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SABTA's out
hÂ@lp you

SIR â\200\224 Please allow me, as vice president of the South African Black Taxi Association to answer the letter received by you from â\200\234Concerned Commuter,â\200\235 Sebokeng, on Page 8 of the Friday edition of Theâ\200\231 SOWETAN, November2. :

As you are no doubt aware, SABTA has elected a - new executive committee, and one of the provisions . of the new SABTA is to improve the service that we provide to the commuter. Without the commuter there would be no taxi business, and SABTA is well aware of this. We will be endeavouring, in the coming months, to greatly improve the image of the taxi business through such means as driver awareness campaigns, driver of the year contests, and disciplinary meetings to deal with reckless and discourteous drivers.

,May'Icalluponâ\200\234ConwmedCommuterâ\200\235-toplease ta'i-\201 particulars of time, date and the registration â\200\230numbers in instances where they feel they have been badly treated and refer these to the SABTA Head Committee, PO Box 26311, Arcadia, Pretoria, to enable us to deal effectively with these matters.

On the second point that you mention, of government plans to introduce minibuses, SABTA is without doubt opposed to these moves and I would call upon you and all black commuters to stand solidly behind SABTA in its attempts to improve the black

- taxi business as well as to maintain our right to com- â\200\230mute our own people.
G NTLATLENG, Vice Pres SABTA ;

R e S R 2 o P AR S 70 PRI

SOWEI'AN Wednesda , November 21, 1984

COMMENT

PHONE: 673-4160

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A FORECAST by the National Manpower Commission that more black than white students will be passing their matriculation exami-

towards top careers within the next few years, leaves us, at the -best, with mixed feelings.

commission reports that the number of new black matriculants will almost be doubled in the next decade as blacks race ahead of white pupils in education. The surge of black school successes will come as - the number of new white matriculants goes into dramatic decline used by ash rm kng em the slze of average white families. :

* According to Dr Hennie Reynders, chairman of the commission, the radical swing in traditional patterns should be regarded by employers as an early alert to changes in thinking that will be needed about recruitment and training in commerce and industry.

While the Manpower Commission supplies useful information and figures about this, we do not think it

its conclusion. We believe the obvious disparity between the two populations, spurred in a way by the blackman's eagerness to get his education so as to improve his lot, tells the story quite plainly.

looks encouraging and we would - imagine that employers and plan-

new avenues for black youths just

whites will be matriculating as the years roll by should, under normal circumstances, mean better and bigger opportunities for blacks.

that all but cloud an otherwise rosy picture.

crease, more blacks fail matric. What with one thing or the other they become dropouts who cannot fit into the economic and social strata of the society. As it happens, even those who have matriculation these days have enormous problems getting jobs and it will take time for employers to throw the doors wider.

nations and launching themselves

needed expert investigation to reachâ\200\231

The situation, on the surface,

ners in general would be opening up -

matriculating. The fact that fewer

But there are serious problems

While their number is on the in-

~ But perhaps the most serious
problem about this scenario is the

- _type of education that blacks have

i getting since the inception of

-Bantu Education. Whatever may be

said to the contrary, the average
black graduate these days is almost

- .illiterate. We have too many exam-

ples of graduates applying for jobs
here and elsewhere, who are simply
â\200\230half literate and heaven alone knows
what their other skills are like.

The chickens have come to roost
for the planners of black education.
Whereas those who introduced
Bantu Education believed the black

- man would be the hewer of wood

and the drawer of water indefi-
nitely, and that this country would
â\200\230have no use for any skills from
them, in the next century the black
man, with his limited skills, will be
faced with manning the countryâ\200\231s
various skilled jobs. Naturally they
will not have the skills to sustain a
highly industrialised country such as
this, and this will lead to the econ-
omy collapsing bit by bit. Already a
whole generation of illiterates is
going through matriculation and we
will rue the day that we introduced
different education departments for

- different people.

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Mr Louis le Grange has dmnbed
the current wave of unrest in the
black townships as more serious
than the 1976 Soweto disturbances.
For once I agree with him. :

The unrest is not yet as wide-
spread as it was in 1976 and the ca-
sualty fkgure is still lower: Mr le
Grange said last Thursday that 130
people had been killed (another
three have died 'since then), while
the official death toll for eight
â\200\230months of unrest in 1976 was 575.

But the conflict this time is more
the result of pointed political action,
less the spontaneous outburst of

rage which erupted in the Soweto -

schools eight years ago. -

Many of the protests have .been.
planned and there is a basis of po~-
litical organisation in the form of
co-ordinating- committees. which
have brought together a wide range

of organisations in the black com-
munity, the most important bemg_ &

â\200\230the United Democratic Front.
- 'As Mr le Grange has noted, there
- are many more adults involved this
time. It is not just a youth rebellion..

There are several other: xmpor-'
tant differences as well. it ae,.

One is that the black trade un;

- movement has become involved for .
the first time, which could lead to%
the political mobilisation â\200\230of our
racially defined working class. :

Until - now the most important
unions have resisted repeated at-

. tempts by black political organisa-

*tions to-draw them into the political

struggle. They seemed determined to- concentrate on -improvingâ\200\231 the wages and working conditions of . their members instead.

Now, by its heavy-handed actions against the unions, the Government . has gratuitously done what the black politicians could not. By de- taining leaders like Mr Chris Dlamini, the president of Fosatu, andâ\200\235â\204¢ Mr Piroshaw Camay, the general- secretary- of Cusa, the Government has politicised the â\200\230black union

movement at a stroke. It is some-

thing it will live to regret. Future historians may well record it as theâ\200\231

~ single most foolish action in 36 years of nationalist rule.

The protest strike of November 5 and 6, which prompted these detentions, was itself enormously significant. Prompted itself by the heavy-handed Sebokeng raid of October 23,

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it was by far the most successfï¬\2011 action of its kind that has been staged in this country:

- This shows: that, with unionisation,txon, â\200\230blacks now. have the ability,

and the willingness, to inflict serious: damage on the economy to fur-

. ther: their . struggle for pohtxcal rights.

-The. unrÃ@st: also has the makmgsâ\200\230

- of aâ\200\231ponstitutional crisis. With the

new constitution barely in place, it
has been stripped of legitimacy by
the massive boycott of the coloured
-and Indian elections in August and
now by the evidence that it has ac-
celerated the alienation of the Afri-
cans 5

It has virtually wiped out the sys-
tem of black local authorities which
the Government has established in
the townships, and which were to
. have formed the basis of the next

phase of its constitutional develop-
ment.

The Government has been work-

ing towards the idea of creating a

national council for urban blacks,
based on these township councils,

- which could be given authority over }

urban black 'town affairs' and also

be slotted in beside the 'homeland'

governments in the confederal
framework of the envisaged 'con-
tellation' of Southern African

states.

This would complete the 'neo-

'apartheid' constitutional structure.

But the township councillors, who

" are despised as 'collaborators' in

their communities and often live in

. conspicuous luxury, have been pri-

h move 'objectives'
{rade 11111011S

many targets during the unrest.
Seven have been killed. Their |

- houses and businesses have been put |

to the torch. Many have resigned |
and others have fled. According to }
one authoritative source, only four
of the 22 councils in the affected
township are still functioning.

I do not know how the Govern-

ment can restore that structure.
* There will be no takers for these

jobs. Only a few days ago elections
to replace Heidelberg's Ratanda.
Council, which resigned en masse,
had to be postponed because there

~ were no candidates.

The only alternative would seem
to be to go back to direct rule by the
white administration boards, but if
the Government does that it will

block its own constitutional plans.

Has the unrest reached the level.
of a revolution? No. It is still too

directionless to be called that, but it

has more direction to it than the
1976 upheavals, and if the Govern-
ment continues to refuse to give
blacks a role in the central govern-
ment, so that their grievances and

- aspirations can be democratically

expressed, then the next outbreak
will doubtless have more direction
still. {5 i b 1

Ollzster Sparks, a former editor-
of the Rand Daily Mail, writes
this regular column and reports
for several overseas newspapers.

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