

for a new application or the call-in card system to operate. Under these circumstances there is little opportunity for advancement, nor for the acquisition of further skills.

All this applies to professionally qualified black people too and one wonders what will happen to all the graduates of the homeland universities in the future. Will the homeland governments be able to absorb them into the government service and if so will the salary offered be adequate?

There can be very little opportunity for professional people to set up in private practice in the homelands because it will be a long time before the public there can pay private consultants.

If the big cities are closed to them by influx control regulations and the big opportunities closed to them by job reservation in spite of South Africa's need for skilled people in industry and commerce the result can only be increasing frustration and bitterness.

Labour Exploitation

IT IS terribly important to an African man or woman that his employer knows the pass laws and complies with them by registering employees.

Sometimes registration is refused because the employee is not permitted to work in the area but, in many cases, no effort has ever been made by a person's employer to register him at a time when it would have been relatively simple. In some cases the African concerned has repeatedly asked an employer to obtain registration only to be told, "I'm too busy" or "Maybe later".

However, worse than this omission, are those troubles caused by deliberate actions on the part of the employer. Over and over again we are told that an employer has threatened to "spoil my book", or that an employer refuses to allow someone to leave a job, knowing that if the "F" card is not sent in registration in new employment will be refused.

Then there are those employers who refuse to give someone a letter certifying previous employment because it was not registered. The employer fears that he may be fined for past actions but to the employee this letter may be the essential document needed to prevent him or her being sent to a homeland, losing all security for the future.

Worse again are those employers who use the pass laws in order to exploit a worker. If a man is working in a job in which he was registered before the 1968 labour regulations came into force, he may hope to qualify in terms of Section 10(1)(b) of the Act after 10 years' continuous employment with one employer.

This qualification will give him the right to regard himself as a permanent resident of the town where he works.

If he is married to a woman who is lawfully in the area he will be allowed to apply for a house in which to rear his family in relative security.

If he leaves the employer before the ten years are up in order to earn more money or better his working conditions or his opportunities, he will be endorsed out and forced to work on yearly contracts for the rest of his life, with no hope of stability in the future.

Men in this position have no bargaining power at all, and some employers take advantage of this situation.

The whole structure of pass laws and influx control makes it impossible for normal economic factors to regulate employer-worker relationships. The law deprives African employees of their human rights and demands much of them.

Justice demands much of employers who have to operate in such a system. It is unjust to pay an African less than his job is worth because he cannot hand in his notice for various reasons; or to pay him less to do a job normally reserved for Whites; or to use the law to force someone to continue in uncongenial employment; or to refuse to accept the possibility of a small fine when a man's livelihood and future are at stake; or to break a contract by discharging someone because of staff reduction before his year is up, involving him in at least one month with no pay while he waits to be recruited by another employer.

Johannesburg Advice Office.