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S. Africa's policy of apartheid falters

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Pressures at home and abroad are chipping away at South Africa's policies of race separation called apartheid.

New government initiatives, best described as "creeping changes," appear to be gradually dismantling some of the nation's most criticized laws and customs.

But long-time political observers say that while change is apparent there has been no fundamental shift in policy by the ruling Nationalist party.

The changes, they say, are "too little, too late" and amount to window dressing by a regime intent on maintaining white supremacy.

South Africa's population comprises about 18 million blacks, 4 million whites, 2 million persons of mixed race and 650,000 Asians.

The changes will not give the black majority the vote or create a multiracial society but appear to be aimed at eliminating or silently dropping the harsher aspects of racial separation.

Two events—the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa and a mounting shortage of skilled white labor inside the country—seem to have sparked much of the new thinking about old problems.

The possibility of racial conflict in southern Africa has grown since the sudden collapse of the Portuguese "buffer zone" between independent black Africa and white-ruled South Africa.

At home, South Africa's industrial

economy finds itself increasingly dependent on black labor to maintain growth.

Last Wednesday, Prime Minister John Vorster told the Senate in Cape Town that black and white-ruled Africa had reached a crossroads and must choose between peace and growing conflict.

He espoused a "good-neighbor" policy and called for cooperation between South Africa and the continent's independent black nations.

Inside South Africa, blacks and whites now work side by side in once strictly segregated stores and supermarkets.

Thousands of blacks are moving into jobs once reserved for whites.

Almost 80 percent of the work force in South Africa's new television manufacturing industry, for example, will be black because of a shortage of whites.

The government recently proposed in Parliament that the nation's controversial "masters and servants" laws dating to 1850 be abolished.

Critics have maintained the laws reduced black South Africans to "slave labor" and were a violation of human rights.

Among the laws to be repealed are ones that make it an offense for blacks under contract to stay away from work without lawful cause, to refuse to obey a lawful command by his boss and to use "insulting or abusive" language to an employer.

Recovering energy from wastes studied

A 600-page evaluation of energy recovery from solid waste, which involved two Texas A&M University people, is due off the presses around Dec. 1, NASA officials said.

Dr. Gary Halter, political scientist, and Dr. F. W. "Bill" Holm of the Mechanical Engineering Department, received notice by letter Monday that the publication date was tentatively set.

Halter and Holm spent 11 weeks this past summer on the project at Johnson Space Center. The program was a faculty summer institute sponsored by NASA and ASEE, the American Society for Engineering Education.

The pair was part of a three-pronged study on recovering or recycling resources from solid waste by municipalities. Eighteen college

faculty members in all participated in the work under a NASA grant.

A trio of groups studied technical problems, economic problems and overall impact in political, environmental, legal and social areas.

A fourth group, a conglomerate of the initial three, worked to create a decision-making model from applicable information already gathered in the study.

Holm and Halter are now expanding the information into a decision-making manual for Texas cities, particularly in economics, to try to give almost any city an idea of what it will run up against in planning for solid waste projects.

A tilling plan now being used in Odessa, in West Texas, where the city plows its garbage under, is being looked at in preparation of the manual.

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