

8.5.63?

LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER.

BANTU LAWS AMENDMENT BILL 1963.

Sir,

As invited by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, we submitted Memoranda on the draft of this Bill.

As women voters of the Republic we feel strongly that the passing of this Bill in its present form will have disastrous effects on the lives of millions of Africans, on the economy of the country and in the worsening of Race Relations.

Particularly in view of the alleged "crisis" in our country which led the Government to take hitherto unheard-of steps for security by the passing of the General Law Amendment Bill 1963, we appeal to you, Sir, not to proceed with a Bill

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tion.

which will further exacerbate race tension, and indirectly halt the expansion of the Country's economy. (and paint yet another unfavourable picture of our country abroad)

After eight years' careful study of ideological legislation and the inhumane effects of its implementation, the following are briefly our objections to yet further stringent restrictions being placed on Urban Africans.

1. The Bill infringes human rights and liberties by placing absolute control and arbitrary power in the hands of one of your Ministers.
2. The Bill removes the small measure of security hitherto enjoyed by Africans living legally in proclaimed areas.

These legal rights have given them some little opportunity of becoming stable and responsible members of the community. The removal of this security and of the African's right to live in his birthplace contravenes an accepted principle of common law and will create a rootless and unsettled people.

We query  
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3. The Bill will intensify the already evident break-up of family life; the cornerstone of stability in any society.

Loss of employment caused by the many restrictions in the Bill, and the consequent loss of residential rights will increase "endorsements out". (and their children will be deprived of the care of their parents, causing a further decline in parental authority, increase in juvenile delinquency and crime, and a growing contempt for the law)

They already  
are

Family not deprived of both parents.

4. The removal of the discretion of the local authority to allow a wife to visit her husband in a proclaimed area, if he has been in employment in that area for a period of not less than two years, is the violation of the right of a woman to live with her husband.

Still will be  
allowed but  
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difficult to  
come in.

5. Africans and their dependents, removed from urban area, may be sent to rural areas where starvation and overcrowding exist.

These areas are not equipped to house, feed and employ or sustain the people already living there.

6. The Minister will have further power to direct the employment and movement of the country's labour force, to terminate labour contracts, to curtail and control the supply of labour and to ~~ferre~~ <sup>prevent</sup> industry ~~to-operate~~ <sup>from operating</sup> in any area in which he may determine that it should not.

7. The Bill imposes stringent and unfair conditions on the self-employed African and on the African trader.

This is contrary to the principle of free enterprise.

8. The Bill denies the right, basic in every democracy, that a man shall be permitted to sell his labour freely and to his advantage.

This denial makes the worker servile to the state, a condition found hitherto only in totalitarian and communist countries.

9. The country is at present experiencing a shortage



of trained personnel.

South Africa's reservoir of non-White labour, avid for education, highly teachable, resilient and of an energy not at present measurable, if well trained, well fed and given opportunities for individual development, could help to raise South Africa to a standard scarcely now calculable.

The potential spending power of a free labour force could offer endless possibilities to South Africa's development. At present our labour potential is wasted and its spending power curtailed.

10. The cost of implementing the new Bill is incalculable. Who can predict the increase in the number of man-hours spent at pass offices, in courts, in prisons and in the execution of the innumerable formalities as well as the ancillary expenses which will necessarily be incurred by the Department of Justice?

For these reasons alone the Black Sash considers that the multiplication of oppressions under this amending legislation may result in a situation which all the physical power of the state will not be sufficient to contain.

We have consistently protested against the "Pass Laws" and the deprivation thereby of the rights and liberties of the individual. This mass of legislation is morally indefensible, unethical and inhumane.

We appeal to you, Sir, on humanitarian and not political grounds to withdraw this Bill and thus prevent further misery and subsequent tension and unrest.