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THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHINESE : PRESENT POSITION

Population: about : 6,000 - 8,000

Johannesburg	: 2,000	also East Rand
Port Elizabeth	: 1,500	West Rand
Cape Town	: 100	East London
Durban	: 100	etc.
Kimberley	: 260	
Pretoria	: 800	

History : Transvaal Native Labour Commission recommended importation of Chinese labourers.

1904 - 1905 : 45,000 Chinese labourers on Rand Mines
Criminal element
"Rondepoort panics".

1910 : Repatriated.

Legislation to curb and finally prevent immigration: present population are descendants of Chinese who immigrated into the Colonies and the S.A.S. as well as a few who entered after Union (mostly wives and children of those already settled here). 80% were born here.

1962 : Minister of the Interior said they would be treated as a separate group under Group Areas and Population Registration Acts.

There has been speculation that they would appeal to be reclassified as White, but Officials of Departments of Interior and Community Development have denied any knowledge of an appeal (Pretoria News: 1/9/65).

25.9.65 Dr. Verwoerd said if Chinese were given White status it would be difficult to deny it to Indians and Coloureds. Japanese were not a large, permanent community and so posed no "threat".

Present Position

Occupations: ± 60% are in professional occupations; many are clerks, typists and secretaries; some own shops and small businesses;

± 50% of boys who leave the Port Elizabeth Chinese High School go to University; the rest train as white collar workers. (Chronicle 5/9/65).

Durban's Chinese community has a very high proportion of University graduates; most of the most promising go abroad to follow professions like medicine, science and accountancy. In Kimberley, the Chinese are doctors, shopkeepers, businessmen and engineers. One is employed by the municipality as an engineer. (Sunday Chronicle 5/9/65).

Education: Some towns have Chinese schools (e.g. Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. Some Cape Town Chinese attend private White High Schools.) In Johannesburg many children go to private Roman Catholic Schools. There is a Government subsidised Chinese School in Market Street. 75% of its Enriculants go to the University. There are about 100 Chinese students at Wit., 10 at U.C.T. Where Chinese schools exist they will remain under the Provinces. Port Elizabeth has one R.C., one C of S Chinese school. Pretoria has a Chinese school, run by the Chinese community. In Natal most children attend private schools. In the Transvaal State and private schools. They are barred from White State Schools.

Kliptown has R.C. School with 80 to 90 Children

Property: In the Transvaal, they have not been allowed to buy property since 1919. In other provinces the same restriction has applied since 1951 (passing of Group Areas Act). Most Johannesburg Chinese live in poorer suburbs like Doornfontein, Bertrams, Fordsburg, as they need a permit to live in a White Area and it is difficult for such a permit to be obtained for the better class suburbs. This also means they cannot trade in the more fashionable business areas.

Group Areas:

- (i) Johannesburg. A group area for the Chinese will be proclaimed shortly. The location has not been revealed.
- (ii) Pretoria. City Council intends establishing a Chinese township north of Laudium. Minister of Community Development instructed City Council to move Chinese within 18 Months; priority is to be given to those living and trading in Lady Selborne and Prinsloo Street, which have been declared White Areas. The Chinese Committee (representing the Chinese Community) is to object to the move and will ask to be treated in same way as Japanese (Pretoria News 14/9/65). Since they are classified as Asiatics the Pretoria Chinese will probably be allowed to trade in the Asiatic Bazaar only.
- (iii) Port Elizabeth. A Chinese group area was proclaimed about eight miles from town in a middle-class White area in 1961.
- (iv) Cape Town. A Chinese spokesman says the community is too small for a separate entity (Burger 16.9.65) Socially mix freely with Whites.
- (v) Kimberley; A Group Area has been proclaimed.
- (vi) Benoni. Chinese on East Rand must eventually have own group area.
Chinese Consul-General (Taiwan) in Johannesburg.

Legal Status:

Under Immorality Act : non-White.
Under Group Areas : Coloured (sub Section Chinese.)
Population Registration : Asiatic.
Identity Cards : Chinese
Public amenities : Use White buses, hotels, cinemas, restaurants, etc. (only consul-general's staff may use Pretoria buses.) Has this changed? Japanese consula incident.
Frequently mistaken for Japanese in public.
Do not have the Franchise.

An increasing number of Chinese are emigrating because of job reservation, group areas etc.

Public Relations: "A very peace-loving Community." (de Klerk)
"Highly developed - by comparison they have more university graduates than any other group." (Marais Steyn).

Generous : donations to Johannesburg General Hospital bigger than other groups. Hospitable.

Patient, polite, industrious, cultured, law-abiding, are terms often used to describe them.

Very honest.

Divorce is very rare. Juvenile delinquency is non-existent. Dress and habits of younger people almost completely Westernised. They usually speak and write to each other in English. (The most usual Chinese language is Cantonese in Transvaal, in Fort Elizabeth and East London Nanyangese).

Religion : Most youngsters are Christian and many parents are becoming converted. The Roman Catholic Church has 800 Chinese adherents in Johannesburg; 1500 in country (June 1964.) It is gaining adherents steadily.

Notes:

- 1) The anomaly of classifying Japanese as White and Chinese as non-White.
- 2) Some families who will have to move have lived in their present areas for + 50 years.
- 3) Have they been consulted ?
- 4) Do their neighbours want them to move ?
- 5) Is it necessary for group areas to be established for them ?
- 6) What will their future be in framework of separate development; what representation ? Will they fall under Department of Coloured Affairs ? Indian Affairs ? Will Government establish Department of Asiatic Affairs for Indians, Chinese and Malays.
- 7) Will traders in Johannesburg be able to retain their present businesses ? If so, will group area be conveniently near ? Schools ? Hospitals ?
- 8) Will they be able to own the land and buy houses in proposed group areas?
- 9) Will they lose their customary right to use White buses, hotels, White Universities ?
- 10) What are the possible implications for group relations ?

Comments:

Impracticable to have separate development for 6 to 8 thousand people. Uncertainty about the future, racial slights and humiliation (incident at Turffontein), emigration - doctors, architects who could have been an asset to South Africa.

Uncertainty about future of trade, businesses, homes. No evidence that White neighbours want them to move. An architect applied for permit to live in Westdene - refused - emigrated. No evidence that Chinese want a group area - they do not live in blocs.

Families look after aged etc. - very little need for welfare work.

Newclare cemetery has Chinese section - great respect for the dead. An example of strong attachment to Chinese culture.

No evidence of anti-White or anti-Black prejudice. Enjoy good relations with those who know them. Often it is only the ignorant who show prejudice. Feeling of frustration, of not being wanted, is growing.

Militantly anti-communist.

Loyal to South Africa. When Nationalist China voted against South Africa, our Chinese repudiated it. The South African Chinese have taken the best in Western culture and wedded it to the best in their own ancient culture to become an industrious, patient, thoughtful community. The time, expense uncertainty, humiliation and suffering in imposing separate development on Chinese is not justified.

Swanepoel. South African Trade Commissioner in Hong Kong publicly said South African Chinese were not discriminated against. Press cartoons, references to Chinaman (R.D.M.) hurt badly.

Future:

- 1) Fear and uncertainty - economic. Fear that as group thinking is encouraged they will come under pressure from both White and non-White sides. Some evidence of this among Port Elizabeth Coloureds? Why should Chinese trade among Coloureds? Uncertainty that they can continue with their businesses, professions.
- 2) Social: fear of "ghetto" mentality.
- 3) Religion: Increasingly Christian, especially Roman Catholic. Unlikely to be embittered by treatment from "Christian" Government.
- 4) Way of life: Increasingly Westernised, retaining many good aspects of Chinese culture.
- 5) Emigrations: desire growing, but Canada about the only outlet. Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore overpopulated.
- 6) Want existing trading and social rights to be maintained.
- 7) Want to continue to be allowed to enter "White" Universities and private schools.

Peter Randall. October, 1965.

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