

## TAXING DESTITUTION.

To-date, the g highlight of the first session of the Herrenvolk Parliament after the "Whites only" elections had returned the Nationalists with a larger majority, was the Budget Speech. Nothing could have shown, as this Budget did with brutal clarity, the full meaning of Apartheid, the cynicism of separate development and the determination of the Boerenasie Republican builders to reduce ~~them~~ to a position of abject helotry that section of the population on which their economy rests. It dramatically demonstrates the intent of the Herrenvolk to batten on the Non-Europeans who produce the wealth of the country.

It is a Depression budget, though their Press is careful to conceal the fact that the economic depression which began in America has crept into the country. The racial policies, which have increased internal tensions, have made foreign capital shy and the Minister of Finance has been ferreting all over for the means of raising the much needed capital. As always, the rich are delicately handled. Anyone with £10,000 to spare can invest in Government bonds and thus make £500 a year, tax free. Afraid to increase the taxation of the rich farmers (who pay the ~~is~~ least) and the industrialists, the Minister resorts to taxation that falls most heavily on the lower income groups. The increase on the tax on petrol, for instance, will have the effect of increasing the cost of transport, which in turn pushes up the cost of food-stuffs. The steadily rising cost of living, which is already squeezing the Non-Whites to breaking-point, will go up still further with the increase in indirect taxation. But as if the situation were not desperate enough, this Budget proceeds to increase the poll-tax by 75 %, payable by every African male over 18, whether or not he is earning. And not content with this, it introduces a new principle of differentiated taxation for Africans only. An African earning £15 a month is to be taxed (from Jan. 1960), even if he should have ten children to support. African women will also have to pay this tax. A White person, with half the number of children, has to earn very much more than this before he pays income tax. In effect, the Budget introduces the principle of taxing poverty, or rather destitution.

The degree to which the Herrenvolk batten on the Non-Europeans is revealed by a few comparative figures, taken from the Report of the Industrial Legislation Commission of Enquiry, 1951. Non-Europeans, who constitute 79.1 %

of the total population of the Union, receive 25.5 % of the national income. The disproportion is even more glaring when we consider the earnings of Africans taken by themselves. They make up 79.5 % of the working population but receive only 19.6 % of the national income. To put it another way: an African's wage is only 8 % of that of a European. This disparity is even more striking when we consider the income per head of the working population. The African receives 4.6 % of the wage of the European.

These bare figures, eloquent as they are, have to be translated into terms of human life to convey their full import. ~~They mean~~ In terms of daily existence they mean abject poverty, hunger, perpetual anxiety and the disruption of family life; they mean slums, disease and early death. It is in itself a significant fact that, while statistics concerning every aspect of European life are readily available, and figures for the white population are up-to-date, those concerning Africans are hard to find. Here and there a local body, or an uneasy medical practitioner <sup>-or</sup> ~~has~~ has undertaken small surveys, but ~~concerning~~ <sup>concerning</sup> the mass of the African population there is a conspiracy of silence.

At the beginning of the 2nd. World War Dr. Anning gave a report on health conditions in a prosperous mining town on the Reef. He found that the life expectation of the African in the location was 36 years, while that of the European was 60 years. 67 % of the deaths among Africans were due to diseases associated with under-nourishment, <sup>mainly T.B.</sup> In another Witwatersrand area, 400 to 500 African infants died out of every thousand. In the Reserves, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ 30 % of the children died before the age of two years and about 60 % before the age of 18 years. Since then there has been a steep rise in the cost of living, while the wages of Africans lag far behind. During the 1957 Bus Boycott certain authorities pointed out that the penny increase in bus fare ~~was~~ was more than the Africans could meet. A recent survey revealed that an African family earning ~~£15.18.11~~ £15.18.11 a month needed £23.10.4. as a bare minimum for health. This made a deficit of £7.11.5. every month, or more than £90 a year. The Non-European Affairs Department found that 69 % of the African families in the Johannesburg locations had incomes below the minimum essential for health. The actual position is much worse than this. The poverty-datum-line (as it is called) is an artificial measuring-rod that excludes expenditure on medicine, tobacco, education, entertainments, etc. Add to this the many fines that Africans have to pay after week-end raids.

In the light of these facts, the 75 % increase in poll-tax becomes  
iniquitous.

But the imposition of a further tax on those earning £15 betrays a flagrant and cynical indifference to human life. It is a tax on the very £15 that demonstrably produces a large deficit, a bottomless hole in the family budget. This is not taxation in the ordinary sense. This is Apartheid in action. This is the jackboot placed squarely on the neck of the African population. It is foretaste of what the Boerenasia has in store for the Non-Europeans of South Africa. We are constrained to think that no ordinary human being would think out such diabolical schemes in cold blood. But then the logic of the policy of Apartheid demands all this and more. It is an expensive business creating the machinery for the maintenance of a master-race. The swollen bureaucracy, the army of non-productive civil servants, the duplication in post offices, in transport, etc. - all have to be paid for. ~~Then~~ Then there is the legion of petty bureaucrats who attend to race classification and all the machinery of the Bantu Authorities and Bantu Education, besides the large police force required to enforce the ever-increasing racist laws. They must somehow raise the money for all this. Cheese-paring economies, such as abolishing school-feeding and cutting down on old age pensions for the poorest section, are not enough. True to the Herrenvolk Apartheid principles, there is no question of over-taxing those who wield the power of the franchise. It is the voteless, defenceless Non-Europeans who must themselves pay for Apartheid, for the chains that bind them.