

Pat Lewis

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A REVIEW OF THE INCREASE IN THE NATIVE POPULATION OF JOHANNESBURG AND THE GROWTH OF THE NON-EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT OF THE JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL

Just two weeks ago I had the privilege, in company with Councillor Cutten and Council officials, of accompanying Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery on his tour through the townships established by the Council in the South Western area of Johannesburg. At the Civic reception that evening, Lord Montgomery stated his favourable impression of what he had seen on that tour. That same evening I was reading the book - City Government - the Johannesburg Experiment - written by Sir John Maud - John Maud as he then was - some twenty years ago when he was invited by this Council to write a book reviewing the government of Johannesburg during the fifty years of its existence. Reading of what had happened in the early years, I thought it might serve a useful purpose if I could sketch for this Council the growth of the Native population since the beginning of this century, and see to what extent this Council has catered for the needs of that growing population. There were times when I think Lord Montgomery's reactions would have been far from favourable!

In referring to a draft Ordinance of 1902, Maud writes: "A third type of activity for which the Council was given authority by the Proclamation concerned the native and coloured inhabitants of the town. The Natives indeed had hitherto never been considered as a part of the human population of Johannesburg, still less a permanent factor in the situation".

What was the Non-European population of that time? It consisted of 3511 males below the age of 15, and 61,153 males of over 15, a total male population of 64,664. The female population of that time was 2505 under 15 and 5110 over 15, a total of 7615. Of these 72,279 souls 59,605 were natives.

At that time the local authority accepted no responsibility for the housing of these people, but in 1904 plague broke out amongst the natives living in appalling conditions near the present market, and according to Maud "with a few hours the inhabitants had been moved to temporary dwellings near the Klipspruit Sewage Farm some twelve miles from the town, and the slums had been deliberately burned to the ground". This drastic action and the establishment of a native location at the Sewage Farm were almost the only attempts that the Council made until 1918 to deal with the question of housing the Native population of the time.

By 1911 the Native population had increased to 101,971 the proportion being ten men to every one woman. In the period 1918 to 1921 the Council completed a housing scheme in Western Native Township to house approximately 5000 people. By then the Native population had increased to 116,120 people. In 1923 the Urban Areas Act was passed which placed an obligation on the Council to provide land for the accommodation of all natives who legitimately resided within the Urban area. This Act also contained provisions controlling the entry of Natives into the Urban Areas. It failed, however, to do this. Maud gives the following reasons:-

1. The heavy taxation of Natives in Resorvos and country districts.
2. The inadequate land allowed them in the Resorvos.
3. The neglect of the Resorvos.
4. The absence of control of Natives living on the outskirts of the Urban Areas.

In fact - economic pressure.

In 1925 a Hostel was built at Wemmer for single men, and in the same year a location was established at Eastern Native Township. At this stage the native townships fell under the Parks and Estates Committee, and according to Maud "Native Locations share the attention of this Committee with the Zoological garden. For some years in fact the actual expenditure on natives and the zoo roughly coincided".

It was not until 1927 that the Council appointed a Director of Native Affairs - Mr. Graham Ballendon - and it was in 1928 that the first Native Affairs Committee was appointed. At that time the housing accommodation provided by the Council was for

5300 persons at Western Native Township  
1600 single males at Wemmer Hostel  
1100 persons at Eastern Native Township  
700 persons at Salisbury Jubilee Hostel, and  
6500 persons at Pimville

a total of 15210

At that time the Native population of Johannesburg was 117,700 males and 19,000 females so that at this stage the Native population was still predominantly the migrant male labourer. The staff of the Non-European Affairs Department then was 16 Europeans and 105 Non-Europeans.

In 1930 another 850 houses were erected at Western Native Township and Eastern Native Township. In 1931 a start was made in building homes at Orlando - by 1935 3000 houses had been built and by 1939 - 6000. In 1934 the Wolhuter Hostel was built to accommodate 3000 single men. At the commencement of the War the Council had built 2300 houses at Western Native Township; 600 houses at Eastern Native Township; 6000 houses at Orlando - a total of 8900 houses - and, in addition, there were 1200 leased sites at Pimville. It is estimated that at this time the Council provided housing for 69,300 Natives. In addition there was Hostel accommodation of 6700 single men. At this time the total Native population was 244,000 of whom 179,000 were males and 65,000 females.

Then followed the five war years which resulted in a complete change in almost every aspect of native life in the City. The majority of male Europeans were either on Active Service or engaged on some form of war work; there was fantastic growth in the number of factories and industries directly associated with the war effort, resulting in an insatiable demand for native labour. It was found that the native labourer could perform tasks for which hitherto he had

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not been thought capable. The native population in the City increased by leaps and bounds and in 1946 it was estimated that the Native population was 211,322 males, 100,000 females and 83,909 children, a total of 395,231 - an increase of approximately 150,000 since 1939, and what is important the Native women were now moving into the City in large numbers.

This abnormal increase in the population co-inciding as it did with a national emergency meant of course that all available resources normally provided by the local authority, such as housing, recreational services, medical services, transport services and social and community services, etc., etc., were swamped out until finally the stage was reached where the Native population literally burst out of the available accommodation and this period saw the emergency in rapid succession of eleven illegal and uncontrolled squatter camps ranging in size from a few hundred persons to the colossal one on land now occupied by portion of Orlando West where some 12,000 families lived in the utmost squalor and degradation.

It will be recollected that as a matter of emergency 4042 breeze block shelters were erected in Shantytown in 1944, and that in 1947 11,000 families were allocated sites of 20 x 20 in Moroka. It was estimated that at that time there were 50,000 families requiring houses.

The Non-European Affairs Department was confronted with a series of unparalleled problems which have continued without a break from that day to this, and although the housing aspect is now virtually under control the administrative difficulties, inseparable from settling, employing and adjusting the huge native population as presently constituted, have increased in tempo and magnitude every year. At the time of the establishment of the Department of the Native population in the City consisted largely of simple labourers coming in to augment their income but with the intention of returning to their homeland as soon as they had become sufficiently affluent. The economic and other advantages, however, present in Johannesburg as a result of the war industrial expansion changed that picture completely and it now meant that there was permanent employment available for a vastly increased population. This stage witnessed the transformation of thousands of Native males from casual day labourers to persons interested in acquiring and holding down steady jobs and more particularly with the acquisition of superior skills which would command a higher cash wage. Concurrently, these men lost, in many cases, the desire to return home and instead brought their families up to the town in very large numbers. This process continued until it proved essential in the national interest to tighten up considerable the Influx Control Regulations in 1952, without which the uncontrolled flow of would-be immigrants into the City would have resulted in catastrophic living conditions, and the enforcement of which now requires the operation of a large and extremely complicated branch of the Department. The post-war years saw too a steady increase in the number of stable family units arising and living in the Native areas. Thousands of the erstwhile single male labourers married and that, of course, meant an increasing demand for family-type accommodation. The Council, through its Non-European Affairs Department had to meet this demand not only for houses, but also for the concomitant social,

recreational, medical and other community services inseparable from a full family life.

During the period 1947 to 1951 a further 5233 houses were built, but in 1951 nothing further was being done. It was not only the magnitude of the task of providing houses that overwhelmed the City, but the cost of providing the services - such as water, sanitation, roads, etc. Four things then happened. Firstly, the passing of the Native Building Workers Act in 1951, which provided for the training and use of Native building workers to build for their own people. Secondly, the Native Services Levy Act of 1952 which taxed the employers of Native labour to provide the funds for the essential services and the subsidising of transport. Thirdly, the Site and Service scheme and fourthly, the establishment in 1954 of the Council's Housing Division to train and employ Native labour to tackle the seemingly impossible task.

Then in 1956, through the interest of Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, the Mining Houses made available to the Council the sum of £3M to speed up the re-housing of the slum dwellers in Moroka and Shantytown. At the end of 1953 the Council had built 17,814 houses and had Hostel accommodation for 14,120 men.

On the 30th June, 1959, the houses built had increased to 43,018 and Hostel accommodation was 19,990. The estimates for the year 1959/60 provide for the building of a further 8400 houses and hostels to accommodate 8000 men.

In 1951 the provision of houses for 50,000 families seemed an impossible task. Today the back of that task has been broken and within the next five years the task should be completed. It merely depends on the funds that can be made available and the procurement of suitable additional ground.

Since the commencement of the Site & Service Scheme the Council has erected 12,640 houses for the persons previously dwelling in Moroka and Shantytown, and has built 11,939 houses to replace the shacks built by persons to whom the sites were originally allocated. At the moment 6765 shacks are erected on the Site & Service Schemes and it is hoped that by the end of 1960 houses will be built on these sites to replace the shacks.

During these last five years the achievement in the re-housing of the people and the expenditure on services can be gathered from the following statistics:-

Cumulative Total Capital Expenditure  
on Native Revenue Account as at -

30. 6. 1927	£398,852
30. 6. 1939	1,497,480
30. 6. 1946	3,186,520
30. 6. 1950	6,322,790
30. 6. 1953	7,318,522
30. 6. 1957	12,535,928
30. 6. 1959	18,034,086

In the Estimates for 1959/60 provision is made for Capital Expenditure on Native Revenue Account of £3,163,098

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This reveals that since 1953 twice as much capital has been spent on the Native Revenue Account as in the preceding fifty years.

The funds to do this have been from Government housing loans, from the Council's own resources, the Native Services Levy and the funds loaned to the Council by the Gold Mining Companies.

What is the Native population now? Where do the people live? What is their reason for being here? No recent census has been taken, but as far as the non-European Affairs Department can calculate the Native population at 30th June, 1959, was -

Municipal Area:

(a) Living in South Western Native Townships and Villages	144,104	144,104
(b) Site & Service & Slum Clearance Scheme	168,850	168,850
(c) Hostels South Western Areas	<u>9,749</u>	57,985
<u>Total South Western Areas Council</u>	322,703	18,574
(d) Native Resettlement Board (Meadowlands and Dicpkloof)	<u>57,985</u>	4,000
<u>Total South Western Area</u>	380,688	<u>393,513</u>

Urban Area:

(e) Urban Area Townships - Western & Eastern Native Townships	18,574	
(f) Urban African Hostels and Compounds	21,394	
(g) Africans house privately in European Area	<u>107,117</u>	
(h) Native Resettlement Board Areas (Sophiatown, etc.)	<u>4,000</u>	151,085
		531,773
Mine Workers		<u>28,635</u>
<u>Total estimated African population in Municipal Area</u>		560,408
Africans in Peri-Urban Areas North and South of City, including Alexandra		<u>165,000</u>
<u>Total estimated african population in Metropolitan Area</u>		<u>725,408</u>

Of the total population of 560,408 in the Municipal area, it is estimated that 241,344 are males, 143,579 are females and 175,485 children. What a contrast with the predominantly adult migrant male population of thirty years ago.

In what occupations are the working population engaged? The records of the Department reflect that the male African in employment as at 30th June, 1959, were:

<u>Type of Employment</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Juveniles</u>	<u>Total</u>
Agriculture	116	1	117
Mines and Quarries	79	-	79
Factories and Industries	60517	3718	64235
Building Industry	17106	318	17424
Commerce	68429	2785	71214
Hotels, Flats, etc.			
Hotels, Flats, etc.	22469	236	22705
Government Departments	1700	239	1939
Railways	9208	100	9308
Municipalities	19203	353	19556
Provincial Administration	1918	91	2009
Domestic Service	18226	548	18774
Total	218971	8389	227360
Gold Mines	28635		28635
	247606	8389	255995

As there is no complete registration of African females, no figures are available listing the categories of employment. It is estimated, however, that 8000 are employed in flats and 56,000 in domestic service. Some of the males employed do not reside in the Municipal area.

So much for the statistics - except to say that the staff of the Non-European Affairs Department is now 459 Europeans and 3138 Non-Europeans. In addition to the staff of N.E.A.D. there are 459 Europeans and 5244 Non-Europeans in the employ of other Departments of the Council engaged to a greater or lesser extent in providing some of the technical services provided by the Council for the Non-European population.

From a relatively simple and straight-forward administrative task confronting the Department in pre-war years, one of the most complex situations confronting any local authority anywhere in the world is now the daily concern of the Department.

No longer is the bulk of the population made up of completely unsophisticated, uneducated and simple labourers; we have today, the second, and in many cases, the third generation of persons who have known of 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. These persons are clamorous for increasing rights and opportunities. Many of them have become tremendously conscious of the disabilities surrounding their daily lives of Natives and the Department is expected to help and assist such persons with their daily problems which increase in complexity almost every day. In addition to its activities in relation to the Non-European population the Department is also, of course, expected to act as a guide and counsellor in many aspects of European activity in the City. Some of the happenings in this town over the last few years, such as the Alexandra Bus Boycott, the annual threatened total stoppage of work on the 26th June, the beerhall boycotts and crises at the beginning of this year, are fresh in everyone's mind and the importance of the role played by the Department in advising civic leaders, Chambers of Commerce and Industries on these occasions are known to you all.

It would be hard to find any aspect of life in Johannesburg which does not impinge in one way or another on the residence, employment, entertainment and movement of the Native workers, without whom this City could not function and the multitudinous duties surrounding these aspects present a daily situation of very considerable complexity, difficulty and frequently real danger to those charged with its execution.

Complex as the situation is today, it will obviously become more so in the future. The last two or three years have witnessed the emergence of two European political parties openly pledged to enlisting Non-European support and membership, and although the future in this respect is unpredictable it is fairly obvious that a considerable change will occur in the not-too-distant future in so far as the political future of the Non-European is concerned. The authorities are likely to be confronted with increasing demands for direct representation and it will be wise to recognise and accept this fact in so far as the internal government of the Native areas is concerned.

In the industrial and commercial fields we have witnessed, particularly during the last twelve months, a growing acceptance of the need for improving Native wages coupled with an increase in productivity, and this factor is of course of tremendous significance since it means the encouragement of a stable labour force approximating the ideal of earning a wage on which the head of the family can support his dependants without the continual and corrosive need for subsidisation. The economic and social consequences which will flow from this are of the first importance. Already we are witnessing the emergence of a strong, responsible middle class among our Native population in the south-western areas, particularly in places such as Dube, Mofolo and Orlando West, where several thousand families have now built their own homes on leased sites, and are in the process of paying off their loans. The improved condition of residence to be observed in these areas has had a most marked effect on family life and particularly on the behaviour of the children. Although

these improved opportunities can only be available to the minority of the population the important fact is that they do exist and will improve, thus constituting one of the most valuable hopes for the future as far as the ordinary Native worker is concerned. He has a direct inducement to acquire a better education and improved economic and social opportunities which await him in the future and which to a large extent are determined by his own attitude towards his work and by the effort and productivity he puts into his daily task.

I have tried to review some of the things that have been happening in the administration of Native Affairs in this City. Much has been done in the provision of housing and amenities. What, however, is the position of this vast population which has been thrown into this cauldron of City life? A life which is strange and frightening to many of them. Although wages have increased, it is well known that the earnings of the majority are below the level required to adequately feed and clothe their families. They are subjected to wearisome and crowded travelling arrangements. With tribal customs broken, and with no other traditions to take their place many of them are bewildered and floundering.

I would, however, suggest that the achievements of those last years indicate the Council's desire to face the task assigned to it with vigour and goodwill towards the Native people. In other spheres such as the Association for the Improvement of Wages and Productivity of Bantu Workers attention is being drawn to the inadequacy of wages of the average Native employee in the City. This movement is bringing home to the employer the need not only to increase wages and productivity, but also to regard the Native employee as an individual not merely as a member of a squad.

While one can have no sense of complacency while there is so much to do to win the confidence of the Native people, I do think that the words of praise regarding the Council's achievements in the townships, expressed by Lord Montgomery, were well merited.

In conclusion I would state that I have tried to sketch for you the great change that has taken place from the days when the Native population was largely male migratory labourers to the present situation of approximately equal numbers of men and women with children who have come with the intention of making this City their home. I hope I have at the same time indicated how this Council has responded to the implications of this huge influx of Native peoples to within its boundaries.

THE ABOVE IS THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT MADE BY COUNCILLOR  
P.R.B.LEWIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE NON-EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE OF THE JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL, TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AT A MEETING HELD ON THE  
8TH DECEMBER, 1959.

December 8, 1959.



**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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