

interference, the British Government would be free to take such further steps as seem to be required. . . .

So runs Mr. Eden's threatening speech to the House of Commons. In the words of the daily paper headlines, this is the West's "Master Plan." There is only one term that describes it accurately, and that is piracy!

And in the annals of British capitalism, piracy is nothing new. It is recorded in history that the first great accumulations of capital which marked Britain's transition from feudalism to capitalism were acquired on the high seas, under the flag of the Jolly Roger. The wheel has turned full circle. And when the sun is beginning to set on the British Empire, it reverts to type. But three centuries have passed, and the world—so the Users' Association will doubtless find—is no longer available for the taking with broadsides and cutlasses. Colonel Nasser, who grows in stature and dignity at each new turn of the crisis, spoke not just for Egypt, but for all colonial peoples when he made it clear that Egypt will not make way for force.

"We are ready to take measures to keep our dignity and sovereignty" he said, "but we are a small country. I know that power politics can gather its navy and its troops. We will just have to defend our rights to the last drop of our blood. . . . We will give an example to the world, for we are going to keep our sovereignty and dignity."

THE TRANSKEI TRAGEDY

(A Study in the Bantu Authorities Act)

By GOVAN MBEKI

ALTHOUGH the Bantu Authorities Act was passed in 1951, it is only recently that the public has been aroused to its implications. The Act purports to establish "Bantu States" or "Bantustans" within the South African State, planned on an ethnic basis. Dr. Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs and Chief Promoter of this plan, is attempting to dress up differently the lie that economic apartheid is practicable. The white electorate is told that the "Bantu" have "no place in the white man's green pastures." The 9 million Africans must develop in their own "national home" which constitutes twelve per cent of the land surface of South Africa. (When the additional 7¼ million morgen promised under the 1936 Land Act is added it will become 13 per cent.) The white man's "green pastures," consisting of 88 per cent of the land surface, are inhabited by 2½ million whites. The Africans are told that they will receive opportunities for self-development and self-government in "their own areas." Some Africans, for example the Transkeian Bunga

and a number of Chiefs, have accepted these assurances and become parties to the implementation of the Bantu Authorities Act.

In order to examine the full motives, aims and implications of the Act, I propose to restrict myself to one area only—the Transkei. Three years after the formation of the Union, the contracting authorities—i.e., the representatives of the white settler minorities in the Cape, Natal, O.F.S. and Transvaal—agreed to peg the land position at what it was when the last wars ended the British and Dutch scramble for land in South Africa. The 1913 Land Act gave legal fixity to the areas which are today known as Native Reserves. The largest of these Reserves is the Transkei, covering an area of 4.4 million morgen, and inhabited by 1,258,590 Africans (1951 figure).

THE HETEROGENEOUS TRANSKEI

It is a mistake to think of the Transkei as a “homogeneous” and simple area. It is a territory of great diversity and complexity, the fruits of the ruthless application of the imperialist policy of “divide and rule” by which the British were able, in the end, to conquer the Xhosa people.

For nearly a century the Xhosas pinned down the British forces in a war of attrition. In the midst of these bloody battles, the great Xhosa Chief Hintsa, the son of Gcaleka, nevertheless permitted the Rev. John Ayliff to open a mission at Butterworth. At about the same time, in 1834, a group of refugees from Zululand sought Hintsa’s protection. Hintsa, with the kindness that befitted a monarch of his stature, threw wide open the doors of his country to the destitute refugees, who subsequently earned for themselves the name of amaFengu.

Ayliff, with his hands clasped across his breast, assured the great Hintsa that he was concerned solely with man’s spiritual well-being and had nothing to do with the greedy British imperialists who sought to dispossess the Xhosas of their land. But in fact Ayliff’s Wesleyan mission was the forward observation post for the British forces.

The British were chafing to deliver a shattering military blow at the Xhosa armies which had for so long resisted their military onslaughts. The Xhosas were the inspiration of all African resistance to the advance of imperialism. Armed with assegais they had withstood firearms. They had dispersed the Dutch and sent them helter-skelter in search of other “green pastures” in the North. The Xhosas must be destroyed. That was the task Sir Benjamin D’Urban had set himself. He had, for this purpose, to know the disposition of Hintsa’s forces. Ayliff, “the man of God,” was the only one who could provide this information.

Ayliff’s medium of communication was to be the Mfengu who, as an adopted member of the Xhosa family, enjoyed the confidence of Hintsa and his people. The Mfengu had succumbed to the appeal of the words “Blessed are the poor, for they shall inherit the kingdom of Heaven.” Destitute, he clung to Ayliff with child-like faith. Homeless, he pinned his faith in a home hereafter. The Christianised Mfengu was used as a bearer of treacherous dispatches between the Butterworth mission and D’Urban.

When the amaFengu discovered, too late, that they had been used to betray their benefactor, they decided to follow John Ayliff, who offered to find them protection with the British forces. This defection was the beginning of a distrust which has been handed down from generation to generation. Industrial development and the spread of education have done much to uproot the distrust and heal the breach between Xhosa and Mfengu. The Government is now seeking to revive it, and all such similar antagonisms, through the operation of the Bantu Authorities Act.

A BUFFER FOR THE BRITISH

The British used the amaFengu as a buffer between themselves and Hintsa. In the Ciskei they were settled in areas between the Fish River and the Great Kei, such as the Keiskammahoek, Fort Beaufort and Peddie areas. As Hintsa's forces across the Kei River retreated, amaFengu were settled at Butterworth, Nqamakwe, Tsomo and Idutywa. The object of these settlements was always that the amaFengu should take the first shock of any attack.

This is the historical origin of these settlements; the story that the British and the missionaries were "rescuing the poor amaFengu from ill-treatment," though still spread in official history books in the Union, is a "big lie" which can never cover up or justify Ayliff's treachery and abuse of religion and hospitality alike.

The presence of the amaFengu is not the only factor which upsets the picture of the Transkei as an "ethnically" and tribally homogeneous area for the purpose of the reactionary Bantu Authorities Act.

Across the Bashee River, in the coastal districts of Elliotdale and Mqanduli are settled abaThembu, as in the Umtata, Engcobo and Cala districts. Cala, Glen Grey and St. Marks districts are inhabited by what are generally known as "Emigrant Thembus" under the chieftainship of Matanzima. Under the old order of things, before British imperialism, all these owed allegiance to Ngubengcuka.

Today, Pondoland is divided into East and West Pondoland, under Chiefs Botha Sigcau and Victor Poto Ndamase respectively. Under these two chieftainships attempts are made to give an outward impression of "paramountcy" over a number of districts, but the headmen, who are in fact under the direct control of the Native Commissioner, are really the most important cogs in the Reserves administrative machinery.

In the East Griqualand districts such as Mount Ayliff, Mount Frere, Matatiele we find a most heterogeneous society. In one location a Mpondomise is headman, while the adjacent location has a Mfengu or Baca or Msutu or Xhosa headman. Within a district which for purposes of "Native Administration" is known as Mpondise, such as Qumbu, there are big pockets of amaFengu, of whom Sandile Majeke claims to be spokesman and Chief.

South, in the district of Willowvale, is Zwelidumile, Hintsa's great grandson. He is the only one of all the traditional chiefs whom the Government has consistently played down, so that his influence extends

over only a few locations in his district. He has been deliberately overlooked for fear that if his chieftainship were encouraged, as is the case with amaPondo and abaThembu, it might be a factor tending to unite the Xhosas.

Such then is the complicated tribal structure of the Transkei, the fruits of past British intrigues, which Dr. Verwoerd proposes further to bedevil with his Bantu Authorities Act.

We must now turn to consider the bankrupt peasant economy, upon which this administrative structure has been superimposed, in order the better to understand the implications of Verwoerd's plot.

A LANDLESS PEASANTRY

THE 1913 Native Land and Trust Act put an end to the chapter of history, initiated in the last century by Sir George Grey, under which it was proposed to transform the African tribespeople of the Transkei into individual peasant-smallholders on the European model. Under the 1913 Act all the land has reverted to the Trust which administers it. There is, therefore, no freehold tenure. The present form of tenure places the African in a position similar to that of a feudal serf.

Seven of the 26 districts have been surveyed and arable allotments averaging 8 to 10 acres (the figure in the Ciskei is 3.25 acres) have been allocated. Title to these allotments is held under the system of "quitrent" (pay rent or quit).

During the last half century not an additional acre in these districts has been set aside for arable purposes. Soon the landless class that arose as a result of the survey drifted to the unsurveyed districts, mainly the comparatively fertile coastal belt of Pondoland. Before long Pondoland had to exercise strict measures to discourage these "immigrants," otherwise it would have had no room for its own natural increase in population.

The passing of the Native Laws Amendment Act in 1936, and the subsequent tightening up of Urban Areas regulations restricting entry to towns, led to terrible distress and showed how desperately short of land the people were in the Reserves.

In a "Transkei Survey" conducted by the National Union of South African Students from 1947 to 1949, it was estimated that no less than 80,000 families had no land at all.

There is landlessness for the vast majority. But the dry farming conditions are such that even those who have arable allotments cannot subsist. The average acreage is an uneconomic unit for the average family of six. At best the average production per acre is 2½ bags of maize. Even under such congenial conditions as prevail at the Fort Cox Government School of Agriculture the average production per acre is no more than 7 bags—and at Fort Cox there are enough labourers and trek animals, and sufficient capital to buy fertiliser, implements and seed.

In his "Summary of the Keiskammahoek Survey," Professor D. Hobart Houghton, Professor of Economics at Rhodes University, states that the average annual income for a family is £30 19s. 7d. This is

made up of income from both internal sources (i.e. sale of produce such as wool, hides, etc.) and external sources (i.e. cash wages sent back to their families in the Reserves by absentee labourers). The total expenditure during the same period is £36 5s.—leaving an excess of expenditure over income of £5 5s. 5d. Professor Houghton observes:—

“Family expenditure for the year varied between £251 5s. 4d. and £2 15s. 4d., while the highest and lowest family cash incomes recorded were £355 18s. and nothing.” Shocked at these findings, he asks “How . . . could an individual, let alone a whole family, subsist on an annual expenditure of only £2 15s. 4d.?” He answers, with grim irony, “Real charity is a virtue which still shines brightly in the Reserves.”

But “charity” is no answer to the excess of income over expenditure. It is only met by the peasants getting deeper and deeper into debt. In 1933 it was estimated that the extent of indebtedness to the traders in the Transkei was nearly £1 million. By now it is far higher.

The traders are, however, finding it too risky to extend credit facilities where there is no security. The caution observed by the trading classes was summed up by one trader recently thus: “Who is going to extend credit to an impoverished nation?”

(“**Transkei Tragedy**” will be continued in the next issue of “**Liberation**.”)

BREAK DOWN SOUTH AFRICA'S IRON CURTAIN!

(A Reply to Mr. Kathrada)

By **ALAN DOYLE**

IN “**Liberation**” of August 1956, Mr. A. M. Kathrada advocates what he calls an “international cultural boycott” of South Africa. It is a pity that he uses this rather sweeping term. A careful reading of his article shows that all he really means is that the national liberation movement should appeal to overseas musicians, dancers and actors not to perform in our country, as a mark of protest against racial discrimination in the Union.

In my opinion the movement would not be well-advised to issue such an appeal or to expend its energies and resources in publicising it abroad to make it effective. I think it would do better to work for the multiplication of cultural contacts with foreign