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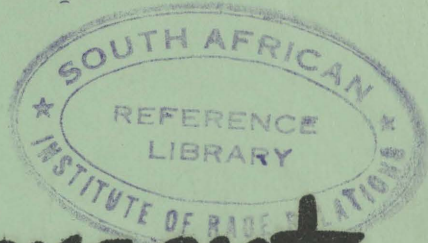
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**Supplement**

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# 'The Emergent African Middle Class'

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## THE EMERGENT AFRICAN MIDDLE CLASS

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Recently there has been much talk about the emergence of an African middle class. Various groups have read all sorts of meanings into this development. Government spokesmen hold up the emergence of an African middle class as a demonstration of how beneficial apartheid has been to the African by making opportunities for economic advancement available to him in his own areas. White business men see in this class a clear indication of the vast potential of the African market, and have wasted no time in wooing the African for their own ends. Those with liberal tendencies view an African middle class as a necessary link between the White man and the Black man which, by virtue of the stake it has in the economy of the country, is likely to espouse counsels of moderation and reason in our rapidly changing political landscape. To the African, it means that he is now ready for a greater share of political power and economic participation in the land of his birth.

There is no clarity, however, as to the meaning of the term "middle class", and its definition has varied according to the motives of those whom it is intended to serve. It has been held to include business men, higher professionals, white collar workers, such as teachers, clerks, nurses, ministers of religion - and even policemen! Others seek to restrict its meaning to those who live on profit and to the independent professionals. This problem of definition is by no means confined only to South Africa, as is shown by an examination of the literature on social classes in England, the United States and elsewhere. In these countries, the term "middle class" tends to include almost anyone who wears a white collar. Again here the motives have not been entirely disinterested. In the United States, for instance, social classes are incompatible with the egalitarian tenets implied in the American dream of unlimited opportunities for all, precisely because they imply limitations of opportunities for at least some sections of the population.

In South Africa, however, the fact that colour lines coincide with class has tended to blur the fundamental distinctions of class and identity of class interests as between White and Black. The "Europeans", as the dominant group, have the major share of the fruits of our economy, and maintain their position by retaining effective political power in their own hands. The "non-Europeans" (only in South Africa does a group of people become the negative of another), on the other hand, occupy the humbler areas of the economy, and have little, if any, political power. As a result, most Whites tend to view all Black people - apart from the main divisions of Indian, Coloured and African - as an undifferentiated mass without distinctions of any kind. Thus the changes that have taken place in African society are seen less as the inevitable consequences of Westernization; rather the emergent African is often looked upon as a nuisance who must be "kept in his place". Class differentiation among Africans of the kind existing among Europeans is thus unacceptable to most Whites, who can only see in the African a supply of cheap labour, and certainly regard any closer identification of the African with so-called Western values as a threat to their supremacy.

### EMERGENCE OF CLASSES AMONG AFRICANS

Social stratification, a term used by social scientists to mean "formalized inequality of rank",<sup>(1)</sup> was known in African society before the coming of the White man. Unlike Indo-European and similar exploitive societies, however, its basis - at least in the groups south of the equator - was political rather than economic. It served to maintain the cohesion of social groups by giving them a single political head (who combined religious functions) through whom the groups realized their common identity and interests.

In those Central African societies which stretch from Uganda to the Congo, classes, as defined in terms of their position in the economic structure, did exist. In this area, the pastoralists, who were conquering invaders, subjugated the agriculturalists whom they found occupying the countryside, and reduced them to the status of serfs.<sup>(2)</sup> The tribal fighting between the Lulua and the Baluba, which has been so much a part of the emergent Congo Republic, has its antecedents in this background.

The reason African societies did not have the kind of class system to which Europeans are accustomed was that there was no private ownership of the means of production. Land, the major unit of production, was available to all on a usufructuary basis. The economies of these societies produced goods for consumption and not for profit. There were no markets, and thus no exchange, except for a system of barter. Specialization of functions, except in the very limited areas of chieftaincy, medicine and smithing, formed hardly any part of the system. Classes, in the Western sense, could not, therefore, exist in such societies.

It was the coming of the White man that changed the character of African society. As the African became increasingly drawn into the White man's society, his own tribal structure tended to disintegrate in the process. White policies then, as now, were designed to ensure that the African entered the White man's service. As de Kiewiet says of Shepstone's policy ".... he believed that the Natives held too much land, which was an encouragement to idleness, that they held it in too large areas, which made them a military menace. The need of Native policy, in his view, was a reduction in the amount of land held by the Natives and a system of taxation calculated to force them more freely into the labour market."<sup>(3)</sup> In the beginning, the African became a farm labourer. Later, when the diamond mines at Kimberley and the gold mines on the Witwatersrand opened, he found himself working on these mines. The process of economic differentiation had begun.

The process, however, went further. The missionaries needed teachers and ministers to evangelize the African effectively. They opened schools, and introduced the African to the literary mysteries of the West. The first two Africans in the Cape to go through the process naturally enough became ministers of religion. Then, as now, voices were not lacking which predicted the dangers of educating the Africans for a condition of life which they would not be permitted to enjoy. In 1891, Dr. Dale,<sup>(4)</sup> who was then Superintendent General of Education in the Cape, sounded one of the first warnings. He felt that the social, political and economic implications of educating thousands of Africans and uprooting them from their tribal system would have to be answered. Labour, especially agricultural, was needed by the Whites, but would the educated

(1) Vance Packard: *The Status Seekers*. London: Longmans, 1959, p.9.

(2) K. Oberg: "The Kingdom of Ankole in Uganda" in *African political systems*. (Ed. M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard). London: Oxford, 1940, pp. 121-162.

(3) C.W. de Kiewiet: *The Imperial Factor in South Africa*. London: Cambridge, 1937, p.31.

(4) Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Native Education, 1935-36, U.G. No. 29/1936, para. 26.



African be willing to take it up? "If not", he said, "the crowding together of educated Natives, living without a trade or regular habits of daily employment, must tend to mischief and social disturbance .... Knowledge is power even to them, but it may be a power for ill." He was satisfied, however, that "while the present cautious system is pursued, no social inconvenience or practical danger can result." Dr. Dale's views are of special interest to-day, because they have come to form the basis of what is known as Bantu Education - a system of education specially tailored to suit what are conceived to be the needs of the African. Unlike the advocates of Bantu education, Dr. Dale did not consider it necessary to change the content of African education, since, in his view, the *festina lente* policy, which his department had pursued for 33 years, was safe, "unobtrusive, but slowly progressive".

For a long time afterwards, the only distinction was between "educated" and "uneducated" Africans, and the only jobs to which an educated African could aspire were teaching, preaching and clerking. After Union, a handful of Africans went overseas to take up medicine and law. In fact, teaching became a noble profession, and the teacher was honoured. Then two things happened. The Second World War gave an impetus to the growth of secondary industry in South Africa, and the African migrated in large numbers to the industrial centres to take up the jobs that were offering. Secondly, as a result of this growth of an African urban population, educational opportunities widened. There was a growth in primary school attendances, secondary education made rapid strides, and university training increased. Employment opportunities widened and with them economic differentiation. The African thus became a member of an urban industrial society. To-day, a third of the African population is in the urban areas, compared with an eighth in 1921.

#### THE WORKING CLASSES

What form did this differentiation take? First, we have the mass of African labourers on White men's farms, who, to all intents and purposes, are still at the pre-industrial stage of the South African revolution. Secondly, we have the Africans in the reserves, the majority of whom still cling to an outmoded and attenuated tribal system. Economically, they are no different from farm labourers, and form a reservoir of labour for the mines. Thirdly, we have the urban African who exemplifies most strikingly, the revolution that has taken place in African society. It is to the urban African that we have to look for the emergence of classes on the European model and for evidence of a middle class.

African urban society falls into three groups. A working class, white collar workers and an independent group of self-employed Africans. There is a large industrial proletariat, most of it unskilled, although there is an increasing proportion entering the semi-skilled and skilled occupations. There is no doubt that if our laws did not confine the African to unskilled occupations, the proportion in skilled occupations would be much higher. Furthermore, our policies ensure that African wages remain low in order to subsidize the higher wages of the Whites. Higher wages for the African would, in fact, increase the process of differentiation, and induction into skilled occupations, the pace of adaptation to a Western technological culture. It is for these reasons that the African is denied access to skilled jobs and to higher wages. The argument that higher wages must be preceded by increased productivity is merely another way of maintaining the status quo. It is not used with Whites who automatically qualify for higher wages irrespective of their level of productivity. Can anyone say that the White lift operator, who is replacing the African under the new job reservation dispensation and at a higher rate of pay, is any more productive than the African whose place he is taking?

The lower rungs of the occupational hierarchy do not comprise only an industrial proletariat, but there is a whole army of Africans employed in commerce and domestic service whose position does not differ in any significant way from that of the industrial workers.

The second group comprises those who are employed in intellectual occupations - the white collar workers. White collar workers, particularly those in teaching, the ministry and nursing, enjoy a high status in the African community because of their education. This is understandable in a literate society where education is equated with success, and, more particularly, when it is realized that to the mass of the African people education represents something worth striving for. This group has increased greatly as a result of urbanization. To-day, there are 25,000 teachers, 7,000 nurses, 200 laboratory assistants, 70 postmasters, 70 librarians and an unknown number of clerks and interpreters, salesmen, social workers and ministers of religion. These have arisen to serve the various community needs of the African people. Policemen, although not wearing white collars, fall into this group. To-day there are about 12,000 of them.

This group, too, is not without its problems, for South African policy has the effect of retarding its emergence. The main instrument that is being used is Bantu education, whose purpose, as stated by the Minister of Native Affairs (the present Prime Minister), is that the African is not to be educated above certain levels. Thus, the content of African education is being altered to keep it in line with government policy. There is instruction in African languages, which tends to limit the horizons of Africans, because the African vernaculars are not sufficiently developed to cope with the concepts of a technological culture. The status of teachers has been reduced to that of labourers. They have no security of tenure in their jobs, and their training standards are being lowered - and this at a time when all provincial departments which had been responsible for African education before the Bantu education take-over had started raising them. Apartheid has been introduced into the nursing profession, and even here one can expect a lowering of standards. The extension of Bantu education to university level must inevitably produce "Kaffir" graduates, no matter what the Government says to the contrary. By harnessing African education to the chariot of apartheid, the Government is reducing education to the status of a handmaiden to political expediency.

#### THE MIDDLE CLASS

A white collar is, however, not necessarily synonymous with middle class status. To be middle class, certain conditions must be fulfilled, and the only groups of Africans that can be said to meet these conditions in any way are those who work on their own. But even these groups do not fulfil these conditions in all respects. Perhaps the best way of looking at what is meant by the term "middle class" is to examine middle class elsewhere to see what gave them the particular character which stamps them as middle class.

Middle classes are a product of the European Renaissance. Their rise is bound up with the growth of



commerce and the emergence of modern economic society at about the beginning of the sixteenth century. What defined the middle class from other classes in the emergent capitalist system was the fact that they were men with capital, which may be defined as property in flexible form. They invested this first in commerce and later on in industry. This capital generated profits on which these groups lived. They were, therefore, men of independent means who exercised political influence to further their claims.

The growth of vast industrial corporations and cartels has had profound effects on the class structure of Western societies. We still have the upper classes consisting of the landed gentry and aristocratic families in England and of the moguls of our industrial and financial empires. To the middle classes has been added a serving middle class, comprising an army of highly salaried managers and technicians who are needed to run the affairs of these bureaucratic structures. But these are middle class in outlook only, for, however highly paid they may be, they still remain employees. For the one factor differentiating the middle classes from the ranks of labour is that they are men of independent means, and are not subject to the whims of employers.

Now let us take a look at what is called the African middle class and see if it comes up to these specifications. The African is all but excluded from profit, rent and interest which form the three main pillars of our modern capitalist economy. A fourth pillar should be added - and that is skills which can be converted to capital. It is not surprising that there are only 16,000 African business men, 100 doctors and about 50 lawyers in the country to-day, in spite of the phenomenal development of industry over the past two decades. There are no Africans in finance, banking, industry and many other investment fields, for the country's policy restricts African participation in our economic life. Having said this, let us see what classes of Africans can be regarded as middle class, the factors that have favoured their emergence, and those that have operated to retard such emergence.

The African middle class is drawn from four areas - property owners, merchants, professionals and artists. Historically, property owners were the first to emerge as a distinct group living on capital investment. In a number of urban areas, Africans were permitted to buy land on freehold. This position continued even after the passing of the Natives Land Act in 1913 and the Native Urban Areas Act 10 years later.

Even so, African land-ownership was restricted to areas outside the more lucrative business parts of the towns, and the African was prevented from acquiring land except from other Africans. This policy produced such townships as Korsten in Port Elizabeth, Sophiatown and Alexandra Township in Johannesburg, Lady Selborne and Eastwood in Pretoria and Evaton in Vereeniging, to mention a few of the bigger freehold townships in the country. A few of the smaller towns also permitted Africans freehold rights to land.

The African land owner lived on rent from premises he had built up. Although many of them did well for themselves, the majority barely managed to pay off the bonds on their properties. There were never many African property owners in the country. It is doubtful if the figure ever exceeded 20,000. Partly as a result of the movement of Africans into urban areas, partly because of lack of capital on the part of landlords and partly because of negligence on the part of the authorities in exercising control, many of these townships degenerated into slums.

In these slums, the authorities found a ready-made excuse for depriving the Africans of the right to own land. The removal of Sophiatown is a case in point. It was not merely concern for Africans living under slum conditions that led to the clearing of Sophiatown: it was largely the fact that land ownership is contrary to the government policy which states that Africans are not permanent inhabitants of urban areas, but temporary labourers from Bantu areas. To-day, only Alexandra, in Johannesburg, and Evaton, in Vereeniging, remain freehold areas for Africans in the cities. Lady Selborne in Pretoria is on its way out.

Thus, the policy of excluding the African from rent has been all but completed. To-day, the African can only hope to occupy a matchbox house, or, if he has the money, put up his own, in one of the municipal dormitory townships to which he can never lay claim, since he is in perpetual leasehold. He cannot use land to generate capital, for leasehold tenure has cut him off from this source of capital. In the White farming areas, he could never own land in any case; while, in the reserves, the African usufructuary system of land tenure has been employed to prevent the African from owning land and, hence, from evolving a middle-class farming community.

Let me now turn to the African who has entered commerce on his own account. This is a rapidly expanding group, and certainly the most important to enter private enterprise. In 1946/47, there were 761 African-owned retail outlets in the Union and one wholesaler. These figures had increased to 1,135 and 21 respectively in 1952. To-day, the number of retail outlets is estimated at 16,000. By comparison, White traders accounted for 26,373 retail outlets out of a total of 34,817, and for 4,575 wholesale establishments out of a total of 4,904 in 1952. The balance was held by Asiatics.<sup>(5)</sup> Thus, in relation to a comparable group of White traders, the African's share of commerce is very small. It is not only small in terms of absolute numbers of establishments but also in terms of capital investments and turnover, and covers a much more restricted field of operation than White or Asiatic enterprise.

From these figures, it is clear that the growth of African commerce is bound up with the growth of African urban populations which is attributable, as we have shown, to the unprecedented pace of industrial development following on the Second World War. In recent years, the vast rehousing schemes in our cities have stepped up the development of African commerce. Since these housing schemes are always miles outside the shopping areas of the cities, such services have had to be provided in them. Thirdly, government policy, by insisting that Africans serve their own people in their own areas, has contributed to the growth of African business.

But the African business man is restricted in his investment potential by the very policy that claims to allow him to develop in his own areas. In the first place, he cannot find the capital necessary to finance his business, because he is excluded from the sources of capital. He is not allowed to own land in these townships, and can only occupy it on leasehold tenure. He thus cannot use land to raise capital, since no finance house will risk its money on an uncertain leasehold tenure. Because of low wages, the African who wishes to enter business cannot save up and when he does, he usually has insufficient capital

(5) Union Statistics for Fifty Years. Jubilee Issue, 1910 - 1960. Dept. of Census and Statistics, Pretoria.



for his business requirements, since he must put up his own premises.

In the second place, he is not permitted to invest in, or run, business outside of his residential areas. The Native (Urban Areas) Act virtually prohibits Africans or "associations, corporate or unincorporate, in which a Native has any interest" from acquiring land or any right, interest in or servitude over land in an urban area. Building societies, insurance companies, savings banks or similar institutions "approved by the Minister" are excluded from this restriction provided "the interest of Natives does not exceed 20 per cent of the liabilities .... in respect of policies, share capital or deposits ...." A complementary section provides for the exclusive rights of Africans to land in African locations and villages.(6) This has meant that Africans must leave the best trading areas to the Whites and go into the locations. There has been considerable publicity in recent years over the eviction of Africans from trading areas of our cities because of this policy. The Group Areas Act extends the scope of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act to include all groups, but is being applied largely against non-White traders, and more especially the Indian.

This policy has had a limiting effect on the trading facilities available in African townships. Because the African is in town during most of the shopping hours, he naturally buys most of his requirements from the White trader. It is not surprising that the main retail outlets in the townships are groceries, butcheries, fruit and vegetable dealers, cafés and dairies, for these are about the only consumer fields that the township stores can serve. There are no furniture dealers or outfitters, hardly any dry cleaners, cinemas or household appliances, and crockery and other types of dealers in these areas, mainly because the African customer finds it more convenient to obtain his requirements in town where he works, and also because of the heavy capital outlay required for these types of retail outlets. Wholesalers, except in agricultural produce, are non-existent because of lack of financial capital.

In the third place, the African business man is up against regulations which limit his business activities. In the townships, businesses are established on a quota based on the number of households to be served, in order, it is said, to prevent "overtrading". This is one of those false economic notions that are applied only to Black commerce. It succeeds in preventing the emergence of a large class of African business men who might start making demands for a better deal for themselves. In fact, this "theory" runs through most of the thinking of White South Africans whenever a question of an improvement in the condition of the African is under consideration. We have already met it under guise of increased productivity when the raising of African earnings is discussed. It comes up, also, in the form of a "qualified" franchise when the part that the African must play in our political life is raised.

To return to the business men. In some of the newer townships the local authorities put up a limited number of premises, thus effectively preventing the development of African business.

In addition, the implementation of "ethnic" grouping prevents Africans from trading or acquiring businesses in areas other than those of their own groups. To add to the insecurity of leasehold tenure, Africans in the Government-run townships of Meadowlands and Diepkloof in Johannesburg have to renew their trading permits annually and on condition that they are "fit and proper persons".(7) The term "fit and proper persons" is undefined, but it does not require much imagination to see what it means.

Even when the African is in business, his problems are not over. His lack of capital makes it difficult for him to buy his stock from the best markets. He is thus at the mercy of wholesalers - scrupulous and otherwise - and may finish up as being no more than an agent for these wholesalers. Furthermore, the normal aids to commerce, such as banks, insurance, credit, communications, accounting and managerial services and trained assistants, and so on, are not available to him. Since most of the business men are poorly educated, they know nothing about the first principles of commerce, and cannot manage their business properly. The African business man cannot even exercise political pressure to improve his lot, because he is debarred from joining chambers of commerce. The attempts by African business men to form their own pressure groups have been uniformly unsuccessful, because they have tended to revolve around personalities.

As the writer has pointed out elsewhere, what has been said above underlines the fact ".... that while the government prattles about the opportunities it has created for African development, it has, in fact, done a great deal to hinder and very little to encourage the growth of African commerce. That, of course, is in keeping with the assumption in the Natives (Urban Areas) Act that the African is allowed in the urban areas only in so far as he ministers to the needs of the Whites. The emergence of an African middle class plays havoc with such a policy and must be discouraged. That is why Black people must be prevented from establishing careers even when they are to serve the needs of their own racial group."

The independent professionals, whose skills become capital, are the next group to be considered. This group consists only of medical and legal practitioners, for all other professions are closed to the African. Although in the 1920's a few were qualified overseas as doctors and lawyers, this group, like others, received its impetus from the concentrations of African populations in the urban areas, the consequent growth of education among Africans and the health and legal needs which follow in the wake of such concentrations.

Both these professions involve a long and expensive period of training which places them virtually beyond the reach of Africans. In medicine, training of Africans was made possible in South Africa by the provision of scholarships by the Union Government after the last war and the opening of the Medical School at the University of the Witwatersrand to Africans. Later a medical school was opened in Durban to cater for non-Whites exclusively. To-day, there are about 100 African doctors in the country. Law has the disadvantage that, in addition to examinations, articles of clerkship must be served before an attorney can go into practice. These articles could be obtained only from Whites, who, understandably enough, were not keen to set up Black competitors. But the liberal air generated by the last war made it possible for Africans to obtain articles from White lawyers. To-day, there are about 50 African lawyers, and their numbers are growing as African lawyers article other Africans.

Lawyers and doctors are, therefore, the professional wing of the middle class. They earn an independent livelihood, and their incomes are comfortable. They have a very high status in the African community, which derives from the combination of high educational qualifications with high incomes.

(6) Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, 1945, Sections 5(1) and 6(1).

(7) Government Notice No. 124 dated February 4, 1955.



But they suffer from the same disabilities as other middle-class Africans. They are subject to the same restrictions in carrying on their businesses. Thus African doctors can open up, and have opened up, only in African townships and villages. Lawyers in Johannesburg have been threatened with removal to the townships, where it is obviously impossible for them to continue their practices. In the Cape, they have already been removed to locations.<sup>(8)</sup> In addition, they face the prospect of having to practice before Bantu Authorities Courts, if the plans the government has in hand materialize. These courts will not be really courts of law in the accepted sense of the term, and points of law will be wasted on them.

Furthermore, the policy of Bantu Education threatens to close both these professions, in their present accepted form, to the African. Africans are already debarred from training in all institutions of higher learning, and must now study at the Government-controlled Bantu colleges, which represent an extension of Bantu Education to university level. With the general lowering of education standards for Africans following on Bantu Education, especially at the secondary level, Africans are unlikely to meet the exacting standards which are a prerequisite for entry to these courses, assuming that the accepted professional standards of the legal and medical callings are to be maintained. In the circumstances, then, the only alternative would be to set lower professional standards, and thus produce only second-class doctors or lawyers. In that event, the future for the emergent African professional is not bright.

Finally, there is a small group of entertainers and artists, mainly musicians and singers, who live on the sale of their abilities to the public. This group, too, is hemmed in by the usual restrictions, and we need not, therefore, go into further details.

#### POLITICAL RÔLE OF MIDDLE CLASS

Several implications follow from this, which must now be discussed. The first of these is that European policies here, as elsewhere in Africa, have retarded the emergence of social classes among Africans to a considerable extent, and have thus tended to blur class distinctions among Africans. While distinctions in wealth and education have become real among Africans and exert a powerful influence, "there is no sharp cleavage between classes .... The cleavage between Bantu and European .... overshadows economic differences within the Bantu community itself."<sup>(9)</sup> Thus, Africans, suffering as they do, from disabilities common to all classes, translate their struggle for status and personal recognition, not into class terms which would cut across colour lines, but into a struggle for the recognition of all Africans.<sup>(10)</sup> They see their struggle as a struggle against White domination.

What happens, then, to the middle class that is expected to "make for future social order and act as a go-between linking the European and the mass of the Bantu people?"<sup>(11)</sup> Can it exert the moderating influence that is regarded as one of its claims to usefulness in our society? The answer to these questions appears to be in the negative. The Whites refuse to extend the normal conventions of commerce and industry to Africans, and deny them access to the values of Western society. It is this limited participation in, and access to, Western culture that has resulted in a narrowing of vision as to the rôle that an African middle class can play in the evolution of our multi-racial society.

Furthermore, unlike their White counterparts in this country and elsewhere, the African middle class cannot form political pressure groups to secure for themselves specifically middle class advantages. In fact, political activity of any kind is hazardous. As Lewin<sup>(12)</sup> has pointed out, "indeed it is the political implications of the precarious position held by the African middle class that have become important in late years. In all other except communist countries, the middle class has long contributed a solid conservative element in politics - for obvious reasons. The men of property, with the proverbial stake in the country, are the last to support wildly radical social changes."

In the Union, however, as elsewhere in colonial Africa before the "wind of change" started sweeping away colonialism, the emergence of an African middle class is in conflict with the policy of apartheid, and obstacles are placed in the way of its development. While it is true that the majority of African business men eschew political activity, many of them have joined hands with the professionals and working class in their demands for a radical transformation of South African society. Herein lies the reason for the adoption of radical policies by the African National Congress and the even more extreme Pan-Africanist Congress. The African middle class has no stake in the country, and sees its salvation in making common cause with the masses with whom it shares common disabilities. In such a situation there can be no compromise, for the Whites, on their side, refuse to give in one iota - "to abdicate", as the Nationalists are always saying - and the Africans, on their own side, want nothing short of full and unfettered participation in our economic and political life, which is what they mean by equality.

To counteract the growing influence of radical African leaders, the Government is engaged in building up the chiefs by way of Bantu Authorities as the real leaders of the people. Tribal "ambassadors" have already been appointed in some urban areas to act as a link with the Bantu Authorities. But there is a flaw in this scheme. The traditional authorities ceased to be a significant political factor when the tribal system, which gave them meaning, was destroyed by the White man's economy. The White man further destroyed their influence when he incorporated them into the authoritarian structure which he built to

(8) In Cape Town, for example, one or two African lawyers - an advocate - had to close down his practice and go overseas, because moving to Langa Location made it impossible for him to continue. The other lawyer, who made the move to Langa, discontinued his practice there in September, 1960, because he could get no clients, since most African workers are in town during office hours; Coloured clients had to get permits to go into Langa, and his offices were too far from the Court, in any case. He is now employed as a professional assistant by another lawyer.

(9) Monica Hunter: *Reaction to Conquest*. London: Oxford, 1936.

(10) Cf. H.J. Simons, who wrote: "As regards the European workers, their allegiance has been divided between Labour and the capitalist parties, an indication that the main political issues in the country are generally viewed as issues, not between classes, but between European and non-European .... communities." - "Trade Unions" in *Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa*, Ed. E. Hellman. London: O.U.P. 1949, p. 169.

(11) Laura Longmore: *The Dispossessed*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1959, p. 20.

(12) Julius Lewin: "The Dice are Loaded Against the African Trader". *Contact*, August 9, 1958.



control the African. As recent events show, the implementation of the Bantu Authorities Act is seriously undermining the already untenable position of the chiefs who are now regarded even by their own people, no longer as leaders, but as Government stooges - "Policemen-Chiefs", as the Africans call them. Posterity may yet be grateful to the Nationalists for finally breaking down the hold of the chiefs on the people at a time when they thought they were strengthening it. The "reserve" African will come to look more and more to his urban brother for leadership. As for the urban African, the pathetic efforts being made to revive tribalism and loyalty to chiefs would be laughable if they were not so tragic. Africans will look increasingly to their educated élite and their middle class for leadership rather than to the traditional élite.

#### FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

It has been shown that an African middle class has emerged in South Africa because the demands of an expanding economy have led to large concentrations of the African population in the urban areas, which needed the services that such a middle class could provide. The development of this class has, however, been hampered by policies which limit African participation in our economy and restrict opportunities for the acquisition of capital and for its investment. While this class is small at present, its political significance is out of all proportion to its size. Thus, the degree to which African participation in our economy is hindered or facilitated will determine the fate of the middle class and the kind of leadership it will provide for the African masses.

There is no doubt, however, that the middle class has come to stay. This much is conceded even by the Nationalists. The only point of difference is on what conditions it will stay. The Nationalists envisage increasing opportunities for African economic development in what they call the "Bantu homelands", which are better known as Reserves. Some of their leading spokesmen have painted a glowing picture of the possibilities for Africans in these areas. Towns will be developed and Africans will find employment in them as business men, industrialists, engineers, doctors, teachers and so on. A Bantu Development Corporation has already been launched with a capital of £500,000 to assist Africans who want to go into these areas. That figure must be regarded as little more than a gesture when seen against the astronomical sums that would be required to develop these areas.

The Bantu University Colleges, which started operations at the beginning of this year, and the Medical School in Durban are expected to produce the kind of personnel such developments will require. For the moment, however, only the Medical School can be said to be producing anything like the sort of people who would fulfil that rôle. The other three have no facilities for the training of such people, nor are they likely to have them for quite a while. What, however, is likely to happen is that, if and when these institutions do provide such training, it will be inferior, and their products will have limited horizons. But it is one thing to produce such people and quite another to keep them satisfied with their position. And, so long as they have been introduced to the values of Western culture, to whatever limited an extent, it is problematic that they will remain contented with policies that could be interpreted as holding back their development.

A complementary aspect of this policy is that Africans in the present urban areas - "White" areas, as the Government calls them - are there on sufferance, and can never really expect to get unlimited opportunities for development there. There are indications that attempts will be made to reduce opportunities for the growth of middle classes in these areas. In fact, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, the Hon. M.C. de Wet Nel, has stated it as the policy of his Department that the African business man in the urban areas is temporary, and is only allowed to remain in them ".... to build up capital and gain experience .... When a Bantu trader in a location has sufficient capital to establish a large business, he must move his business to a Bantu area ...." The Minister added, however, that African business men would be compelled to move to Bantu areas only when "comparable towns, markets and opportunities" were available to them.(13) That, of course, is the crux of the problem: whether these "Bantustans", will ever materialize.

In the meantime, the African urban population continues to grow. Even the Tomlinson Commission working on the assumption that the government policy of diverting the African urban population to the Bantu areas would be implemented, predicts its continued growth.(14) Provision will have to be made for these people, and such provision envisages, among other things, a middle class. Thus, increasing urbanization of the African may well counteract the policy of restricting the evolution of an African middle class.

While present policies continue, there can be no growth of a true African middle class, for commerce and industry can flourish only in a climate where private enterprise and commercial success are regarded as essential. Restricted opportunities must lead to increasing frustration, and increasing frustration to extremist political views and action. The trend can be reversed, but only if White South Africa is willing to come to terms with African demands for full participation in the social, economic and political life of South Africa.

(13) M.C. de Wet Nel: Reports in The Star dated October 23, 26 and 28, 1959.

(14) D. Hobart Houghton: "The Tomlinson Report - Summary of Findings and Recommendations." Johannesburg: S.A. Institute of Race Relations, 1959, p. 22.