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By LEN BLOOM

## Some Problems of Urbanization in South Africa

WITHIN TWENTY YEARS Accra and Dakar, Lagos and Dar-es-Salaam have joined London, New York and Moscow as centers of international standing. Gutkind has shown in a discussion of the role of the city in Africa as a stimulus for rapid social change that the growth rates of parts of Central and West Africa are eight to nine percent—rates almost as much as those in England in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. He predicts that the influence of the city in Africa will increase steadily, and we can expect, therefore, that an urban way of life with its own African peculiarities will gradually emerge.<sup>1</sup>

South Africa is the most urbanized and industrialized state of the continent, and perhaps has had the most consistent governmental control of its development. Broadly, governments have attempted to contain and retard urbanization for ideological and political reasons, but despite intensive pressure, urbanization has spread consistently in extent and influence. Africans have left the country steadily for the towns, and since the Second World War the beginning of an urban proletariat has been formed.

The preliminary results of the 1960 Census give the following percentages for the population living in urban areas: African, 30; Colored, 63; Asian, 80; and White, 80. About 44 percent of the total population of South Africa is urbanized. Between 1951 and 1960, the official increase in white urban dwellers was 7 percent, and Africans were close behind with 5 percent.

The economist, Horwood, considers that the official figures reveal quite clearly that the urbanization rate of the African has outstripped that of any other race. Where, in 1911, there were approximately one-half million Africans in the urban areas, the number had increased to some three million by 1960. Where, fifty years ago but one in every eight Africans resided in the metropolitan areas, today three in every ten do so. During the last intercensal period (1951-1960) there was a bigger increase in the urban African population than in any similar period in the past. What is more, a sample survey reveals that 70 percent of urban Africans are industrialized workers who have never reverted to rural work.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>P. C. W. Gutkind, "The African Urban Milieu: A Force in Rapid Change," *Civilization*, XII, No. 2 (1962), 167-91.

<sup>2</sup>O. F. P. Horwood, *The Economic Framework of Social Development in a Dual Society* (Durban, 1962), p. 12.

In other words, in 1960 out of a total African population of about 10.8 million, about 3.4 million were officially acknowledged as urban, and many experts consider the official figures to be an underestimate.

The comparative rates of change in the rural-urban population in South Africa indicate the extent to which urbanization has affected the various "ethnic" groups.

	African Percent	White Percent
1921-1936		
Urban population	+94.49	+54.26
Rural population	+32.69	+ 3.64
1936-1946		
Urban population	+57.16	+31.51
Rural population	+10.19	- 6.19
1946-1962		
Urban population	+80.00	
Rural population	+25.00	

Neither the net over-all increase of population, nor the state-encouraged immigration of white settlers can account for these startling figures, which reflect, therefore, radical socio-economic pressures and changing ideologies. It is hard to imagine any change in the economic momentum and generated needs of South Africa reversing this trend; indeed, the South Africa of 2,000 A.D., with its projected population of about 25,000,000, will probably have forces to accelerate the rate of urbanization.

Firstly, South Africa will probably be more closely integrated into the continent of Africa—politically, socially and economically. South Africa is one of the few major industrialized states in Africa, and once its present isolationism has ceased, it could become the workshop of Africa, as once the United Kingdom was the workshop of the world.

Secondly, the growth of the internal consumer goods market will continue, as more and more Africans become workers for wages, and as wages increase. Even though the purchasing power for a large proportion of Africans is very low, the collective African market is large, and has been estimated at some £400,000,000 a year (about \$1,120,000,000).<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, African rural areas are decaying, overpopulated and grossly undercapitalized. No government has ever dared the electoral risk of raising the necessary loans or taxes from the white electorate to pay for the considerable improvement schemes that are needed if the African population is to be coaxed back to the countryside.

Fourthly, the politics of the Africans' struggle for freedom and equality demands that rural conservatism and tribalism be weakened.

<sup>3</sup> M. Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1964), p. 209.

This demand can be met only by accelerating urbanization and industrialization. This will form a major task in the reconstruction programs of a democratic government in a future South Africa.

The basic patterns of industrialization and urbanization in South Africa are similar to those of other countries. There are the sharp contrast between rural and urban activities and the paradoxically close reciprocal relationship between them. The economic policies that flow from the ideology of *apartheid* distort the basic trends, but do not effectively divert them from their ultimate destination. Murray<sup>4</sup> analyzes the basic disequilibrium of a developing country as resulting from inequality: on the one hand is a capitalized sector in which is concentrated most of the wealth and social services, and which is the source of the economy's dynamic; on the other hand, the bulk of the population live in a stagnant, poverty-stricken, underemployed and technologically backward sector, in which the chronic lack of capital and "surplus" of labor inhibit economic advance.

Murray's diagnosis applies to South Africa, but the situation is complicated by the extent to which successive governments have sought to stem the speed of economic change, which has, despite governments, not markedly lagged except in the rural sectors. A further complicating factor is that for many years the governments' policy has been to regard Africans in urban areas as "migrant workers," with their roots in the country. It is, for example, the policy of the government to remove from the Western Cape all the quarter million Africans who now live and work there.

A major characteristic of urbanism is its pervasiveness. Towns do not influence the behavior of townsmen alone, but are also a force in the change of lives of countrymen. No doubt the urban way of life is influenced often by the lingering traditions of rural patterns, and there may be conflict between the new urban and the older rural value systems. But to interpret the processes of urbanization as a struggle between rural and urban loyalties, and as little more, is short-sighted and sentimental. In South Africa, the frontier mentality lingers on, if only in the manifestoes of the political parties, and even sophisticated economists and sociologists support *apartheid* and the emphasis upon "keeping" the African as a rural-orientated person.

Wirth<sup>5</sup> and Bascom<sup>6</sup> both stress permanent settlement as fundamental to the development of urbanism. A highly developed urbanism demands as a prior condition security and freedom from any economic, political and social pressures that encourage migrant labor. But there

<sup>4</sup> R. Murray, "Agronomy and Society," *New Left Review*, *IXX* (1963), 85-92.

<sup>5</sup> L. Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology*, *XLIV* (1938), 1-24.

<sup>6</sup> W. R. Bascom, "Urbanism as a Traditional African Pattern," *Sociological Review*, *VII* (1959), 29-43.

are marked differences between the permanency of the serf and that of the city-dweller. The settled nature of the serf's life is due to physical and social barriers to communication and to legal-political prohibitions. He may be physically settled, but nevertheless is often insecure and uncertain of the future and his ability to decide upon it. The modern community is a result of good communications and the inter-dependence of sectors of the economic-social system. Modern man can move from Johannesburg to Cape Town to Durban, or even from Lagos to London to Tokyo without changing from an urban to a non-urban way of life. This probably demands a smaller psychological adjustment than moving from the pre-industrialized to the industrialized sector of a country. There is a subjective difference between the restless wanderings of uprooted, work-seeking peasants (in many ex-colonial or crypto-colonial states) and the modern mobility within an open society. In South Africa—a crypto-colonial state—the wandering peasant is compelled by law and economic need to find a livelihood wherever he can, but is never permitted to feel that he is settled permanently in the world of the city or in that of the country. He can only with difficulty develop fully urban (or rural) attitudes.

In January, 1960, in a mine disaster in Colebrookdale in South Africa, of 429 African miners killed only two were born in South Africa. All were officially "in transit," "temporary sojourners" on the Reef. Such people are in industry and in the city, but they are forbidden by law and discouraged by their conditions of life from becoming of the city.<sup>7</sup> Many of the psycho-social difficulties experienced by Africans in their transition from country to town are not due to the obstinate persistence of rural attitudes and values, but are defenses against the insecurity of their status as townsmen. The present government has complicated the problems of urbanization by encouraging the formation of so-called Border Industries, *i.e.*, industries on the borders of African rural areas where there are large reserves of unskilled (and therefore low-wage earning) workers. On the one hand, the border industries draw in some Africans and spread basic industrial skills and attitudes. On the other hand, the workers still live in dominantly rural regions with rural values, and the irradiation of urban value is thus inhibited.

It is an anthropological heresy in 1964 to overstress the rudimentary nature of economic motivations in pre-industrialized societies. As long ago as 1935, Mair,<sup>8</sup> in her summary of the changes of economic organization from pre-industrial to industrial in West Africa, said that this change was a matter of degree and not of kind. She argued that economic decisions existed in pre-industrial societies and were not essentially different from those in industrial societies. Jones<sup>9</sup> has also demon-

<sup>7</sup> J. Woddis, *Africa: The Roots of Revolt* (London, 1960).

<sup>8</sup> L. P. Mair, "The Growth of Economic Individualism in African Society," *Journal of African Society*, XXXIII, No. 132 (1934), 261-73.

<sup>9</sup> W. O. Jones, "Economic Man in Africa," *Food Res. Inst. Stud.*, I, No. 2 (1960), pp. 107-34.

strated the vigor of economic motives in the day-to-day lives of tropical Africans. Indeed, is it conceivable that any society could function adequately had it not some institutionalized form of economic calculus to govern the allocation of its scarce resources among competing ends, in accord with its own particular system of culturally determined priorities?

A major autonomous motive developed in industrial-urban economic activity is the compulsion to choose (within the limits of wages), and many psychologists have noted<sup>10</sup> how the desire for achievement rapidly and irreversibly becomes a major goal in a society. Economic choice insensibly becomes integrated into the wider problems of political and social choice; the economic freedom of the city and industrialization generate both the desire for and the situations which make possible social and political freedom.

Outside South Africa in the continent of Africa, urbanization developed with commerce and trading rather than with manufacturing; and long before Africa was colonized, large settled trading communities were scattered throughout. With colonization and industrialization there was a demand for a steady supply of workers, and Africans were compelled or cajoled to move to the industrial and mining areas. The peculiarities of modern migration in Africa have impeded, but not prevented, the transition from rural to urban orientations. It is largely because of these peculiarities that there are men and women who although "industrialized" are not fully "urbanized."

Migrant labor in Africa has certain qualities arising from explicit or implicit economic-social-political policies. Woddis<sup>11</sup> has distinguished six characteristics: (1) Migration is almost exclusively of adult men, and the rural areas are therefore denuded of able-bodied men of working age. (2) Migration is often for a short and limited time, and there is small incentive for the worker to become a settled townsman, although some urban attitudes must rub off on him. (3) Migration is often spasmodic, discontinuous, and for some specific purpose, which once the worker has accomplished, he returns home. (4) Enormous distances are crossed, often on foot, and much of the worker's wage goes towards providing for his return rather than to raising his standard of living. (5) Forced labor is often disguised as some form of labor recruitment. (6) The scale of the migration is so great that the already acute rural crisis and unbalanced economy are further upset by loss of the potentially most productive rural workers.

Glass,<sup>12</sup> in her study of industrialization and urbanization in South Africa, elaborates on the theme that the political-economic system may

<sup>10</sup> D. C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (New York, 1961).

<sup>11</sup> Woddis, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Y. Glass, *Industrialization and Urbanization in South Africa* (Durban, 1962).

compel workers to become integrated into the industrial sector, but nevertheless precludes them from full integration into an urban society. On the Reef, for example, the mine worker is forced to live in closely regulated compounds in an area allocated to his (perhaps notional) "tribal" affiliation. He is largely insulated from the city and deprived of more than a minimum of situations in which he can choose how he shall spend his time and his money. A high proportion of African workers are lodged in barrack-like hotels, or in relatively insulated and controlled "locations" or townships, in which urban influences filter through the barriers of what law and economy permit.

Wage policies further reenforce the split between industrial commitment and urban orientation. In 1963, a survey in prosperous Johannesburg indicated an average monthly household income of about Rand 59 (approximately \$88), which still leaves some 45 percent who have not exceeded the "poverty datum line."<sup>13</sup> In November, 1963, a number of large industrial concerns announced the increase in the wages of their African employees to a minimum of \$2.80 a day, which still barely exceeds the bread-line, and does nothing to improve the lot of the very considerable numbers of non-industrial workers, e.g., domestic servants and agricultural workers. In Africa, the convention of paying only subsistence wages, stabilized at a low level, has hardened,<sup>14</sup> and the industrial worker dare not, for economic reasons, cut himself from non-industrial means to augment his meagre income. Legally the industrial worker in South Africa can never be free, as of right, from rural non-industrial ties, however ludicrously farfetched they may be. Therefore, both economically and legally the would-be fully industrialized worker may be compelled to oscillate emotionally between a rural and an urban-industrial orientation.

The legal barriers that in part inhibit urbanization-industrialization of Africans are: (1) job reservations and anti-trades-union legislation; (2) "influx and efflux" control of the movement of workers in search of jobs; (3) the system of "Bantu Education," i.e., the provision of an educational system for Africans different in principle from that provided for other groups.

*The Industrial Conciliation Act* (1956, and subsequent amendments) gave the government power to reserve certain proclaimed jobs for persons of a defined "racial" group, the general aim being to protect the white worker from nonwhite competition. At the end of 1961, "determinations" were in effect to forbid Africans from, *inter alia*, driving heavy-duty trucks, operating elevators in certain cities, carrying out certain skilled and semi-skilled building and clothing operations, occupying certain posts as traffic constables, firemen and ambulance drivers and

<sup>13</sup> Horrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-08.

<sup>14</sup> V. L. Allen, "Management and Labor in Africa," *The Listener* (August 15, 1963), 225-27.

attendants. During 1962 further inquiries were held to decide if restrictions should be placed on nonwhites in the building industry in Natal, motor assembly, motor transport driving, footwear, furniture, laundry, dry-cleaning, liquor and catering industries. There is an effective color bar in operation in governmental and municipal organizations that precludes nonwhites (with very few exceptions) from any but menial jobs and petty clerkships.

*The Native Labor (Settlement of Disputes) Act* (1953, subsequent amendments, and allied legislation) makes it illegal for African workers to strike, and the few trades unions that legally can be formed are so strictly controlled and restricted that they are scarcely more than tame company unions. Indeed, since Africans first began to work for white employers legal strikes and protests against working conditions generally have been almost impossible.<sup>15</sup> Yet during 1960 there were 33 strikes involving 2,199 workers, of whom 294 were charged with and convicted of striking.

Trades unions have indirect social influences on the community. In the modern society the trade union should represent an "important cohesive factor among urban-industrialized Africans, filling the vacuum caused by the necessary disappearance of tribal ties."<sup>16</sup>

*The Bantu Laws Amendment Act* (1963) is a key measure in the complex mass of laws that effectively disqualify any African from acquiring the right to live anywhere, rural or urban, or to seek work wherever he chooses. Every year there are some 300,000 convictions for offenses against influx control regulations, and during March, 1961, in Johannesburg alone, 89 juvenile Africans were sentenced to five cuts with a cane for offending against these laws.<sup>17</sup>

*The Bantu Education Act* (1953) gave the central government control of all educational services for Africans, and since then the per capita cost of African education has steadily sunk to about seventeen dollars, or about twenty percent of the amount spent upon white children. On the education of the Africans, two-thirds of the children of South Africa, less than one-third of one percent of the national income is being spent. There is a very steep tapering from the lower to the higher grades, in compliance with the general policy of the government to retard the education and technical training of Africans except at a low level. "The school must equip him [the African] to meet the demands which the economic life of South Africa will impose upon him."<sup>18</sup> These demands are upon the membership of a predominantly laboring class. The syllabus and emphasis of *The Bantu Education Act* emphasizes that Africans "have their permanent homes in the reserves and their entry into other

<sup>15</sup> M. Horrell, *South African Trade Unions* (Johannesburg, 1961).

<sup>16</sup> G. V. Doxey, *The Industrial Color Bar in South Africa* (London, 1961).

<sup>17</sup> Horrell, *South African Trade Unions*, p. 128.

<sup>18</sup> H. F. Verwoerd, *Bantu Education-Policy for the Immediate Future* (Pretoria, 1959), p. 15.

areas and the urban centers is merely of a temporary nature and for economic reasons. . . . They are admitted as work-seekers, not as settlers."<sup>19</sup> Verwoerd is even more blunt: "there is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labor."<sup>20</sup> The transition from rural to urban orientation is made harder by the stress upon "traditional" ways of thinking and living such as Chieftainship, tribal affiliation, "mother tongue" teaching at the expense of English or Afrikaans, and there are plans to introduce a "Bantu matriculation" which will further serve to cut Africans from the mainstream of modern technological and scientific thought.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the efforts of the current government since 1948 to separate Africans from non-Africans, in industry and commerce increasing numbers of Africans work under the same roof as white workers, although at very different, low or semi-skilled jobs. In the work situation, recreational and other facilities are segregated and outside the work situation there is virtually no contact between African and non-African workers. Only a small number of trades unions are not segregated. The government's educational and labor policies effectively exclude the African worker from any position in which he might compete with a white worker. Paradoxically, there is in practice a highly coordinated system of integrated behavior that includes almost all of the day-to-day life of various groups, codified in rigid law or custom. Integration is excluded on a level of informal social relationships, but within the context of industry, commerce and public administration, there is a great deal of formalized contact.<sup>22</sup> Contact is sufficient to generate an intense consciousness of Africans versus non-Africans among both groups, but is inadequate to assist the dissolution of prejudice and conflict. In short, the structure of industry, commerce and public administration demands "contact" between the groups if the system is to operate at all. Simultaneously, however, it emphasizes both the present inequality between groups and the utterly arbitrary nature of that inequality. It encourages urbanization-industrialization, but makes the African worker painfully aware of the limits to his ambition and to his full and free participation. It erodes rural sanctions and incentives, yet provides little to encourage the African worker to excel himself.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the wonder is that so many Africans are in no doubt about their progress, depending ultimately on the extension of the industrial-urban sectors of the economy. A decaying, moribund tribalism is being replaced rapidly

<sup>19</sup> W. W. M. Eiselen, "Harmonious Multiple-Community Development," *Optima* (March, 1959).

<sup>20</sup> Verwoerd, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>21</sup> M. Horrell, *A Decade of Bantu Education* (Johannesburg, 1964); and N. Hurwitz, *The Economics of Bantu Education in South Africa* (Johannesburg 1964).

<sup>22</sup> L. Kuper, "The Heightening of Racial Tension," *Race*, II, No. 1 (1960), 24-33, and "Racialism and Integration in South African Society," *ibid.*, IV, No. 2 (1963), 26-30.

<sup>23</sup> K. Danziger, "Some Psychological Aspects of Economic Growth," *South African Journal of Science*, LIX, No. 8 (1963), 394-99.

by an urban way of life. Writing of Southern Rhodesia, McEwan observes that among his African informants "no regret was expressed at the passing of the traditional culture; the problem of how to achieve self-government and remove the yoke of the white man was far too pressing to indulge in regrets for the vanishing past."<sup>24</sup> This is equally the case in the more urbanized African population of South Africa.

The ideological implications and the emotional content and significance of contact in industry can only remind the African worker of his peripheral role in industry. It is naïve to suppose that mere physical proximity involves any but the most superficial psychological contact. Participation in industry does, however, allow the worker to appreciate the powers of education and of technique, and he readily infers that these powers are monopolized and manipulated by a politically dominant group.

The formation of small in-groups in the town, composed of semi-urbanized migrants from the country, has been traced (*inter alia*) by Epstein, Mayer, Mitchell and Wilson and Mafeje.<sup>25</sup> There are striking parallels between the development of groups among the Polish immigrants to the United States in the 1920's, described by Thomas and Znaniecki,<sup>26</sup> and the patterns in South Africa. There are similarities, too, between the living patterns of peasant immigrants to Israel and those of African migrants.<sup>27</sup>

Like other townward migrants, Africans create novel social groups partly to mitigate their loneliness and the unfamiliarity of the town, partly to carry out activities for which the towns may provide them with no ready-made means. Social-psychological lacunae must be filled; a common device to fill them is "encapsulation," or the creation of a strongly demarcated in-group. This device is not a lingering of an outmoded culture-element, but a direct response to a current, stressful situation. In South African urban areas, tribal affiliations sometimes appear to persist, and the government policy is of "ethnic grouping," an attempt to build a system of indirect rule upon a tribal political structure. But despite government pressure and policy and the acute problems of living in the town, the so-called tribalism of Africans is as functionally trivial as the synthetic passion for folk dancing, and the socio-political importance of the tribe is dwindling rapidly.

The sharp dichotomy of African and non-African in the struggle for

<sup>24</sup> P. J. M. McEwan, "The Urban African Population of South Rhodesia," *Civilisations*, XIII, No. 3 (1963), 228.

<sup>25</sup> A. L. Epstein, "The Network and Urban Social Organization," *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, XXIX (1961); P. Mayer, *Xhosa in Town, Townsmen or Tribesmen* (Cape Town, 1961) and *Sociological Aspects of Labor Migration* (Durban, 1962); J. C. Mitchell, "The Kalela Dance," *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, XXVII (1956); and M. Wilson and A. Mafeje, *Langa: A Study of Social Groups in an African Township* (Cape Town, 1963).

<sup>26</sup> W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York, 1927).

<sup>27</sup> S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1956); and E. Katz and A. Zloczower, "Ethnic Continuity in an Israeli Town," *Human Relations*, XIX, No. 4 (1961), 293-329.

political power in South Africa has created an increasing group consciousness among Africans that cuts across tribal and regional differences. A survey of the origins of the leaders of the (now banned) African National Congress testifies to the irrelevance of tribal origins among the widening circles of non-traditional Africans. Yet there are still many naïve studies of "African personality" that appear to be based upon the reality of an assumed tribalism in the city.<sup>28</sup>

There is nothing unique about the problems faced by Africans in their adjustment to changing economic, social and political conditions, which are faced also by peasants in many other countries that are in the throes of urbanization. There are even parallels between the "racialism" of South African "whites" and the attitudes during the nineteenth century towards the Irish immigrants who poured into northeast and northwest England.

But it would be misleading to trace psychological changes without constantly allowing for the immense complications of a discriminatory political-economic-social-legal system which exacerbates the upheaval of mass migration. Perhaps most of the supposed difficulties of adjustment to urbanization in South Africa are, in fact, brought about by the tensions, frustration and doubts caused by discrimination and are complicated by the invidious caste and status position of the Africans.

Few studies of psychological changes attempt to allow for the conflicts generated by the artificiality of the South African situation, much less to analyze these difficulties sympathetically. Many South African studies are, besides, tainted by an implicit racialism, expressed in the constant comparison of Africans with non-Africans, in an attempt to measure the potentialities of the former against the measuring-rod of the abilities of the latter. Thus, Biesheuvel, one of the few South African psychologists whose work in this field can be taken seriously, is concerned with the methodological problems of "research into the limits of modifiability of African behavior," "to determine the extent to which it is modifiable." He states:

African research programs should therefore preferably be directed towards the measurement of limits of modifiability of African behaviour, and towards a definition of the environmental factors that determine these limits. . . . As such (they are) socially valuable, providing a means whereby African potentialities can be more fully realised and whereby group differences in well being can be reduced.<sup>29</sup>

The general assumption of the studies of Biesheuvel (and his colleagues) seems to be that until Africans came to the town in large

<sup>28</sup> J. C. de Ridder, *The Personality of the Urban African in South Africa* (London, 1961).

<sup>29</sup> S. Biesheuvel, "Objectives and Methods of African Psychological Research," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII (1958), 167.

numbers (1) basic motivations of Africans differed from those of non-Africans, and (2) it is only in town life that individualistic motivation develops and becomes an original component of motivation.<sup>30</sup> Equally naïve is the view which asserts that Africans in the towns are driven by impulses, controlled only by fear and strength, and nearly or completely "devoid of culture."<sup>31</sup>

Biesheuvel, like so many students of Africa, is basically a romantic; but he has exchanged the romanticism of the noble savage for the romanticism of the glittering, civilizing city. Like many psychologists, he has a fundamental lack of appreciation of the changing, evolving, historical nature of urbanization, in which the worker-migrant has a continual struggle for decent living and working conditions and for recognition as a human being. Many analysts of urbanization and social change in Africa seem to assume that Africans are operated upon by "Western," urban ways of life and are either reluctantly, or tamely, drawn into the urban way of life without active participation by themselves.

On the contrary, one of the major characteristics of African urbanization has been the tenacity with which Africans have overcome the obstacles to joining the industrial-urban West. In part, no doubt, they have been compelled by economic-political-social pressures to migrate, but the same governments that have forced Africans to leave the country have strenuously resisted the attempts of Africans to become emancipated urban dwellers with full civil rights. The hectic history of urbanization in Africa is a direct continuation of the resistance of Africans to the earlier exploitation of slavery and colonization.

Herskovits and Davidson have done much to dispel the myths that Africa has had no history and that Africa was apathetic, inert, uncivilized "before the 'white' man arrived to irritate African societies into 'progress.'" <sup>32</sup>

A more sophisticated discussion of some of the social changes now occurring in Africa is that of the anthropologist, Powdermaker,<sup>33</sup> whose account is based upon the Copper Belt area of Northern Rhodesia.

Among the more significant changes described by Powdermaker are: (1) Mobility and Freedom increase. The individual chooses new roles, meets novel cultures, is subject to pressures and is offered opportunities other than those of his traditional, rural way of life. In Africa there is a long history of culture-contact and an amount of mobility that is astounding when the physical and linguistic obstacles to mobility are considered. Now that from the Cape to Cairo is on the verge of becoming one interrelated continent, it becomes increasingly possible for

<sup>30</sup> S. Biesheuvel, *Work and Its Effect on Personality Development in Africans* (Durban, 1962).

<sup>31</sup> S. Biesheuvel, *Race, Culture, and Personality* (Johannesburg, 1959).

<sup>32</sup> M. J. Herskovits, *The Human Factor in Changing Africa* (New York, 1962), and B. Davidson, *Old Africa Rediscovered* (London, 1959).

<sup>33</sup> H. Powdermaker, *Copper Town: Changing Africa* (New York, 1962).

an African to feel primarily an African and less insistently a Zulu or a Tshwana.

Education, industry and commerce, the expanding institutions of urban society, the dictates of the imperatives of political unity, all compel choice. There is no possible retreat to the comparative stability of tribalism—even were such a retreat contemplated by modern Africans. There can be only advance towards a fully urbanized and industrialized society. The uncertainties of mobility and the potential increase in personal freedom have stimulated and challenged Africans who seek the fullest participation in economic and political activity and will no longer be satisfied with the tawdry makeshifts of such neo-colonialist devices as South Africa's "Separate Development." The anxiety and doubt generated by situations of marked changes are more than adequately balanced by the potentiality for self-determination.

(2) "The imagery of time changes. Time not only becomes more precise, but also acquires great depth. Today, the African is becoming 'heir to the ages.'" <sup>34</sup> Today is the African renaissance, and with the development of archeology, history, sociology, anthropology and economics in African university institutions, Africans are rejecting the arrogant colonial myth that Africa had "no civilization" and slumbered during historical time. The inter-connectedness of Africa now strengthens the sense of continuity of Africa's past with its present, and the relation of Africa with the rest of the world is seen as altogether more complex than hitherto has been allowed. There is a general wandering through space and time and from one stage of development to another. The ubiquity of the city and of industry is a strong link: the rural peasant from the Transkei who goes to work in Durban learns of a speed of social change that makes him and his "tribe" part of a process at once more profound and more pervasive than the comparatively local and specific time-scale of his rural life. He is learning more than the need to catch busses on time; he is learning a new value-system in which he is related to a deeper and a wider world.

(3) Economic changes of urban life make possible new roles that are opening to men and women; personal achievement and careers bring new rewards, new prestige, new challenge. Even in the South Africa of Job Reservations, according to the Bureau of Census Statistics, in 1960, out of an economically active population of 3,886,457 Africans, some 48,714 were professional or semi-skilled.<sup>35</sup> Africans in the towns can be doctors, teachers, nurses, lawyers, insurance agents, carpenters, bricklayers, clergymen, and can engage in other occupations that are unknown in the country. The proportion is, of course, pitifully small, and the system tells the African in effect: "You were not expected to aspire to ex-

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>35</sup> "Enormous Increase in Skilled Labor," *Bantu*, X, No. 10 (1963), 526-28.

cellence: you were expected to make peace with mediocrity."<sup>36</sup> The conflict between aspiration and achievement is acute: Africans are fully aware of the potential need for their services, but the opportunities that the governing ideology permits them are meagre. There are no African dentists, architects, high-grade technologists, industrial and agricultural chemists; indeed, there are no Africans with any high-grade professional skill that might entail their giving orders to white subordinates. It is, therefore, impossible for an African to obtain, for example, a high-level position as a specialist in a hospital.

(4) A new social system is growing in which age and rank no longer command status, but rather education, city ways of living, money-earning and profession are badges of rank and status.

The 'intelligentsia' and the new middle class are becoming the nucleus of a novel self-conscious status group.<sup>37</sup> Most magazines designed for the African reader, e.g., *Drum*, display middle-class values and consumption-patterns, and in the social pages of these publications there regularly appear photographs and descriptions of those qualifying in a profession, graduating from university or nursing college—or even, sometimes, from high school.

The masses of semi-literate or illiterate laborers, and semi-skilled workers, no longer fit the old hierarchy; in recent years some of the most able African leaders have been men with no traditional status, and none of the top leaders owes his position to his occupying some traditionally revered role. The new leaders include such men as Nelson Mandela (an attorney), Walter Sisulu (an ex-union organizer), Chief Albert Luthuli (an elected chief, who owes his position to the enthusiasm and votes of urban youth of Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth), and Govan Mbeke (an ex-teacher). The government still tends to draw its tame members of the urban Bantu Councils from among the older, more conservative men and women, but it is clear that the real leadership in the towns—as in the countryside—is functional, drawn from those who can lead by virtue of their education or other personal qualities.

In South Africa, because of the ruthless proscription of African political organizations and the mass imprisonment of leaders, there is a growing tendency for leadership to be drawn from a wide range of people who in more settled times would be uninterested in political and economic struggle, and evaluated accordingly.

(5) There has been a radical shift in emphasis in the views of the layman about why things happen. The world of Africans has become increasingly subject to human and social pressures, and theories of

<sup>36</sup> J. Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (London, 1963), p. 19.

<sup>37</sup> N. Mkele, "The Emergent African Middle Class," *Optima*, X, No. 4 (1960), 217-27.

causation are becoming impersonal, non-magical and rational. Of course, Africans, like all human beings, accept some irrationality at some levels of explanation; but like men at all levels of economic and social organization, they have a strong tendency to attempt to interpret their world rationally and to control it. Africans, like all city dwellers, have become widely influenced by their practical experience that men and society move the world. It is manifestly neither the gods nor the ancestors nor magic who are responsible for the anxiety of urban life. One is dismissed from one's job by Mr. A; one is deprived of one's right to seek work by Job Reservation or "influx control"; Dr. B. heals one's sore arm.<sup>38</sup> Urbanization and (even the diluted and distorted "Bantu") education serve to increase knowledge and information and belief in areas of rational control.

(6) Perhaps the major shift in attitudes and values is that "the African is affected by a world-wide change in knowledge about race, in attitudes to people of different races, and in ideas about colonialism."<sup>39</sup>

The struggles of the urban African thrust him into "self-awareness." He cannot fail to become aware that he lives in a changing world, in which Africa plays a commanding and dramatic role. But there are contradictions in the situation that cannot help but sharpen the urban African's self-awareness. On the one hand, African states are now a major force in the world of international politics, and South African Africans know that it is only a matter of time before their freedom struggle succeeds and South Africa will play a role commensurate with its economic position. On the other hand, the African in South Africa lives in a society that erects may vast signboards advertising his difference from the ruling class and banishing him to an inferior place. The conflict is acute: a discriminating society, set in a wider world in which to be an African fosters pride, confidence and zest.

In this context even the mystique of the "African Personality" is less an "evasive ethos"<sup>40</sup> than a response to a challenging situation. "But even as a myth, it is an expression of a burning desire for freedom, self-determination and the desire to reject the white man's 'civilizing mission' and to break away from his moral and cultural trusteeship. The 'African Personality' is evidence of a coming into consciousness of the black peoples and is a corporate reassertion of their dignity."<sup>41</sup>

Of the acceleration of the process of urbanization during the past

<sup>38</sup> L. Bloom, "Some Psychological Concepts of Urban Africans" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Natal, 1962); "The 'Izinyanga' of Durban: Their Changing and Traditional Explanations of Behavior," *Transcultural Psychiatric Research*, XIV (1963), 43-45; and "Some Psychological Concepts of Urban Africans," *Ethnology*, III, No. 1 (1964), 364-99.

<sup>39</sup> Powdermaker, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> C. de Crespigny, "Not Enough Night: Negritude's Evasive Ethos," *The New African*, II, No. 9 (1963), 181-83.

<sup>41</sup> E. Mphahlele, "African Culture Trends," in P. Judd (ed.) *African Independence* (New York, 1963), p. 133.

generation there can be no doubt, even though there might be differences of opinion about the extent of urbanization. The fullest significance of urbanization is that it has occurred despite the marked and consistent hostility of government towards it. In urbanization, Africans have had to fight on two fronts: against economic discrimination and against the institutionalized insult of political-legal persecution. In South Africa, the battle for stabilization is being won by Africans; it is one episode in the war against inequality. In the towns, the continuity of the present social-political-economic systems with open colonialism is still apparent. It is this obstinate persistence of colonialism in a non-colonial, semi-industrialized society that is responsible for the large-scale social and psychological problems of adjustment to city life.



By JAMES A. EMANUEL

## A Fool for Evergreen

A little bit of fool in me  
 Hides behind my inmost tree  
 And pops into the narrow path  
 I walk blindfolded by my wrath  
 Or shrunken by some twist of pain,  
 Some hope that will not wind again.  
 He ogles with his antic eyes  
 And somersaults a you're-not-wise  
 Until the patches in his pants  
 Go colorwheeling through my glance  
 So fast that I cannot recall  
 That I was mad or sad at all.  
 A little bit of fool in me  
 Keeps evergreen my inmost tree.