school, shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £200.

COMMENT.

Under the new proposals -

1. The entire control of syllabus, conditions of training and discipline of the whole body of nurses and midwives in the Union is placed in the hands of white persons. The Advisory bodies have no powers whatsoever and their advice need not be followed. It is true that hitherto only white persons have been elected to the Council, but they were elected by the entire membership of the Association. The new Act, if passed, will be a fresh grievous affront to human dignity in respect to both the Coloured and Native communities.
2. It is noteworthy that "apartheid" is here extended to the Coloured as well as the Native members of the profession. Is this the shadow of things to come?
3. Section 49 would appear not only to prohibit a non-white sister being appointed over a white staff nurse, but also the appointment of non-white interns or other medical officers where there are white staff nurses or sisters. If this interpretation is correct there would be no hospital in the Union where a non-white could serve as intern and thus no non-white could qualify as a doctor. "Control or supervision" may not, however, mean what they appear to mean.

Altogether this contemplated piece of legislation is such as to bring shame and dishonour to a noble profession, which will cause bitter comment throughout the civilised world.

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15th May, 1957.

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**RECORDS RELATING TO THE 'TREASON TRIAL' (REGINA vs F. ADAMS AND OTHERS ON CHARGE OF HIGH TREASON, ETC.), 1956 1961**

**TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961**

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