

CHANGES NECESSARY TO STOP BLACK UNREST

Since South Africa's national economy is very largely dependent on a contented and stable Black labour force, it follows that anything which threatens this is disruptive, and, if allowed to continue can have disastrous results.

The present wave of Black unrest revolves around four main issues:-

1. Housing
2. Education.
3. Public representation, i.e. involvement in administration and policy making on issues which vitally concern Blacks.
4. Employment and job opportunity.

There are many other peripheral issues which affect the issue, but those listed, taken in their broadest context, cover the principal areas of concern.

1. Housing

The housing situation confronting urban Blacks is chaotic. With few exceptions there have been no large scale building programmes undertaken by any of the Bantu Administration Boards since they came into existence. In Johannesburg it is believed that the present backlog exceeds 12,000 family units. No urban African family in Johannesburg has any hope of acquiring a house in Soweto, so that the actual physical lack of houses is the most urgent and burning grievance.

Secondly, the fact that no African can acquire freehold

title to land in a Black residential area, means that he cannot borrow money to build for himself because he cannot give collateral security. The wrong decision by the Government to stop even a lease-hold tenure form of homeownership in 1967, has had very serious results and has worsened the housing shortage; at that time, 12,000 houses had already been sold to Blacks in Soweto, but all that came to an abrupt end. The latest modified relaxation whereby a form of homeownership may be permitted provided it is linked with homeland citizenship, has merely exasperated the position and in any event, although announced 18 months ago, is still not yet in operation.

From the housing shortage flows social, economic and filial problems which have now reached gigantic proportions, and have created a measure of active hate for all forms of White authority which is alarming.

It will be quite impossible in the short term to solve the housing problem by orthodox and conventional means, and only a bold change in official policy can have an impact of any real consequence.

Firstly the permanency of the urban African must be accepted, this can and may be linked with permanent employment; but the principle is inescapable.

Next, he must be able to acquire freehold title to land allotted to him, acquired by purchase; so as to afford security of tenure for him and his family.

Next, the natural ability and willingness of the people themselves must be invoked in the building of accommodation within their individual capacities. This means that the authorities must provide serviced land with essential public amenities including electricity on which the Black families

can then build for themselves - if need be, with financial assistance from either their employers or the State.

This will mean a totally new approach to Regulations, Building By Laws and standards, but it will mean that families will be able to provide themselves with essential accommodation rapidly. No other single measure will so quickly defuse the present explosive situation as the provision of housing accommodation. At the same time the authorities must press on with normal house building as well as essential public buildings.

I want to stress that no real labour stability is possible without adequate housing and that labour instability opens the door to industrial revolution and economic decline.

In this connection it is important to remember that the economy of the White sector is almost entirely dependent on Black labour. In the manufacturing industry alone for example, there are 662,000 Blacks employed, as against 283,000 Whites and if the supply of Black labour is stopped, then the industry cannot survive. The same applies to all other sectors, including mining.

### Education

The authorities must face the fact that Bantu Education is hated and rejected because it was designed to educate Blacks for positions of inferiority.

There is no mystery about this, Dr Verwoerd made no bones about it, he said that Blacks must not be educated to expectations which were impossible ~~for~~<sup>of</sup> fulfilment; because they must accept that their presence in White urban areas was possible for only

so long as they provided for the labour needs of the White community, and therefore their education had to be geared accordingly.

Such being the case the whole concept of Bantu Education must be abandoned, and normal education as accepted for Whites, introduced.

The demand for compulsory education is probably beyond the financial resources of the country at the moment, but acceptance of the principle will, in all probability satisfy immediate demands, if taken in consultation and co-operation with the people, as outlined in point 3 below.

Many officials may find it impossible to reconcile themselves to such a radical change and if so they must be removed.

Coupled with conventional "school" education, a massive injection of capital for Vocational Training throughout the country and covering those trades and occupations in which Black labour is essential for economic prosperity must be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

Blacks must be convinced that the opportunity for acquiring skills and knowledge is available to them, and that after training they will be able to find jobs commensurate with their skill and ability and with the prospect of improvement.

#### Representation

By this I mean direct Black representation on public bodies, including private enterprise and the State service, not as window dressing, but as a reality.

The people must see and truly believe that their own people are involved in public affairs which involve their own lives. The day for purely consultative or advisory bodies is past, Blacks must be personally involved in the process of Government and particularly

in the making of decisions which affect their homes, their jobs, their security, their prosperity and the education of their children.

They will make mistakes and strain patience to breaking point, but they must be personally involved in policies and decisions which carry real responsibility.

The administration of Black urban residential areas such as Soweto can be handed over to democratically elected bodies, who must be directly represented on the City Council, and by the same token the Black public body must be involved with such State services as the Railways, Hospitals, Schools, Labour Bureaux, etc.

The problem of finance is a real one, and for the transition period will require subsidy, but with the improvement in education and training Blacks will be absorbed into jobs presently denied to them by artificial legislation with a consequential improvement in their whole economic position to the point in the future where they can really pay their way.

The position and future role of the Bantu Administration Boards and the mass of legislation including the Pass Laws, which only affect the Black population, will have to come under careful and critical review, in co-operation with the Black Administration bodies and those aspects which are purely repressive and discriminatory will have to go.

These thoughts may strike conservative Whites as unacceptable, but the alternative is continued Black unrest, labour instability (which will adversely affect the White labour force) public resentment; and the real possibility of worsening violence which may grow to the point where it becomes impossible of control, while at the same time preserving White prosperity and safety.

Many social changes which will affect race relations will follow,

but these and the political aspects are not dealt with in this memorandum, which is primarily concerned with the basics of the present position.

Employment and job opportunity

Certainly one of the causes of the present unrest is the degree of frustration felt by all Blacks, but particularly by their young people about their job situation and their prospects of improving their lot.

The majority feel that they are kept down in the most humble and lowest paid jobs by White design, and that they have no real prospect of ever improving their position, either from the point of pay or status.

As indicated earlier one of the main answers to this resentment lies in improved education and vocational training, but the results of that will take years to come to fruition - in the meanwhile many of the purely repressive and discriminatory aspects of present legislation can be revoked so that suitable and competent Blacks may be absorbed into skilled and semi-skilled positions in industry with consequential improvements in their economic position.

In the long term they must have hope that if they can demonstrate their capacity for improved employment it will not be denied then purely on grounds of race.

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