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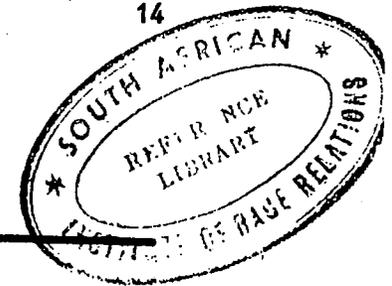
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# RACE RELATIONS

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# RACE RELATIONS

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VOLUME XI : NUMBER 1 : 1944

## THE INDIAN IN SOUTH AFRICA : TOWARDS A SOLUTION OF CONFLICT

Maurice Webb

THE Indian presents South Africa with its smallest racial group and its biggest inter-racial problem. Of our total population of 10 million, only a quarter of a million are Indians. It would be reasonable to expect that so small a minority would be easily absorbed into South African life, but the rapid and unanimous passing of the "Pegging" Act, with all political parties trying one with another to condemn the Indian and to pass restrictive legislation against him, shows how little the Indian is accepted in South African life.

Thanks to the inquiry initiated by the South African Institute of Race Relations and carried out by the Department of Economics of the Natal University College under the direction of Professor H. R. Burrows, a certain amount of fact concerning the Indians of South Africa is now available.<sup>1</sup> But as relatively few people will read the report of Professor Burrows's researches, and almost everyone has strong convictions concerning Indians, the Indian situation remains the one regarding which there is, in the mind of the politically dominant public, a minimum of knowledge and a maximum of feeling.

Even as to the simple facts of the origin of South Africa's Indian population, there is a large amount of prejudiced opinion. The Indian is inclined to say that South Africa brought the Indians to the country; the white South African, on the other hand, implies, against the Indians' will,

*Indian Life and Labour in Natal.* Published by the S.A. Institute of Race Relations.

The white South African is prone to say that the Indian ought never to have come, is not wanted, and ought to go away. The fact that Natal badly needed labour to develop the sugar industry and turned to India for suitable labour, after trying other possible sources in vain, is often overlooked by European South Africans; and that the indentured Indian labourers voluntarily accepted indentures, under conditions that it is difficult to regard as attractive except in the worst circumstances, is equally overlooked by the Indians. They also ignore the very pointed comment on the social and economic conditions of the poorer Indians in India of that time that the acceptance of the indentures clearly makes. The simple basic fact concerning the introduction of Indians into South Africa is that South Africa wanted the Indians, and the Indians wanted to come; and, more important, that when the first period of indenture expired and the labourer was entitled to return to India, the labourers for the most part wanted to stay and the employing white South Africans wanted them to remain.

Had this position of recognized identity of interest continued, it is reasonable to assume that the place of the Indian in South African life could have been amicably adjusted as circumstances changed with the development of the country. But the coming of "free" Indians to add to the numbers of those who came under

indentures, and the arrival of trader groups that soon grew into a distinct commercial class, brought new and disturbing factors into the situation. Perhaps because a negligent white trader resented and feared competition from more resourceful and energetic newcomers, perhaps because a spoiled European middle class began to feel their security menaced, whatever the causes (and they are evidently many and complex), feeling on the part of the European towards the Indian deteriorated before the close of the last century and has grown progressively worse ever since.

This deteriorating position of the Indian in South African life is clearly reflected in this chronological table :—

1893 : Parliamentary franchise withdrawn in Natal.

1896 : Riots in Durban on the arrival of free Indians.

1913 : Indian Immigration Act prohibiting new immigrants other than wives or children of established settlers.

1922-3 : The insertion of anti-Asiatic clauses in title deeds legalized.

1922-3 : The Anti-Asiatic League gave expression to strong European feeling.

1924 : Municipal franchise withdrawn.

1925 : Areas Reservations (Class Areas) Bill introduced into Assembly by Dr. Malan, Minister of the Interior.

1927 : The Cape Town Agreement, which secured the withdrawal of the Class Areas Bill and provided that :—

- (a) A representative of a foreign government would be the representative of South African Indians to the Government of South Africa.
- (b) Repatriation of Indians to India be stimulated and subsidized, the care of repatriates to be with the Government of India.
- (c) The remaining residue of Indians in South Africa have opportunities of "upliftment".

The administration of the Civilized Labour Policy resulted in the sharp decline in the employment of Indians by the Government. The number of Indians employed by the South African Railways

and Harbours and in some industries fell to one quarter between 1920 and 1937.

1936 : Passing of the Native Bills. Although not directly affecting Indians the segregation policy of the country was consolidated by the passing of the Bills, with general effect on all inter-racial issues.

1940 : The first Broome Report following a persistent "penetration" agitation.

1943 : The passage of the "Pegging" Bill. That this Bill could have secured the support of all political parties and almost the unanimous approval of Parliament indicated the friendless position of the Indians.

Behind these selected landmarks it is easy to sense the struggle that was going on. The European, politically dominant, fearing and disliking the Indian, taking away first one form of franchise and then another. The Indian trying to establish himself in the community by the purchase of land and property, being thwarted by anti-Asiatic clauses. The European still fearful, attempting with the Class Areas Bill to impose segregation, and the struggle of the Indian community, backed by the Government of India, against this threat. The attempt of the Indian to advance in industry by the acquisition of skill and finding his progress thwarted by the administration of the "colour bar".

The fifty years between the withdrawal of the Parliamentary franchise in 1893 and the passing of the "Pegging" Bill in 1943 is thus seen as a period of steady decline for the Indian in status and function. In those things which make man belong to a community, a voice in its affairs, opportunity to share the responsibilities of administration, opportunities to employ fully skills and abilities, the Indian has declined until he is voiceless, debarred from most normal opportunities of advancement and generally disliked.

Does the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 fit into this picture of decline? So many Indians have hailed the Agreement as their Magna Charta that it is desirable

to examine that document a little closely.

The Report of the first Indian Penetration Commission quotes (par. 22) the speech made by Dr. Malan, then Minister of the Interior, in introducing the Class Areas Bill in 1925, when he described the Indians in South Africa as "an alien element in the population", and compares this statement with the phrase of the Cape Town Agreement which refers to "the considerable number of Indians who will remain part of the permanent population", adding the comment, "the change in point of view is striking".

On the face of it the change is striking, but was there in reality any change in the point of view of either Dr. Malan, the Government he represented, or the electors behind the Government? Conferences between representatives of governments, if they reach any agreement, are likely to end in an exchange of courtesies, and pleasant phrases are likely to figure in reports. What really matters is not the courtesies and phrases but the actual content of the agreement reached.

The gain to the Indian community from the Cape Town conference is reflected in par. 6 of the Joint Communiqué issued at its close. This reads :—

"In the expectation that the difficulties with which the Union has been confronted will be materially lessened by the agreement which has now happily been reached between the two Governments, and in order that the agreement may come into operation under the most favourable auspices and have a fair trial the Government of the Union of South Africa have decided not to proceed further with the Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill." [The "Class Areas" Bill.]

That was a gain but not a positive gain. It was a threat (the threat of territorial segregation) withdrawn or withheld.

The Agreement itself has three clauses. The first and longest is headed "Scheme of Assisted Emigration". Under this scheme South African Indians are offered inducements to emigrate to India. The offer includes a bonus of £20 for every person over the age of 16 and £10 for every child, a pension for "decrepit adults" (all payable in India after arrival),

as well as railway fares and free passages. Responsibility for the emigrants once arrived in India rests with the Government of India. On these means rested the "expectation that the difficulties with which the Union Government is confronted will be materially lessened", the "difficulties" clearly being the Indians in South Africa.

Clause 2 of the Agreement tightens up the restrictions on the entry into the Union of wives or children of Indians in South Africa.

Clause 3 is the famous "upliftment" clause upon which so many hopes have been pinned. This clause asserts the principle that for those Indians who remain in the Union "educational and other facilities . . . should not be allowed to lag behind the other sections of the people". It promises to "consider sympathetically the question of improving facilities for higher education". Section 2(c) is specific and commits the Union Government "to take special steps under the Public Health Act for an investigation into sanitary and housing conditions in and around Durban which will include the question of (1) the appointment of advisory committees of representative Indians; and (2) the limitation of the sale of municipal land subject to restrictive conditions". This undertaking has not been kept, and municipal land has continued to be sold "subject to restrictive conditions", i.e., with an anti-Asiatic clause in its title.

For the rest this "upliftment" section of the Cape Town Agreement promises adherence to the principle of "equal pay for equal work" in the operation of the Industrial Conciliation Act, and promises revision, mainly in the direction of right of appeal, "when the time for the revision of the existing trade licensing laws arrives".

There is nothing in this that can justifiably be regarded as a charter of rights. The clause does, however, open with an important declaration: "The Union Government firmly believe in and adhere to the principle that it is the duty of every civilized Government to devise ways and

means, and to take all possible steps, for the uplifting of every section of their permanent population to the full extent of their capacity and opportunities." This is a fine statement of principle, but its application to Indians in South Africa was clearly subject to two considerations: (1) public opinion (the upliftment clause goes on to say: "It is difficult for the Union Government to take action which is considerably in advance of Public Opinion"); and (2) the number of Indians who would remain as part of the permanent population after the provisions of clauses 1 and 2 of the Agreement had had effect.

It will be seen that the positive gains are negligible. There is no word of restoration of franchise in Natal lost in 1924 (municipal) and 1893 (parliamentary), no promise of franchise in the Transvaal, no suggestion of the removal of the provincial boundary restrictions, no undertaking to remove "restrictive conditions" of land purchase, no undertaking that knowledge and skill once acquired could be used without artificial restriction for the benefit of the individual and the community.

That Dr. Malan had not in fact experienced that striking change of view to which the first Broome Commission Report makes reference, and that he did not regard the Agreement reached as marking any change for the better for the Indians, is clearly shown by a letter he addressed to the Potchefstroom Chamber of Commerce. This appeared in *The Star* on 12 April 1927, two months after the agreement had been presented to the House of Assembly, and says:—

"The whole object of the Agreement is to get as many Indians repatriated as possible, and the energies of the conference were bent in that direction, namely, to draw up a satisfactory scheme with the help of the Government of India.

"All other points were subordinate to this. The Agreement is not an agreement in the usual sense of the term. The Union Government did not bind itself in any way with regard to future legislation, and can impose any legislation it likes in the event of the repatriation proposals not working satisfactorily. What has been reached is a new friendly basis to give the new repatriation scheme a fair chance."

Five years later, when the emigration scheme of the Cape Town Agreement had disappointed the hopes with which it was drafted, and a further emigration scheme, to some other part of the world to be discovered, was under consideration, Sir Fazil Hussein, head of a further delegation from the Government of India, said at Kimberley:—

"Both my Government and yours have agreed that none of our people should permanently settle in this country, and having agreed on this, and with goodwill on both sides, we hope to reach a satisfactory settlement."

The conclusion is unavoidable. The purpose of the Cape Town Agreement, to which the Government of India was party, was not upliftment but expulsion. A remnant of Indians that might remain would be "uplifted" and absorbed into the Union's Western civilization. The Indians themselves in welcoming the Agreement appear to have presumed, each one, that it would be the other fellows who would go; he would remain and be "uplifted".

We know now that the Cape Town Agreement and the subsequent abortive colonization scheme failed. In all about 17,000 persons were induced to emigrate, sufficient only to effect a net decline in the Indian population over the years 1930 and 1931. In 1934 the Indian population was back to its pre-emigration level and has since continued to advance.

It may be said that those Indians who resisted the inducements to emigrate, which involved facing an unknown future in what had become an unknown land, elected to remain in the Union, knowing the prejudices and restrictions to which they were subject. While this is true, it does not preclude the Indians from making legitimate efforts to improve their lot, nor does it absolve the European section of the population, which has a monopoly of political power, from its moral responsibilities towards the Indians in the country.

### The Present Position

Although the "Pegging" Act was passed with the cordial support of all parties,

the situation it has created is an extremely uneasy one. The Act is supposed to peg the position and to afford a period of calm during which something is done, though what is to be done and who is to do it has not yet been discovered. The position created is very far from one of calm: it is marked by intense feeling. Properties continue to be sold by Europeans to Indians (legally: with the consent of the Minister as the Act provides) and Europeans, although the sales are voluntary, are indignant. Indians smart under the prosecutions taking place under the Act. The whole position instead of being "pegged" deteriorates hourly. The issues involved are far wider than the question of purchase of a few residential properties by some wealthy Indians. The whole question of the position of the Indian in the South African community has been raised, and those who try to see beyond the mists of prejudice and the confusion of agitation to the future of South Africa, are concerned that a real solution be found.

We now face the fact that, every effort to expel the Indians from South Africa having failed, we have about 250,000 Indians, 90 per cent of them South African-born, claiming recognition as permanent elements of the population and the rights of citizens. As 195,000 of the Indians in the Union are to be found in Natal the problem is largely a Natal problem. Further, the Burrows Report estimates that there will be "at least 263,000" Indians in Natal by 1960. If the Indian population in other parts of the country increased at approximately the same rate, the Indians in the Union would then number about 300,000, not at all a large proportion of the population of the Union as a whole or even in relation to the Union's European population, which by then is likely to be about two and one quarter million; but in Natal it would likely outstrip the European population, which in 1940 was 201,900.

Three alternatives present themselves: (1) to renew attempts at expulsion; (2) segregation; (3) the absorption of the

Indian into South African citizenship. As two attempts at voluntary emigration have failed, and with every year that passes the proportion of Indians born in South Africa increases, this would be quite impracticable without compulsion, and would mean something akin to the mass expulsions of Jews from Germany and German-occupied countries of Europe, something that one hopes is quite unthinkable of South Africa. As to segregation, there are those who argue that, the Cape Town Agreement having failed to accomplish its object, the Class Areas Bill which was withdrawn to give the Agreement opportunity to operate should be re-introduced. There is logic in this proposal; but in view of the intense opposition of the Indians to any form of segregation, the great practical difficulties in the way of giving it effect even if agreed to, and the general abandonment of the segregation policy ("Isolation has gone and segregation has fallen on evil days", said General Smuts in January 1942), it must be put aside. The third alternative remains to be tried. It is the only line along which it would be possible to advance with the co-operation and goodwill of the Indian people, and for that reason alone is the only one likely to achieve success.

What does the Indian community desire? The present High Commissioner to the Government of India, Sir Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, gave the answer briefly in his address to the conference of the Institute of Race Relations in Maritzburg last July: "The only solution of the Indian problem lies in the assimilation of the Indian to western standards of life and western thought. On the one hand, the Indian demands freedom from segregation and colour bar, so that he may have equal opportunity with the other elements of the population, and, on the other hand, he wishes for the restoration of the municipal franchise which was taken away from him in 1924 and the parliamentary franchise of which he was deprived in 1893."

In the same month the South African

Indian Congress defined its aims at its conference in Johannesburg in these more detailed terms :—

"This Conference of the South African Indian Congress instructs the Executive Committee to prepare and submit to the Honourable the Prime Minister of the Union Government a Memorandum styled 'A Charter of Indian Rights in the Union of South Africa', the following to form the basis of the Charter :—

- "(1) The recognition of Indians as South African Nationals and the extension to Indians of citizenship rights including Parliamentary, Provincial, and Civic Franchise.
- "(2) The repeal of all legislation adversely affecting Indian Nationals in the Union of South Africa, and the removal of all statutory and administrative restrictions on their rights to ownership of land, trade, and residence.
- "(3) The inclusion of Indians in the Old Age Pensions Act, Blind Persons Act, and in all other existing social welfare legislation; the inclusion of Indians on a basis of equality in all legislation based on social security and social benefits, including free hospital and medical treatment, family allowances.
- "(4) The removal of all obstacles to the security of employment in industry, trade, and agriculture at a living wage to enable a decent family living standard.
- "(5) Free primary and secondary education and admission of students to Universities and Technical Colleges."

The whole of this depends upon the opening claim: "The recognition of Indians as South African Nationals and the extension to Indians of citizenship rights." Once that is fully granted much of the rest would follow. Indeed in the spheres of education, health, and social services progress along the lines requested is going on.

In his recent speeches Senator Clarkson has maintained that the Indians (for whom he, as Minister of the Interior, is now responsible) are to be regarded as permanently within the South African nation; when addressing the Durban City Council he is reported to have said :—

"The Indians are national citizens of the Union and as such are deserving of all the rights enjoyed by the European population."

Senator Clarkson's predecessor, Mr. H. G. Lawrence, expressed similar views. But it is very doubtful whether even the Government or its party are yet entirely convinced that the Indian is to be fully regarded as a South African national.

As recently as 24 August 1943 Mr. Harold Abrahamson, United Party M.P. for Drakensberg, Natal, wrote in the *Natal Witness* :—

"The Indians have never yet been accepted as a permanent part of our population. They came to South Africa of their own free will, for their own betterment, as temporary labourers with their camp followers the traders, and they have prospered exceedingly. Ultimate repatriation has never yet been abandoned by the Union of South Africa which confined the Indians to Natal."

These are the words of one of the Government's supporters in Parliament. Later in the same letter Mr. Abrahamson claims that he expresses the views of 99 per cent of the Europeans in Natal. Whether this is true or not, he expresses a view that is held by many.

In the course of this correspondence Mr. Abrahamson suggested the re-introduction of the Class Areas Bill and the segregation "solution".

Still more recently, 6 November 1943, a letter was given pride of place in the *Natal Daily News*, signed "F.A.", which advocates "in all seriousness" a loan of £15,000,000 in order to make another attempt at voluntary emigration, an inducement of £500 and a free passage being offered to every family that would emigrate to India. The most curious thing about this proposal is that even if it were practicable, it would appeal only to the poorer hard-working section of the Indians who could be least spared. £500 would be no inducement to the "trader" who buys properties and is supposed to be the cause of all the trouble.

### The First Steps

There can be no solution of the Indian problem, there can be no start made towards the solution, until this question of "permanence" (the question of national

ity and citizenship) is definitely settled. It is common in these days for the Governmental finger to be pointed at Natal and Durban. Durban, it is said, is on its trial. There is no denying that it is as far as the Pegging Act is concerned, but the basic question of nationality rests not with a province or city but with the Union Government that alone controls nationality.

The first step is the responsibility of the Government, which is favourably placed to take it, as it is not, or should not be, unduly subject to anti-Indian opinion. It can and should establish the fact that the Indian has come to stay, is a South African national and a citizen. This requires not only statements by responsible ministers but clearly understood acts.<sup>1</sup> The beginning should be representation in Parliament. Ultimately Indians will find their place on the common franchise, but this will entail either a considerable change of heart in the present politically effective minority or a bitter political struggle, or both. But the Government has the power to nominate certain Senators and could at least see that Indians are represented in the Senate which, since the coming of the Native Representatives, has contributed notably to the helpful consideration of the Union's complex inter-racial problems. That such representation would not satisfy the Indians does not absolve the Government from doing what is within its power to do. Even such representation would establish the Indian definitely within the structure of South African society; he would at last "belong". The Government could go much further than it does at present in appointing Indians to commissions and the boards of institutions. Indians sit on the board of King Edward VIII Hospital, the Coloured and Indian Juvenile Affairs Advisory Board, the Asiatic Affairs Advisory Board. But these are bodies with specific respon-

<sup>1</sup> Since this article was written, the Minister of the Interior, Senator C. F. Clarkson, has expressed the opinion that Indians should be granted the municipal and parliamentary franchise on a communal basis.

sibilities towards Indians. Indians might well sit on such Commissions as the Public Health Commission, the Adult Education Commission, helping to view some of South Africa's problems as a whole instead of within racial compartments.

Greater opportunities for employment in the Government service, as on the Railways and in the Post Office, with opportunity of promotion to senior posts, could also be afforded.

By such means as these the Government could give to the Indian a sense of belonging increasingly to the country, having a status and a dignity that he now lacks.

And the Government should tackle the question of provincial boundary restrictions. The whole question of the Indian in South Africa is aggravated by the enforced concentration of the mass of the Indian population in Natal. It is likely that the proportion of Indians would continue to be higher in Natal than elsewhere for many years, but with freedom of movement across provincial boundaries there would be a gradual dispersal and the Indian population in the Union would be seen to be relatively small and would be absorbed more readily.

Towards the close of the last session of Parliament the Minister of the Interior announced the Government's intention to appoint a commission to inquire into the conditions of Indians in Natal. Such a commission is overdue. The Coloured community had its fact-finding commission and the Natives have had several. The whole position of the Indian community is still largely unknown, although the Burrows Report has afforded much useful information. It is to be hoped that this commission will soon be appointed and that its terms of reference will not be as restricted as was indicated by the Minister's announcement in Parliament, but will include an inquiry not only into housing, health, and social services, but also into economic conditions, employment opportunities, and the whole relation of the Indian people to the South African community. The commission might well

advise on the powers and useful activities of the Asiatic Affairs Advisory Board which has been appointed but has not yet functioned.

There is an illusion abroad that the problems of the Indian can be solved by education, health, and social services, by the "upliftment" of the third clause of the Cape Town Agreement. These services should be rendered for the material reason that sick and ill-educated people are a liability in a community and that healthy, educated, productive people are an asset; and because of the moral obligations that a person has towards his neighbour, a State has for those it governs. These things are necessary and good in themselves. They do not confer, nor can they be substituted for, function and status. Indeed, they increase the need for them. A sick man is conscious of little but his ills; an ignorant man may not know what he lacks; but a man with health, knowledge, and ability will need all the more to function fully and usefully in the community to which he belongs. We travel a dangerous road when we attempt to over-exalt the function of social services. The Nazi and Fascist regimes were notable for their development of social services, for their health and educational institutions, and for substituting these things for human dignity and freedom.

While first responsibility rests with the Union Government, important tasks, particularly the provision of housing and residential amenities, must fall to the local authority.

In giving evidence at the first Indian Penetration Commission concerning the situation in Durban that had given rise to what was known as "penetration" the Durban Indo-European Council said:—

"The remedy lies in planning. It may be regretted that Durban has been allowed to 'just grow' like Topsy and particularly that at the time of incorporation of the added areas the opportunity was not taken to make a full civic plan for the new enlarged Durban, but Durban is not alone in the cities of the world in reaching planning by force of circumstances rather than foresight.

The longer the planning is delayed the more difficult it will be.

"Such a plan as is here suggested would comprise not only the general layout of greater Durban but would also make full provision for its present and estimated future population, the needs of all groups, economic, social, racial, being considered, also the present and estimated future needs of industry, education, recreation, health, and all public services.

"That such a plan may be drawn up in co-operation and be fruitful of inter-racial goodwill is the special concern of the Indo-European Council."

"Planning" has recently become an overworked word and there is a tendency to think of planning as a remedy in itself instead of a means to remedy. Nevertheless when communities are made up of diverse racial groups, as well as of different occupational and economic groups, and prejudices have to be taken into account, there is all the greater need for that foresight and preparation that goes to good planning. But planning is impossible without facts. The fact-finding commission will be able to supply much information necessary to the making of a good plan. In this connection it is encouraging that the Durban Municipality has arranged with the Department of Economics of the Natal University College to make a housing survey of Durban. Such a survey is essential to any civic planning.

The Government can encourage municipal planning with housing grants or loans, the provision of land for expansion, in some cases perhaps by providing money necessary for surveys and the services of experts. Civic planning, if undertaken with vigour and imagination, should go far to prevent a recurrence of the "penetration" agitation that led to the "Pegging" Act.

Sir Shafa'at Ahmad Khan said wisely in the passage already quoted that the only solution to the Indian problem lies in the assimilation of the Indian to western standards of life and western thought. This process, necessarily slow if it is to endure, of integrating a considerable minority into a society that has made the maintenance of western standards its

goal cannot be undertaken from one side only. It demands much of European and Indian alike; goodwill, tolerance, wisdom and patience, and practical every-day helpfulness in small things and in great.

The position of the Indian in South Africa is disturbingly similar to that of the Jew in Europe. He is in a minority group separated from the majority by religious observances, physical characteristics, traditional customs. Deprived by prejudice or law from participation in normal occupations, he is either, in the mass, extremely poor and so earns the dislike that is the lot of those degraded by poverty; or else, in respect of the few, driven to commerce or finance, where if he prospers he is hated for his success. The tide of anti-Asiatic feeling in South Africa is too similar to the sinister Anti-Semitism of Europe to be let pass unheeded. To avoid in South Africa a repetition of that dread disease of Europe is worth great effort and sacrifice on the part of European and Indian alike.

### What Indians Can Do

There is much that Indians could do. They could try to understand the prejudices of the European and to curb their anger at them and meet more than half way those Europeans who fumblingly try to reach across the racial barriers; they could resist the temptation to regard every tea party and committee as a chance to scold those friendly Europeans present for the sins of the Europeans who are not there. They could take much greater advantage of the opportunities of free association that are available in Joint Councils, cultural groups, social welfare activities, and see that they are represented by some of their best men and women who will take a constructive part.

Europeans similarly have the difficult task of overcoming old prejudices, of discovering persons in what has for long been regarded as an impersonal racial group. Europeans, too, can do much by refraining from judgements on a race because of the actions of a few; and by

co-operating with Indians in the work of Joint Councils and in education, cultural, and social welfare activities.

Some Indians have acquired wealth in South Africa, and among those that have there are those who have been and are notably generous. There are further opportunities for the helpful use of such wealth: the objective researches undertaken by Professor Burrows should not lack funds to be continued, assistance could be given to Indian students to train in medicine or social science at the Universities of the Witwatersrand or Cape Town; assurance could be given that a substantial grant offered by the Nuffield trustees for orthopaedic services for Indian cripples on the £ for £ basis could be matched by Indian funds; opportunities could be given for specialized professional training of Indian men and women. Such activities would benefit the whole community and would bring with them self-respect and the respect of Europeans.

The assimilation of the Indian to western standards of life and western thought would not mean for the Indian the destruction of his culture and his racial identity. It would mean the surrender of some customs, polygamy as far as it still obtains, and an alteration of some traditional attitudes, as for example in respect of the place of women and the custom of *purdah*. But these things are changing rapidly already. It would not mean a sacrifice of religious faith. It is not religion that divides us but its lack or its counterfeit.

Much of the solution of the difficulty regarding the Indian in South Africa is to be found only in mental and spiritual sources: tolerance, goodwill, patience, understanding, respect for human personality. There is hope from material sources as well. South Africa is becoming increasingly aware that she is a very poor country and that in order to maintain "western" standards for Europeans or Non-Europeans it is necessary to increase greatly the amount of available goods and services. The Indian is a productive

worker and as such is needed in South Africa.

The Burrows Report records that "excluding the food and drink industry, Indian industrial employment was doubled between 1915 and 1937, while the total population increased only by 50 per cent" and adds the comment, "this is a remarkable achievement in view of the several obstacles to such progress".

In spite of all the restrictions of the "colour bar" the Indian has found increasing employment in industry, employment that has helped to increase the country's much needed production. With the development of South Africa's secondary industries, the efforts of the Social and Economic Planning Council, the introduction of new industrial processes,

this employment is likely to increase and to be encouraged, bringing to the Indian the satisfaction that comes with useful work performed and to the European an appreciation of services that contribute to the national wealth.

Before the onset of the Indians' fifty years of decline there was recognized identity of interest: South Africa wanted the Indians and the Indians wanted to stay. The same identity of interest obtains now. South Africa needs the industry, the skill, the full capacity of its Indians employed in the task of building up South Africa; and the Indians want nothing better than to belong fully to South Africa as useful citizens. We shall find the solution of our difficulties as we come to realize this identity of interest.

## COLLECTIVE FARMING IN THE RESERVES

Edward Roux

PROMINENT among proposals for the rehabilitation of agriculture in the Native reserves is the suggestion that these areas should be reorganized as collective farms. The idea has much to commend it, and it may be useful to consider some of its possibilities.

Bantu society has traditionally many communistic features. How many of these survive and to what extent they will aid in the establishment of collective farms on modern scientific lines is a subject for practical investigation and experiment. In one important respect—the ownership of cattle—Bantu agricultural practice is highly individualistic. Also, whatever the system of land tenure practised, and in spite of communal work parties and the like, appropriation of the products of cultivation is almost always by the family and not by higher social groups. Any system of reorganization will have to take these factors into account.

It is necessary to emphasize that there are two main branches of agriculture at

present practised in the reserves, namely, stock-raising and arable farming. Stock-raising presents the more difficult problems and also calls for more urgent attention; for, unless scientific methods of working with livestock and pasture are rapidly introduced, the reserves will soon become (have already become in part) so completely eroded as to be incapable of reclamation. Arable farming offers the more promising field for immediate improvement, because here modern methods do not come so sharply up against traditional prejudices as they do in the case of cattle.

The problem that faces the scientific agriculturalist, both in stock-raising and arable farming, is the extraction of the highest possible yield (in meat, milk, maize, etc.) while maintaining the fertility of the soil. In countries like China and Western Europe, where a settled peasantry has lived for centuries without harming the soil, the method of agriculture is described as "mixed farming". This

is essentially a balanced system of stock- and arable farming where plant foods and humus are continuously returned to the soil in the form of animal manure. It is a system well suited to an individualist peasantry occupying comparatively small allotments of comparatively fertile soil which can be irrigated, or which receives an adequate and well-distributed rainfall. This system has been suggested for Africa, and it would prove suitable for some special areas, but it is doubtful whether it could be applied with success to most of our Native reserves, which are essentially cattle country, of moderate or poor fertility, with an erratic seasonal rainfall interspersed with extensive periods of drought.

In our reserves, practically without exception, cattle and sheep are grazed on commonages which are for the use of all tribal stockholders, without grazing fees or any limitation of the number of stock. On the other hand, arable lands are privately owned (as in the "surveyed areas" of the Ciskei and Transkei), or communally owned, though individually worked (as in the "unsurveyed areas").

### An Experiment

In the light of these facts let us consider a possible experimental scheme for introducing collective farming in the reserves. The scheme, if it is to be applied on a large scale, assumes certain things: (1) that the area in which the attempt is made is not so overcrowded that it cannot support its population by agriculture under any circumstances; (2) that the bulk of the adult males are available for work on the land throughout the year; (3) that a measure of financial aid is forthcoming, for the purchase of fencing and other equipment, either from the Native Trust or from some other source; (4) that the tribesmen have agreed to the scheme of reorganization, or at least that the chiefs and headmen are prepared to co-operate fully; and (5) that a number of well-educated, capable, and conscientious African agricultural experts ("demonstrators") are available to act as advisers—one for each collective farm.

This is asking a lot. Some of these assumptions presuppose a degree of sympathy on the part of the Government and a far-reaching alteration in South African social policy which may seem revolutionary. The first would seem to require the provision of adequate empty land, outside the existing reserves, for the settling of the surplus population—a step more far-reaching than that contemplated by the Land Act of 1936. The second presupposes a drastic change in the present system of using the reserves as mere breeding-grounds for the supply of cheap labour for mines and industries. Both the desired results could probably be achieved by the establishment of a permanent African working population, adequately paid, housed, and fed, and living a normal family life in urban townships. This would lead to a large number of Africans permanently severing their connection with the land. It would relieve the over-pressure on the land and enable those who remained behind to develop into modern peasants with a continuous interest in the soil and with sufficient resources to make a living by agriculture alone.

Assuming these prerequisites are not forthcoming in full measure, there may still be some value in outlining our scheme; for it may be possible to carry it out on a small scale in certain limited areas.

The scheme, in brief, is as follows:—

The particular Native reserve, or part thereof, is carefully surveyed to obtain adequate information as to area, population, number of families, livestock, soils, topography, water-supplies, vegetation, etc. On the basis of this knowledge it is then divided into a number of conveniently-sized collective farms. Within each farm the land is re-allocated to building sites, garden plots, arable, and grazing areas. Each farm is then fenced—the arable portion fenced off from the grazing lands and the latter divided into suitable camps for rotational grazing. (Note: In modern systems of veld management, mowing and hay making are practically essential. Grass-mowing machinery and barns for