

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY PATRICK LEWIS, CHAIRMAN
OF THE NON-EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE
JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL TO STATEMENT REGARDING
THE LIVING AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE BANTU
POPULATION IN JOHANNESBURG.

JOHANNESBURG - "CITY OF GOLD".

Johannesburg is the largest City in South Africa, being 90 sq. miles in extent and has a population of over 1,000,000 people. It is situated approximately 400 miles from the coast, is at an altitude of 5,500 feet, is the centre of the South African gold mining industry and during the last 25 years has become a large industrial centre. The area where the oldest gold mines are situated is collectively referred to as the Witwatersrand and is the home of 734,505 Whites, being 24% of the total White population in South Africa and the Black population is 1,240,807, this representing 11½% of the total Black population but 38% of the Black population in urban areas.

EARLY HISTORY.

To understand what has happened in Johannesburg it is necessary to go back in South African history. It was in 1652 that the Dutch-East-India Company established a station on the southern tip of Africa in order that their ships sailing between Holland and the Dutch-East-Indies should be able to get fresh supplies. The point at which they landed is now the City of Cape Town. The native peoples that were living in that area at that time were the Hottentots and Bushmen - people of a light brown colour. They were few in number and the country was largely uninhabited except by large herds of game.

While the Dutch were settling at the southern tip, the northern portion of what is now South Africa was being entered by black people who were moving south from Central Africa to seek new grazing for their cattle and to escape from tribal warfare in the north. At a later stage when the Settlement established by the Dutch began to expand towards the north-east, the White and Black met. From time to time agreements were made regarding boundaries, within which the groups agreed to contain themselves. Parts of the areas allocated to the Blacks, at that time, are still inhabited by the Black people, and these, plus other areas which have been allocated, are usually referred to as "Bantu Reserves".

THE GREAT TREK.

In the 1830's a movement to open the areas now known as the Orange Free State and the Transvaal took place. Most of these people lived on large farms scattered over the territory.

THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD AND DIAMONDS.

The real expansion of the hinterland only took place after the discovery of diamonds near Kimberley in 1874 and the subsequent discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1886. At first it was not realised what wealth lay in the rock below the surface, nor in the early days was it visualised that techniques would be developed whereby it would be possible to mine for gold at a depth of over 11,000 feet below the surface. The total value of gold produced, since the opening of the mines, has amounted to £5,212 million.

THE BANTU IN THE EARLY DAYS OF WHITE SETTLEMENT.

The Bantu population were a pastoral people used to their primitive methods of agriculture. At first they did not wish to seek employment with the White man and in the early days the farmers in the Province of Natal found it necessary to recruit Indian labour from India for the development of their sugar plantations because of the shortage of local labour. Subsequently, for work on the Gold Mines, Chinese labourers were brought to South Africa but at the end of their contracts they were repatriated to China. When the Bantu did seek employment in the White areas, it was usual for the Bantu male to come to the White man's City, to work for a period, return to his family who continued to live in the reserves and, when his money gave out, he would again return to work for a period.

JOHANNESBURG POPULATION FIGURES AND RATIO OF MALES TO FEMALES.

At the close of the last century, the Bantu population of the City of Johannesburg was approximately 60,000, the ratio being twelve males to every female. Over the years that ratio changed and by 1927 the population had doubled and the proportion was now six males to every female. Today, the male and female populations are almost evenly balanced and of the total Bantu population in Johannesburg of 614,000, 36% are children under the age of 18. What an upheaval this has been for a people used to a primitive rural economy to be pitchforked into a modern industrial area!

THE MOVE TO THE CITIES.

What caused the move to the Cities? In the reserves and rural areas it had been extremely difficult for families to eke out a living on the ground allocated to them, partly because of their primitive methods of agriculture. Another of the difficulties has been that the Bantu have measured their wealth in cattle which has meant that the ground operated by them has been overstocked and overgrazed. In the Bantu society it was the duty of the women to till the fields and produce the food.

There was usually a strict tribal pattern of behaviour where the Chief's work was Law, where the witch-doctor and the medicine man had a great influence and where Western concepts of democracy were unknown. It was also considered necessary for a young man to work for a period on the Mines to show his manhood and also to provide him with sufficient money to purchase cattle, the payment of the customary marriage gift to the family of the bride. Those who worked in the City brought home tales of wonders of the "City of Gold" and other were induced to follow.

HOUSING OF THE BANTU IN THE CITIES.

Of the total Bantu population of 10,000,000 in South Africa, approximately one-third live in the White man's cities, one-third are employed on farms and approximately one-third live in the Bantu Reserves. In South Africa an obligation is placed on the Local Authorities to allocate portion of their Municipal areas for the housing of the Bantu people working in the Cities and a further obligation is placed on the City to provide them with housing. Whilst, at one time, the accommodation needed was chiefly for the male population, it was mainly Hostels that were built, but as the womenfolk and children began to move in, it was houses that were required. Domestic servants are usually provided with accommodation in separate quarters in the grounds of their employer's home. Domestic servants in apartments are usually housed in quarters on the roof of the apartment block. Those engaged in the Gold Mining Industry are provided with accommodation on the Mines, in what are usually called Compounds. Often employers of large numbers of Bantu do the same thing.

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LIMITATION OF MOVEMENT TO THE CITIES.

In the history of every industrialized country there have been periods when unsophisticated peasant populations have been drawn to urban centres by the offer of cash wages, which appear deceptively high to those accustomed to living in a subsistence economy. The appalling poverty and the dreadful slums (some of which persist to the present day) which accompanied the Industrial Revolution in Europe are examples of what can happen when economic pressures on a laissez faire basis are the sole determination of population movement. The steps taken in South Africa to avoid these evils are based on what is termed "Influx Control" which seeks to restrict the number of non-urban work seekers to those for whom the work opportunity and suitable housing accommodation are reasonably available.

It should be remembered that the wages paid and the amenities offered in a city such as Johannesburg attract workers from as far afield as Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Angola and Mocambique. Of the Bantu labour force employed by the Mining Industry in South Africa 262,000 are from territories outside South Africa. It is estimated that a total of about 1 million Bantu in South Africa are from the territories outside South Africa.

THE BUILDING OF HOMES.

The City of Johannesburg started on housing schemes in a small way in the 1920's and this was stepped up in the 1930's when some 6,000 houses were built in an area called Orlando. The cost of building these 6,000 houses varied from £95 for the two-roomed house of 400 square feet to £650 for the roomy four-roomed house. At that time, the houses were built by White artisans.

LARGE INFLUX IN THE WAR YEARS.

Between 1939 and 1945 the whole of South Africa's economy was centered on the War effort, and materials and labour were not available for the housing of this Bantu population which was moving in from the Reserves and during this time the influx control was relaxed. . It was a period of vast industrial expansion when work traditionally done by White labour

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was, because of the compulsion to get things done, now entrusted to Bantu labour and employers were surprised at the adaptability of the workers. The Bantu males acquired skills in industry and instead of returning to their families in the Reserves they stayed in the towns and the families came to join their menfolk, so now it was not Hostel accommodation that was required but houses. This huge influx of people overcrowded the existing townships and squatter camps developed where people took over a piece of ground and erected shacks, often made of hessian or cardboard or packing cases or old corrugated iron. At one time these uncontrolled squatter camps became a menace to public health as there were no proper sanitary or water facilities. The position was ameliorated by settling the people on sites of 20 ft. x 20 ft. and providing them with communal water, ablution and sanitary facilities. They were also assisted with materials with which to build their shacks and a settlement known as Shantytown resulted.

In 1946 and 1947 there were two major slum squatter camp movements which were brought under control in the same way and there was established a further settlement of 9,000 families in an area known as the Moroka emergency camp.

PROBLEM OF SERVICES.

The City of Johannesburg and other cities throughout South Africa were faced with the task of providing, not only houses, but all the other ancillary services such as sewage disposal, works, water, electricity and roads and very often the cost of providing services was as great as the cost of erecting the dwelling. Because of the poverty of the people the rents they could afford to pay were limited.

BANTU SERVICES LEVY AND SITE-AND-SERVICE SCHEMES.

The Central Government agreed that the burden placed on the cities was too great and decided to shift the responsibility partly to the shoulders of the employers and legislation was passed making the employers in the cities responsible for paying a levy of 2/6 (later increased to 3/-) per week for every male Bantu employed for whom they did not provide accommodation. In the City of Johannesburg this levy amounted to approximately £750,000 per annum and was a grant to the City towards the costs of providing services.

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Thus in calculating the rentals to be charged no recovery had to be made for these services financed from the Services Levy. Over a period of nine years the contributions thus paid by the employers of Johannesburg to the Services Levy has amounted to £5½ million. Even with the assistance of the funds made available from the Services Levy it was realised that it would take many years to catch up on the backlog of housing and a scheme was inaugurated called the Site-and-Service Scheme in which townships were laid out under proper town planning methods wherein provision was made for school sites, parks, hospitals, creches, churches, playing fields, trading sites and civic centres. Residential plots of 40 feet frontage by 70 feet depth were laid out. Water was laid on and sanitary services installed and the people living in the squatter camps were allocated these sites on which they erected their temporary dwellings, with the idea that the City would build a permanent house on their sites as soon as was possible. In all 35,000 of these plots were laid out. It is pleasing to report that the Council has built on nearly all of these plots and the temporary dwellings have been demolished.

FINANCING OF BUILDING OF HOUSES BY BANTU LABOUR.

A Government agency called the Bantu Housing Board has, from funds allocated by Parliament, made funds available to the Local Authorities for building houses. The problem has always been to keep the rents within the capacity of the tenants to pay. The Government passed an Act called the Bantu Building Workers' Act, which enabled the Council to develop its own Housing Division and to train teams of Bantu workers to build houses for their own people. The training of these people has not only provided the Bantu with employment but has enabled former labourers to acquire skills as carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers and painters. By this method it was possible to reduce the cost of building a house to approximately 7/- per square foot, possibly the lowest building cost in the world. The houses built are of simple design. They have a concrete foundation, brick walls, steel windows and doors and corrugated asbestos roofs. A house of approximately 600 square feet costs £190 to build. When the houses are built two fruit trees are supplied to each home and to date 42,000 have been planted. The rentals payable vary from 17/4d in the old sub-economic schemes to £2.15.0 for the standard house of 600 square feet.

:- ASSISTANCE ...

ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOLD MINING COMPANIES.

In order to speed up the clearance of the slums in Moroka and Shantytown certain of the Gold Mining Companies in Johannesburg agreed to advance the City the sum of £3,000,000. With the assistance of these funds in one year alone the City was able to build over 10,000 of these houses. At one stage 300 houses were being completed every week. It is very pleasing to report that the slums of Moroka and Shantytown no longer exist.

NUMBER OF HOUSES BUILT.

The present position is that the City has now erected over 48,000 houses and in addition 6,400 families have built their own homes on sites leased from the Council. Further accommodation has been provided by a Government agency called the Bantu Resettlement Board and they have built 16,500 houses. In addition some 20,000 men are accommodated in Hostels built by the City Council.

It is estimated that a further 18,000 homes are required to meet the present backlog and that in the future 2,000 homes will be required each year for the normal expansion in population. It is hoped that within the next five years all the population will be adequately housed.

How do these people get to and from work? What sort of life do they lead? What sort of place is it that these people live in? What facilities are available to them.

TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS.

The Township of Orlando, to which reference has been made, is approximately ten miles to the South-West of the City. The farthest point in the Township being seventeen miles from the city centre. The Government-owned South African Railways have spent approximately £7 million on the provision of an electric train service, which straddles the area in which these Native Townships are situated. The Townships cover an area of twenty-five square miles. The train fares payable vary from approximately 17/- to 25/- per month for a worker's season ticket. While the trains are still overcrowded it is hoped that as more rolling stock becomes available the facilities will become adequate. The trains carry over 100,000 workers to and from the City each day.

:- TRADING ...

TRADING RIGHTS IN BANTU AREAS.

In the areas which are allocated as residential areas for the Bantu the trading rights are reserved to them so that in all these areas all the shopkeepers, traders, garage owners and so on are Bantu people. In view of the different tribes to which the people belong the Government policy is that, in so far as possible, the people of one language group should live together in order to facilitate schooling where initial teaching is done in the mother tongue. This is referred to, in South Africa, as Ethnic Grouping.

DIFFERENT TRADITION PERIOD.

This large influx of primitive people to the Cities has brought with it many problems. In the Reserves the people conformed to a pattern of behaviour which had been handed down from generation to generation. Age was venerated, tribal taboos were strong, marriage customs were strictly observed. When these people flooded into the Cities most of that was left behind and, at this stage, a new pattern has not been evolved to replace the old. In the Reserves they used to till the fields, the sun was their clock and their food came with the different seasons of the year. As stated previously the number of cattle they owned was the measure of their wealth and status in the tribe. In the Cities all this was gone. It was a new thing to the women to stay in the house and no longer go out to till the fields. The men were not accustomed to having weekly wages and sharing them with their womenfolk. In the Reserves the children would have herded the cattle - in the Cities there were no cattle to herd. Cattle play a large part in their marriage customs and establish a kinship between the families of the bride and groom - in the Cities this was no longer possible.

In order to supplement the earnings of the men, the women, as they became accustomed to city life, undertook such duties as domestic servants or daily washer-woman. Later, as they became more accustomed to the Cities, they undertook work in the factories. This meant leaving the children alone at home, perhaps at best in the care of an aged relative. Away from tribal authority the strict observance of tribal customs disappeared and one of the

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unfortunate results of the migratory system where the men were away from their families, was to establish a pattern of moral laxity and illegitimate unions, which could not have taken place if the old tribal sanctions had still been in force.

THE CITY'S SOCIAL WELFARE EFFORTS.

The City of Johannesburg faced with this problem has attempted to help these people to re-adjust themselves to the circumstances in which they have been placed. Nursery schools have been built to take care of children while their mothers are at work, organisations of Bantu women have formed their own associations to supplement what the Council has done in this regard. The City Council has erected clinics to supplement the hospital services provided by the Transvaal Province. Trained nurses visit the families in their homes and maternity nurses are available when needed. Recreation fields have been built, sports organisers have been engaged and to day the game of football has become very popular, there being over seventy-one soccer fields in the Townships. But, first of all, these people have had to be taught to play these games, which were practically unknown in the Reserves from which they came. In order to provide for the children, parks with playing equipment have been built and have been so planned that there is one within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of every home. A large swimming bath has been built and swimming lessons are given to school children.

SCHOOLING.

The Bantu Education Department is responsible for schooling. There are now ninety-six schools in the area with a total enrolment of approximately 58,000 children. It is estimated that there are at least a further 40,000 children, of school age, out of school and the building of a further twenty-four new schools is in progress. Unfortunately, most of these children do not stay at school long enough to get more than a rudimentary education. The City Council has conducted a Vocational Training School where youths are trained as carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers and tailors and shortly an electrical wiring course will be taught.

:- ADMINISTRATION ...

ADMINISTRATION OF TOWNSHIPS.

The administration of the Townships falls under the control of the Non-European Affairs Department of the Council. The staff of the Department consists of approximately 350 Whites and 1,000 Bantu. In so far as is possible it is the policy of the Council to give increased responsibility to the Bantu. In the Townships, Advisory Boards are elected, consisting of six members, four of whom are elected by the people, two are nominated by the Council. These Boards act in an advisory capacity to the Department. It is hoped that in the near future it will be possible to increase the powers of these Boards and give them increasing administrative functions.

CONCLUSION.

This review of what has been done in the City of Johannesburg will give some idea of the complexity of the situation with which the Cities in South Africa are faced. It is the start of an Industrial Revolution - the start of an upheaval in the lives of a primitive people, the majority of whom were, before the White man came to South Africa, constantly engaged in bloody tribal warfare; a people who had no written language; who were in mortal fear of the whims of the witch-doctor. In the short period, varying in some cases from periods of some hundreds of years to a shorter period of fifty years, have been asked to adjust themselves to a modern Western society. In a city such as Johannesburg no longer is the bulk of the population made up of completely unsophisticated, uneducated, simple labourers. We have, today, the second and, in many cases, the third generations of persons who have known no other home than Johannesburg; who have spent their entire working life in full-time industrial and commercial employment in the City and who are integrated into Urban conditions of living. There are others again to whom the whole environment is new. In giving this review of what has been done one does so, not with the sense of complacency, but with a view to indicating how the City of Johannesburg has faced up to the task assigned to it with vigour and goodwill towards the Bantu people who live within its boundaries. There is much more to be done and in the years ahead it is hoped to continue the good progress that has been made in recent years.

Collection Number: A1132

Collection Name: Patrick LEWIS Papers, 1949-1987

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Location: Johannesburg

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