

and contempt fostered against them. None of the basic contradictions and evils of our society would be solved. In a world that is rapidly revolting against all forms of human exploitation and reaction such a development would be harmful to the true interests of Africans themselves.

It is precisely because of this fact that Congress has repeatedly and most emphatically rejected these pernicious views of the "Africanists" for the people know that to win the demands set out in the Charter is the only sure road to the future South Africa of their dreams.

THE TRANSKEI TRAGEDY

Continuing a detailed study of effect of the Bantu Authorities Act in the Union's biggest Reserve.

—by **GOVAN MBEKI**

THE fundamental economic problem of the Transkei, as of the other Reserves, is not difficult to state, or once stated, to solve. The land area is far too small and infertile to support the population. Therefore, in order to end the terrible poverty, malnutrition, famines, suffering and misery of the Reserves, it is necessary to allocate much more land for African peasants. But this statement of the problem, and its obvious solution is by no means agreeable to the rulers of South Africa, and never has been. The *wealthy farmers have no intention of parting with the land that was taken by conquest long ago.* And, in fact, a condition of poverty and near-starvation in the Reserves is welcomed by the mining-magnates, the farmers and other employers of African labour, who regard hunger and destitution as their main allies and recruiting agents for a bigger and cheaper supply of labour-power.

In the first three months of 1956, the Transkei supplied 44,500 able-bodied men to employers outside the territory. According to figures released by the Labour Bureaux, this total was composed as follows:—

Mines: 28,000
Farms: 9,300
Secondary Industries: 7,200.

At any given time about 80 per cent. of the able bodied men between 18 and 44 years of age are away from home working on the white man's mines, farms and industries.

Only if we constantly remember this terrible truth and seek its reasons and implications can we begin to understand the Transkei.

It is not for the love of glittering prizes on the mines that the menfolk leave the Reserves. Just as in the twenties and thirties thousands of Boer youngsters who had grown up on the platteland and had known and desired no other way of living were forced into the cities through economic pres-

sure; so the African from the Transkei and other Reserves is thrust into the cities by landlessness and overcrowding.

The Keiskamahoek Rural Survey revealed that the density of the population in this so-called farming area was 120 per square mile. Gordon Mears in his "Native Administration in the Transkeian Territories: 1894 to 1943" cites the Annual Report of the clinics around Umtata, which describes very modestly the general standard of health thus:

"The general standard of health is poor. Thin Natives are commoner than plump ones."

Dealing with infant mortality, the same writer — quoting records of mothers attending clinics of the Umtata Health units, shows that out of 1426 live births, 658 died before reaching the age of 16. A death-rate of 46 per cent.

There is a steady decline in the birth rate. Figures taken from the Keiskhama Survey show a distressing picture, as reflected in the following table:—

YEAR OF CENSUS	NUMBER	INCREASE	APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE RATE OF INCREASE
1921	15,489	—	—
1936	16,380	1341	8%
1946	17,243	413	2.5%

The most cursory examination of the above table reveals some remarkable features. Firstly, the growth of the population is exceedingly slow. In a quarter of a century the nett increase has been only 1754. In the two periods under review (1921-1936 and 1936-1946) the percentage rate of increase dwindled at the alarming rate of over 50 per cent. How long, it may be asked, will this process continue before the population remains static? And when the static stage is reached, how long will it take before a dying African nation follows the way of the Red Indian and the Australian Aborigine?

Against a bleak economic background where for more than a quarter of a century three million people have year after year struggled for survival under the shadow of starvation, where the absence of body-building foods has rendered sterile young women in their thirties, where death has taken heavy toll of both animal and human life, where preventable disease has maimed thousands, where the social effects upon family life of the migratory labour policy have ruined family life, where despair is threatening to destroy the purpose of living, so that men cling to life only because it is instinctive to do so — against this background we must examine the alleged millenium of Bantu Authorities announced by Verwoerd.

It is not the first millenium to be announced for the Transkei. There was the crisis of the early forties, when Africans were pouring into the cities, desperate for survival, and the urban authorities were desperately seeking to stem the tide. To deal with this situation, the Government of the day evolved a panacea: a new plan called the Rehabilitation Scheme. This was outlined in a White Paper called *New Era*. The Bunga-gentry who today extol Verwoerd's Bantustan lie, then spoke learnedly of van der Byl's "White Paper", and extolled the Rehabilitation lie. The plan proposed various types of "settlement" in the Transkei. On close examination the

settlements appeared to be little more than rest resorts for African males, between intervals of working on the mines, where they could meet their opposite sex numbers for the purpose of breeding "slave labourrs" for the future benefit of mines and farms.

To hide the true purpose of this sinister plan, N.A.D. gospelsellers talked glibly of the people's land being ruined by overstocking. They promised to fence in pasturage and to paddock camps; to free children from the tedious duty of herding, to enable them to attend school by the thousand. This denuded veld would once again be covered with a green cushion of sweet-smelling and health-giving grass. A New Era of plenty was in the offing, they promised.

As in 1894, with the passing of the Glen Grey Act, in 1927 with the passing of the Native Administration Act, in 1936 with the passing of Hertzog's trinity of oppressive laws, so the Rehabilitation Scheme was presented to Chiefs and Headmen as a revival of "the good old days." They accepted it. But though the Bunga accepted it the people rejected it; the talk of "overstocking" to a land starved people was more than they could swallow. They know only too well that the trouble is not "too many cattle" but not enough land.

The latest in this series of "schemes" to solve the desperate needs of a land-hungry people without giving them land, is Dr. Verwoerd's Bantu Authorities Act. Aided by the Native Affairs Department's army of propagandists he has gone all out to "sell" the idea to the African Chiefs and Headmen, employing a variety of appeals to the vanity of some and the cowardice of others, of methods of bluff, blackmail and theatas.

Let us listen to the words of a General of Dr. Verwoerd's propaganda army, Mr. M. C. D. de Wet Nel, Vice-Chairman of the Native Affairs Commission, addressing the Ciskei Bunga.

He rejects as misleading the idea that the Reserves are overpopulated and unable to produce sufficient food for their inhabitants. Even before the advent of Europeans, he said, "often hunger and death were experienced as a result of droughts and warfare." But he concedes the fact of the drift from the Reserves to the big cities, "where young men with ambition make an excellent living by selling their labour or by entering the professions." He holds out a picture of these young men being diverted to "Bantu National Homes." The "establishment of cities within the Bantu areas would draw off those who cannot make a living on the land."

Except that the areas where the hypothetical "Townships" are to be established, this is just a new version of the Reclamation Plan enunciated in the 1945 "New Era" Paaper. In place of the talk of overstocking, which was so provocative, there is substituted an appeal to the aspiring African middle class who see in the Government's plan an opportunity to amass wealth and even to become owners of the means of production; an appeal to the Chiefs, who are made to believe that they are going to be clothed with government-backed powers to rule despotically over their fellow-men.

What are these "industrial opportunities" that are to be opened for Africans in the Reserves? In Verwoerd's magazine "Bantu-Bantoe" a caption to a picture of an African straining at an anvil states:

"Industries such as bakeries, millers, brickmakers, carpenters, furni-

ture-makers, shoemaking, blacksmiths, bicycle shops and garages will be necessary and attractive business propositions."

The truth of the matter is that the new plan does not set out to create opportunities for the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT of the African. Artisans such as carpenters have been with us all along. The best contribution they have made has been to make cheap coffins for the trading stations to sell at exorbitant prices to bury the victims of man-fostered FAMINES IN THE RESERVES.

With the discovery recently of strategic minerals such as titanium along the coast of the Transkei and other minerals of value in East Griqualand, does even the most credulous not realise that talk of the Transkei as a Bantustan is all eyewash! If any industrial development takes place in the Reserves it will not be by the "African for the Africans" as apartheiders would like to make us believe. For the sake of those Africans who have been misled into believing that they are going to be the Transkei's big industrialists in the new plan we would like to pose the following issues. Bearing in mind that ownership of certain factors, such as land, capital, labour and management are necessary for the production of wealth, do the prospective African industrialists in the reserves have access to any of them? As the entire reserves population consists of poverty-stricken peasants and poorly paid wage-earning migrant labour, where is the capital to come from to invest in modern machinery, in modern factories? On whose land are the factories to be established since all the land belongs to the Government? Where are the African prospective industrialists to find the necessary skilled labour to operate their machines since by law and practice, the African worker is precluded from gaining skills? What is the management going to manage since there is no labour, no capital, no land? It is a day-dream that is not worth a minute's consideration.

But this does not mean that industrial development is not going to take place. If from the point of view of capitalist investors of capital and industrialists it is economically more advantageous to establish a certain type of industry in the Transkei they would never hesitate to do so. But such an industry would not be established from a humanitarian point of view because capitalists are not in the habit of establishing factories for charitable purposes. Already a few industries are in existence in the Transkei. Garment, sweets and furniture factories have been operating at Umtata for a number of years, and it should not be surprising if before long a good few more secondary industries were established. When that happens there will come to the fore one of the economic contradictions of Apartheid, because, not only will the African worker be compelled to work for "slave wages", but his wages will have a depressing effect on the white worker's wages in industries engaged in similar activities.

Thus for instance, the establishment of a garment factory at Umtata has not in effect protected the white worker in the European cities. Although in this instance they do not work under the same roof the result is contrary to what the Apartheid gossellers have so often tried to assure the gullible white workers. The same case has been proved beyond doubt in Zwelitsha, at Kingwilliamstown, Ladysmith and other rural areas where textile factories have been established. The wages are very low and any attempt to form trade unions is resisted with the utmost ingenuity by the management. In addition to using anti-union legislation the management resorts to all sorts of mean methods to ensure that there is no unity among

the workers. Blackmail, summary dismissals of workers who organise others, promotion of influential workers into positions of "indunas and shift bosses" and giving them faked powers of employing and dismissing others under the paternal eye of the management, **MASS DISMISSALS AT THE END OF THE YEAR AND MASS RE-EMPLOYMENT OF THE SAME WORKERS ON BEGINNERS' WAGES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT YEAR** — these and other methods are employed in varying degrees to keep the wages down and to pile up profits to the skies.

On this basis and no other, industries may be established in the reserves.

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