

malnutrition and that productivity of unhealthy workers is low, There is evidence to support the view that this is the situation in South Africa."¹² By reducing the wage gap the industrialist will therefore have a more productive labour force.

The absurdity of the arguments that "productivity must precede wage increases" has long been evident. A man whose subsistence needs are pre potent, (i.e. living below the P.D.L.), a man whose wage increases are no more than a few cents a week, and who is expected to increase his productivity will not have any motivation to work at maximum efficiency level. Only by increasing wages, substantially reducing the wage gap, ending poverty

and adequately motivating the worker can South Africa hope to survive.

The Wages Commission is involved in labour organization and research in an attempt to put into practice the argument set out above, for the breach in the defences of South Africa is the hunger of the masses which, unless satisfied, may have repercussions that will endanger all of us. The very nature of this article has meant that all ideas and activities could not be fully described. However it is hoped that this article satisfies some of the curiosity that surrounds the Wages Commission and the rationale behind its activities.□

References :

- 1 *General Report of the S.R.C. Wages Commission*, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg on a survey of the Wattle Growing Industry of the Natal Mist Belt.
- 2 *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1972*. South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg.
- 3 *A Socio-Economic Survey into the Saligne Forestry and Development Company's Estates at Eston*. University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) Wages Commission, 1973.
- 4 *A Socio-Economic Survey into the Government Forestry Estates at Harding, Weza, Bulwer, Riverside and Creighton*. University of Natal, (Pietermaritzburg), Wages Commission, 1973.
- 5 *South Africa Today*. Hamilton Fyfe, H. London 1911.
- 6 *Black Pay and Productivity in South Africa*. Horner, J. A. South African Institute of Race Relations, 1972, Johannesburg.
- 7 *ibid.*
- 8 *ibid.*
- 9 *Race Relations News*, June 1973. South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg.
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 Dr A. Barker, Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital, Nqutu. (Speech given in Pietermaritzburg on 9.4.73).
- 12 Horner, J. A. *op. cit.*

CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI SPEAKS TO COLIN GARDNER

Gardner: What are your present feelings about the whole question of the allocation of land to KwaZulu? And a sub-question: when whites who are discontented with the present plan say that you are discontented too, are they not in fact being hypocritical? Are they not discontented for opposite reasons?

Chief Buthelezi: I don't regard them as my allies. If they reiterate what I am saying, it is with completely different motives. They use us as a whipping-boy, as far as the whites are concerned. They like to say that this Government is irresponsible - that they are creating a black state, and blacks cannot be trusted, and this is going to be a nest of communism, and so on. I really dislike that very much. I don't consider them my allies in any sense.

Gardner: In fact they are almost at the opposite pole?

Chief Buthelezi: They are the worst, actually. We do not accept what the Nationalists are offering; but **they** are much worse than them. They are not saying this out of benevolence for the Zulu people at all.

Gardner: What do you feel is the present position in regard to the land issue in KwaZulu? What is going to happen?

Chief Buthelezi: I honestly cannot prophesy what is going to happen. Mr Vorster said to me in March that he cannot go further than what he has proposed. In other words, the consolidation map as it stands now is all he offers. And he has said that if we don't want to take what he is offering, independence on his terms, then we can remain as we are - which is rather interesting to me. Does he mean that his policy has failed? This was supposed to be a solution. Now if he says that we may

have to remain as we are, certainly we are not going to be satisfied. All the liberatory movements which existed before were concerned about the black man getting human dignity and equal human rights in his fatherland. And we are just as concerned. We cannot under any circumstances be satisfied in remaining as we are now, as the Prime Minister suggests.

Gardner: You once proposed that KwaZulu and Natal might form into an independent state. Do you see any possibility of that happening in the immediate future or the more distant future?

Chief Buthelezi: I cannot read what people say: I can only put a proposal. I've put this proposal in all seriousness. I think that if a non-racial state developed in this part of South Africa, people all over the world would be interested. African countries would be interested; so would nations overseas, — that such a thing as that could emerge in this place that is so sickened by racism. So, personally, I offer this to the Natal whites in earnest: I mean it. But of course I see it is a hot potato, because many people tend to be afraid: if something goes wrong in an African state, then of course it affects people here; and then they tend to fear that this might happen to them. This I perfectly understand. But I don't think it is justified in view of the fact that there are some African states, with black majority governments, where things are not going wrong. I think personally that it would be a good thing, especially in Natal, and the more so as we have all race groups here — Indians, Coloureds and Whites, minority groups whose rights could be safeguarded by a bill of rights. I think this is something feasible, provided people can get out of this cocoon of fear. And if a state like that were to come about, I think I've got a golden key which could open African markets.

Gardner: I'd like to say that I personally would be delighted at such an arrangement. I know there are a few white businessmen in Pietermaritzburg who are interested in the idea, but how many there are I cannot say.

Chief Buthelezi: Quite so . . . I am concerned about racism. Though I myself am a black consciousness man, I'm so sickened — I've grown up in a society of racism, and I'm sick and tired of it, and I don't think I'd like to live in a racist society, whether it was white-oriented or black-oriented: I'm not interested in that.

Gardner: Do you feel that white liberals and radicals have any important part to play in South Africa at the moment? Or are they irrelevant (as is often said) or are they a hindrance to the real changes that need to take place?

Chief Buthelezi: Well, since I believe in freedom of speech, I believe that therefore the rights of individuals should be entrenched and safeguarded. And I believe that, just as I have a right to have my opinion, those white groups that are described as liberal or radical have an equal right to have their own opinion. And I believe that it isn't fair to write them off as a hindrance, because I think that in a sense they may be a conscience of this country. Because ultimately, on a long term

basis, whether we like it or not, white and black — I think we'll just have to accept each other. Ultimately we have to — so that if these people are committed to a non-racial society, I think they have a right to do their own thing. And I don't think one must question their bona fides.

Gardner: But, looking at the problem from the point of view of a black person who is wanting to bring about a redistribution of power, would you tend to think that they could be helpful to this cause?

Chief Buthelezi: I think each one of us has a commitment. I have a commitment, here, to my people first of all, the black people, and to the rest of South Africa in so far as we are all here — we have been placed here by destiny, cheek by jowl, whether we like this or not. I think this is a fact. I think that perhaps I've gone over the period at which, as a student, I thought perhaps there could be a black take-over. But I do believe that blacks are entitled to full human rights here. But at the same time I accept that whites have also become indigenous to this country, in the same way as Americans are to America, Canadians to Canada and Australians to Australia. They've become indigenous. Of course the only thing that I deprecate is the white oppression of my people. And I feel that if my people were to have human rights and so on, and if perhaps whites would accept that they were safe in a black majority government — I mean, that's all there is to it. I don't believe that there is anything practical about imagining that some people may be swept into the sea, or that they should go away; I don't think so. I don't think they have any other home, after three centuries.

Gardner: Perhaps a difficult question — what in your view will make or might make the whites as a whole transfer or share their power? What is going to do this in the end?

Chief Buthelezi: I don't know: it seems to me that appeals to Christian ideals, western democracy, humanitarian considerations — we're not going to get a significant number of proselytes through this. And therefore I'm very sorry to say that it would appear to me that they're not going to be prepared to consider anything unless something provides some kind of trauma for them. It seems that it is quite realistic to think so.

Gardner: Some sort of confrontation which is going to make them revise their ideas?

Chief Buthelezi: Exactly.

Gardner: Then of course — don't you think? — they'll start listening to the appeal to their Christian conscience.

Chief Buthelezi: I think so.

Gardner: I hold the rather cynical view that on the whole people listen to Christian appeals when something else has told them that it is wise to do so. Most people don't respond to simple exhortation.

Chief Buthelezi: After all, Christianity has been around for 2000 years! I would agree with your assessment . . . □