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It is always difficult to understand fully a human situation without understanding the historical forces that brought it about. The South African monstrosity like all great problems have decidedly humble beginnings. It was born out of an age of exploration conquest and a quest for better life. The spirit of adventure that characterized Europe in its heyday was the birth of the poverty and the exploitation of the people of the third world, a systematic subdication of a people for the purposes of profit. The enormous growth in economy which should have been a blessing for the people of South Africa is a bane for all as it was built over bodies of nameless men and women who suffered in a world not of their choosing to serve a master they never invited to build cities they never desired to be civilised against their will and to discover that the civilisers are after all technically competent barbarians who will hold man to ransom because of the colour of his skin and enshrine their prejudices into an intricate philosophy of racial superiority to justify their insatiable greed and involve other countries whose sensitivity to the cruelty of the system is blunted by the sweetness of the fruits of exploitation.

Migratory Labour is the material foundation of apartheid brand of capitalism. The system constitutes a perpetual ransom which Africans pay for allowing themselves to be subjugated and making it possible for the colonisers to occupy and claim 87% of the land. As if conquest was not humiliating enough, the ransom paid is continuous and it is defended in modern western capitals by respectable people as a special way of life which will evolve in due course into a humane society whilst they proceed to plunder without shame South African resources within a context of philosophy that constitutes an improved version of National Socialism.

(1) Views expressed here are my own and do not represent views of the United Nations or any of its Specialised Agencies.

De Kiewiet in his "History of South Africa" describes the colonial process in South Africa as a systematic subjugation of a people, the alienation of their land and the employment of of the same people as servants on the land they once owned. He further describes the process by which South Africa intergrated diverse elements to build the cities and productive units that we see. In this process the black man acquired the tastes and modes of existence resembling that of the white man and vice versa. It is the peculiarity of South African brand of racism that it maintained the exploitation of black labour and endeavoured to enshrine this exploitation in racial theories and build modern economy characterized by unequal people, one slave one master, one determined to be free one determined to oppress and use the most modern techniques in pursuit of what is called the state security and the exorcising of communism meaning entrenchment of white supremacy.

I have stated that Migratory Labour is the material basis of the philosophy of apartheid. It is the exploitation of labour without moral, social or political responsibility. Labour can be obtained across frontiers and paid for in low wages which are higher than subsistence wage levels. At the end of the contract the labourers are exported back to their homelands where they return with wages, diseases, broken homes, soil erosion and cash purchases from the Republic. The education of their children is not the responsibility of their employing Governments which only syphons taxes from mining profits without having to build social services and medical services even for those workers who have contracted diseases in the employ of mines. In this regard Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Mozambique has to find resources not from tax paid by mining companies but from local tax to take care of the children of migrants to rehabilitate broken homes due to absent fathers to conserve the soil whose erosion is caused by inappropriate farming methods in the absence of the able-bodied and to hospitalise the able-bodied when they return from making South Africa a powerful racist state at the tip of the continent. A classical case of the poor subsidizing the rich.

The political conquest of South African natives was completed and sealed in the formation of the Union of South Africa

in 1910 and their legal dispossession of the land was enshrined in the Land Act of 1913. Migratory Labour on the other hand is as old as the discovery of diamonds towards the close of the 19th century. The history of the poll tax, which is still retained in former high commissions territories, which is a flat tax unrelated to income, payable by all males, hut taxes as in the Cape: hard-sell-techniques equating migratory labour with adventure and circumcision, as well as the equation of western dress with christian civilisation all combined to help the mines to receive steady flow of migrant labour. Needless to state that periodic droughts and indebtedness to the village trader all helped the growth of this unfortunate flow.

The absence of development within neighbouring colonised states further secured labour for the mines and the economy of South Africa in which the colonial mother land Britain had major investments. The study of South Africa is a study of the evolution of British neo-colonialism which has evolved from dominance of the mining industry with Afrikaners as junior partners into a full-fledged modern economy encompassing investments of all major western countries who whilst embarrassed by the application by their junior partner of outmoded philosophies of racism have their will paralyzed by the extraordinary rate of profit. South Africa's anti-communist phobia apart from being the best advertisement for communism (to the African) given apartheid's inhumanity to man, is skillfully used to suppress all possible legitimate opposition with the acquiescence of western countries whilst the economic plunder proceeds unabated.

With the dispossession of the African people as enshrined in the Land Act of 1913 there came into existence the strengthened Native Congress the predecessor of the African National Congress and the growth of a modern resistance movement as it is known today. As this paper does not deal with resistance, its vicissitudes, failures and successes, I shall proceed to leave this aspect to those of my colleagues who can trace resistance techniques and the evolution of legal enactments-perfecting oppression that is called apartheid. This was an uninterrupted process of the reduction of all Africans to a status of migrant labourers, including those who had property in urban areas who were forced to sell in order to move to barrack-type cities of match box houses called SOWETO without

security of tenure where their impermanence in the city was written large even though the South African Government knew that the so called homelands had no meaning for these people and that many of them were detribalised. The introduction of single-sex hostels as recently as the 1960's into urban areas also showed the determination of South Africa to proceed with the generalization of the unisexual notorious mine-compound system and undermine African family life in a manner similar to a move towards labour batteries concept - rather than human dwellings. Do pardon me if my imagination runs away - we have not seen incubation centres yet.

Apartheid means generalized migratory labour systems and the creation of sufficient "independent" economically non-viable homelands which shall be labour reservoirs for the systematic exploitation of the black man without moral, political and social responsibility. The recent concession that urban Africans who accept homeland citizenship shall have urban housing makes sense only in so far as it is a technique to popularise the master plan and to break resistance towards separate development. The reduction of blacks into non-citizens in the developed parts of the country justifies the refusal of the Herrenvolk to share political power and ensures a divide and rule policy.

Why is Migratory Labour so attractive that it has become the model of statecraft - a casual glance at the history of South African economy should make the point clear:-

- (a) It divides the African people
- (b) It gives them a hope of self-determination whilst ensuring the neo-colonialist independent
- (c) It ensures wider exploitation of their labour without creating a need to hospitalise, educate and create social welfare facilities for the exploited. It maximises returns on investments
- (d) It precludes them permanently from ever desiring to share in political power
- (e) It helps the whites to appropriate into themselves what took all racial groups to build, without feeling bad since

the exploited have some homeland somewhere.

The Basotho who helped to build South Africa do not claim any rights in South Africa, so do Malawians and Mozambicans. Their poverty will be an international problem and aid given to them will only enable them to continue to supply South Africa's labour needs whilst South Africa appropriates all taxes for her own use so even international community can help subsidize the system. From the gold mines alone in 1974 South Africa collected R800 million in taxes; and given Lesotho labour input of some 20% - 25% R200 million should have come to Lesotho as Lesotho's share of the tax. All Basotho know exactly what an injection of R200 million would do towards building their economy (see Table 1). It would finance their present five year plan twice over.

The Labour Supply from Different Parts of
Southern Africa in the last Five Years

Table 1

<u>Date</u>	<u>R.S.A.</u>	<u>Lesotho</u>	<u>(000)</u>			<u>N.lat.22°S</u> ^(a)
			<u>Botswana</u>	<u>Swazi land</u>	<u>Moza mbique</u>	
1969	117	65	15	5	100	70
1970	97	71	16	5	113	98
1971	87	69	16	5	102	108
1972	87	79	18	4	98	129
1973	86	87	17	5	99	128
1974	92	78	15	5	102	73

(a) This area includes Malawi, Angola, and generally Tropical Africa north of Beit Bridge.

Any student of the South African economy knows that its growth was based on the exploitation of the gold mines. It is also a fact that given this low ore content of these mines they could only be exploited provided that labour was cheap. This is particularly important given other countries whose labour wage structure made it impossible to exploit mines of higher gold ore content among these Canada comes to mind. The development of South African secondary industry began in 1925 when a conscious decision was taken to diversify. This development was heavily

subsidized by the mining industry and it made a breakthrough during the Second World War when products of relatively inferior quality from South Africa found markets within a Europe devastated by war. After that period South African never had to look back. Instead of the mines closing down, new rich deposits were found in the Free State further strengthening the development - a fact that caused one historian to describe South Africa as a country that has developed by political blunder and economic windfall.

Taking wages in historical perspective in real terms, if we allowed for inflation and we take 1936 as an index of 100 we find that white and black wages did not change much between 1911 and 1936. White wages had an index number of 102 and black wages had an index of 100. In real terms they went down with rise in prices during the early 1920's. By 1936 they were both at 100 meaning that during the period 1911 - 36 there was no change. But from 1936-1969 especially during the 1960's there was a dramatic increase as far as whites were concerned. The index number went from 100 to 172 i.e. 72% increase. As far as blacks were concerned, wages were no higher in the same period and were possibly lower than they had been in 1911. That held up to the end of the 1960's. Looked at differently we can say that average white wages in 1936 was $11\frac{1}{2}$ times the size of the average black wage in the same year. By 1969 it had risen to twenty times the size. It is also important to note that secondary industry wages tended to rise more rapidly than mining wages partly because of the wide range of countries that miners could be recruited from, thereby keep wages low.

Looking into the 1970's we see a period of change characterized by a number of separate unrelated yet uncannily interlocking events. The first of these is the shortage of labour.

By the end of 1969 there was for the first time in ten years a serious shortage of black labour. There was a decline in supply of black South Africans to the mines. In 1970 the supply of black South Africans labour fell below 100,000 to 97,000 for the first time since 1936. The primary reason was erosion of supply caused by the fact that wages on manufacturing

sector was rising faster than on mines and there were more opportunities for self-advancement on secondary sector than on mines with its most rigid colour bar in the entire South African economy.

With this decline there was a proportionate rise in supply (see Table 1) from countries like Lesotho, Botswana, Malawi, etc. Mozambique supply was static at a very high figure of 100,000. Between 1968 and 1973 the supply of labour from Malawi doubled. The South African component in 1973 fell to an all time low of 20%. This changing labour scene sparked off a wage debate within the mining industry. There was fear of over-dependence on imported labour. Durban strikes increased sensitivity on low wages. In 1973 there was a dramatic increase in the price of gold from R26 per ounce in 1970 which had been the price for 20 years. In 1971 the price was R29 per ounce. In 1972 it was R40. In 1973 it was R65 and in 1974 it was R107. This kind of vertical rise has never happened before and the mining industry was not accustomed to increases before let alone this escalation. That the price was rising was fine but it also meant it could come down. South African economy has been fortunate in having its vital commodity enjoying fixed price fluctuation in this commodity meant the existence of a distabilizing variable. In 1974 April Malawi deescalated its supply of labour to the mines so that 12 months later there were 50,000 men less supplied than before.

Another event in this turbulent period, apart from the fact that I became Minister of labour; was compound confrontations starting in September 1973, with the shootings at Carletonville and going right through to the present day. The whole confrontation issue brought a whole new element into the mining industry the element of uncertainty regarding the ability of the mines to control the labour force.

It is important at this juncture to pause and review the following. During my tenure as Minister of Labour, we discovered that an average of 300 Basotho annually died on the mines. We discovered also that the sporadic outbursts of violence killed fewer people than the average figure indicated. These were normally heavily publicised whilst the average mortality due to occupational

hazards were only reported to relatives. Examining the nature of violence, mutilation of bodies during some of these outbursts we realised that it had to be admitted that the compound system imposes serious mental stresses on men who are removed from the civilising influences of their families. This to my mind clearly calls for a close investigation into the psychological impact of the compound system on the individual miners.

Let us examine the behaviour of wages between 1969-1974. We have already observed that between 1911-1936 there was no change in black wages in contrast with a change of white wages between 1936-1969 of 72% bringing a ratio of $11\frac{1}{2}$ average wage 20 times the average black wage. The average wage in 1970 was R4,329 as against average black wage of R208. In index terms whites were 177 and blacks were 99, in 1971 whites went up to 178 with blacks still at 99. In 1972 whites were still at 178 blacks has now risen to 108 - the first time they had gone above 100. In 1973 whites had gone up to 194 and blacks 134. In 1974 whites had gone to 206 and blacks to 194. Between 1971-1974 there was more or less a doubling of real wages paid to black mine workers whilst the price of gold had almost quadruppled. This of course was doubling at a very low level and should not cause much excitement, yet it was a dramatic change compared with the past. In 1971 average white wages to black was the highest it ever got to i.e. 21:1 by 1974 it had dropped to 12:1. In absolute terms in 1971 white workers were getting an average of about R4,400 more than average black in 1974 when things were getting better they got R6,460 more than the average black, i.e. the gap in absolute terms was widening.

It should be clear that uncertainty about continued supply of labour from Malawi, Mozambique because of her impending independence all helped to push wages of black workers up. In addition there was to be recruitment from Rhodesia for the first time since 1912.

It should be noted that even in South African there are workers who earn much less than mine workers by virtue of the control of labour movement by influx control methods. This is particularly true in agriculture. Although the example I chose may

be an extreme one there are people in the Eastern Cape who earn R7 a month without food rations. This should make it clear that the removal of pass restrictions - a factor most irritating in race relations is an essential factor in South Africa's supply of labour to constituencies which have thus far been the main support to the Nationalist rule.

For the benefit of those who believe that partheid is merely the removal of offensive signs and everything will be fine, I would like to say that removal of apartheid means removal of migrant labour systems in its present form - the respect of the family unit the removal of the pass law so that the individual can sell his labour where remuneration and conditions of service are optimal. It also means the intervention of labour exporting countries' Governments to ensure that their citizens are treated as men not boys. It means an end to residential segregation business segregation the end of educational segregation it means an end to racial domination. Is it conceivable that the present Government could introduce meaningful reforms that could fundamentally change the present in-built vested interests of so many of its voters. How can we justly advocate peaceful change desirable as it may be if feasible.

South African on the other hand has not remained static. It has sought not only to have allies in western countries but in Africa as well culminating in the abortive detente policy which almost split the continent in half whilst the visible side of apartheid was reason and peace the underlying purpose was the consolidation and protection of apartheid by making it possible for South Africa to create dependent states both psychologically and economically around her borders whose interest in the abolition of apartheid would be negated by the rate of return from fruits of apartheid. It is to the credit of African people that such a crude strategy was not only exposed but total identification of Africa with the struggle of the Azanian people, the people of Zimbabwe and Namibia has been steadfast at tremendous sacrifice to their respective economies and the danger of provoking irrational racist aggression which necessitates building up of security forces which at this state of their development constitute a serious misdirection of scarce resources. It is in this respect that South

Africa diminishes the freedom of neighbouring African countries. These countries have to be on the alert as long as they remain sympathetic to the freedom of the people of Azania, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Insecure Governments cannot afford all freedoms that make a healthy process of growth possible. South Africa hangs like a dark shadow of evil in the region and has necessarily become a threat to world peace.

The South African Government began a rapid build up of its military forces in 1960, the year in which several African states achieved independence and in which the Sharpeville massacre aroused world concern. The building was accelerated after the establishment of the organisation of African Unity at the Summit Conference of Independent African States at Addis Ababa in May 1963.

The reasons given for the build up were the necessity to survive diplomatic and economic setbacks to be able to defend the free world and maintain defences against hostile elements; that in the light of a flight of capital after Sharpeville and in view of the fact that 48% of the defence budget would be spent in South Africa, it would stimulate the economy while bolstering the confidence of investors and prospective immigrants.

Table 2

(a)

The Estimates of Defence Expenditure since 1960/61

<u>Year</u>	<u>Expenditure</u> (million rands)
1960/61	44
1961/62	72
1962/63	120
1963/64	122
1964/65	233
1965/66	229
1966/67	256
1967/68	266
1968/69	254
1969/70	272
1970/71	257
1971/72	316
1972/73	344

(a) Unit on Apartheid Notes and Documents No. 25/72 p.3
South Africa's Military Establishment.

For 1973/74, 172 million and for 1974/75 702 million were allocated.⁽¹⁾ The defence budget for the year 1975/76 has reached the all time high of 948 million rands. The dramatic rise in defence expenditure reflects the rapid militarization of white South Africa during the past decade. Expenditure has in fact trebled in the past five years and is expected to increase even more following the decision of South African Government in 1974 to compress its 10 year defence programme into five years⁽²⁾.

The situation became increasingly worrying after 1973 with the success of FRELIMO in Mozambique and an increasing resistance in Rhodesia. While manpower already limited, was further drained by an increase in the defence forces to 110,000. The first serious steps were taken to recruit Africans into the South African army - to defend their own oppression and to increase the number of Africans available for policing African areas⁽³⁾.

In a white paper presented in March 1975 in the Cape Town Parliament, Defence Minister Botha announced that South Africa will spend \$575 million in the coming year on landward defence alone, that the total annual defence budget has increased to almost \$1.5 billion. He added that his country knew how to make nuclear bombs and would soon be able to turn out heavy weapons and other ultra modern aircraft⁽⁴⁾.

Without reviewing assistance to South Africa by purchases of arms from leading western countries without reviewing devious methods employed to overcome international embargoes resulting from international public opinion and UN resolution without singling out major trading partners of South Africa it is clear that such massive build up of defence precludes peaceful change.

(1) Official Records of the General Assembly Twenty Ninth Session Supplement No. 22 (A/9622) Annex 1.E.

(2) Ibid. Thirtieth Session Supplement No. 22 (A/10022) para. 254 et seq.

(3) UNESCO Racism and Apartheid in Southern Africa (Paris 1974) p. 11

(4) Press Report Los Angeles Times Johannesburg correspondent 30 March 1975.

If anything it is an advertisement that even investment in non-military goods by foreign companies is welcome as this will release more resources for defence purposes. The classical talk about investing so that South Africa experiences difficulties with manpower shortage and this will lead to relaxation of apartheid seems so much liberal nonsense. What is true is that the crumbs from the rich man's table will be larger but they will remain crumbs. It is not crumbs that the people want, gentlemen, it is freedom.

The picture that emerges is that of Migratory Labour as a generalized system of employment of workers. Workers without rights and devoid of political aims to acquire those rights in the most prosperous parts of the economy. Clearly it is a commonwealth of the exploiters and the exploited. It defines South Africa's concept of a black man, it rationalises apartheid whilst paying lip service to the concept of self-determination. It is decidedly unchristian and defines South Africa's self-deception. As a system of economic relations it is peculiar to South Africa and her neighbours. It is our special thing.

The political philosophy of this region is called apartheid or rather an economy based on migrant labour of differing impermanence which will eventually return to an imaginary homeland designed to justify keeping the labour voiceless without rights and without common humanity that we are all supposed to share. The possession of 87% of the land and the retention of 13% as an imaginary homeland for 80% of the population is not surprising when we realise that the inspiration for this political approach comes from our own admiration of the migrant labour system - exploitation without responsibility. The migrant worker defines a political and an economic system. He stands as a reminder not of the aggressive free enterprise system but of systematic exploitation without social or moral responsibility. He tells a success story too tempting not to generalise into a comprehensive socio-political model where the few oppress the many. He has provided the apartheid system with profound rationalisation (Even Malawians love our system, look at that Mozambique, as for Lesotho where would it be without us). He reminds us of the glorious past - of the civilising mission through teaching the

natives good habits, industry and obedience.

By progressively alienating land from Africans many Africans who were former owners came back as employees on the land they once owned and by so doing began intergrating the South African economy. The mines on the other hand did this better, as Africans had no land to till, as their economic habits depended on abundance of land the alienation of the land together with hut taxes and poll taxes and hard salesmanship as well as equation of christianity with western dress and utensils all combined to produce the necessary wants that induced the system to operate with the efficiency with which it is known.

The mines demand for labour and sustained the reserves which were little more than cheap labour reservoirs. These reserves were later upgraded to the homelands and a new system emerged reinforced by the economic plight of neighbouring states whose independence could be clearly defined as a protest against South Africa's racial laws, not as an assertion of economic growth.

No one can understand the development of the South African economy without fully appreciating the role of gold in that development. Gold mining created the South African economy by an extraction from low grade ore stones, a metal which could only be mined if labour was as cheap as the reservation system made it possible. Given the vast interests of the United Kingdom in this extraction one hardly wonders why so many of neighbouring black states retained a status no better than that of reserves to establish an economic pattern that made the system to yield such rewards. It was around the gold mines subsidized by the mining industry that South African manufacturing sector was built. This growth process was given an impetus by the second world war when the external market proved responsive to South African secondary industry.

The precedent of Chinese labour on the gold mines which was repatriated apart from proving that the industry had vast tentacles demonstrated clearly that one need not create a

permanent labour force around the mines and must have added much towards the establishment of migrant labour system as a South African way of life. Whilst it may be partially true that the recruitment of the so-called foreign Natives is caused by shortage of labour because of the wage structure in secondary industry it is equally certain that this form of labour was preferred for obvious reasons - (exploitation without social responsibility) further burdening the labour exporting countries with a social infrastructure which is not justified by economic strength of those countries.

The abolition of this evil system would constitute the humanisation of South Africa, the recognition of the sacred institution of marriage and the restoration of the dignity of the human person. Perhaps South Africa would have been poised to do just that now that the initial capital accumulation has ushered a mass consumption economy. What is not clear is whether such a resolution is not belated, given the apparent determination of the South African government to generalise the migrant labour system to all Africans even those who know only the urban environment. What effects will the impending struggle for independence in Zimbabwe and Namibia have? Will this further harden the line towards greater rigidity or will this produce long awaited changes which along can avert the approaching conflict and violence?

Reference (5)

Agency for Industrial Mission South Africa Today - a Good Host Country for Migrant Workers? - International Consultation on the role of the Church among migrant workers , papers and Proceedings January 1976

Wilson Francis, Migrant Labour in South Africa, Christian Institute, Johannesburg, 1972

Black Sash - Special Issue on Migratory Labour, JHB Vol.17 No.1 May 1974.

- (5) This field abounds in numerous pamphlets giving detail description on suffering caused by Migratory Labour as well as the application of influx control. Much of this information is obtainable from the South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg and South African Council of Churches, Sprocas.