

ON ASPECTS OF THE PASS LAWS.

IS A WORK CONTRACT NECESSARY BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE, AS MUCH TO SAFEGUARD THE CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, TERM OF WORK, PAY, HOLIDAYS, ETC., OF THE EMPLOYEE AS TO GUARANTEE THE EMPLOYER SOME CONTINUITY OF LABOUR.

A pass is not a labour contract, and does not serve that purpose. Under present conditions, the pass becomes a means of preventing the worker from changing his employment to suit himself, or better his conditions.

Conditions governing employment generally (such as maximum hours for all industries, a basic minimum wage, etc.) should be laid down by the laws of the land - this does not require a separate labour contract between employer and employee. Conditions in specific industries should be made by agreement between employers and workers' organisations (trade unions). Professional workers sometimes enter into a contract with a particular employer (usually when an employer does not wish to lose the services of a valuable worker) but this does not require a general labour contract, nor does it mean such a contract must be carried on the person of the employee.

There are no conditions of work which cannot be covered by either (1) laws applicable to all - not requiring separate labour contract; (2) agreement between trade unions and employers - not requiring individual labour contracts; (3) personal agreement between employer and individual worker - not requiring compulsory labour contracts.

SHOULD AN IDENTIFICATION CARD BEARING CERTAIN BASIC PARTICULARS BE CARRIED BY EVERY CITIZEN, REGARDLESS OF RACE OR COLOUR.

There are sound arguments to back this. A simple identification card bearing such particulars as name, age, address and a registration number (but not, of course, race) which would be produced when any citizen was registering a birth or death, wished to travel from the country, vote, etc. could simplify government administration.

However, the important point to emphasise is that in the context of South African conditions any form of compulsory identification card is repugnant. The first requirement is that all forms of passes must be completely abolished. If, at a later stage, by democratic decision of a government elected by all citizens, it is decided to issue identification cards, that is an entirely different matter. It can come later if the people want it. If compromise is reached on this issue, even with the best intentions, the card will still be another form of the hated pass. There can be no deviation from the straightforward demand to abolish all passes, all compulsory cards in all forms.

CAN A PASS OF ANY TYPE PROTECT THE BEARERthis is the argument usually produced on the issue of passes for women. A pass serves as identification if someone comes from country to town and is lost, run over, killed; assists mothers in tracing lost sons, wives in tracing husbands, and so on.

A pass does not serve these purposes, is not intended to serve them, never has served them. It would be interesting to compare statistics: a) the number of lost or injured Africans whose families have been enabled to trace them through the pass with b) the number arrested for pass offences. This argument does not bear any real consideration. Arguments regarding an identification card have been dealt with above. It must always be borne in mind that whatever the

authorities have stated to the contrary, passes are NOT for the benefit of the people and have never operated for their benefit in any way. They are hated and despised. They are the means of keeping the people in subjection.

CONCLUSION:

There can be no compromise on the issue that all passes must be abolished. Thereafter, and only thereafter, can proper consideration be given to proposals for identity cards etc.

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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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