

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

DEPORTATION OF AFRICANS.

In order to avoid a possible confusion of two different issues, I have considered it necessary to draw a distinction between those persons, on the one hand, who have been excluded from their homes and home-districts and confined to certain specified areas by government order, and those on the other, who are dealt with daily in terms of influx control regulations and are removed from their families and rendered homeless.

While it is the former with whom we are concerned, it is desirable to point out that the plight of the latter can be, and very often is, very much worse than of those who are included within the definition of the term deported, for, while the government does pretend to provide for the deportees proper, they are evicted from their homes and left to their own resources: to find a domicile for themselves and, failing which, to become fugitives from the law, like the case of a Klerksdorp man who was thrown out of his home by the local authority and has at this moment no home anywhere in South Africa, or to sell themselves and their families to the farmers, although even this does not settle the ultimate question as to their domicile, but leaves it **unresolved.**

According to information received from the Native Affairs Department, there have been 98 deportations in the last 22 years and 37 in the last 5, giving the average annual deportations for the last five years as being between 7 and 8 persons and between 3 and 4 persons for the preceding 17 years. This increase may either be due to increasing resistance to government measures or to an increase in the government's restrictive and compulsive legislation, **or to both.**

The deportations are ordered in terms of the Native Administration Act of 1927 and of sections 10 of the old and 29 of the new Urban Areas Act. And among the persons who have been dealt with are trade union leaders, chiefs and tribesmen and political leaders deported from both rural and urban areas.

The general reason given for the deportations is "that they (the deportees) endanger tribal stability by refusing to contribute to tribal levies or by trying to depose the chief. By and large, causing unrest in the life of the community". The following are the reasons given for the deportation of some of the individuals:

- (a) He was antagonistic to authority, opposed government laws (Bantu Education Act of 1953), collaborated with agitators and took part in unlawful meetings.
- (b) For conduct detrimental to law and order.
- (c) For inciting people to violence during the boycott of schools, buses, taxis; sowing discord among various sections of the community and encouraging illegal civic guard organizations.

There are no internment camps in the sense of enclosures with large aggregations of people, consequently the deportees are scattered throughout the country, the purpose being apparently to avoid having like-minded deportees capable of plotting further against law and order, together.

Nor are the deportees given an opportunity, on deportation, of collecting their personal effects or giving instructions to their families regarding the management of their homes. The modus operandi is to confront them with a deportation order and to escort them to an awaiting lorry. Apparently after the deportees have been safely deposited in their new "homes", not much care or thought is bestowed upon them, for in 1956, the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Native Affairs admitted, in reply to a question by a press reporter, that the records of the Department went back to 1927 and it was therefore difficult to know the exact number of deportees.

However, the Department was writing to all the Chief Native Commissioners and requesting them for information about the deportees in their districts.

Upon arrival at their destination, the deportees are offered accommodation, sometimes as distant as fifteen miles from any other human beings and only see people when a policeman arrives or cycles pass to ascertain whether or not they are still in occupation of their huts. Normally they live in complete isolation and are precluded from receiving friends. In one instance of which I am aware, a man who was employed in the civil service was dismissed summarily from work because he was seen with a deportee in his car. While in a few instances accommodation is provided for a family, often the accommodation made available is no more than a single-roomed closet or an old disused cowshed.

For the means of livelihood the deportees are offered employment at monthly wages ranging from £4 to £6 as wood-choppers or rangers. According to information from the Native Affairs Department, after the Trunchdale disclosures in 1956, it was decided to pay those deportees who were employed at a monthly allowance of £2. The work offered did not take into account the fact that the deportee may never have done heavy manual work. About the quantity or quality of the fare provided, no information is available; however, we have correspondence from a deportee complaining that he was starving and requesting us to make representation on his behalf to the Department for increased food. An incident which might possibly give an insight into the prevailing situation was that of a wealthy chief who was charged with the theft of a bag of grapes from a trust farm to which he was confined.

When the deportees are removed from their homes, no thought is given to their families except in very rare cases in which the wives and children are allowed to follow the head of the family. No provision is made for them and they are left to fend for themselves or to be taken care of by friends.

It does appear that owing to the plenary powers which the legislature has given to the Minister of Native Affairs and Local Authorities, and to the increasing resistance to restrictive and compulsive government measures, we can expect to witness an increase in the number of deportations. In view of this, it seems reasonable to accept the view that by their removal from home, the deportees have already been adequately punished and that any additional **hardship** to which they are subjected, is unnecessary and without justification, either on moral or on legal grounds. Therefore, an **amelioration** of the conditions should be sought. I suggest the following ways in which this could be done:-

- (a) That all the cases should be reviewed annually as a matter of routine and a report tabled before Parliament;
- (b) that the deportees should be given time, on deportation, to collect their personal effects and to give instruction regarding the care of their affairs, and that if it is feared that delay might cause trouble, to arrange for their effects to be sent to them as soon as possible;

(c) That/....3

- (c) that they should not be denied communication with the outside world by keeping visitors away from them;
- (d) that adequate accommodation should be provided, and, where they desire it, for their families also;
- (e) that where the families live away from the deportees, they should be given free rail warrants periodically, to enable them to visit the deportees;
- (f) that they be assured of a reasonable standard of living,
- (g) that the government appoint a special officer to meet the deportees regularly and discuss their personal problems with them.

JOHANNESBURG.

June, 1957.

W. B. NGAKANE,
FIELD OFFICER.

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DEPORTATION OF AFRICANS.

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