

# Building Railways and 'Building Character'<sup>1</sup>: The Model Villages in Northern Natal, c.1935-1939.

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## Introduction

During 1935 a section of northern Natal was transformed by the appearance of wood-and-iron townships on the hill slopes near Ingogo Station and Mount Pleasant. Within a matter of months roads were graded, houses sprang up, rugby fields, tennis courts and children's playgrounds were laid out. As cottages were completed, the village population began to arrive from different parts of the country - ultimately about 450 families<sup>2</sup> - and the unique communities of the SAR & H 'model villages' were born.

In this article, which arises from a wider research project concerning welfare on the South African Railways<sup>3</sup>, I examine the peculiar phenomenon of the Railways model village. I focus on the first villages, 'Arbeidslus' and 'Werkgenot' erected in northern Natal, from whence they were later re-located with personnel, to the eastern Cape. I discuss the background of the model villages and consider some aspects of their reception in Natal. I also attempt to interpret their significance within the context of the 'civilized' labour policy of the Railways. Railways had a long history of providing employment for white labourers in times of economic depression<sup>4</sup> and more than mining, industry, or any other state department, committed itself to the 'civilized' labour policy promoted by the Pact Government from 1924. In terms of this policy, wherever practicable so-called 'civilized' labour (so defined as to imply white, and, theoretically, coloured labour) was to replace 'uncivilized' (black) labour - at 'civilized' wage rates.<sup>5</sup> This presented the Railways with the problem of a white labour force which, by official definition, should conform to standards of living 'generally recognised as tolerable from the usual European standpoint',<sup>6</sup> but which in reality was scarcely distinguishable from 'uncivilized' labour whose aims were said to be 'restricted to the bare requirements of the necessities of life as understood among barbarous and undeveloped peoples'.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore the substitution of white for black labour was costly. I here argue that the model villages were intended to address both problems. Firstly, the presumed superior European culture and standards were to be inculcated, to give credibility to the concept, and justification to the policy of 'civilized labour'. Secondly, the added cost of 'civilized' wages had to be minimised. To do this, robust health, physical strength, stamina and a capitalist work ethic had to be developed in white labourers, to increase their productivity. In the

long term, white workers had to be given the training, and their children given the education, that would elevate them above the ranks of the unskilled and protect them permanently from competition with blacks for work as manual labourers.

## Transportable towns for workers

The first Railways model villages were built to accommodate the families of unskilled white labourers engaged in grading, tunnelling and re-laying of tracks to reduce curvature on the line between Volksrust and Glencoe. It was a major project, and formed part of a comprehensive scheme to speed up railway traffic throughout the Union - the so-called £10,000,000 scheme.<sup>8</sup> As a result of Cabinet discussions early in 1934 it had been made known that work to the value of ten million pounds 'was available' on the railway systems.<sup>9</sup> The magnitude of the undertaking caught the imagination of parliament<sup>10</sup> and the press,<sup>11</sup> and much was expected from it. However, having garnered praise and publicity for the idea, Oswald Pirow (Minister of Railways and Harbours) was clearly anxious that his Department should not find itself encumbered with the entire burden of giving it substance, and hastened to place the scheme in perspective. During his budget debate in March 1934, he informed the House of Assembly that beneficial as this reconstruction work would be, it was not immediately necessary from the Railways' point of view. If undertaken, it would be primarily to assist the Department of Labour in providing unemployment relief.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it was 'not worth £10 000 000 or anything like that sum' to the Railways Administration. Minister Pirow stressed<sup>13</sup> that the work could be carried out far more cheaply using black labour and that the SAR & H was neither prepared nor in a position to absorb the higher cost of 'civilized' labour. However what it could do was to offer large-scale employment, provided that the matter of funding was resolved. The scheme became, therefore, a joint venture of the two Departments, Labour and Railways, the former to subsidize wages and the Railways Administration to bear various other expenses. In practice the precise apportionment of costs, authority and responsibility led to protracted wrangling and cool relations between the partners,<sup>14</sup> since the SAR & H did not want to add fuel to the fire of criticism surrounding its cost and rates structures.<sup>15</sup>

The design, erection, financing and management of the model villages which housed a select portion of the workforce, clearly rested with Railways.<sup>16</sup> It is not possible to tell from contemporary sources just what meaning was attached to the concept 'model' which appears in the earliest traced references to the model village scheme. In terms of accommodation these settlements were 'models' perhaps in the sense of being 'experimental', or perhaps 'simplified to basics', but certainly not in the sense of being ideal. Housing was spartan: two bedrooms,<sup>17</sup> a dining area and kitchen, constructed in corrugated iron with matchboard and asbestos insulation. Many of the houses were without interior doors.<sup>18</sup> Ablution and laundry facilities were communal.<sup>19</sup> The Minister of Railways was to resist later appeals for individual bathrooms on the grounds that 'these people' were not accustomed to bathrooms. Besides, he thought that they ought not to have everything too easy. Water was not even laid on in the kitchens and had to be drawn at an outside tap. The Minister defended this austerity too, on the grounds that inhabitants should not be spoiled.<sup>20</sup> However a schoolroom, dispensary and assembly hall were provided<sup>21</sup> and in comparison with the tented facilities which served the balance of the construction crew, no doubt the families selected to occupy the model villages could be regarded as 'satisfactorily' if not ideally, accommodated.<sup>22</sup>

#### Bonanza or burden?: Reaction in Natal

The people of Natal were to display a decidedly ambivalent attitude towards the model villages, but possibly on balance regarded the province as ill-served by the Railways Administration. Compared with the canvas workers' camps that were a feature of railway construction throughout the country, from an aesthetic point of view, the villages were undoubtedly the lesser evil. Nevertheless they were something of a blot on the landscape. The planners attempted to soften the scene by lining streets with jacaranda trees<sup>23</sup> but not a great deal could be done to disguise the sterile rows of uniform prefabricated houses. Siting the villages against the hillsides may have enhanced the outlook for the inhabitants, but equally increased the visual impact on the environment. Indeed, as the first village took shape, the *Argus* correspondent writing from Newcastle, prophesied that it would come to be known as 'Tin Town'.<sup>24</sup>

Nor could much commercial advantage have been gained from the presence of the villages within the province. News of the influx of large numbers of workmen for northern Natal rail improvements probably raised hopes of a local commercial boom among businessmen. Indeed, the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce recommended that the housing be constructed within Newcastle rather than at a distance from the town - to facilitate the education of the children, so it was argued.<sup>25</sup> In the event, the model

village system was so planned as to make the community remarkably self-sufficient. Education was well provided for within the villages, and (what was no doubt more disappointing for the Chamber of Commerce) each village had its own non-profit supply store catering for the basic needs of the inhabitants.<sup>26</sup> Since credit was strongly discouraged and thrift and saving encouraged,<sup>27</sup> it is fair to assume that the model villages provided only limited possibilities for economic exploitation.

What may have created unease in some quarters in Natal with a history of anti-Afrikaner feeling<sup>28</sup>, was that the model villages were potentially fertile ground for the cultivation of Afrikaner nationalism. This was of particular significance in the north of the province, which already had a large Afrikaner population. The villagers were almost exclusively Afrikaans-speaking, the Afrikaans language and cultural union (ATKV) was active,<sup>29</sup> and with little other social distraction, Afrikaner cultural activities and the cultivation of *volkseunheid* - could thrive. For example a branch of the 'Voortrekkers' youth movement, was established to replace the health class for young girls.<sup>30</sup> A *boereorkes* was assembled. Debates, lectures, dramas and various other functions were organised by the ATKV.<sup>31</sup> The model villages could also be used for political propaganda, as is well-illustrated in the Christmas issue of the SAR & H Magazine in 1935. In an article ostensibly concerned with the functioning of the villages, but loaded with political innuendo, the contributor 'Delea' focusses on the themes of character formation and nation building, the upliftment of the Afrikaner working class and its full incorporation into the *volk*.<sup>32</sup> Heavy emphasis is placed on the fact that the settlements were located close to Amajuba mountain, an evocative symbol for Afrikaners.<sup>33</sup>

'...it is as though Amajuba is talking to one, when one is in the villages, and it makes one think. Yes, Afrikaner nation - you must think and build with purpose. Think of your roots and think of your future.'<sup>34</sup>

In a particularly revealing passage the author concludes that the inhabitants of 'Arbeidslus' had shown that Afrikaner labourers, 'respond strongly to leadership and example' - wherein lay 'the peril or salvation of the class'.<sup>35</sup> This kind of appeal to Afrikaners to unite across class lines as a common force was typical of nationalist propaganda generated by both the newly created Purified National Party and the Afrikaner Broederbond and its associate organisations. It was bound to be offensive to many in a province which was dominantly English-speaking and Imperialist in its loyalties.

What was certainly a source of acrimony in Natal, was the fact that the northern districts railway improvements did not provide employment for men from the area. The member of parliament for Newcastle attempted to

intervene to persuade the Department of Labour to recruit locally, and warned of considerable ill-feeling and resentment if workmen were brought in from other areas.<sup>35</sup> This was a long-standing issue between the Department and various Natal authorities and was apparently related to the anti-Afrikaner sentiment already referred to.<sup>37</sup> Since the province was far less affected by unemployment and poverty than were other parts of the Union, labour for relief projects carried out in Natal was usually imported from elsewhere.<sup>38</sup> In the past there had been considerable prejudice against these intruding (Afrikaans-speaking) poor whites and resistance to their insinuation into the province. The Department of Labour was accused of sending men of inferior calibre to Natal, thereby introducing a variety of health, social and moral problems, and generally lowering standards.<sup>39</sup> However as the Secretary for Labour pointed out in this case, there simply was no pool of unemployed workmen to draw on locally - the Department could not even find sufficient eligible white labourers in Natal for provincial road works. He therefore remained adamant that labour should be transferred from depressed areas where the need for relief was greatest.<sup>40</sup>

### Model villages to shape model citizens

Although additional work opportunities were not forthcoming for Natal, any fears that the province would be corrupted by undesirable influences from the model villages must surely have proved unfounded. The workmen admitted to the villages had been chosen with particular care. The Railways Administration had its own reservations about Department of Labour recruits - recently borne out by reports from Cape Town of outrageously unsuitable placements. It therefore requested permission for its officers to inspect all the candidates for the subsidised work on the Natal deviations, before final recruitment. Those for the model villages were specifically selected by railway officers. The recruits were to be men who were 'thoroughly capable of giving a good day's work, and who were prepared to remain in the service'.<sup>41</sup> In other words, they were to be physically fit and stable men. Nor was the capacity for work the sole criterion - only men with families would be accommodated, and the families were to be 'worthy' and 'deserving' cases.<sup>42</sup>

In the circumstances, this select group of poor whites could not be regarded as merely a cross-section of the country's unskilled labourers. They had been judged and assessed as promising human material. Railways then undertook to develop the potential.<sup>43</sup> This brings us back to the question of what the Departments of Labour and Railways had in mind when they referred to the construction settlements as model villages, and suggests another possible connotation of the term 'model'. Not the physical structures and amenities of the villages, but the social structures of the villages were to become models. As is hinted in the names of the villages -

'Arbeidslus' and 'Werkgenot' - and as is apparent in all the details of organisation of the villages, it was central to the scheme that the inhabitants were to be coaxed or coerced into becoming models of obedience, thrift, piety and above all, industry. The most obvious indicator of this underlying principle of the model villages is the schedule of rules of occupation, drawn up by the Railways Administration.<sup>44</sup> Before taking up residence in a village, the railworker signed his acceptance of these rules, thereby committing himself and his family to a lifestyle, stringently regulated and closely monitored by the village Superintendent, aided by a social worker, nurse and teacher.

What is particularly interesting to the social historian is the scope and scale of intervention which the authorities saw fit to apply, and furthermore the degree of submission by villagers. In referring to the regulations, the Chief Social Worker engaged in setting up a welfare system for the SAR & H (Miss Erika Theron<sup>45</sup>), observed that these were no more than would be taken for granted in any decent household.<sup>46</sup> This, however, calls for an extraordinary definition of 'any decent household'. It would include *inter alia* the idea that the average decent householder could not choose his own visitors or resist making unwise purchases from tradesmen at his front door.<sup>47</sup>

Many of the regulations did indeed deal simply with the day-to-day business of clean and orderly living and were no doubt designed to teach these families the life skills that would render them socially and economically viable in the wider society. However, others clearly infringe on individual liberties. Acceptance of these rules of occupation required compliance with a specific, uniform value system. And it was not only the substance but the dictatorial style of the rules which betray the essence of the model village scheme. Consciously or otherwise, the villages were structured as indoctrination camps, producing labour that was compliant, productive and conforming to what its promoters regarded as western cultural standards - a white working class that could justify its privileged position *vis-a-vis* black labour.

There were naturally provisions to ensure the health of the community. These would be expected in the circumstances, but it is noteworthy that such provisions consisted not of general guidelines but explicit instructions with sanctions spelt out. Underlying these clauses was an assumption of considerable naivete, ignorance and sloth among at least some of the villagers.

Railworker families were evidently *not*, without question, equated with 'any decent household',<sup>48</sup> but if they were to remain in the village, they were to be shaped to fit the mould. For example:

'Lavatories must be cleaned daily ... and the seats scrubbed. Paper must not be allowed to lie about the floor, but should be cut into squares and stuck on a wire skewer and this fastened to a cross-

beam.' 'Dirty water must not be thrown on the ground...'<sup>49</sup>

and so on at length and in detail. To ensure that the conditions of occupation were observed, the camp superintendent had the right of entry and inspection 'at all reasonable hours'. His 'orders and instructions' had to be 'promptly obeyed'.<sup>50</sup>

Not only hygiene, but management of finances was supervised:

'Debts are strongly discouraged, and anyone incurring unjustifiable debt may be expelled...'<sup>51</sup>

The social worker assigned to the settlement seems to have concerned herself so closely with the income and expenses of each family, that records maintained in the early years for each family included detailed budgets,<sup>52</sup> and she was able to quote totals of individual savings.<sup>53</sup>

A curious regulation banned the possession of motor cars or motor cycles, irrespective of whether these were kept inside the villages or outside. Infringement would render residents liable to expulsion.<sup>54</sup> The contributor to the SAR & H magazine mentioned earlier, claimed that this was a wholly understandable restriction, since a subsidised labourer could not afford to own a motor vehicle. People were to be discouraged from living on credit.<sup>55</sup> Clearly white labourers were not regarded as sufficiently civilized to control such affairs on their own.

No black or coloured servants could be employed in the village.<sup>56</sup> The significance of this constraint is less easy to interpret. Possibly this too would be regarded as unwarranted expenditure. Possibly railworker wives, like their husbands, were to be encouraged to learn 'the dignity of labour'.<sup>57</sup> But the specific inclusion of the racial categories points to another possibility - the intention of discouraging contacts across the colour line, when socio-economic differences were slight. There are references scattered throughout the SAR & H files in various collections, concerning proper relations and distance between the lower ranks of white labour and black people. For example, Charles Hoffe (later General Manager SAR & H) wrote to the Minister of Railways, when he was Staff Superintendent, to appeal for housing assistance for white labour in Natal to prevent the mingling of different races. The letter is peppered with dire predictions of 'racial tension,' 'ultimate intermarriage', of 'dissension and communism'.<sup>58</sup> In the eastern Cape the welfare committee discussed with concern, the fact that black servants were being allowed to sleep in the kitchens of railworkers' cottages.<sup>59</sup> Apparently the Administration and its welfare department felt it necessary to keep a watchful eye on the relationship between the 'civilized' and the 'uncivilized' race groups. Not that this should be seen as anything exceptional within the context of contemporary

attitudes. C. W. de Kiewiet, whose history of South Africa was prescribed for the training of SAR & H welfare officers,<sup>60</sup> described poor whites as 'a race of men so abject in their poverty, so wanting in resourcefulness that they stood *dangerously close* to the natives themselves'.<sup>61</sup>

Morality also fell under the purview of the village authority. Intoxicating liquor was totally banned in the model villages.<sup>62</sup> 'Disorderly conduct', 'immorality' (undefined), and even 'insubordination' could lead to summary dismissal. On Saturday mornings, all children over the age of seven were obliged to turn out for a 'parade' lasting an hour and be drilled or instructed as ordered.<sup>63</sup>

The final injunction on the schedule of rules is indicative of the 'cradle to grave' control of the Administration in these villages. In the case of birth or death within a household, the head of the family would be held responsible for advising the Supervisor - and only *then* for making arrangements for registration or burial of the body.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the structured controls contained in the rules of occupation, the social worker involved herself closely in the daily lives of the village people. Clubs were established to teach various skills, particularly homecrafts, and incidentally to impart social graces. 'Problem' families were identified and visited frequently to be advised or admonished on matters ranging from nutrition, to lice control and even the most intimate personal relationships.<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, given the authoritarian, regulated constitution of the model villages, and the unstructured background of the recruits, the experiment appears to have succeeded to a significant degree, both in creating a stable, productive workforce and in the *embourgeoisement* of the communities. Within the first months, the earnings of the men (who were initially paid on a piecework basis) had on average almost doubled.<sup>66</sup> Productivity continued to rise and peak after approximately 2 years.<sup>67</sup> Wastage of labour, even in the early stages of adjustment, was at the low rate of 2%<sup>68</sup> compared with the the rate of 20 - 30% for gangs outside the villages.<sup>69</sup> This exceptional stability was sustained for the following decade, when the decision was taken to dissolve the model village scheme.<sup>70</sup>

Throughout the period only twelve families were evicted for misconduct. Statistics of maternal and<sup>71</sup> the more remarkable when it is realised that these figures pertained to an exclusively poor, labouring class community in which mortality rates would normally be higher than average. There were many other, equally significant but less quantifiable signs of progress towards 'social rehabilitation' according to the social workers who evaluated this aspect in 1945. Women who had been 'dull, disinterested and slovenly' had overcome

their apathy and begun 'to care for the home by keeping it clean and providing clean clothing and good food for the family; sending the children to school regularly ... consolidating family life'.<sup>72</sup>

A sense of community evidently evolved, as can be gleaned from a small report on a concert held at *Arbeidslus*. Over 300 people attended this evening of varied entertainment (including a wrestling match, music, recitation, jokes and readings) in aid of the Sunday school funds.<sup>73</sup> As subsidised labour was generally drawn from the ranks of the poor whites, characterised as unadapted and alienated from normal social life,<sup>74</sup> this would indicate a significant step forward. Perhaps elements of the occasion also suggest movement towards integration of the model village community into the greater, self-conscious Afrikaner community (see my discussion above) - it was expressly reported that the concert ended with the singing of '*Afrikaners, Landgenote*'.<sup>75</sup>

### Appraisal

By 1945, when the model village scheme drew to the end of its useful life, its role in providing 'opportunity'<sup>76</sup> was clearly regarded with pride by the Railways Administration. The committee appointed to evaluate the scheme concluded that 'no sounder investment could be effected in the interests of the nation than building up an improved citizen'.<sup>77</sup> But what is not evident is the cost of that investment.

It is difficult to obtain an accurate evaluation of the scheme in economic terms, since costs were so dispersed and the reporting so misleading. No detailed analysis is offered here - only some general observations. In the report on the model villages issued in 1945, it was claimed that until 1939 (which coincides with the end of the Natal phase of the project and movement of the villages to the next site, in the eastern Cape - as well as with the outbreak of war) 'the output of work, on the whole, was such as to justify the employment of European labour on the works being considered an economic venture'.<sup>78</sup> What is unclear however, is whether or not this decidedly measured statement refers only to the costs borne directly by Railways, in other words, over and above the Labour Department subsidy. This might justify the Natal project from the point of view of the Railways Administration, but of course it fudges the issue of the total cost to the State, and ultimately its revenue sources. In interpreting statements related to the economic logic of 'civilized' labour it should be kept in mind that this was a sensitive subject from its inception.<sup>79</sup> The SAR & H in particular had suffered repeated criticism and embarrassment for what was branded as an uneconomic labour policy.<sup>80</sup> Against this background, both in and out of parliament, Pirow had declared<sup>81</sup> and in particular to ensure that 'civilized' labour proved its 'payability'.<sup>82</sup> Under the circumstances, the Railways' committee which issued

this report would have been disinclined to publish injudicious findings on the economics of the model village scheme. However, it was forced to admit that by 1945, the cost of labour under model village conditions, had become prohibitive - although care was taken to attribute this in the main to wartime conditions.<sup>83</sup> So no final assessment can be made as to whether the model villages succeeded wholly in making 'civilized labour' more cost effective than that which it replaced. It seems unlikely.

But as an exercise in socio-economic upliftment, Railways officials had no such reservations about the model villages. They concluded 'without doubt' that they had 'served as a timely and important contribution to poor-white rehabilitation during the period of ten years when the residents would otherwise have been a burden on the State'.<sup>84</sup> Since Railways was a para-statal body and for at least part of this time bore the cost of 'prohibitively' expensive labour, the logic is dubious. What does seem indisputable is that the model villages went a long way towards 'civilizing' their residents by instilling in them attitudes and habits which narrowed the social gap between the poor white and the white middle classes. There are also indications that they promoted Afrikaner ethnic and cultural identification, in opposition to class definition. Perhaps within their time, they helped to make the concept of 'civilized' labour at least appear less irrational.

### ENDNOTES

- 1 'Delea', "Die Modeldorpe", *South African Railways and Harbours Magazine*, December 1935, pp. 1561-1563.
- 2 Transvaal Museum Library, Johannesburg (TML), SAR & H, Report of the committee appointed to examine the present state and future policy regarding the model villages: eastern Cape main line improvements, Johannesburg, 1945, p.20.
- 3 Also referred to in the article as SAR & H or Railways.
- 4 UG 29-1947: Report of committee appointed to investigate the employment of unskilled European workers in the Railway service, pp. 2 and 29-30.
- 5 Prime Minister's circular no.5, dated 31-10-1924, quoted in *Official yearbook of the Union of South Africa*, no.10, 1927-28, p.197.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *Ibid.* The first Carnegie commission of enquiry gives abundant evidence that poor whites, who largely made up the ranks of white unskilled labour, lived in conditions of such indigence, ignorance and squalor that it makes no sense to claim that a higher level of needs and aims was characteristic of this group. *Report of the Carnegie commission of investigation on the poor white question in South Africa*, parts I-V (Stellenbosch, 1932).

- 8 Cape Argus, 23-3-1935. When the plan was first mooted, no decision had been taken to commence work on the Natal main line and several other routes were mentioned: Debates of the House of Assembly, 23-4-1934, col.2562.
- 9 CAD, ARB 640, file LB650/1/2, Under-secretary to Secretary for Labour, 29/1/37, appendix entitled, Memorandum on Railway Works: Northern Natal. See also Cape Times, 14-3-1934.
- 10 Debates of the House of Assembly. See numerous references in part appropriation and budget debates, 1934.
- 11 See for example the Cape Times, 16-3-1934: 'More about the £10 000 000 scheme' and the Cape Argus, 23-3-1935 which claimed optimistically that £10 000 000 had been made available 'to enable 10 000 men to be employed for ten years'.
- 12 Debates of the House of Assembly, 15-3-1934, col.1459.
- 13 Debates of the House of Assembly, 15-3-1934, col.1459, 23-4-1934, col.2562.
- 14 CAD, ARB 640, file B650/1. See correspondence and minutes of meetings.
- 15 See later discussion.
- 16 "New Railway villages at Ingogo and Mount Prospect, Natal", South African Railways and Harbours Magazine, October 1935, p.220.
- 17 A few 3-bedroomed houses were erected but since large families (including many with five or more children) were favoured for recruitment, accommodation must have been very cramped. CAD, ARB 640, file B650, General Manager of SAR & H - Secretary for Labour, 5-1-1935.
- 18 Instituut vir Eietydse Geskiedenis, Bloemfontein (INEG), PV 93, file 1/67/7, Summary of discussions between a delegation from the Continuation Committee of the Volkskongres, 1934 to Minister of Railways and Harbours, 7-1-1936.
- 19 "New Railway villages at Ingogo ...", p.1219.
- 20 INEG, PV 93, file 1/67/7, Summary of discussions ... 7-12-1920.
- 21 "New Railway villages at Ingogo ...", p.1219.
- 22 Verslag van die Spoorwegwelsynswerk deur die Voortsettingskomitee van die Volkskongres, 1934, p.4. In the report of the social worker who had surveyed the villages it was stated simply that 'Die doel van die Dorpe ...(is om) .. 'n bevredigende stelsel van behuising vir hulle en hul families so na moontlik aan die werkplekke te verskaf'.
- 23 "New Railway villages at Ingogo ...", p.1219.
- 24 Cape Argus, 15-3-1935.
- 25 The Star, 26-6-1934.
- 26 Glances at Railway welfare: Some features of the social security measures and welfare services adopted by the SAR & H administration: Brochure produced on the occasion of the National Social Welfare Conference, September 1944, p.25.
- 27 See discussion below.
- 28 J. Lourens, Thomas Boydell and unemployment in South Africa, 1925-1929 (unpubl. MA, UNISA, 1990), pp.85-88.
- 29 Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuur Vereniging (SAS & H), 'established to promote the use of the Afrikaans language and active interest in Afrikaans art and culture' (my translation): F.J. Kok, Die taak van kultuurorganisasies in minderheidskultuurgroepe met besondere verwysing na die ATKV (unpubl. DPhil, Stellenbosch, 1992). This organisation was responsible for many Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation initiatives such as the symbolic trek of 1938.
- 30 Verslag van die spoorwegwelsynswerk, deur die Voortsettingskomitee van die Volkskongres, 1934, p.36.
- 31 'Delea', "Die Modeldorp", p.1563.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Symbolic of the victory of the Boers over Britain in the independence struggle of the Transvaal.
- 34 'Delea', "Die Modeldorp", p.1561 (my translation).
- 35 Ibid., p.1563.
- 36 CAD, ARB 640, file B650/1, Correspondence between O.R. Nel and Secretary for Labour, 12-9-1934, 5-10-1934, 17-4-1935.
- 37 J. Lourens, Thomas Boydell, pp.85-88.
- 38 CAD, ARB 579, file LB505/1/1, A.C. van der Horst to Secretary for Labour, 17-11-1927. See also endnote no.40.
- 39 J. Lourens, Thomas Boydell, pp. 85-88. See also for example CAD, ARB 579, file LB505/1/1/PC3, Report of the Industrial Inspector (Department of Labour) - Secretary for Labour, 26-7-1927 and Under-Secretary for Labour - Secretary for Labour, 5-11-1927.
- 40 CAD, ARB 640, file LB650/1, Secretary for Labour - Minister for Labour, 2-11-1934 and Secretary for Labour - O.R. Nel, Member of Parliament for Newcastle, 12-9-1934.
- 41 CAD ARB 640, file B650/1, Notes of discussion between the Department of Railways and Department of Labour, 2-8-1935.
- 42 CAD, ARB 640, file LB650/1, General Manager SAR & H - Secretary for Labour, 5-1-1935.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 TML, South African Railways and Harbours Rules, Village Hygiene and Occupation being annexure to Report of the committee appointed to examine the ... model villages, 1945. The rules which are referred to in the following section are dated 1940 and have been used as the basis for discussion, since I have been unable to trace earlier versions. However the specific clauses

- referred to appear substantially unchanged as corroborated in other sources.
- 45 Later Professor Erika Theron. Theron completed her Doctoral studies under Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd in the Department of Sociology at the University of Stellenbosch and is regarded as one of the foremost figures in the development of social work studies in South Africa. She served as secretary for the Continuation Committee of the national conference on the poor white question, 1934, from which position she was seconded to the Railways welfare project. Thereafter she took up an academic post at the University of Stellenbosch. She was active in numerous cultural, academic and public bodies in various capacities and in 1973 was appointed chairperson of the commission of investigation into Coloured affairs.
- 46 Verslag van die Spoorwegwelsynswerk deur die Voortsettingskomitee van die Volkskongres, 1934, p.4 (my translation).
- 47 TML, Rules, Village Hygiene and Occupation. See also "Arbeidslus" in Forward, 27/3/36.
- 48 See quote from Theron above.
- 49 TML, Rules, Village Hygiene and Occupation.
- 50 Cape Argus, 15-3-1935.
- 51 TML, Rules, Village Hygiene and Occupation. See also 'Delea', "Die Modeldorpe", p.1562.
- 52 Verslag van die Spoorwegwelsynswerk deur die Voortsettingskomitee van die Volkskongres, 1934, p.58.
- 53 TML, Report of the committee appointed ..., p.27.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 'Delea', "Die Modeldorpe", pp. 1561-1563.
- 56 TML, Rules, Village Hygiene and Occupation.
- 57 Cape Argus, 23-3-1935. In an article on the 'Important Model Village Experiments' a highly-placed (government) official is quoted as saying, 'You must give these people their self-respect; you must make them realise the dignity of labour...'
- 58 TML, file 'C. M. Hoffe': Hoffe - C. Malan, 21-11-1929. See also G.H. Pirie, "Sleepers beside Tracks: Housing in South Africa's state railway corporation," South African Geographical Journal, vol. 64, no. 2, 1982, in which it is shown that racial separation was a factor in the Railway housing policy.
- 59 CAD, SAS 1866, file RHOW35/4, Minutes of a meeting of the Welfare Committee, Cape eastern system, 5-12-1945.
- 60 C.W. de Kiewiet, A history of South Africa, social and economic (London, 1941). See CAD, SAS 1870, file RHOW35/11, List of prescribed books for the training of Lady Welfare Officers, purchased during 1943-44, appendix to minutes of a meeting of the Central Welfare Committee, SAR & H, 21-10-1947.
- 61 De Kiewiet, A history of South Africa, p.181 (my emphasis).
- 62 See also 'Delea', "Die Modeldorpe".
- 63 TML, Rules, Village Hygiene and Occupation.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 INEG, PV 202/II, file 6/3/2/1/1. See monthly reports of the social worker based at Ingogo, to the continuation committee of the Volkskongres, 1934.
- 66 Spoornet Library, Johannesburg (SL), SAR & H General Manager's Bulletin no. 3284, 1935.
- 67 TML, Report of the committee appointed, p.22.
- 68 SL, SAR & H General Manager's Bulletin, no.3284, 1935.
- 69 CAD, ARB 640, file B650, Notes of discussion between the Railway Department and the Department of Labour, 2-8-1935, p. 4. See also TML, Report of the committee appointed, p.23.
- 70 TML, Report of the committee appointed, p.23.
- 71 Ibid., pp.27-28.
- 72 Ibid., p. 26.
- 73 "Arbeidslus se eerste stoeiwedstryd" SAR & H Magazine, February 1936, p.245.
- 74 TML, Report of the committee appointed ..., p.21.
- 75 "Arbeidslus se eerste stoeiwedstryd", p.245.
- 76 I. Abedian and B. Standish, "Poor Whites and the role of the state: The evidence", The South African Journal of Economics, vol.53, no.2, 1985, pp.163-164. Abedian and Standish use this term to refer to 'a whole array of educational, medical, transport and social services' which contributed to the ultimate eradication of the poor white problem.
- 77 TML, Report of the committee appointed, p.31.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 See for example D. Hobart Houghton, Some economic problems of the Bantu in South Africa (Johannesburg, 1938); De Kiewiet, History of South Africa, p.224, F. Van Biljon, State interference in South Africa (Westminster, 1938), pp.244, 283 and 286-288.
- 80 See for example S. Herbert Frankel, The railway policy of South Africa (Johannesburg, 1928), pp.55-59 and 88; Abedian and Standish, "Poor whites and the role of the state", p.162.
- 81 Debates of the House of Assembly, 14-3-1934, col.1399.
- 82 Ibid., 11-4-1934, col.2044.
- 83 TML, Report of the commission appointed, p.31.
- 84 Ibid., p 30.