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Police, Radio and Press Tried to Play it Down, But the Facts Show that

TENS OF THOUSANDS

STAYED HOME

African Lead Followed By Coloureds, Indians and White Students

THE overall picture of the 3-day stay home shows that, though there was a mixed response to the call of the National Action Council, tens of thousands stayed at home in all centres.

● Best response came from Johannesburg, where first thing on Monday the overwhelming majority of African workers went on strike. The trickle back to work started later in the day, but even on Tuesday numbers of people in areas like Mzimhlope and Alexandra stayed home.

● Outstanding support for the strike was given by the Coloured people in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and other centres. Percentages of Coloured workers who stayed home varied, but there is no doubt the community as a whole has registered its protest against Government policies.

● Indian support for the stay-home in Durban and other areas was substantial. All shops were closed from Monday morning.

● Support for the strike came from a minority of Europeans, and at Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and Maritzburg university students stayed away from classes.

Johannesburg

Early on the first day of the strike the stay-away was between 60 and 70 per cent effective.

Depleted labour shifts trickled into factories, some had to shut down altogether, some industrial sectors looked like a morgue, the city streets were nearly all-white, as though there were five whites to every African and not vice versa as in the South Africa we know. The early morning trains and buses were empty and station platforms almost deserted.

But the stay-away figure dropped somewhat in the later hours of the morning and some workers caught later trains as it got light.

PROPAGANDA

Even before the strike had had a chance to get going, the Government used the SABC on all possible wavelengths to announce the police verdict of "total" failure. The late morning press chimed in with the same predominantly police version.

For example, the first broadcast

beamed at 7 a.m. said there was no sign of any strike; this was Special Branch Chief Spengler's handout.

The strike was ushered in under a barrage of threats by the Government, the Railways and large employers to sack all workers striking. Africans faced the strike with the knowledge that it was being treated by the authorities almost like a minor war.

Yet Monday showed that this did not intimidate the majority of workers in Johannesburg.

JOBS ENDANGERED

What did take the edge off the strike was that it was just not extensive enough to assure the strikers that the amount of scabbing would not endanger their jobs.

This was played upon heavily by radio announcements beamed into the townships.

This was a general strike organised without pickets but against a background of frightening police and army movements over two weeks. Troops dug in in the centre of town right next to the Alexandra Township bus terminus.

On Monday morning police, uniformed and plain-clothed, were stationed at every bus stop corner. At New Canada junction special railway police riot squads patrolled in steel helmets with gas mask bags carrying long batons and wicker-work shields. Some were armed with sten guns.

Nevertheless the African population remained calm and many more struck than the press will admit to, let alone Government sources with a strong vested interest to show they had smashed the strike at birth.

Throughout the day there was a deliberate effort to minimise the extent of the Johannesburg strike. Congress circles will be the first to admit the strike was not complete, but the press headlines of so-called "flops" and "failures" did not coincide with facts like these:

Large clothing factories were almost depleted of labour, only one of 140 workers reported for duty at a certain Boovsens factory. 25 workers were present at an en-

gineering firm out of several hundred, three workers out of 3,000 reported for work at one large firm. Ninety-nine per cent stayed out at a large laundry, under half turned up at a tobacco firm, many businesses limped along, some with entirely depleted African staffs.

Bus and train loads told a similar story: one Pretoria service had carried 547 by 7.30 a.m. instead of the usual load of 1,500. There were trickles instead of floods of workers leaving stations, but in their keenness to smash the strike the first estimates blindly accepted the police versions and grossly under-estimated the strike extent.

Thousands of courageous workers answered this strike call and this is a fact.

AT ALEXANDRA

At Alexandra most men were at home on Monday. From 4 to 6 a.m. (Continued on page 3)

NEW AGE

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"African Grievances Remain" —MANDELA

THE Secretary of the National Action Council, Mr. Nelson Mandela, told New Age on Monday that the strike was far more successful in Johannesburg than has been made out.

"Nevertheless it was not the national success I had hoped for.

"I believe in weighing up the shortcomings and this will be done. But one thing is crystal clear: African grievances are there and the African cause is just. As long as the grievances remain there will be protest actions of this kind or another.

"If peaceful protests like these are to be put down by mobilisation of the army and the police then the

people might be forced to use other methods of struggle."

Mr. Mandela added: "Until we get a 100 per cent stoppage there are still Africans not yet deep enough in the freedom struggle, not yet ready enough to sacrifice. There were tens of thousands of heroes of the strike. They are the stuff of which any victorious freedom fight is made.

"Those who scabbed must be warned that they are harming the cause of the African people—their own cause.

"Every freedom struggle has its casualties, its setbacks. This doesn't mean that freedom is not worth fighting for."

ARRESTS, ARRESTS, AND MORE ARRESTS

THE police have a gleaming new weapon in their hands—the power to detain any arrested person for 12 days without bail—and they are brandishing it indiscriminately.

Yet they seem to be having trouble finding charges to lay against the men, women and youths they arrest.

In JOHANNESBURG, Transvaal Indian Congress leader Ahmed Kathrada, the first well-known political figure to be arrested in this strike crisis, has been charged with leaving the magisterial area of Johannes-

burg for Schweizer Reinecke in December last in contravention of his ban. He is at present at the Fort but will be moved to Schweizer Reinecke this week.

HURRIED CASES

Five Africans—Daniel Mabe, Steven Masuko, Franz Nhlopo, Harry Somela and Philemon Linda—all of EMDENI SOUTH have been charged with an offence arising out of the 1960 Emergency—a charge of assault with intent. They also have a second charge preferred against them of intimidation. All five were remanded in jail to June 2.

They were to be legally represented but their case was hurried

through before their attorney reached the courtroom.

The same thing happened in the case of the 11 people picked up in the Special Branch swoop of May 24. The 10 Africans and one Indian were rushed into court and out again before their counsel could trace them. They have all been moved to Modder B jail.

The arrested persons include: Mr. Essop Pahad, Mrs. Muriel Sodinda, Mr. John Tsele, Mr. Cameron Bhen-dile, Miss Kate Molale, Mr. J. Ramorulu, Mr. Patrick Gabutloeloe, Mr. G. G. Xorile and Henry Gordon Makgothi.

Mr. Faried Adams, secretary of (Continued on page 3)

Stop the
Slaughter
in Angola

30,000 MASSACRED

BY PORTUGUESE

TYRANTS

—see page 7

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