

THE CITIZEN COMMENT

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Bonus cut

WHEN the Government cuts back on any benefits to public servants, we can accept that the crunch has come.

The economy is in a mess and drastic measures have to be taken to bring it back to health. One can blame drought, the falling gold price, the falling rand, the strong American dollar. One can blame the previous Finance Minister, Mr Owen Horwood, for not acting timeously or at all.

But whatever and whoever we blame, the massive over-spending by the State is the Government's own fault, for it was within its power to keep its expenditure under control, but it didn't.

In the case of the public service, it is clear that in trying to match the private sector's salaries the Government raised salaries of its own employees far too high, taking into account the benefits public servants receive in housing subsidies, pensions and retirement gratuities, and the state of the economy.

The Government simply could not afford the huge salary bill it faced after granting such a big increase in public service pay.

According to expert calculations, public servants cost taxpayers R10 000-million last year — more than double the figure four years previously.

This amount is for the central government, SA Transport Services and Escom, but does not include parastatals like Iscor, Armscor and Sasol.

Last year's R1 000-million increase was large enough to pay the total bill in 1976.

Public servants now receive 18,5 percent of the South African salary payout, compared with an average of 16 percent in the past ten years.

In 1980 the State's salary bill rose by 23 percent, in 1981 by 25,9 percent, in 1982 by 22 percent and last year by 27 percent.

Public servants say that parity has been achieved between the public and private sectors.

But with the State employing nearly a third of all economically active people in South Africa, the salary bill of the Government is enormous and excessive.

Commerce, industry and the ordinary man, overtaxed and suffering from terrible inflation, have been looking to the Government to cut its expenditure severely.

Cutting back on staffing of the public service is obviously one way of achieving this; cutting back on salaries or benefits is another.

The Government has decided to leave salaries

as they are, a wise step in the circumstances, since a cut in pay so soon after putting it up would be regarded as a sign of rank incompetence. It would also cause a mammoth upheaval in the public service.

The Government, instead, has decided to cut the annual bonuses of officials in Government and provincial service by a third.

Half the existing vacancies in the Government departments are also to be abolished, there will be an immediate ban on enlargement of any department, a cutback in expenditure on the achievement recognition system, and a drive for higher productivity.

Personnel who regularly use official transport between their home and workplace will be required to pay for the ride.

All these are drastic measures which wouldn't have been taken if the Government had not found them to be absolutely essential.

But as we said yesterday, it is easier to push up salaries and benefits than get public servants to accept their reduction.

The Government, critics say, increased public service salaries to win the support of officials in the referendum on the constitution. The measures announced now are bound to affect the National Party in a couple of pending by-elections and will alienate most public servants.

But the crunch had to come — and the Government, while still deserving to be criticised for its previous profligacy, is to be congratulated on having the courage to do what is essential in these critical times.

The rest of us are unlikely to find any joy in the coming Budget, when our turn comes.



BY SHARON FARMER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

From left, Richard Hatcher, Eleanor Holmes, Ernest Morial and Randall Robinson at the dinner.

Arresting Presences

TransAfrica Honors the Volunteers Who Keep the Faith

6/13/85

By Jacqueline Trescott
Washington Post Staff Writer

When a friend asked William Moore, a deacon at First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church and a retired Bureau of Engraving employe, to drive demonstrators to the South African Embassy every day, he didn't hesitate to say yes.

"From the things I hear and the pictures I see, I see that what is happening in South Africa is real wrong. Something should be done," said Moore.

Before last November Moore, 65, hadn't called himself an activist, although he had participated during the 1960s in the civil rights marches on Washington. Now, he ob-

served, "those demonstrations in all kinds of weather are waking the consciousness of a lot of people."

Moore, whose participation is essential to the operation of the antiapartheid protests, joined a handful of now-familiar faces—among the most diligent picketers at the embassy—to receive the salutes Saturday night of TransAfrica, the Washington lobby that has spearheaded the demonstrations.

Among the volunteers cited at the group's eighth annual dinner were Jake Wells, Mark and Cecilia Sharp, Bob Ngoma, Mario Schowers, Wayne King, Conwell Jones, several organizers outside Washington and several lawyers who provide legal

See DINNER, C3, Col. 1

TransAfrica Celebrates



From left, Charlie Lewis, Roscoe Nix, Martha Cobb and Lionel Barrow at the TransAfrica dinner.

DINNER, From C1

services to those arrested at the embassy. The group also honored historian C.L.R. James with its Africa Freedom Award.

This year the TransAfrica dinner retained its traditional atmosphere of business-first with discussions of such issues as ridding South Africa of apartheid, gaining freedom for neighboring Namibia and influencing U.S. policy in the rest of Africa and the Caribbean.

But this year the ballroom at the Washington Hilton also had an air of celebration. More than 2,200 people have been arrested at the South African Embassy since November, and when TransAfrica Executive Director Randall Robinson called for the guests to stand if they had demonstrated, half of the 1,300 guests stood.

States, cities and universities have been calling for divestment in companies doing business in South Africa, and legislation is pending in Congress that would ban all new business investment and bank loans in South Africa as well as the sale in this country of kruggerands, South African gold pieces. To wild applause at the dinner, Mayor Marion Barry announced that this week he will propose renaming the portion of Massachusetts Avenue in front of the embassy for Nelson Mandela, the political leader who has been imprisoned for 23 years, and his wife Winnie.

Though political victories were cited, many in the audience were discussing the personal impact of the demonstrations. "White collar, blue collar and no collar" had been attracted to the movement, said Robinson. They "are all involved in developing

an American consensus . . . We have done one damn good hell of a job. We are nothing if not relentless," he said. "The supply of those who would do it is inexhaustible."

For some, picketing has given new direction.

"I have only missed about seven days and I feel badly when I miss because I am devoting my time to fighting racism," said Jake Wells, 72, a former director of the National Junior Tennis League.

"I was born black and I didn't grow my hair to identify myself before. Now I am working for my peace of mind."

For some like William Lucy, a labor leader, and John Payton, an attorney, the response to the demonstrations has restored their faith in people. "It has removed some of my cynicism and rekindled some optimism. I have a new kind of enthusiasm because you know people will respond because there's a rebirth of moral initiatives."

In his keynote address, New Orleans Mayor Ernest Morial outlined an urban agenda for disinvestment of public funds in institutions doing business with South Africa. He noted that the loss of American jobs to cheaper South African labor and American investment in South Africa (which he said was \$14 billion in 1983) had attracted some unexpected advocates for antiapartheid measures.

"Ironically," he said, "constructive engagement has even pushed [Alabama Gov.] George Wallace to support the South African freedom movement because ships now being built in Mobile are using South African steel—while up the road in Birmingham, steel mills are closing down in the face of this stiff foreign competition."

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South Africa: Take a clearer look

By CAL THOMAS

APARTHEID IS unnatural, unholy and wrong, whether practiced today in South Africa or practiced by another name in the all-too-recent past in the United States. It took us 180 years to turn our system around, though it is still far from the ideal, but we expect South Africa, in existence only since 1910 and independent since 1960, to be as racially "advanced" as we are.

Imagine how frustrated Americans would be if they knew South African television carried pictures of the Philadelphia police operation against MOVE as typical of the way we handle our black population and you will begin to understand South Africans who believe their problems have received one-sided treatment.

Twice in the same week, I had the opportunity to consider another point of view from the one I have been accustomed to receiving from the "morally upright" American press.

A delegation of black and white South Africans came to Washington to tell of their support for their government's attempt to keep the country free from a Communist takeover, even while they continue to work with that government to end apartheid.

The most dramatic story was told by Joyce Kinikini, whose husband, son and two nephews were murdered just weeks ago. Another son is missing. Kinikini says her husband, a black councilman, was suspected of collaborating with the white government. Kinikini, who says her family was slaughtered by Communist supporters, gave me a videotape of the slayings, made by a Dutch TV crew. It is horrible. Her husband and son are shown being hacked to death with knives, doused with gasoline and set afire while people stand around, cheer and raise their fists at the camera. I wonder why we never saw this on American television?

At the South African Embassy in Washington, I met the new ambassador, Herbert David Beukes. (I had expected to encounter demonstrators outside but was told they show up only during afternoon rush hour and leave when the TV cameras depart.)

Beukes acknowledged an error he thinks his government has made: "We made a mistake in believing that the solution to our country's political problems was to create separate

homelands (for blacks). The government will no longer insist that creating independent countries is the only way to solve our problems. Instead, we will attempt to link together in a federated system all of the independent nations with the South African government with the objective of full participation for all without one group dominating another."

Beukes said apartheid is "nearly dead and certainly past the critical stage." He wonders why his country has not received better marks for its progress, which includes repeal of the "immorality law" that prohibited sexual relations between those of different colors; the institution of collective bargaining for blacks, including the right to strike; repeal of laws prohibiting blacks from forming labor unions, and the elimination of a two-tier salary structure in which blacks were paid less than whites. Further, said the ambassador, hotels, restaurants, libraries, public parks and airlines have been desegregated.

All of this sounds faintly suspicious in light of our own experiences with the foot-dragging anti-civil

rights leaders of 20 years ago, but one must remember that Mississippi and Alabama are not bordered by the likes of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola—all Communist, or in the case of Zimbabwe, certainly Communist-leaning, countries.

Beukes said there is only one precondition to the ultimate elimination of apartheid and that is that those who participate in the negotiating process must renounce violence as a tactic. This the radicals have refused to do. Instead, they are bent on intimidating the moderates, black and white, who are trying to cooperate with the government.

IT IS DIFFICULT to pry a criticism of the U.S. from these South Africans, but the moral differences between the U.S. and South Africa are not all black and white. While we have made progress on race relations, we tolerate abortion on demand and rampant pornography. Abortion is illegal in South Africa, and pornography is tightly controlled. While one cannot be considered a trade-off for the other, perhaps we would do better to get the beam out of our own eye before becoming preoccupied with the speck in our South African brother's eye.