

SOUTH AFRICA, 2,000 A.D.

An Exercise in Crystal Gazing

Dr. H. L. WATTS

Dr. Watts is the director of the Institute for Social Research, Natal University, Durban. He gave this talk at the national conference of the Black Sash in October 1969.

In the course of this talk I want to share with you some ideas, about the development of South Africa up to the year 2000. I must admit right at the outset that the topic is an extremely detailed, intricate, and wide-ranging one. Therefore I have deliberately selected only a limited number of aspects to consider. In essence these will all relate to what I have regarded as one of the crucial social processes occurring in South Africa at the present time. I have sub-titled the talk 'An Exercise in Crystal-Gazing', for from one point of view that is what scientific prediction is. All my guesses about the future are not just shots in the dark, but are based on a careful examination of current trends. At the same time, as a social scientist, I am nonetheless standing in the tradition of the seer and the crystal-gazer. Perhaps I have not got a crystal ball with me this afternoon, but from one point of view the computer and the electronic desk calculator are only sophisticated instruments used in an attempt to see into the darkness of the unknown. Therefore, for a while, I am going to wear the mantle of the seer and share with you some visions.

A FIRST STEP in trying to gauge the future development of South Africa is to take a long, hard look at where we are now. After all, the future is always a development from the present, and unless we have some understanding of the present our predictions about the future are likely to be very shaky indeed — particularly in my case as I cannot lay claim to the divine inspiration of a prophet!

If you were to look at South Africa at the present time I wonder what you would choose as the most important process at work. Different people would possibly think of different things. For me the process of urbanization and industrialization in South Africa is the most important element in the present situation. In order to understand why I am making this point, I think it is necessary to spend a short while looking at the position in regard to urbanization throughout the world generally.

Because urbanization is occurring throughout the world we, in this present generation, tend to rather overlook certain salient features. First and foremost it is a trend which from one point of view is unique in the history of man, and is transforming every aspect of his existence as a social animal. We can simply define the process of urbanization as a greater and greater *proportion* of people living in towns. As a process it has had a long history, and it can safely be said that some 5000 years ago true towns appeared in the Middle East. But — and this is a very im-

portant proviso — for most of human history, the rate of development of urbanization has been very slow. Secondly, for most of human history the size of urban areas has been small. To illustrate both these points, it is estimated that in the year 1800 only 3% of the total population of the world were living in towns of 5000 persons or more. A century later, by 1900, this figure has jumped to 13.6% or more than a four-fold increase. In 1960 the proportion of the world's population living in towns of 5000 people or more was estimated at 33%. Kingsley Davis, who is one of the world authorities on urbanization, and works at the University of California, has estimated that by the year 2000, 54.5% (or more than half) of the world's population will be in urban areas. Secondly, to quote a few examples, Rome in the classical era covered only about 5000 acres. Yet, the city was unusually large for those days. London in the 15th Century was a very large city with 45,000 people — to put it colloquially, by present-day standards, only 'peanuts'. While by the end of the 18th Century London had 800,000 people, the regional centres in England were small and seldom had over 50,000 inhabitants.

Urbanization today has taken a great leap — not only in the sense of more and more of the world's population living in urban areas, but also most significantly we are now seeing more and more people living in one particular area. In other words, urban areas are greatly

increasing in size, and we are witnessing the emergence now of the large-scale mass society. This mass society, which is to a considerable degree impersonal, is unique in the history of mankind. Again, to quote some figures, in 1950 it was estimated that only 16% of the world's population was living in cities of 100,000 persons or more. By the year 2000 Kingsley Davis estimates for the world as a whole the figure will be 39%. In 1960 again, New York had 14,000,000 people — it is estimated that next year it will still be the largest city in the world with 16,000,000.

Three factors

This process of urbanization in fact, is being fed by three different factors — an increasing urbanization of the population in the sense that a greater and greater proportion of people are living in urban areas; secondly, a very rapid population growth in the world; and thirdly, an increasing concentration of population in larger and larger cities. In regard to the second factor, perhaps I should illustrate just how rapid this population growth is. Again we are dealing with a process which is unique in human history. It took the many thousands of years of man's existence on this planet prior to 1850 to produce a population of about 1,000,000,000 persons. Seventy-five years later — note just 75 years later — the 2,000,000,000 mark was reached, while the 3,000,000,000 mark was reached only 37 years later in 1962. At this rate if the trend continues — and one is inclined to say God forbid — the 4,000,000,000 mark will come up in 15 years, and after that the 5,000,000,000 mark in 7½ years, and so on. In other words, only within the last three centuries at the outside has the world's population taken a sudden jump. From this angle, the leap to the moon is nearly as large a leap as that which the number of men on this earth has taken within, from the point of view of geological time, the very very recent past.

A giant leap

All these processes which I have been describing, which urbanization to a considerable extent sums up, are of course the result of major technological changes. Without very far-reaching changes in the means of production and distribution, all the processes I have been describing would not have been possible. In other words the agricultural and medical revolutions, and the industrial revolution — all of which are still continuing in our own

time — have been responsible for this picture which I have described as unique in human history. For many thousands of years man has been largely a rural animal, with a very, very slowly growing population. He has lived close to the soil, and he has been more controlled by the world around him than controlling it. Now man has made this sudden giant leap into astronomical numbers, into enormous conglomerations of human habitation, because of means of production, distribution and, of course, consumption which our ancestors would have regarded as either magic or the work of the devil.

What does all this mean for South Africa?

South Africa is showing these processes of a changing technology, population growth, urbanization and urban concentration. At the present time the trends are not as pronounced as in some parts of the world. Nonetheless, I believe these trends will have the major impact on South African society in the years ahead. Let me now proceed to develop this theme and to give you evidence as well as prognostications, and also share with you some hopes.

The major impact

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Our first overall census in South Africa was taken after the Anglo-Boer War in 1904. There were just over 5,000,000 souls at that time. I guess that a century ago in the 1860's the total population of South Africa was probably something of the order of half that number — say 2,500,000. Today a century later our total population is over the 16,000,000 mark. At the time of the 1960 census we had 3,000,000 Whites, 1,500,000 Coloureds, 500,000 Asiatics (who were nearly all Indians), and almost 11,000,000 Africans. Official estimates show that by the year 2000 South Africa may have as many as about 42,000,000 people. The jump from say 2½ to 3 million people in the middle 19th Century to perhaps 42 million one and a half centuries later shows the degree of population growth — due to both migration, and,

of course, today, due to the rapidly dropping death rate producing an increasing excess of births over deaths.

At the 1960 Population Census there were ten cities with a total population of 100,000 or more each. These account for about one-quarter of the South African population. My estimate is that by the year 2000 perhaps one-third of our population, or some 14,000,000 will be living in these ten South African cities.

Detailed estimates

It is only for Durban that I have careful detailed estimates, made after considerable study. In 1960 Durban had very roughly 700,000 people living within the metropolitan area. Our estimate at the Institute for Social Research is that by the year 2000, Durban could have over 2½ million people. Making similar but rather more rapid estimates — and therefore possibly cruder estimates — I estimate that Johannesburg in the four decades from 1960 to the year 2000 may jump from just over one million to 2½ million people. Cape Town may increase from 800,000 to 2 million. Port Elizabeth, which has been growing very rapidly could develop from 300,000 people in 1960 to 1½ million in the year 2000 — although I rather suspect that the rate of growth for that city will slow down somewhat and we will see a slower development latterly. Taking the Witwatersrand-Pretoria complex as a whole, to use a nasty word, as a conurbation — the population could increase from 2 million in 1960 to 4 million in the year 2000.

I have figures for the percentage of the South African population living in urban areas from 1904 onwards. In that year just over half the Whites, and just over a third of the Indians were in rural areas. Today, not far short of nine-tenths of the Whites and Indians are in urban areas, and I estimate by the year 2000 less than 10% of each race will be in rural areas. Half the Coloureds in the year 1904 were living in urban areas. I estimate that four-fifths will be in urban areas at the turn of the century. When we come to the Africans, we have the most marked change of all. In the year 1904 an estimated one-eighth of the African population were in urban areas — no doubt as very temporary migrants. At the 1960 Census about one-third were in urban areas. The projection of the trend up to the year 2000 is a bit uncertain, because we are not sure to what extent government policy will be successful in attempting to turn Africans away from White

areas. Kingsley Davis, in a very recent study undertaken for a 'Focus on Cities' Conference held in 1968 at the University of Natal, has suggested that figures show that the rate of urbanization of the Africans in South Africa is rather slower than one would expect on the basis of other models, and that therefore government policy is working to an extent. However, if we do ever see true development of the homelands — and believe me, whatever one's political convictions may or may not be, these homelands need development desperately — then we will of course see the emergence of urban areas in the homelands as well as in the White areas of South Africa. I feel this is a logical pattern, and therefore it may be fair to project the existing African trend. If so, just under half of the Africans by the year 2000 will be living in urban areas. The jump from just over a tenth to about a half in urban areas in a century is a dramatic change, with very far-reaching irreversible social effects.

Need for homeland development

At this stage I would like to pause and underline again how great is the need for development in the homelands, and also in some of the similarly economically-depressed White rural areas of South Africa. This development is needed regardless of the political credo of whatever party happens to be in power at the moment. As has been pointed out for instance by Hobart Houghton, South Africa has a plural economy. There is, on the one hand, the wealthy developed, industrial urban civilization of the towns and cities; and on the other hand, the poverty-stricken and depressed subsistence economy of vast rural areas, mainly inhabited by the Africans. This poverty and underdevelopment is a tremendous challenge to our social conscience — and it is also a wonderful opportunity. While I am no economist I must sadly confess (on the basis of what I hear from those who are experts in this field) that our efforts at development are pitifully small in the face of the present need — and this despite the fact that the present government is doing more in this regard than any of its predecessors. As Lady Barbara Jackson has pointed out in an address she gave in Durban in June of last year, if we talk of separate development, let it be *development*. I contend that we are challenged, in the final analysis, to make this development not because of political expediency, not because of the need for a balanced economy in South Africa, however import-

ant, but because of the demands of common humanity. Whether of course such development is easily possible, and to what extent we can envisage development, are different matters, and I could talk to you about them until the small hours of the morning!

What are the implications of what I am saying? There are several important ones which I want to share with you.

Urban industrial economy

First and foremost, the emergence and continuing rapid development of an urban industrial economy in South Africa is pulling more and more people within the orbit of urban life and work, with all it implies. You have already heard how by the turn of the century very much the largest majority of Whites and Indians — nine-tenths — and also of Coloureds — four-fifths — are likely to live in urban areas. I think that this means for Whites by the year 2000 our rural heritage will be largely history, perhaps of vital interest only to the oldest people — alas for those who lay great store by our rural heritage! Some years ago I listened to a symposium on the Afrikaans programme of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. All the participants were, with one accord, bewailing the loss of the rural heritage of Afrikaners, and saying that this heritage must be clung to at all costs as it represented the spiritual strength and vitality of their people. Be that as it may, increasingly we will find that not only the English but also the Afrikaner will be an urban man, with urban thoughts and an industrial outlook. This likewise is increasingly true of the Coloureds and the Indians.

Experience of urban areas

When we come to look at the impact of urbanization on the African, we see a tremendous social change taking place. Today already, by means of the migratory labour system, nearly all adults in the African population have had some experience of urban areas, and there are those who have had no experience of rural areas. Recently I completed a study of African households in Johannesburg, Durban, Pretoria, and several smaller areas in South Africa. What struck me most forcibly was that while in the urban townships one was not dealing with a completely western population, one was dealing with an urban population — urban in terms of values and aspirations and outlooks — a population which in many instances had become urbanized only during the last twenty years or so. An African urban industrial

working class population confronted me and my colleagues during the survey. Increasingly the African will become an urban and an industrial population. I do not believe that by the year 2000 the African will be fully westernized — indeed I doubt whether that will ever be the case. But, he will have urban values and urban aspirations, and will want the type of things which only an urban society can give. This will be true equally of those living and working in the cities of today, as well as those who, as the result of border industries, will live in new urban areas on the fringe of the homelands. Industrial urbanization has smashed forever the fabric of tribal Bantu society. This process is irreversible. Economic development and urbanization will increasingly, in the years ahead, produce an urban African population with a brand of westernization which is already becoming evident. What is being produced is a composite of some traditional elements with many recognisably western, urban elements.

Rapid social change

Urbanization is a world-wide phenomenon, and throughout the world, in terms of certain basic characteristics, it casts men in a common mould. These characteristics are, among others, a desire for the economic goods produced by industry, and which can be afforded by those with an urban standard of living. The status symbols of an urban society are aspired to. Education, which is so important within urban areas, becomes a significant ladder for social climbing. Rapid social change resulting from tremendous technological development and invention is a hallmark of modern urban society. In South Africa urbanization will stamp all our peoples — white, yellow, brown, and black alike. Increasingly in the years ahead, in terms of characteristics and outlook, South Africans will be more urban than anything else, whatever their background.

As a result of the patterns I have been describing we will see, and indeed will require, occupational shifts within our society. Occupation determines much of an individual's life chances and life experiences. There will be, as there is already, a gradual but definite shift for all races into white-collar jobs. This process is a world-wide one associated with urban and industrial development and it will particularly affect the non-whites, (especially the Africans) who have the greatest leeway to make up in development. In 1936 the non-White population in the Republic was almost entirely manual-working. By 1960 a signifi-

cant proportion of all the non-White races were in white-collar jobs. But, to give you an idea of how great a room there is still for change, taking the South African population as a whole, in 1960 72% of all our people were unskilled manual workers, and only just over 1 in 8 were white-collar workers in either clerical and commercial work, or professional and managerial jobs. At the present time our economy appears to be about three-quarters of a century behind the U.S. pattern, and I believe that by the year 2000 we will be perhaps halfway towards the present United States pattern. This will have great impacts on the values, goals and aspirations of South Africa's people — they will be more and more cast in the mould of urban, and perhaps urban middleclass, values.

Shift to middle-class positions

Because of our labour shortages, and South Africa's need to use every worker to the full, we will see amongst our non-Whites an increasing acceleration of the present trends of occupational diversification and the partial shift from working class to middle-class positions.

Urbanization will demand major improvements in our education for the population as a whole. I believe — and hope — that by the year 2000 our plural economy will be rapidly disappearing, and that we will achieve an ever-expanding urban industrial economy. There will be rising non-White standards of education and living associated with this change. Now somewhere between a third to two-thirds, and occasionally more, of urban Africans, Indians and Coloureds are in poverty. (The figures vary from town to town). Under conditions of rising education and a rising standard of living, we will see demands from the non-Whites for better housing, better suburbs, greater opportunities for development, and equal pay — after all if we talk of separate development, sooner or later we will be told this must imply equal development.

By the year 2000 we will have important problems to solve — problems associated with urbanization, and metropolitan growth, with which the western urban world is already all too familiar. Perhaps we in South Africa who are developing later and more slowly than the western world will have a chance to learn by the mistakes of others! Planning is increasingly being recognised in South Africa as important, and given the type of population and urban growth which I portrayed earlier

I believe that planning is going to be of fundamental importance. One of the elements of this planning is going to be the question of the optimum size of a city. How big should the city be? This is a hotly-debated topic which has not yet been solved, and I think that optimum size depends on the particular aim you have in mind. In other words there are optimum sizes for different purposes. Professor Spengler, in 1968 at our 'Focus on Cities' Conference in Durban, suggested a population of a quarter of a million was the optimum size for a city. This being so, then Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, and probably Bloemfontein will by the turn of the century be well beyond the optimum size. Ought we to have a position where people of all races are ultimately prohibited from moving to a particular city, once it has reached optimum size? Should only those who are required to replace migrants moving out of a city be allowed in, provided they have skills which are needed for that city?

Freedom of movement?

This idea of influx control is one which cuts right across the concept of freedom of movement as being one of the basic freedoms of mankind. Yet, I find myself wondering how long we can afford to have complete freedom of movement. To quote an extreme example, New York next year will have 16 million people. Maybe I am old-fashioned, but I shudder at the thought of having to live in a city of that tremendous size. From my perhaps very limited viewpoint, a city of 16 million is a monstrosity, and I think the advantages are more than outweighed by the many disadvantages. Yet, if the trend continues, by the year 2000 a city of 16 million will be relatively small. Furthermore, even today New York is only part of a large megalopolis made up of over 100 miles of Eastern Seaboard of America. Can we afford to allow this process to go on indefinitely, or must we ruthlessly limit city size in order to prevent conditions of living which we regard as being disastrous for mankind? Experiments with animals show that over a certain density of population, the animals cease to breed and the population declines. Man is an animal — will he too behave likewise? If we do feel some limitation of city size is necessary, then if not by the year 2000 in South Africa, certainly in the future beyond that there will come the day when influx control would have to be applied to all races in particular areas.

The influx control could be either of people, and/or of businesses and industrial enterprises. Are we, with African influx control, and industrial decentralization already seeing the beginning of this process of control? Influx control may not, in itself, be a bad thing — it might be the lesser of two evils, in which case the question is not whether we have influx control or not, but how it be administered, and that we must have adequate machinery to ensure that there shall be no injustice to individuals, no disrupting of family life, no committing of people to poverty. These requirements call for a far more flexible, far more humane, and a far more intelligent planning structure than anything which the western world has yet managed to evolve. The best we seem to have achieved so far is a kind of nightmarish bureaucratic system which stumbles forever in a morass of red tape, with a fiendish exponential development on the basis of some Parkinsonian Law.

Mile-high buildings

Given huge city populations in future, a colleague of mine has predicted mile-high buildings. While man is infinitely adjustable, I am thankful that I personally will not live to see that day. Perhaps rural ties are still unknowingly strong within me! — for I do cling to the earth and the idea of being a mile high seems to me halfway to being in orbit, which as far as I am concerned is for the *birds* — and *astronauts*. If we don't want huge cities with such tall buildings, influx control and population curbs will be essential.

Another problem which we should be tackling now, and not waiting for the year 2000, is the question of urban poverty and maladjustment resulting from rural people being sucked into the vortex of our rapidly expanding urban life, without any skills or prior adaptation to urban living. I refer to the poverty and problems particularly of our non-Whites, as by contrast, the problem of poor-White poverty has largely been solved. If two-thirds of our urban non-Whites are in poverty, particularly in the small areas, what are we doing about their economic development and uplift *now*? What are we doing to aid adjustment of rural people to urban ways of life? We should take a long hard look at what the Americans are doing in their attempts to assist Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, streaming into the cities in the north, to adjust, and we could well try and use these same techniques in South Africa. Our industries — whether they be in White cities or in bor-

der areas — are pulling hundreds of thousands off the land into urban areas and into a new sphere of existence. Problems of poverty, malnutrition, family life, and social dislocation are all too frequent. The position may not be as bad as it was a quarter of a century ago immediately after the war, but nonetheless we are faced with a challenge. I hope by the year 2000 our social conscience, together with our desire to improve our own lot by stimulating the economy through the improvement of our brothers' lot, will have improved the position considerably.

As automation has a greater impact on our society towards the end of the century, the problem of technological misfits could become a serious problem. It is a problem that is emerging now in Europe and North America, and may well be a problem with us by the turn of the century. In an editorial in the February 1969 issue of 'Frontier' there is the following challenging comment about Western European society:—

'... it is very doubtful whether any acquisitive society can survive into the next century... The trouble with an acquisitive society in the new conditions that are coming is that it tends to reject those who are not successful in their acquisitions. With tens of millions of technological redundancies we may find ourselves with tens of millions of rejected members of society. The poverty and deprivations of the inner cities of America show one thing that can happen to rejects; but it is not only a matter of poverty. Even if you provided everyone in the inner cities with a comfortable home and a good income, they would still feel rejects. And rejects they would be, for they would not have passed the standards set by a society that is still acquisitive and is still rapidly becoming more competitive.'

From this point of view I hope that our economic development up to the year 2000 will be such that we will have gained many of the advantages of the development that Europe and North America have gained, but that disadvantages of this type will not yet have hit us. We still have to wipe out the problem of maladjustment and poverty resulting from urbanization, without having any further problem landed in our laps.

An important area of South African society is intergroup relations. This is an area frequently spoken about, politically debated, and polemically argued about. Often, alas, emo-

tional nonsense is put forth, and nothing more. There are so many variables involved that forecasting is most difficult. So I will not attempt to lift the veil on this aspect of South Africa in the year 2000. However, I will comment that increasing economic development — i.e., urbanization and industrialization — will not leave us as we are, and all

the processes I have described will impinge on group relations too.

The challenges are great, the opportunities immense — I hope we will rise to them. Our European forebears recreated the face of Western Society, I think on the whole for the better; what will we and our children do with South Africa?

PROFESSOR J. S. MARAIS

PROFESSOR J. S. MARAIS died suddenly in Johannesburg in November, 1969. His wife, Anna, is the national vice-president of the Black Sash and we were greatly saddened both for her and because Etienne Marais was a good friend to the Black Sash from its earliest beginnings. He bequeathed laughter and joy to those who knew him.

Dominee Beyers Naudé paid this tribute to him at his funeral. There are no better words with which to express our love and admiration.

“Professor Marais will be remembered by the warmth and friendliness of his personality, his uncompromising commitment to honesty and truth, his unquestioned integrity and his fearless stand for social justice. These will be the marked characteristics by which Etienne Marais will be remembered and his memory cherished by his wife, his children, his colleagues and his friends. We are grateful for such a life and for the fact that he passed away without any illness or pain.

When I reflect on the life of Professor Marais I am always reminded of Christ's words in John 8:32 where he says: ‘And you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.’ For Etienne Marais will be remembered for his search after truth—a search clearly shown in his approach as an academician to the subject he loved so dearly — history. Without any partisanship, with an objectiveness and scientific approach which made him one of the great historians of our country, he pursued his research and published his findings. This deep respect for truth was the dominant factor in his historical writings which will be honoured for their reliability long after his personal memory has passed away.

He will be remembered for his demand for integrity. All those of us who knew him

were aware of his insistence upon integrity—in his own life as well as in those of all around him. He evaluated the significance of people's actions in terms of their moral integrity. He despised all hypocrisy and cant and always wished to ensure that the motive of his actions should be pure and clear. Wherever anybody sincerely respects truth the question of integrity comes into play. Integrity is always the sign of honesty and purity. Etienne Marais' integrity was never questioned because falsehood was foreign to his character.

He will be remembered for his stand for social justice. The urge for truth and integrity inevitably and unavoidably leads a human being to involvement in social concerns. One who loves truth, who values integrity is also the one who advocates for social justice. This explains why Etienne Marais could never be the kind of person who would be satisfied to live in an academic cloister — he had to move out to meet men where they live and suffer. This was the reason for his willingness to become chairman of the Open Universities Liaison Committee when the threat of exclusion of non-white students from the campuses of our universities was imminent. The same explanation applies to his chairmanship of the Academic Freedom Committee where he was willing to champion worthy and lofty causes however unpopular this made him to many.

These worthy characteristics linked to one another — truth, integrity, justice enacted in deep sincerity — moral values all too little acknowledged and honoured in our present-day society in South Africa. With more men of such calibre our country could be truly called great and free. This was the greatness of Christ who wishes all his followers to listen and to accept his words: ‘You will know the truth and the truth will make you free.’”