

***THE DISPOSSESSED PEASANTRY
IN
SOUTH AFRICA***

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THE BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I

Flying across Africa one is struck no less by the sheer immensity of this pear-shaped continent than by its ever-changing landscape. Rich savannas and tropical forests give way to flat plains, immeasurable stretches of bush and the inhospitable desert. It is a continent where people seem close to nature and where nature in the end remained the master. All the ancient civilisations have long been buried in the limbus of the past and with recorded history, these have been condemned to silence and oblivion. It is only within the last decade that this dark silence has been pierced and the peoples of Africa have been made aware of their rich heritage.

With the rise of the West in the field of commerce and trade with the East, when the traffic in things became less profitable, man himself became a thing to be bought and sold. Historians have agreed that the year 1441 is significant in this regard. It was in that year that the slave trade was officially declared open when the Portuguese traders presented Prince Henry of Portugal with the first ten African slaves from the Northern Coast of Guinea who had been hunted down like dogs by a Portuguese raiding party¹. But more significant was the year 1492, when Columbus discovered the New World, that the seal was set on the slave trade for now the development of the New territories demanded millions upon millions of African slaves. Surplus value was realised in the labour of the slaves and with it came the rape of the continent of Africa for the enrichment of the Western powers.

From the 15th century to nearly the end of the 19th century, the comparatively small population of Africa (in 1938 it was regarded as numbering only 150 million people) was subjected to the most horrifying terror of the slave raiders who plundered and rampaged throughout the continent, reducing fifty million of its strongest and most virile members to slavery to be shipped to the Americas and the West Indies, there to labour on the cotton and sugar plantations². The immense loss to Africa of practically half of its adult population was immeasurable. Slavery was a continual drain upon her resources and set the clock back for centuries in terms of culture and development.

But behind these marauding slave-raiders stood the power of the State, the sanction of successive Popes and the hearty blessings of the various monarchs of Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France and England to mention but a few. The creation of joint-stock companies revolutionised trade even more when they were granted sole rights by the State to conduct trade and in the name of their respective governments could exercise treaty-making and law-enforcing rights in all colonial and foreign trading areas. The rise of the Dutch East and West India Companies, the English Merchant Adventurers, early predecessor of the Royal Africa Company in the 19th century, the British Eastland dealing with the Russian trade, the Hudson's Bay Co., the English India Co., were in the main, slave trading companies. The Royal African Co. received in addition, a grant of £10 000 per year and an amount of £20 000 p.a. for the upkeep of its African establishments³.

According to James Pope Hennessy, the international proliferation of these companies gave rise to wars on an international scale. In the longest, bloodiest and most widespread of the European conflicts of the first half of the 18th century, the War of the Spanish succession 1702-1714, the chief-objective of the English, Dutch and German allies was to ensure that the descendants of Louis XIV of France were kept off the thrones of Spain, the Spanish Netherlands and the Spanish Indies but, for the English, the secondary war-aim was to get legal rights to the ASIENTE, granted by the Spanish crown to the French Guinea Company in 1702. The Asiente, literally a contract or agreement had taken on a specialized meaning, that of a monopoly for shipping African slaves to the colonies of Spain. This the British secured at the end of the war by the Treaty of Utrecht and this was what she had really fought for. "In the holocausts on Flanders Field", the writer further states, "finally thousands of European men were doomed to die that their governments might keep or seize the coveted Asiente. In Africa, their counterparts and fellow-sufferers, the captive Negroes were doomed to live."⁴

It is of moment here to present a picture of the⁷ reign of terror let loose on the defenceless people of Angola during this period. Believing Angola to have great mineral wealth, according to reports received from the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Angola, a Royal Order was issued, backed by the Pope, that the whole of Angola be subjected and captured. However, Black Gold proved to be the main source of wealth. To obtain this, the methods employed were various and subtle. Chiefs were subverted and internecine wars fomented between tribes. Prisoners of war were sold into slavery and became at first the main source of wealth for the slavers. With wars decimating the population armed gangs of slavers were sent far into the interior to raid the villagers and enslave the adults. When the population rose in revolt, the Portuguese commander, son of the governor, a mere youth of 19 years, killed more than a hundred chiefs in 1619 until the slave-raiders themselves were forced to protest in order to protect their trade⁵. This is but one instance of what was the general pattern on the whole of the West Coast, from Guinea to Angola and on the East Coast from, Zanzibar to Mozambique.

King Garcia of the Kongo, chief of the then most powerful state in Angola who owed his position to the

¹ James Pope Hennessy, *Sins of the Fathers*

² Basil Davidson, *Black Mother*

³ J.P. Hennessy, *Sins of the Fathers*

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ J. Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*.

Portuguese and later aided the Dutch because, he wanted to be free and because he had had enough of the horrors of the slave trade wrote to Portugal in these memorable but pathetic words:

'...instead of gold and silver and other goods, which function elsewhere as money, "the trade and the money here are persons who are not in gold nor in cloth, but who are creatures. It is our disgrace and that of our predecessors that we, in our simplicity, have given the opportunity to do many evils in our realm and above all that there are people who pretend that we never were lords of Angola and Matamba. The inequality of the arms have lost the lands over there to us and our rights are being lost through violence'.⁶

From Angola alone about 15,000 slaves a year were exported to the Americas and accounted for more than 88% of its yearly income. M. Vansira makes the point that, 'Trade, mainly the slave trade, began in 1500 and increased in volume and intensity throughout the centuries. It was the great continuing **event** in Central African history until 1900'.⁷ According to Belgian estimates, thirty million slaves alone were taken from the Congo and large areas depopulated. The disastrous 80 years war of Spain and Portugal against the Netherlands revolt led to a declining influence of the former on the slave trade and from 1621 the Dutch, unable to live on the produce of their land, had taken to the **sea**. It was not long before they secured almost two-thirds of the carrying trade from the Portuguese through the establishment of the Dutch East India and West India Joint stock companies which had received by charter the monopoly of the slave trade. As Hennessy writes, 'If it was a bad day for the gold coast when the Portuguese first settled there, it was a worse one when they left and when the Dutch - avaricious and brutal, complacent and infected by **one** of the more inhumane versions of Christianity, that of Calvin, took their place'.⁸ Furthermore while under the Dutch 'the machinery of the slave trade of the West was now whirring smoothly - its cruelties were paralleled across the Atlantic, on the plantations of Surinam and the Depot island of Curacao. Dutch planters and their wives, more particularly, became a by-word for their revolting treatment of their slaves, whether negro slaves of the Transatlantic colonies or the Indian, Chinese or Javanese slaves in their oriental outposts in Batavia or Malacca or in the Banda Islands'. Perhaps this gives a clue to the inhuman treatment of the Non-Whites in South Africa and the violent methods employed to reduce them to non-beings by the descendants of the Dutch - the Afrikaners of South Africa during the past three centuries - part of a long tradition.

Under the British, the slave trade was brought to a high degree of efficiency, The British perfected slave ship design and slaving instruments and methods, with that 'inventiveness which was once their-national hallmark' ⁹that **is**, they developed a slaving expertise.

Facts are available in Basil Davidson's book 'Black Mother' to reveal the huge profits in the great Triangle Circuit trade that started from Liverpool and London to the West Coast of Africa, crossed over to the West Indies and back to England to complete the circuit. The following cold account gives a picture of man's inhumanity to man. 'The Negroes sold, the slave shelves (on which the slaves had lain manacled in pairs) now dismantled, the fetters and branding irons put away, the ships were thoroughly cleansed. They were then loaded with sugar and molasses which were sold in New England and in Europe'. It is known that in the years from 1783-1793 the nett profit to the town of Liverpool in England alone on an aggregate of 303,737 slaves sold, was almost £3,000,000 or about £300,000 p.a.¹⁰ Ship-building in Liverpool was 'gloriously' stimulated by the slave trade and so was every other ancillary industry connected with ships. Loaded shop-window displayed shining chains and manacles, devices for forcing Negroes mouths open when they refused to eat, neck rings enhanced by prongs, thumb screws and other no doubt useful instruments of torture. It was truly said that the principal streets of Liverpool had been marked out by chains and its walls cemented by the blood of African slaves. Alas for each working man in Great Britain who had contributed his little mite for investment in the slave trade joint-stock company. Little did he know that he was creating the capital for the rise of an avaricious class of men who would not scruple to subject his own descendants to the Moloch of industrialism in its most acute form. As I.B. Tabata states,

'It is our contention that the Industrial Revolution in England would have been impossible at the time and in the manner in which it took place, if it had not been for-the limitless slave trade drawn from the continent of Africa.

If, as we hold, human labour is the originator of all wealth, then we might justifiably claim that the people of Africa contributed a lion's share in laying the basis for the emergence of what is known today as "Western Civilisation."¹¹

⁶ ibid

⁷ ibid

⁸ J.P. Hennessy, *Sins of the Fathers*

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ I.B. Tabata, *Presidential Address to APDUSA*

CHAPTER II

Africa is one of the oldest of the continents and for a few decades now anthropologists no doubt helped in their research by the rich foundations of America and Britain (for their own reasons of course) acknowledge that 'there are a number of prehistorians and physical anthropologists who believe that one of the places if not THE place in which true men developed was Central Africa'.¹² According to another anthropologist W.V. Breisford: 'The impetus of culture change as exemplified in the form of tools was certainly from Africa northwards to Europe rather than vice versa, even earlier than the middle Pleistocene period. In those days Africa taught Europe'.¹³

Since the dawn of history Africa has been a restless continent and its peoples continually on the move. A striking feature of the landscape shows unending lines of paths, criss-crossing one another, diverging only to meet again, over mountains, valleys, bush and eroded plain, all trodden by man. This is symbolic of its long history, ancient and modern. The continent was one, races intermingled, separated, warred and intermingled again. Mass migrations seemed to have been part of a way of life. But at a certain point in their history, a mass migration, distinguished by its positive direction south-wards took place. It revealed a common purpose and a common impelling necessity. Authorities put the beginning of the Southward migration as early as 300 B.C. These migrations went on for about 1,800 years uninterruptedly, without surcease but mounted to sudden waves of intensity and force.¹⁴ When one considers the immensity of the land, the huge plains of Central Congo which had to be traversed on foot, the hazards to be encountered, the jungles with its hordes of predatory beasts, only the stronger tribes, those more militant and warlike, firmly bound in language and culture could survive under these circumstances.

In this regard the high plateau in Central Africa appeared to lie across the main human migration waves en route Southwards. Here there were no major obstacles in terrain. There were others of course starting from the Horn of Africa through present-day Malawi. But all the major tribes in Zambia, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa belong to the Bantu-speaking tribes. The term Bantu-speaking comes from the term applied to the language and is not to be confused with the appellation "Bantu" now applied to the African people of South Africa by the Afrikaners. There are political reasons for this, to avoid the use of the term African in order to suppress any feeling of national consciousness and unity.

According to the anthropologists, 'No-one knows when they first began to arrive (in Central Africa) but it is certain that the original home of the Bantu-speaking tribes was the Great Lakes of East Africa and that they originated from a mixture of Negroes in lower Egypt and the Hamites from the extreme North-End Horn of Africa'.¹⁵ It is believed that when the migrating peoples on the long journey Southwards through the Congo, Zambia and Botswana at long last reached the sea-shores of South Africa and saw the rolling surf of the Southern seas as an impenetrable barrier, many turned back towards the North to settle elsewhere in Botswana and Barotseland

Others again found there was no turning back, for they were engulfed once more in the sweep of yet a stronger wave of a more compact migratory race called the Nguni. The Nguni has earned the name of an 'armed nation on the march.' Their settlements were on a military pattern, with a clear division of labour between the sexes. It was the Nguni who finally settled in Zululand, Pondoland, the Eastern Province of the Cape, Transvaal and Swaziland. The majority of the tribes in South Africa with the exception of the Abathwa, descendants of the early Stone Age people dubbed by the Whites as Bushmen and the Khoi-Khoi, the so-called Hottentots, are the present-day descendants of the Nguni and have a structure and a culture common to all although these with the passage of time have undergone modifications.

Tribal groups all over the world are based on the extended family group and the reasons for this are too well-known to bear repetition. Suffice it to say that the preservation of life demanded an organizational form and a cohesiveness of structure to enable the race to survive and to combat the all too-powerful forces of nature. This herd consciousness during the periods of barbarism was born out of necessity, but slowly a new element crept in, which added a qualitative difference to a mere instinctive accommodation to the natural limitations of the forces of nature. The extension of increased productivity, for the maize plant, the sweet potato, the groundnut and the cassava had been brought to the people of Africa by the slave traders from Brazil, a Portuguese territory and this, together with the taming of cattle led to a surplus in food production. In addition, they had acquired the secret of smelting iron ore which led not only to more efficient tools of war but to better tools in the field of agriculture. It was on the basis of these surplus products that a system of chiefs, sub-chiefs and councillors arose, which could devote its entire time to the affairs of the tribe. A class division was created based on the division of labour. But basically the power of the chief depended on the land, its division and its use. It was always part of the tradition that only the products of the land and later domesticated animals could be presented to the chief and tributes by lesser tribes to the paramount chief could only come from the products of the soil. There was complete identity between man and nature and the land and the people were one.

Tribal man saw the land, the water, the lakes and fields as the natural instruments of production for common use by all the people. Each individual was subservient to nature and the bond that united the individuals in a common group - the tribe or the clan the land itself. Between man and nature, there was an exchange in which the labour of one was exchanged for the products of nature. There was at first little separation between mental and physical activity. But with the growth of surplus products came the rise of a

¹² J.D Clarke, *Prehistory of Southern Africa*

¹³ W.V. Breisford, *Tribes of Northern Rhodesia*

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ *ibid*

hierarchy which set in train a series of events that led in turn to the desire for the acquisition of more land especially by the nomadic tribes.

The limitation of the land area marks the end of the nomadic life of the tribes and lays the basis for the evolution of a new system. Sooner or later there comes an end to the taking of land and man must start with the business of producing. But societies under a new system having its basis in agriculture, evolved slowly out of nomadism and had to struggle for its existence. It is clear that the later inter-tribal wars especially in South Africa came as a direct clash between the nomadic and the settled agricultural tribes. With this development, the basis for the evolution of a new system, was in process of formation when the Dutch sent Van Riebeeck in 1652 to the Cape of Good Hope, the extreme South Western point at the tip of Africa to establish the first white trading post.

Although the Portuguese had landed at the Cape before the arrival of the Dutch, they had not established a trading post there. There were many reasons for this. The coast was a stormy one and there were no settled tribes with whom they could barter for slaves. To the general inhospitability of the conditions was added the fact that they had suffered a crippling blow when they were defeated by a tribe of the Khoi-Khoi who inhabited the Western Cape in a pitched battle on the shores of the Table Bay.

In this skirmish, in 1510, the Khoi-Khoi had sent their long-horned cattle before them **in** battle against the foreign invaders and had shot their poisoned arrows and spears behind this **protective** flank. D'Almeida, their commander, a ruthless adventurer known throughout the East Coast as the Crusader, had just returned from a resounding victory over the united forces of the Arabs and had destroyed Arab power and monopoly in the spice and slave trade along the Eastern coast of Africa. His ignominious death sent a wave of apprehension and fear amongst the superstitious crews of the Portuguese trading vessels. The direct result was that they gave the Cape a wide berth although the way was now open for them to monopolise the whole of the trade and Portuguese ships even went as far as Japan.

Almost a hundred and fifty years had to elapse before the Dutch decided to set up a victualling station for passing ships on their way to and from the East for now they had captured the carrying trade from the Portuguese. The dreaded disease scurvy had already decimated the crews and it was vital to the trade that supplies of fresh meat and vegetables should be obtainable. Van Riebeeck with a hundred servants of the Dutch East India Company was the first Commander of the outpost and set about erecting the usual fortifications.

However it was not the purpose of the Dutch East India Company **in** the 17th century to establish a permanent settlement nor could it be in that age and at that time. Colonization began with the growth of industry and the development of finance capital. For the present it was merely the age of commerce and trade, a one-way traffic from the East to the West. The Company's eyes were rigidly fixed on capturing the monopoly of trade from the Portuguese and other rivals. The Cape was merely an outpost, a replica of the many Portuguese outposts dotted round the coast of Africa on the long journey to the East. But the very rigidity of the policy of the Company with its minutest regulations fixing the prices of goods bought and sold and its many rules governing the behaviour of the servants of the Company led to a situation where its employees preferred the hazards of trekking into the unknown and settling on land outside the bounds of the outpost rather than live under its jurisdiction.

Ex-servants of the company who had completed their contracts had land given to them on loan by the Company to grow corn and supply meat to the Company at fixed prices. With a view to encouraging agriculture a condition was attached that all land which at the end of the period of 3 years had been cultivated to the full extent of its capability should be granted to the holder in 'Eigendom' (freehold). These were called Vryburghers, literally free citizens. Soon enough these Vryburghers moved further away from the actual precincts of the fortifications to the *mountain* ranges near Cape Town, ranges like the Hottentots Holland (Home of the Hottentot) But the Governors of the Castle forbade them to wander beyond the limits of the outpost; forbade them to barter for cattle with the Khoi-Khoi; warned them that if they broke the law they would be liable to a year's imprisonment and confiscation of their cattle. But they nevertheless secretly trekked far and wide over the mountain ranges carrying tobacco and beads in exchange for the humpbacked cattle of the Khoi-Khoi. These were the first veeboers or cattle-farmers.

The Khoi-Khoi were a nomadic people who roamed far and wide over the Western Cape in search of grazing ground for their vast herds of cattle and fat-tailed sheep. A mild and gentle people, always willing to barter their beasts was the common opinion. It was at a later stage when they saw that their land was being fenced off and that white men with arms protected what they considered to be their land, inalienable, part of nature for common use, that this friendly and peaceful people took up arms against the White invaders and united with their hereditary enemies the Abathwa people and later with the African tribes to wage battle against their conquerors. Three major wars were fought to regain their rights. But what really killed them off in their thousands as a people, were the three smallpox epidemics brought by Dutch ships from the East early in the 18th century.

Yet strange enough it was the Abathwa who made no compromise with the White man from beginning to end. They were a people still at the hunting stage - children of nature as it were. The caves in which they lived high up in the mountains in inaccessible places, they adorned with wild life paintings which to-day are a source of inspiration to artists. The Abathwa saw the Whites as invaders who were encroaching upon their ancestral lands and robbing them of the right to hunt the herds of wild animals, their food and sustenance **and** they fought them. with their primitive bows and poisoned arrows.

The Dutch on the other hand saw them as their natural enemies and made it their business to destroy them. Right up to the 18th century the latter formed commandos for the special purpose of rounding them up

and guerrilla skirmishes were almost a daily occurrence. For instance as late as 1772, a band of 58 Abathwa of all ages and of both sexes were hunted down and tried for the murder of a Dutch farmer, his wife and child. Some were flogged, others hanged or broken at the wheel. Thunberg, a Dutch botanist travelling in the Roggeveld two years later reported how he met a commando who had killed a hundred Abathwa and they told him of another detachment which had wiped out 400 Abathwa in the Sneeuberg. He also learnt that the Government i.e. the Company supplied gunpowder, shot and musket and also a monetary reward for each Abathwa killed. Thunberg further noted that of those members of the commando who had been wounded by arrows, none had died. They had applied a mixture of urine and gunpowder as an antidote. The English writer Barrow related that he had heard "one of the more humane colonists boast of having destroyed with his own hands nearly 300 of these wretches."¹⁶

Between 1786 and 1795 over 2,500 Abathwas were killed and 600 captured. Those taken prisoner mainly women and children were handed over to the farmers practically as slaves for never did an adult male submit to the enemy but fought him to the bitter end. His courage even in face of overwhelming odds was phenomenal.

The lack of labour resources to tend the vegetables and fruit gardens of the Company hampered the work of the settlement for the Abathwa and the Khoi-Khoi could not see the necessity of exchanging their freedom for money when they had the lands. Importation of slaves to do the hard work became the next step. Barely six years after the arrival of the Commander and the free citizens of Holland on the shores of Table Bay, there followed in their wake 170 manacled Angolan slaves captured as booty from a Portuguese ship bound for Brazil.

From then on there was a continuous traffic in slaves. Shortly after that another 180 slaves were brought from the East Coast near Mozambique, some of whom were sold to the Vryburghers on the cattle farms at £6. per head. Simon van der Stel arriving from the East Indies, to succeed Van Riebeeck not only imported Malay slaves from Java and Sumatra but thought it a good thing that those who had risen in rebellion against the Dutch in the Islands should be deported to the Cape. Thus it came about that Prince Yusuf with thirty of his followers were deported to the Cape to remain in isolation until they died. These were the first political exiles.

With the arrival of slave labour the basis was laid for the accumulation of primitive capital in the Western Cape. The intensive viticulture and wine industry of the Western Cape led to the export of one related commodity, wine and spirit. Indeed the intensive fruit farming practised in the Western Cape was made possible only by the concentration of a large slave labour force.

In 1685, thirty three years after the founding of the outpost there were 900 slaves at the Cape of whom 600 were owned by the Company and the rest by the Vryburghers. In fact the slaves outnumbered the white inhabitants. The conditions under which the slaves lived were bleak and harsh. The death penalty for trivial offences such as raising their hand against their master and mistress, making a noise at a funeral etc, was common practice. The Dutch slave-owners made it a point to exert their power over the slave by the unbridled use of force, wanton brutality and violence to reduce his manhood and lower his dignity as another human being. sjambokking, branding and loss of ears became part of the daily treatment.¹⁷ Some romanticists actually would go so far as to hold forth about the patriarchal rule of the Dutch slave-owners but that is begging the question. Death by prolonged torture was the accepted creed applied to the slave population, here as elsewhere in the world.

So great was the dependence of the colonists on slave labour that the importation of fresh numbers of slaves always took preference over the immigration of white settlers from Europe. For instance in 1716, when the Company proposed to encourage the immigration of white labourers to assist in the great shortage of labour at the Cape, all the members of the Council of Policy, the administrative body, with the exception of one, rejected the proposal in favour of slaves as they were regarded as being less expensive and more obedient than white labourers. In 1796, the white population was 21,746 while the number of slaves had increased to 25,754 excluding those who were manumitted by buying their freedom. Ability to speak Dutch and Christian baptism were considered good reasons for the granting of freedom but very few were granted that right on those grounds. The slaves themselves were classified into three classes; the Malays, who were regarded as skilled handicraftsmen. It was they who built the beautiful homesteads in the Cape complete with French gables. Next came the household slaves, the offspring of slaves and Dutch called half-castes and the Blacks who worked in the fields and on the lands. Concubinage further degraded the women slaves. Van der Berghe further relates from Mentzel's writings in 1787... "Towards evening one can see a string of soldiers and sailors entering the slave lodge where they misspend their time until the clock strikes 9.... The Company does nothing to prevent this promiscuous intercourse, since for one thing it tends to multiply the slave population and does away with the necessity of importing fresh slaves."¹⁸ Notice that the children of slaves automatically became the slaves of the slave-owner. Mentzel's observations have been taken up by the Afrikaners to mean that only the English were responsible for the growth of the Coloured people in the South African population.

Van Imhoff, a Dutch Governor-General on his way to Batavia could write of the Dutch settlers in the Cape as early as 173 in these words: '.... but having imported slaves every common or ordinary European becomes a gentleman and prefers to be served rather than serve...., the majority of the farmers in this colony are not farmers..., but owners of plantations and many of them consider it a shame to work with their own hands. Such a

¹⁶ L. Green, *Karoo*

¹⁷ Mentzel, *Description of the Cape*

¹⁸ P. van den Bergh, *South Africa: A Study In Conflict*

bad example makes the farmhands worse.¹⁹ Time was to prove Van Imhoff's words prophetic. From the very day the Dutch landed in the Cape with their slaves, the basis was laid for a master and servant attitude towards the Non-Whites. This division took precedence over everything else, and slaves and slave-owners took their appointed places with strict laws and regulations governing the relationship with the result that there grew a contempt for manual work as only fit for slaves and later for 'Kaffirs'. The 'Baas' attitude of the Whites in South Africa to-day lies deep in the national heritage and has become the fatal weakness in Afrikanerdom from which it cannot escape.

It is necessary to go into the details of the development of the outpost which later led to a settlement. In the matter of trade and commerce the Company ruled with an iron hand and stifled all independent initiative. A revolt by the Dutch settlers against the Company arose when Governor Adriaan van der Stel, son of a former governor, cornered the market in wine, meat and corn. He was accused of employing the Company's slave labour and making use of the Company's implements on his farm 'Vergelegen'. These practices were by no means unusual at many of the outposts. The real reason was that the farming he practised was scientific and intensive and they were unable to compete with him. This together with the restrictions of the Company on their movements in that they could neither barter with the Khoi Khoi for cattle nor find an outlet for their produce created such bad feeling that they rose more in protest than in revolt. The later revolts by the trekboers at Graaff Reinet and Swellendam near the Eastern border were more serious and revealed the extent to which anarchy developing its own momentum led to lawlessness and in this instance to actual rebellion against the domination of the Company.

¹⁹ E. Walker, *A History Of Southern Africa*

THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND

CHAPTER III

Certain fortuitous circumstances - the pastoral nomadic tribes of the Khoi-Khoen who left their grazing grounds for long spells at a time and the subsequent wiping out of these tribes in the 18th century by the ravages of the small-pox epidemic led to wide-spread expropriation of their grazing land and cattle in the Cape. Their subsequent destitution offered a golden opportunity for the trekboers to obtain cheap labour. What remnants remained of the original numbers estimated to have been 40 000, were quickly rounded up under a series of vagrancy laws and placed under conditions of serfdom among the farmers. Already the implication of these laws meant that the Khoi-Khoen no longer had any rights to the land and were henceforth to be regarded as interlopers. Others were taken on by the Company and conscripted in a Khoi-Khoen Corps. The Company was short of troops for maintaining its defences since the veeboers considered soldiery a lowly occupation only fit for slaves. This Corps was composed at first of 200 men and placed under the command of a subaltern. It was segregated from the regular forces of the Company and wore a special coloured uniform, with special rations and earned sixpence a week in cash. However they carried muskets and according to reports were 'amenable to discipline'. The veeboers strongly objected to the Khoi-Khoen Corps fearing that it might be used against them, but what they resented most, was the deprivation of Khoi-Khoen labour on their farms. This labour problem runs throughout the history of the Colony as a continuous threat and the demands for labour grew more and more insatiable with the growth of time. In 1817 the Khoi-Khoen Corps as such was disbanded and a new corps under the name Cape Corps consisting of 900 mixed people together with Khoi-Khoen was formed but it still remained an irregular **force** completely segregated with a special uniform, special rations and inferior pay.²⁰

With commerce and trade closed to the veeboer, the only factor of production left as the acquisition of land and cattle. Under the prevailing conditions the methods of farming practised by the tribes, that is extensive and shifting cultivation of the natural resources, veldburning and hunting were taken over in their entirety by the veeboers. But since the basis was different, with private ownership as the driving force, each veeboer became a trekboer driven by an insatiable lust for more and more land and for more and more cattle. Individual greed and rivalry were fostered and it was only when his private ownership was threatened with the possibility of losing all he had striven so hard to possess, did he call into being a joint force - a commando. Inevitably these commandos which at **first** constituted a method of defence, began to live a life of their own, conceived a lust for killing the indigenous people and started a series of commando raids on the African tribes for cattle. These veeboers bore no responsibility to the State per se, took no part in the maintenance of law and order over the extensive area of the Colony, and rejected the necessity of the imposition of taxes. All they wanted at most when the law caught up with them was a landdrost, somebody with whom they could register their extensive acquisition of their property. The result was that the Company not only had to hire mercenaries from elsewhere to defend the country but enlist the help of the indigenous people to maintain law and order- The trekboer strongly believed that the imposition of taxes was an infringement of his absolute rights over his possession of land and hence owed no special obligations to the State. His thinking, his vision, in short, his way of life was limited and confined by the physical possession of a single instrument of production - land, as nature left it, crude and primitive. With no markets available, with no incentive for him to produce, what he achieved in the end was merely a production-limitation akin to feudalism. His instrument of production became his personal property but he himself remained determined by the low level of production, backward and feudal in outlook.

Under the company's rule there was no body of civil law in the modern sense. Whatever land-law the Company had, was based on the Roman-Dutch law. Holland itself was in a transition stage between feudalism and the rise of the national state based on private ownership. Hence the land-law was extremely vague and indefinite. One thing however was clear, that in the event of intestacy, there was equal division of the land amongst the heirs. Land was easily got in the early days of the settlement. The trekboer would send a Kommissie trek ahead to spy out good land preferably with a 'fontein' (spring) who would duly report on the possibilities of finding good land elsewhere. All that was required of him then was to stake out claims, a half-an-hour's ride at a fast walk each way from a central point, register the claim with the nearest landdrost and take possession while the slow machinery of the law takes its course. These were called leeningsplaatzen (loan places) and they appear to have been the only form of land tenure at the time. Each of these leeningsplaatzen consisted of about 6,000 acres with a revocable fee of £5.0.0. p.a. together with a tithe of grain. Rarely did the Company revoke a claim and if it did for specific reasons like building roads and bridges etc., the occupant would be compensated for the 'opstal', (buildings, barns, etc.) at prices which generally included the land as well as the 'opstal'. Walker correctly states, 'These farms were to all intents and purposes, free grants of land'. They could be inherited as they in fact were, and sub-divided.²¹

²⁰ Lichtenstein, *Travels In Southern Africa*

²¹ E. Walker, *The Great Trek*

Already in the middle of the 16th century, the trekboer had it firmly in his mind that these cattle-runs belonged to him as of right. The old adage 'possession is nine-tenths of the law' comes to mind and certainly arose out of conditions at a particular point in the history of all peoples. It was also in the nature of things that each successive son would demand a cattle-run of his own, preferably outside the jurisdiction of the Colony so as to avoid taxation. Some trekboers were not content with one but two or three more. It is no wonder that with the increase of Population, land grew scarcer and scarcer. As Sheila Patterson so aptly described the trek-boer, 'he was traditionally a man of the land though not of the soil.'²²

Between the Company and the trekboer there was from the beginning a tug of war. The Company's aim was to keep the trekboer within the bounds of the law, to maintain control over his movements by setting limits to the ever growing expansion and turbulence of the trek-boers, to keep peace on the Eastern borders of the Colony and to hold the Cape as a viable settlement. There were economic reasons for this policy for by the middle of the 13th century the finances of the Colony were in a parlous state. These were the real reasons why Governor van Plettenberg undertook the hazardous journey from Cape Town in 1778 to pay a visit to the frontier to see for himself how far the trekkers had penetrated.

To his dismay and alarm, he found that they had already established contact with the African tribes who from all accounts appeared to be a far more formidable proposition than the Abathwa and the Khoi-Khoi.²³ According to reports, these were athletic, war-like tribes, tall and well-proportioned, firmly knit under powerful chiefs. The position was fraught with danger and he had no other alternative but to try and secure peace by negotiating a treaty with the tribes. The Zuurveld was declared a neutral territory, with the Fish River as the Cape boundary. It was an unreal peace for it was common practice amongst the commandos to conduct raids on the tribes for cattle on the pretext that their cattle had been stolen.

On the basis of a Spoor Law (tracking law), they claimed the right to confiscate all cattle within reach belonging to the tribesman. As a result of these raids it was inevitable that war would break out in retaliation. The first wars ended with the tribes occupying the Zuurveld and adamantly refusing to withdraw on the ground that they had as much right to the land as the trekkers. And once again the Company had to seek peace by negotiating another treaty after obtaining a promise that each side would stick to its side of the bargain. The wars that followed at various intervals first between the Dutch and the tribes and later between the English-Dutch and the tribes were in reality, wars of conquest of the land.

The war that broke out under the First British occupation in 1799 was one that engaged the serious attention of the new invaders. For the first time in the history of the Cape, the Khoi-Khoi had joined forces with the African tribes to launch a united struggle against the trekboer. Those of the Khoi-Khoi who were part of the irregular army threw in their lot with the African tribesmen in a war of liberation. Faced now with a formidable foe, a section of which knew how to handle the musket, the trekboers fled in fear and were driven back to the Olifants River near Oudtshoorn on the very borders of the Western province. Here the British army took a stand and negotiations began once more on the basis of a new treaty. It was not the first time that the British came to the defence of the Boers.

General Dundas who took charge of the operations had scant respect for the Boers. It happened he had just returned from Graaff Reinet where the trekboers had risen in revolt in the name of the 'Voice of the People', declared a republic and with arms in hand were prepared to defend their stand. Commandos had already been organised to protect the break-away 'republic'. Dundas had been sent to quell the rebellion but when he arrived there, the 'children of freedom' hid in the bush when they saw a disciplined army on the march. He called them a 'troublesome and disaffected race'. In his own mind they were the compound of cowardice, cruelty, of treachery and cunning and most of the bad qualities, with few, very few, good ones of the human mind'. When immediately after this incident, he had to hasten as quickly as he could to the defence of the conquered territory and take a stand at the Olifants River without receiving any help from the trekboer, he added with contempt 'timid to an extent beyond example' and 'totally unfit for military duty'²⁴ The British, far-seeing administrators, immediately realizing the danger of a like situation arising in the future where the Khoi-Khoi would decide once more to join forces with the tribesmen, now made an attempt to remove the causes for their discontent with their masters, the trekboer

The causes were not far to seek. From the time the Vagrancy Laws had been instituted the Khoi-Khoi were subjected to the most barbarous treatment by the trekboers. Whereas a slave had his value in gold, and it was profitable for his master if he at least received a minimum of food and clothing so that he could provide surplus profit over and above his keep, the life of the Khoi-Khoi had no value in money. He was not paid for in gold. He was handed over freely to his baas by a government which not only wanted him to be kept under control but to provide the trekboer with necessary labour. He, in fact was not a free man, nor a chattel slave. He was neither allowed to have land of his own nor could he leave the trekboer and if he did, he could be hunted down and shot as indeed he was or broken at the wheel as a lesson to others.

Even his children at a tender age had to be bound to the farmer for ten years under the euphemism of 'apprenticeship' a term invented by Governor Cradock to hide a multitude of sins. Thus the same punishment which was formerly the lot of the Abathwa was progressively applied to him. In the Eastern province no less than 14,000 Khoi-

²² S. Patterson, *The Last Trek*

²³ E. Walker, *The Great Trek*

²⁴ Gen. Dundas To Yonge, *Records Of The Cape*

Khoi led a harsher life than the slaves of the Western Cape. It was against these conditions that this once friendly and peaceful people revolted, to take the momentous step of throwing in their lot with the African tribes for their liberation.²⁵

Dundas knew that he had to take the necessary steps to split this growing unity. It was Maynier, the landdrost who had negotiated peace during the 1799 war, who had walked unarmed amongst the tribes to secure that peace that he entrusted with the job of drawing up a register of employment of all Khoi-Khoi their terms of contract, their wages and their terms of service. By so doing he thought to exercise some administrative control over the employment of the Khoi Khoi and curb the trekboer's excessive brutality. At the same time he handed certain areas of unoccupied land over to the Khoi-Khoi captains (chiefs) for their use and settlement. We see here the beginning of segregated locations. What was more important, Dundas hoped to gain the co-operation of the Boers as well by placing 9,000 rix dollars at their disposal in lieu of their losses during the war. Those were hardly reforms and did not touch the root of Khoi-Khoi subjection. In fact it laid down the basis for a later Act, the Masters and Servants Act which decreed that all mine workers and hired farm labour were bound to their employers under contract and were liable to criminal sentences if they broke that contract. This has remained in force up to today. The consequence of this was that the Khoi-Khoi fled in greater numbers to the mission station of Van der Kemp of the London Missionary Society for refuge and shelter.

Three years later in 1802, another war broke out, and once more the trekboers had to face another joint force of the Khoi-Khoi and the tribes but the attack was not sustained and peace was negotiated. W.S. van Ryneveld the Dutch fiscal, who was appointed chief civil magistrate by Dundas under the first British occupation, gives his impressions of the Cape in 1797.

"Slave labour at the centre and unlimited free land at the circumference were the curses of the Colony...There was nothing in the soil or the climate to forbid Europeans from doing the work that was done by peasants in Spain or Sicily and such-like lands. The only bar thereto was that custom was against it, necessity did not drive. Why should a young man work for a pittance in the cornfields alongside slaves when he could marry, acquire some cattle and get free grazing beyond the frontier? So long as this trek, trek, trekking went on, how could the importation of slaves be ended, since corn must be grown by someone? How could peace be kept with the border tribes or even a solid front be maintained against them? How could the exiguous revenues of the Colony pay for the proper enforcement of the rule of law, let alone for the extension of religion, education and the things of civilisation to the frontier community?"²⁶

With these remarks, Van Ryneveld here puts his finger on the causes which led to the name that South Africa has earned, that of a slave state for the non-whites. With war breaking out between France and England, the opportunistic British took temporary occupation of the Cape in 1795 lest it fall in the hands of the French.

The year 1803 saw a change in the administration. The British had to return the Cape to Holland now bearing the name of the Batavian Republic. Before real changes could be effected in the administration, came the Second-British occupation. Yet the British had not forgotten the lessons they had learnt from the 1802 war. They had brought home the full implications of the growing unity of the Non-whites against foreign rule and domination. It was now more than ever necessary to take steps to prevent this from happening again in view of Napoleon's conquests in Europe and Egypt. Another internal war would not only threaten their defences in holding the Cape as a strategic stronghold but would lay it wide open for conquest by Napoleon and lose them their Eastern Empire more especially India, the glowing jewel of the British empire.

All in all it was politic to allay the fears of the Khoi-Khoi. To this end the Governor, Sir John Cradock drew up in 1809 that he called the Magna Charta for the Khoi-Khoi. Despite its name, it did not alter by one whit, the complete servile subjection of the Khoi-Khoi to the trekboers. While on the one hand they had the legal right to lodge complaints with the nearest landdrost against abuse of their 'rights', they could be severely punished if these complaints could not be proven. In addition, the Magna Charta stipulated that from now on they had to carry a pass signed by the baas or the magistrate if they moved elsewhere. Any White man had the right to demand their passes and if they did not have them, they were liable to imprisonment. As for their children, the apprenticeship clause still applied but there was some 'mitigation', in that they could be 'apprenticed' elsewhere if the master was found guilty of wanton misuse and cruelty. This was the snag. If the landdrost happened to be a Cuyler who had married into the trekboers, it would end there. No wonder Van Der Kemp, the missionary, viewed these regulations with hostility as offering no alleviation of the conditions under which the Khoi-Khoi laboured. His opinion was that these proclamations were drawn up for the express purpose of further enslaving the Khoi-Khoi. To prove his point, he and his assistant Read made representations to the new Governor Lord Somerset to set an enquiry on foot into the cause of numerous assaults often leading to violent death of a number of Khoi-Khoi in the service of the trekboers.²⁷

The end result was that a Circuit Court was sent out in 1812 to collect evidence and to mete out punishment where necessary. The trekkers called it 'the Black Circuit' and boycotted it. Landdrost Cuyler absented himself and was later relieved of his post. Nevertheless in spite of the intimidation used to prevent the Khoi-Khoi from giving evidence

²⁵ *Cambridge History Of The British Empire, Chapter VII*

²⁶ *Replies By Van Ryneveld To Earl McCartney (See The Great Trek... E. Walker)*

²⁷ *Theal, History Of The Cape Colony*

and providing proof, enough material was collected to reveal the insane lengths to which the trekboers went to crush the spirit of the Khoi-Khoen. Since judgment erred on the side of leniency by the imposition of small fines and warnings, it appears that the court was not so much concerned with meting out due punishment for the crime but to make the trekboers realise that civil government had come to stay.

The so-called Great Trek from the Colony northwards into the Orange Free State, Transvaal and Natal by the land-greedy trekboers had many causes. Walker makes the point, '... the root cause... was that the steady advance of the forces of regular government which van Plettenberg's visit had heralded, paved the way for the coming of new social and economic forces'. And what were these new forces.²⁸ These were world-wide shattering forces, the triumph of industrialism over feudalism. Under the revolutionary banner of liberty, fraternity and equality, the serf had to be freed from feudal fetters, the chattel slave had to be released from bondage to allow for the full and untrammelled development of the new industrial age, and bring to birth a working class ;solely dependent on wages - a wage slave.

And likewise the advance guard of the new capitalist class the traders and missionaries had to set about fashioning the world **in** its own image. The superstructure, a code of civil law, maintenance of order, education, culture and all the 'things of civilisation' had to be evolved for a type of state to arise for the advancement and entrenchment of the rising bourgeoisie.

²⁸ E. Walker, *The Great Trek*

CHAPTER IV

The trekboers at Graaff Reinet, the small town on the fringes of the Western Cape hearing the wind of change, revolted against the settled government of the Cape. They interpreted it according to their own needs and wants. For them it meant no interference from the state in the way of getting more land, enslaving more Abathwa children or pressing more Khoi-Khoi into forced service and carrying on fresh raids against the border tribes. For them the word freedom meant licence to continue a way of life they drank with their milk. The daily pleas for expansion beyond the confines of the Colony were answered by Craig, the British commander in these terms.

"With what face can you ask of me to allow you to occupy lands which belong to the other people? What right can I have to give you the property of others and what blessing and protection could I expect from God were I to cause or even to encourage such a gross and glaring act of injustice? Reflect for a moment on what would be your own sensations were you to hear that I was even debating on a proposal.... to turn you out of your farms"²⁹

The real, reasons behind this impassioned plea for fairplay was the fact that the British did not have the necessary military forces either to defend the country from external dangers or to take up arms against the tribes. For the time being its policy was to keep the Cordon sanitaire on the border, to maintain an unreal peace and work out other methods for the future. In the meantime demands for more allocations for fresh lands poured in, and the cries grew more importunate day by day. To the trekboers it seemed that an end had come all too soon to their 'lekker lewe' (nice life) with 'Niemand Klaas en almal baas' (no one a serf and everyone a boss). The British now took the step of bringing the whole system of land tenure i.e. the leeningsplaatzen under review and formulated a series of changes more in keeping with the kind of state they envisaged.

Cradock had realised that the old system should be put an end to because it fostered the trek, trek, trekking proclivities of the boers. He now instituted a new land policy to bring all new lands under a perpetual quit-rent system. Lord Caledon, his successor, took the matter further and stopped all further grants of land under the old leeningsplaatzen on the Eastern border and introduced the new system of permanent quit-rents with smaller allotments. Under the Proclamation of 1813, there was to be a voluntary conversion of all leaseholds into a perpetual, hereditary quit-rent system of not more than 3,000 acres. Furthermore that from now on, there was to be accurate surveys of all land taken, subject to a higher rent depending on situation and fertility. He was appointing land commissions to investigate all applications. The trekboers secure in the knowledge that the term 'voluntary' covered them, simply refused to budge and sat tight. Naturally they failed to see the advantages of paying higher rents as well. They fully appreciated the difficulties of the new rulers to oust them from their possession of the old leeningsplaatzen with its old indefinite boundaries.

It was then that the British took the momentous step of starting a completely new policy wholly alien in the life of the Colony. In 1832, the Imperial Government proposed to make land, its one great colonial asset, a source of revenue. All crown land was put up for auction to the highest bidder for cash.³⁰ What the boer feared most, had come to pass. Money, that is capital, was entering the picture about to bring revolutionary changes in the whole structure of the country. Money that had formerly ruled the town, was laying its icy hand on the land he worshipped and virtually subjecting the landowners, his own class to its rule.

Fresh reforms had already been proclaimed in the laws appertaining to the labour force - the Khoi-Khoi. Ordinance 50 of 1828 abolished all pass laws in regard to them and granted them the right to hold land where they could find it. All representations to introduce another Vagrancy act were rejected. There was to be an end to the 'apprenticeship' system. The Khoi-Khoi was to be integrated into the system as a 'free' man and by implication was a British subject nominally enjoying equal status with the Whites.

Following upon this almost immediately came the granting of freedom to the slaves in 1834. There were 39,000 of them in the Cape for whom the boers demanded compensation.³¹ There had long been agitation in England spearheaded by Wilberforce to put an end to the iniquitous system. He had already taken sides with the Khoi-Khoi against the cruelties perpetrated on them by the trekboer. In truth, Wilberforce's agitation stemmed from his connections with the now liberal entrepreneurs who wanted all labour freed for the development of industrialism. The feudal mores of the trekboers were slowly but surely being undermined and they, lacking in perspective and understanding, vented their spleen in violent vituperation against those missionaries who had taken up the cause of the Khoi-Khoi.

The one they held most responsible for these changes was no less a person than Dr. John Philip, director of the London Missionary Society who had been placed in charge of the missionary stations of the Society. Philip's ideas provide the key to British policy and thought. It was during this period of developing capitalism just before the land rights of the trekboers were being codified and the so-called Magna Charta of the Khoi-Khoi had been proclaimed, followed later by Ordinance 50 of 1828, that Dr. John Philip appeared on the scene in 1819 to draw the eyes of all, Boer and Briton alike by reason of his sure grasp of the realities of the situation and his intellectual ability. To the trekboer he was the embodiment of evil, the one who was responsible for Ordinance 50, robbing him of his rights of ownership over his serf labour, demanding the freedom of the slaves

²⁹ *Cambridge History Of The British Empire, Chapter VIII*

³⁰ Eric Walker, *The Great Trek*

³¹ *ibid*

and making him master and slave alike equal before the law. What was worse, he, Philip was the one who sought peace with the border bribes, forever going to visit them telling them he had the 'ear' of the Government and talking to their chiefs as man to man. He was the one who blew his mouth off in England about the evils of slavery and the suffering of the Khoi-Khoi.

Philip was in fact an outstanding representative of a then new species of the liberal bourgeoisie of the Adam Smith genre. He was a close friend of Wilberforce, men of the same genus. This relationship placed him in an advantageous position to advance his cause. An interview with Huskisson the British Secretary of State gives an insight into his thought.

Huskisson: Tell me in one sentence what you want for the Hottentots (Khoi-Khoi).

Philip: I want nothing for the Hottentots but the power of bringing in their labour to a fair market.

Huskisson: That is all you require? That is everything.³²

Philip was not concerned with collecting details of cases of inhuman treatment but more with the principles behind the laws of the land which governed life. He rejected laws that were discriminatory of one section. When the 'Magna Charta' was proclaimed his only comment was that he disliked separate legislation. It was indirectly due to him that Proclamation 50 of 1828 was promulgated which in theory placed all servants, Black and White on an equal footing before the law. Philip's attitude towards commando rule on the Border frontier was a scathing one. He believed that if Ordinance 50 had not been passed 'Thousands of Hottentots might have fled to the side of the Kafirs.' He feared another united uprising and for that reason fought for the advancement of a civil administration and a standing army to bring the whole border area under the rule of law. He advocated peace with the tribes not from the point of a temporary interregnum until such time as the British were militarily strong enough to conquer the tribal areas, but as a definite policy so that there could be a dialogue between the government and the chiefs. The tribal areas could be penetrated by means of trade, creating new wants and needs and luring the black labour force out of its lair to be gradually integrated into the new system of capitalism. These were the chief reasons why Philip with official approval from the Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban, set out to visit the chiefs to prepare the ground and to assure them of the good faith of the British government.

The coming of Philip heralded vast changes in the frontier regions to buttress British policy. Lord Somerset, the new Governor, had erected a vast chain of forts along the line of demarcation and had planned to man them with mounted dragoons instead of infantry. He needed more than four thousand armed soldiers to keep the border quiet. But the Imperial Government which had just come out of the Napoleonic wars and licking its wounds, simply could not afford the heavy costs of policing an area which was practically empty. He was advised to cut down his numbers and was granted about 2,400 men. It was patently impossible to guard the border night and day with such a small force.

A fresh solution to the thorny question presented itself eminently satisfactory to all parties concerned. Thousands of unemployed workers of England were shaking loose from the mother country and emigrating to Canada. Emigration to the Colony would solve the problem of the frontier. Somerset, the imperialist, saw the possibilities of peopling the frontier and the Zuurveld in particular, with English emigrants and so create a bulwark against infiltration into the Colony by the tribes. As he said: '... I am such swayed in recommending the plan by a strong wish to be able eventually to withdraw the military detachments from that quarter'.³³ His argument for lowering the heavy costs was a potent one. He was all for substituting a strong border community for a weak Afrikaner one which would put an end to all border wars.. To promote this scheme, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer moved a grant of £50,000 in 1817 to assist the unemployed to emigrate to the Cape of Good Hope and the scheme was presented to the public in rosy terms. The following year saw 5,000 British emigrants arriving on the Eastern border and given a hundred acres per family at quit rent under the following conditions: that after 3 years of continuous residence the Government agreed that the land shall be measured as its own expense and the holder shall obtain, without fee, his title thereto on a perpetual quit-rent not exceeding two pounds ten shillings per hundred acres. The initial allotment was later increased. Due to labour shortage in the frontier regions, Bechuana refugees from Bechuanaland were 'apprenticed' to them. Collections of taxes were delayed until they got on their feet and initial debts incurred during the first 3 years of drought were cancelled. During the following years thousands of British settlers arrived and later even German emigrants.

The trekboer could not reconcile himself to these changes. He turned inwards looking for a way out of this impasse. He had a feeling of being hemmed in and confined. The land was being lost to him by the introduction of money economy. Civil law and administration was now catching up with him from which he could not escape. Moreover he was prevented from making a dash into the tribal areas whenever he felt like it and taking the land. The 'lekker lewe' was no more but where now? And so the idea which was always below the surface of his mind came to the fore, that the only solution of his insecurity away from these was to take up once more the trek, trek, trekking business.

In actual truth Cape Town, the seat of Government which the trekboers perhaps saw once, if at all, during their lifetime - a difficult and hazardous journey at all times, was to then a foreign product. Hence they saw a close concentration of people of all classes actively engaged in production and commerce, with capital in the shape of goods and money from which they as a group, barely literate, living a life on a primitive level stood isolated and apart. Their

³² *Cambridge History Of The British Empire, Chapter VIII*

³³ *ibid*

way of life, an ambition to which they all aspired was the physical possession of such extensive acres that they would not be able to see the smoke of another's chimney, was at variance with the growth and orderly development of the towns. They saw this life as outlandish and the English as 'Uitlanders'. The separateness of town and country, the conflict amounting almost to hatred in their minds to the ways of the town were really derived from their feudal mores. It represented in reality the feudal antagonism towards any form of property not based on land. Here in the town they saw the rise of another form of property, expressed not in land but in capital, having its basis in labour, commerce and exchange, in short, production. To them it seemed inconceivable that this new factor, that is, capital, could attain mastery of the town. Who knows it might one day challenge their supremacy over the land? this was in fact the source of the disquiet, their discontent, and gave added weight to their determination to remove themselves together with their families and serfs from the scene of the Colony to seek another Eldorado far removed from the new state and the challenging power of capital.

THE CONQUEST OF THE TRIBES

CHAPTER V

The 19th century is rightly regarded as one of the most momentous in the history of the world. Britain pioneered industry and trade and rose to her full power and imperial domination over many lands and peoples. Her mottoes 'Buy cheap and sell dear', 'Free enterprise', 'Laissez faire' were the slogans by which she released individual enterprise and private capital to seek markets for her products from the four corners of the world. Added to this came another - 'the state governed best where it governed least'. The rise of commercial and naval superiority however, were not sufficient to bend her people to accept her dominion. There had to be a moral justification as well. Part of her exportation was the invention of a singular hypocritical moral code, a self-righteousness called Victorianism. Lord Palmerston, who later became prime minister of England when asked, why the world was divided between different races living in different climatic zones, put it in a nutshell when he replied: ...'It is that commerce may go freely forth, leading civilisation with one hand, and peace with the other, to render mankind happier, wiser, better... It was believed that nations and races stood higher or lower according to the proven capacity of each for freedom and enterprise. In this category it was natural that the Anglo-Saxon nations stood the highest, the lower rungs occupied by the Asian nations with the 'Aborigines' of Africa on the lowest level of all, of whom it was thought 'had never learned enough social discipline to pass from the family and the tribe to the making of the state'.³⁴

When Britain took over the Cape Colony in 1806, she was still in the throes of settling the question of her right to assume pre-eminence over all nations and peoples. Napoleon had issued a challenge to her growing supremacy and until then, it was a state of preparedness. She had first to organize her internal forces, land, labour and capital not only to meet the requirements of industry and trade but to provide her with that material power to meet this challenge. The Cape was a strategic asset for the protection and safeguarding of her great eastern empire and though a financial liability, it was a necessity imposed upon her to keep the Cape coastal line safe for her trade and navy and ward off all rival attempts.

Towards the inhabitants of South Africa both Black and White she had no clear imperial policy. That policy had not yet crystallised out of her economic development for her role in world affairs was still undecided. It was more a matter of expediency, a learning from experience, giving with one hand and taking away with the other. But she was guided by two trends 'the state governed best where it governed least' i.e. non-interference and also **non-colonisation**.

During the whole of that century, a period of nearly a hundred years, the African tribes in the territories, (which the Whites called Kaffraria) from the Cape Province, right across to Natal, Orange Free State and the Transvaal were harried and split not only by intertribal wars but by the weight of harassment on the Eastern border caused by the trekboers and the British soldiery. Militarily the tribal forces were at a grave disadvantage for their sole weapon of war, the assegai, was really only effective at a distance of approximately 40 yards depending on the muscular strength of the individual warrior. With this inadequate weapon they had to meet the onslaughts both of the feudal commandos with their horses, muskets and ammunition but the far superior disciplined British colonial forces with their guns and cannons. Historical forces expressed in terms of weapons of war marched at a tempo and a speed that allowed of no cessation. Thus the Eastern border of the Cape where Black and White confronted each other became in point of fact, part of a world-wide struggle between capitalism and tribalism.

At that time the tribal structure was no longer in the first flush of youth. It had undergone certain basic modifications due to changes of environment and means of production. While cattle still remained the chief source of food and wealth, many of the tribes were turning to the land and depending on maize, millet and vegetable crops as an additional source of food.

At the beginning of the century this apparently stable tribal structure had already been shaken to its very foundations. It is believed that the slave-raiding expeditions set on foot by the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay had penetrated as far as Zululand creating chaos and fear. It was in the midst of this turmoil round about 1812 in the second decade of this century, that Tshaka, a military genius rose to the highest rank to weld the Zulus into a mighty nation. The dream he conceived came out of the glory of a long-forgotten past when the mighty Nguni, 300 years ago 'an armed nation on the march' had swept down from Central Africa to the Southern Seas and scattered all the tribes before them. Every nation could only learn the lessons of its own past. His warriors had to return to the old way of life, a spartan way of life with the sexes separated. They had to be enjoined to practice celibacy until they won their spurs in battle. Once more the idea of unity is born but not on the basis of production but in the brain of a military ruler. His claims to sole leadership over all the tribes was based on the outlook of the ancient Nguni whereas in fact the Nguni had already split into separate kingdoms, the Zulus, the Xhosas, the Tembus, the Sothos, the Pondos and the Swazis each with a highly developed language, culture and traditions of its own.

To achieve his goal, Tshaka created a military machine with an unmatched striking power. He invented the short spear for close in-fighting with his warriors protected by huge ox-hide shields. His armies were trained to march in ever-enclosing circles in the shape of the horns of his cattle with the main force advancing in the centre (the head). These were new tactics and those who attempted to resist within these ever-tightening movements were ruthlessly decimated. Their lands and crops devastated. As his mighty disciplined armies sped from Natal to the Transvaal, Orange Free State and entered Pondoland in the Cape, he found to his chagrin, resistance everywhere. Refugees fled in

³⁴ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa And The Victorians*

a never-ending stream to other regions seeking shelter in present-day Namibia, Botswana and Lesotho. Areas lay depopulated in this holocaust in which at least, two million lost their lives and many thousands more from starvation and hunger. Pressure grew in those - areas safe from the depredations of his army. On the borderlands of the Cape came the Fingos as refugees, glad of any shelter they could find. Internecine wars broke out between the different nomadic tribes for rights to grazing land and between the agricultural tribes in defence of their land against the nomads. Tshaka's dream was shattered in the dust not because of his assassination in 1828 but because it was, in the first instance, at variance with the new historical forces that had entered on the scene in Southern Africa – capitalism, with all its ramifications.

DIVIDE AND RULE

Simultaneously with the growing power of Tshaka on the extreme East came increasing pressure on the border by the land-hungry Boers with the English vainly trying to keep the status quo. A spate of complaints from the trekboers poured in to the Governor of increasing raids by the tribesmen on their cattle and fresh demands for protection. But this time their complaints found favour in the eyes of authority and orders were promptly issued to expel the tribes from the Zuurveld once and for all and their immediate removal to the area beyond the Fish River. The expulsion was carried out with an excess of brutality at a time when the crops and vegetables were ripening in the sun. These were set on fire and the whole area became darkened with the smoke of burning crops, causing great hunger and starvation. This was a tactic increasingly resorted to in later wars. As usual the trekboers entered upon this exercise with alacrity even eagerness, since it was the cheapest way of acquiring cattle from the tribes. Thousands of head of cattle were confiscated in this expulsion.

Lord Charles Somerset, together with Sir Harry Smith, the military commander on the Eastern border, then drove the lesson home. The history of the Cape Colony, and indeed the tangled history of the Boer Republics from 1835 - 1852 was dominated by the figure of Smith, a headstrong man who would stop at nothing to achieve his purpose. A new treaty was imposed on the tribes whereby **all** cattle of a colonial breed (as if there were any such) and all horses were to be returned. Furthermore the spoor law would be more strenuously enforced, the whole village or the tribe being held responsible for the loss of any cattle by the Whites. Military posts were to be manned not by infantry but by dragoons and there would be systematic patrolling of the border. Somerset went further. He reversed the old policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the tribes, and instituted a system of paramountcy because as he said, the tribes needed it. He then took it upon himself to arbitrarily select Chief Ngqika of the AmaXhosas as the paramount chief over his uncle Ndlambe. His aim was to break the power of the confederation of chiefs and set one up against the other. The confederation of chiefs by custom gave that chief seniority by virtue of his experience and his wisdom in handling the affairs of the tribes. For an outsider more so an enemy, to decide the rights of chieftainship was to destroy the very basis of the tribal structure and split it apart. It was an act tantamount to war.

The fact was that the governors of the Cape had been given dictatorial powers within the bounds of colonial policy. But it is said, Somerset consulted himself when embarking upon a policy of extermination. War did break out in which the Governor supported Ngqika's claims to paramountcy against the combined forces of the confederation of chiefs. He despatched a strong force of soldiers and a host of Boer commandos all heavily armed into Ndlambe's territory where they set the crops ablaze and burnt every single living hut, making off with twenty-three thousand head of cattle. These were promptly divided amongst them all with Ngqika receiving a fair share of the loot. Once again the expedition was a highly profitable one.

It was in this situation with demoralisation spreading amongst the tribes barely recovering from the ravages of Tshaka's armies, that they were called upon to face the bullets of Somerset's soldiers. Brother was killing brother at the instigation of Somerset. It was at this moment that a Makhanda arose. Here was a prophet like Noses arising to rally the spirit of unity amongst the tribesmen against the major danger, imbue them with fresh courage to take up arms against the white invaders and drive them into the sea whence they came. Their bullets, he vowed, would melt like water and they should not fear. Under his command the warriors rose like one man. Twelve thousand marched into the colony under his banners braving the military outposts and the watchtowers and besieged Grahamstown, the chief military centre in 1819. Their intrepidity of spirit and courage availed them nothing. Thousands faced the cannon fire which mowed them down like grass but still they came. Makhanda was taken prisoner and incarcerated on Robben island. So great was his influence that his people risked their lives to save him, but he was drowned in the surf and his body never recovered.

The counter-attack by Sir Harry Smith was blistering. The tribes were driven from beyond the Fish **River** to a distance of thirty-five miles across to the Keiskamma, a river running parallel to the Fish River. This was Ndlambe's land, eight miles in length and thirty miles wide. This fine tract of land was now given the official name of British Kaffraria and annexed to the Colony. The border was extended to the Keiskamma and a new line of fortifications built to safeguard the new frontier. The pattern of British conquest becomes clear. With the Boers acting as agent provocateurs, the British now take over the military conquest and establish ownership over the property of the tribes - their land and cattle. The wealth of the tribes is now expropriated in terms of unequal treaties for with every new treaty imposed upon them, they were left poorer and poorer.

British Kaffraria was now handed to the British settlers and trekboer for settlement. With the British a new element was introduced into the subsistence economy, namely trade and commerce. For a decade there was peace on the Keiskamma border excepting for the usual pestiferous raids by the trekboers. Changes came about in the administration and in relations

with the tribes. Somerset appointed resident commissioners in the territories to keep an eye on things. Missionaries and missionary institutions flourished along a missionary line Christianising chiefs and tribesmen. And in the wake of the missionaries followed traders and speculators. Trade was freed from all encumbrances. It was a case of 'buying cheap and selling dear'. However the missionaries were more than harbingers of peace, they were real political agents skilled in their task. John Ayliff, William Shepstone and Dugmore the poet for example, were settler missionaries who assiduously studied the languages, the customs and manners for the benefit of British administration. Shepstone's son became the interpreter on the Governor's staff in the 1835 war and diplomatic agent in the territories. He was later to prove his worth to the British in Natal. Missionary stations became areas of disaffection within tribalism itself and provided sources of information as to the relationship of forces within the area. The tribal structure and the unity of the tribes were indeed threatened both from within and without.

With the death of Ngqika his half-brother Maqoma, the eldest son of Ngqika became the real leader, for the heir Sandile was barely nine years of age. Maqoma established his home in the upper reaches of the Kat River, one of the **principal** tributaries of the Fish River. He was however expelled from this area on the grounds that the upper part of the Kat River was part of the territory ceded to the British by Ngqika after the 1819 war but it was clear that this area was of great strategic importance in the policing of the Eastern border region. In fact the Governor had already decided to allot this part of the upper Kat River to the Khoi-Khoi and the Fingos who were restive at not being given land after the so-called Magna Charta. There was always the fear that they might once more unite with the tribes against them. Already there were murmurings after the murder of Chief Seko, an uncle of Maqoma who had been shot by the trekboers while defending his cattle against their depredations. But he, Somerset deaf to these murmurings, doggedly pursued his own path for no sooner had Maqoma settled, peacefully in the Tyumie Valley near the present Fort Hare, than he was once more driven forth just when the crops were ripening in the sun. Once again the land was set alight and the sky darkened with the acrid smoke of fire. In the words of a British officer at the time who, nevertheless carried out his duties faithfully, he, Maqoma, had been driven to an area 'as bare as a parade ground'.

In his manifesto on the eve of taking up arms in 1835, Maqoma stated, inter alia that not only was his uncle Seko murdered in cold blood while unarmed and his cattle stolen, but that he himself was not allowed to live in peace in his own country. One of the orators spoke to the British in ringing words that the Xhosas are men and they love their cattle; their wives and children live upon milk; they fight for their property; they hate the colonists, who covet them all and aim at their destruction'.³⁵

It became abundantly clear that the Governor, Lord Somerset and D'Urban before him, was determined by all means in his power to carry on a war of extermination. That Maqoma understood only too well. For the first time the tribes used guerrilla tactics. They infiltrated silently between the parallel forts on the Keiskamma and the Fish Rivers evading the soldiery. They avoided open confrontation, the essence of guerrilla war. Their aim was to destroy the property of the colonists just as the colonists had destroyed theirs. Few Whites however lost their lives. The damage they inflicted on the Whites amounted to £300,000. It was only two months later when reinforcements arrived that Smith was able to dislodge them from the Colony.

The employment of these guerrilla tactics aroused the ire of Smith who had had great experience of war in the East against the indigenous peoples. He therefore resolved upon a course of punishment worthy to be inscribed in the annals of imperial conquest. In March 1836, he led 4,000 fully armed and mounted dragoons supplemented by Boer Commandos, deep into the heart of the territory where he applied extensive scorched earth tactics. Once more the land and crops lay blackened in the sun and all cattle in the area confiscated. Not content, in the following month he sent another body of troops across the Kei River, far beyond even the Keiskamma and systematically destroyed all the villages of Hintsas, the paramount chief of the Gcalekas seizing 15,000 head of cattle. When Hintsas rode to Grahamstown to sue for peace, he held him hostage, pending a fresh delivery of 25,000 head of cattle and 500 horses within five days and a like number to be delivered in 12 months time. Smith now moved his frontier to the River Kei, a river running parallel to the Keiskamma and the Great Fish from its source right up in the Stormberg Mountains to the sea. The drive to total war was increasing rapidly.³⁶

This area of about 7000 square miles was promptly given the name of Queen Adelaide and annexed to the Cape as British territory, and martial law declared. It was an uneasy peace and the situation grew more tense when the tribes learnt of the nature of the death of Hintsas, their Paramount Chief.

It appears that Hintsas was given permission to leave for his territory in order to persuade his people to hand over their cattle peacefully, provided he left his son and his brother as hostages for him. As he and his Khoi-Khoi escorts under the command of a British officer came down a slope leading to a river, it happened that his horse took the lead. He was shot twice and wounded. Waist-deep in the river he begged his pursuers for mercy. The Khoi-Khoi soldiers moved by his prayer, spared his life but a British officer from above a rock overlooking the scene shot him to death. What caused the greatest revulsion *was* that sadism was let loose and his body most barbarously mutilated. A writer of that period in expressing his horror at the barbarities perpetrated on his body, said they were 'a disgrace to civilization'. There are other versions of the nature of his death to the effect that it was Smith who killed him.

In the meantime the London Missionary Society had received reports from Dr. Philip on the real causes of the war, the manner in which it had been conducted and the nature of Hintsas's death. He stressed the fact that the policy of the British Government was to leave the tribes in security of their homes and that this policy he had himself conveyed

³⁵ *Encyclopaedia of, History of Southern & Central Africa, 1877*

³⁶ *ibid*

to D'Urban. Therefore D'Urban's policy of expulsion of the tribes from their homes as a means of control was a flagrant breach of the promises made and the system of unequal treaties should be put an end to. The liberal party had come to power with the freeing of the slaves and in that milieu, Philip's indictment of the 1835 war made a deep impression. Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, was highly disturbed by these revelations and sent despatch after despatch to D'Urban asking for reports, and his conduct of the war. He had to wait a year and by that time his faith in the governorship of D'Urban was shattered. Part of the now famous Glenelg despatch he sent to D'Urban stated that original justice in the last war was on the side of the conquered and justice demanded that the conquered territory be returned to the tribes. D'Urban sent in his resignation as a protest. British troops withdrew from the River Kei and Keiskamma to the old western boundary of the Fish River. Hints's territory of 7,000 square miles, Queen Adelaide, was returned to the tribes. The commonly held opinion at that time was that 'for the first time in the history of nations, the conquerors restored to the conquered their despoiled dominion'. This generosity was of short duration. The real reason behind this liberal move can be found in British policy at that time - non-interference and non-colonisation. Britain could not undertake colonisation as a policy at a time when her hands were fully occupied with her own industrial problems. The emigration of British settlers was permitted only as a solution to the thorny border problem and the grave unemployment that prevailed in England after the Napoleonic wars. To the trekboer and the British settlers this was a retreat and they united in raising a wild outcry at British 'betrayal'. This was the signal for the Boers to trek to land beyond the confines of the Colony.

Sir Andries Stockenström, son of the old Swede Stockenström was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern Province to enable him to draw up a new treaty and effect some reconciliation with the chiefs.³⁷ He was to assure them that the Crown wanted them to have security of their homes and that there would be peace on the border provided they upheld the terms of the treaty. But both the British settlers and the trekboers refused to observe the conditions of the treaty and Stockenström was unable to enforce measures against them. With Sandile, chief of Ngqika's clan coming of age, General Napier, the succeeding Lieutenant-Governor thought the moment was opportune **to effect** some changes to the treaty:-

- (a) that farmers could move more freely in the territories without passes;
- (b) that cattle were not required to be guarded by an armed tribesman.
- (c) In case of murder, chiefs should have the power to apprehend the assassin and that he should be brought to trial in the presence of the diplomatic agent.
- (d) A mixed commission consisting of the Lieutenant-Governor, a diplomatic agent and a few of the principal chiefs should sit from time to time at Fort Beaufort to decide on all matters in dispute.³⁸

These clauses give a clear indication of British thought **and** policy. In the words of Palmerston it was necessary to create conditions so 'that commerce may go freely forth, leading civilisation with one hand and peace with the other ...' Commerce and trade were certainly going freely forth and already the territories were proving a source of great wealth. Already in 1825, 50,000 lbs of ivory, 179,000 lbs of gum and 15,000 hides had already exchanged hands and traders went as far as Natal through Pondoland in search of trade. By that time trade fairs had already been a feature and attracted buyers from all over the tribal areas. The 1820 settlers had imported merino sheep to the Eastern Province and the export of wool showed a remarkable **progress** from 20,000 lbs in 1822 to 200,000 in 1832 and over 1,372,000 lbs in 1842. Wool became the most important export and remained so until diamonds were discovered in the seventies.³⁹

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ *Encyclopaedia of the History of Southern and Central Africa, 1877*

³⁹ *Cambridge History Of The British Empire, Chapter VIII*

THE CONQUEST OF THE TRIBES BRITISH LAW AND JUSTICE

CHAPTER VI

With the new economy penetrating the territories, once a closed system both economically and politically, came the advance forces of civil administration. The first step had been the appointment of political agents in the tribal areas and now under Clause 4 came the establishment of a liaison committee between the Governor and the chiefs. The idea was to bring about a system of indirect rule, with the government working through the chiefs and keeping the tribes peaceful. But the chiefs understood perfectly that their authority was being undermined and that they would have to carry out the orders of the British, who by force of arms could compel them to submit if they raised any sort of opposition. The authority of the chiefs rested on their chief instrument of production, namely their land resources, but now they were confined to a limited area barely sufficient for half their needs. It was a delicate position requiring the utmost diplomacy on the part of the British to woo the chiefs, for already there was grave suspicion of their vaunted good motives.

It was Sir Peregrine Maitland, the succeeding governor who precipitated the War of the Axe in 1844. A further clause was added to the treaty whereby any member of the tribes charged with commission of outrage or theft be sent to the Colony for trial. The silk glove had all the while concealed the dagger. The chiefs were now to be robbed of the right to administer justice even in their own territories. Maitland had ordered a survey for a fort to be built right in the midst of the territories and this together with a long and terrible drought sent a wave of apprehension throughout the tribal areas.

It was then that Sandile, chief of the Ngqikas wrote to the Governor in these words saying that the situation was growing out of control: 'I swear war is not in my heart but confusion I hear, prevails in my country and your country (anti-convict settlement agitation by the whites) and we sleep in the bush for fear. The only thing which I now see which is bad in the world, is the drought. The cattle are dying.'⁴⁰ This was the voice of despair. The *casus belli* of the 1846 war occurred when a tribesman was charged with stealing an axe and taken to the English magistrate at Grahamstown for trial. Under escort and handcuffed to a Khoi-Khoi policeman while passing his home, some young men ran out to rescue him. In the melee, the prisoner's brother and a policeman were killed. Smith sent 11500 armed soldiers into the territory to arrest the chiefs in the confederation. The same dreary pattern followed, scorched earth, cattle looting, shooting, a new treaty and finally annexation of tribal land.

Smith now grabbed back British Kaffraria which the British had secured to the tribes under treaty. He annexed the territory right up to the River Kei, Ndlambe's territory and threatened to destroy the chief like a wagon of gunpowder that he exploded before them. He proclaimed that all the tribesmen on the land on the Western side of the River Kei, the former Queen Adelaide called Ciskei, occupied it at the pleasure of the government. They had no longer rights to the land as of old. British Kaffraria (land between the Fish and the Keiskamma) was to be a separate imperial independency and not part of the Colony, and a system of Roman-Dutch law was imposed. However this law could not be applied to the tribesmen by the magistrates because they were not regarded as part of the population. The government had to fall back on a mixture of martial law and common sense. Thus from the beginning two laws came into being, the common law which was applied to the whites as citizens of the country and martial law against the Blacks as non-citizens. But Smith still had a thorny problem to solve - how to destroy the power of the confederation of chiefs which enjoyed the full, support of the loyalty of the people and constituted the main threat to his confiscation of their land. He had to destroy its power and its unity at all costs.

Smith's opportunity came when he deposed Sandile for alleged insubordination and gave his power to a white Magistrate. Sandile was also accused of being deeply involved in the affairs of Mlangeni, a new prophet who was busy organizing his people. The confederation refused to accept this and when Smith sent his soldiers to arrest Sandile, the tribes rose in rebellion at this high-handed action. Never before was there such unity amongst all sections of the oppressed. The Ngqikas were joined by the Tembus, the Gcalekas, the Cape Mounted Rifles (a mixed army brigade) the Khoi-Khoi and even by large sections of the non-white police.

The war dragged on all through 1851 and Smith was urged to bring the war to an end as speedily as possible. It was the longest war and cost the British taxpayer over two million pounds. New regiments from abroad and a battalion of British lancers were sent out to assist him in this task. In 1852 Smith announced further plans:

'My next step will be, the moment the men are somewhat refreshed, to fill the Amatola's (mountains) with troops and to carry out systematically that devastation, the horrid result of savage war which will reduce the people to submit to my terms.'⁴¹

In arranging the movements for carrying out this step, the following order was issued:-

'The object of this deposition of troops is to spoil Ngqika's cattle, to burn all his kraals, the fences of his cornfields and destroy the cornfields themselves. Troops will be provided with sickles, dragoons with rifle swords and will move at daylight in the prosecution of this devastation as

⁴⁰ *Encyclopaedia Of The History Of Southern And Central Africa, 1877*

⁴¹ *ibid*

locality and circumstances direct.'

How completely this devastation was carried out can be learnt from Smith himself:

'During the prosecution of this war, 6,000 warriors have fallen, and 80 chief men, all of some distinction, 80,000 head of cattle and innumerable goats have been taken from the Gaika, Tambookie's (Tembus) and from Sarili (son of Hintsa, chief of the Gcalekas). The enemy has been driven forth with very great loss from the strong-holds which he so determinedly held and throughout the whole of their locations the crops of the Gaikas have been utterly destroyed'.⁴²

But in spite of all the ruthless measures he employed and the hunger and famine that ensued, he failed to bring a swift end to the war. He suffered the same fate as his co-conspirators D'Urban and Somerset and was recalled. In the Lords only the die-hard Duke of Wellington as Commander-in-Chief defended him but Major Hogg, who was on the spot, gave an adverse criticism of his conduct which was accepted. George Cathcart, known as an honest soldier was given the task of bringing the war to an end. He raised levies of mounted police and brought out the burgher commandoes in force; first with the carrot of promises of land and cattle to the trekboers and then with the stick that he would withdraw all regular forces of the British Army on the border if they refused. The bait worked and thousands came. Only in 1853 was the war brought to an end. New terms were dictated to the chiefs. Land was taken from the Tembus, and given to the Fingos whom the British had taken under their protection. These were placed in areas which served as buffer states between the Whites and the tribes proper.

Cathcart then left, leaving the administration to Sir George Grey, the new governor whose influence was felt far beyond the Cape Colony to Natal and the Orange Free State.

But a greater human tragedy awaited the tormented people of British Kaffraria - the people of Ngqika's tribe who had undergone eight devastating wars far more than half a century. They had had to face the bitter loss of their youth in the many wars, their cattle and their land without seeing an end to it except by submission. In 1857, a national suicide took place of profound proportions. A young Xhosa girl Nongqause by name and her uncle Mhlakaza while at the river early one morning to fetch water, saw strange white figures rising out of the early morning mist who told them of a great prophecy. They were the spirits of their ancestors. She was instructed to reveal the prophecy that on an appointed day the Xhosas would rise to the heights of their former great power and drive the Whites into the sea. But certain conditions had first to be met. Every single beast had to be slaughtered and every grain of corn had first to be destroyed. The sign would be that the sun would rise in the east, as usual and on reaching its zenith, would return to set in the east. At that sign the cattle would rise from the earth refreshed in all their splendour and the corn would cover the land in the springtime of their growth. It was like a vision of heaven. The tribes in the area obeyed and awaited the sign. The day of plenty and rejoicing never came. Instead famine and hunger stalked the land. Thousands died, others fled beyond the border only to die. But the Whites rejoiced for thirty thousand emaciated tribesmen were given passes to enter the Colony for the purpose of seeking work. Such an 'incredible madness could only have attacked a community profoundly disturbed'.⁴³ Never in the history of any nation had there occurred such a mass immolation.

This in fact was the turning point. It could not have come at a more critical time both for the tribes and the Whites. War would have broken out in any event and spread right across to Natal and the Orange Free State where the Basuthos were already up in arms against the Boer invaders. Unity was already in the making and if all the tribes in the areas had united the results would have been far-reaching. This was what Sir George Grey was most afraid of. The question is: Was Nongqause subject to delusions instilled into her by the fathers of the church? Who, indeed, were these white figures? The prophecy certainly bore overtones of Christian myths.

Sir George Grey was regarded as an administrator who had had vast experience in Australia and New Zealand where he had put down the revolts by the Maoris against the confiscation of their land. When he arrived in the Colony as Governor he found more or less a rough principle that guided policy on the Eastern border, namely a strict segregation between Black and White. He realised that if he dispossessed the tribes from the whole of their land beyond the Kei (the Transkei of today) there would be a further repetition of the wars of 1846 and 1851. As far as British Kaffraria was concerned, it was not practical policy to hold it as a tribal reserve with white influence restricted only to military occupation.

Instead of segregating the races, he advocated the penetration of all the territories by means of roads and public works. Tribal society had to be gradually transformed and brought into the new economic system by erecting schools, hospitals and institutions of a civil character'. As far as he was concerned there was to be no border of any kind. Immigration of British settlers into the area would check the tribesmen from embarking upon revolts of any kind. More important they would learn 'habits of industry' from the British which would fit them to live under the same civil and economic order as the Whites. As a start to the implementation of his plan he declared British Kaffraria, after the national suicide, as an empty area, extended the rule of law and suppressed the unfettered exercise of native law and custom. He divided the whole area into European farms of various sizes and established locations for the Blacks. In the Government Notice 16 of 1853, setting out the purpose and outline of the scheme, Grey warned the Chief Commissioner who administered British Kaffraria 'to reserve sufficient tract for the future of the former inhabitants of the district who are likely to return there, selecting the localities with a view to the safety of the European population to the tastes and habits of the Kaffirs and with a view to their locations in villages under

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ *Cambridge History Of The British Empire, Chapter VII & N. Majeke, The Role Of The Missionaries In Conquest*

the existing system'. With Grey came the implementation of a system of locations. Lacking an influx of British emigrants, he peopled the area with ex-German mercenaries and German peasants. Grey was recalled as governor in 1861 because he had advocated a form of federation in the Cape Parliament with the Boer Republics and the tribal areas, to put an end to conflict and war a policy which had not yet been endorsed by the Colonial Government.

The likelihood of a fresh war breaking out was within the grounds of possibility according to the new Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse. With this in mind, the Colonial Secretary Cardwell ordered the abandonment of Grey's policy of federating the whole of the Transkei to the Cape Colony. Instead he armed the Governor with an Imperial Act incorporating British Kaffraria within the Cape Colony in 1871, so that the Cape Government could shoulder the financial and political responsibility of keeping law and order on the Eastern frontier. Already by 1860, the White population in British Kaffraria had increased to six thousand and Chief Sarili of that area was expelled beyond the Kei to Umtata, bereft of land and cattle. The former independent tribesmen were reduced to servitude and confined to small locations and villages established specifically for their use.

The 9th war that broke out in 1877 was the last flicker of any kind of national resistance. The Gcalekas and the Tembus joined forces under Sarili against the Fingos who had taken sides with the Whites against them. With Sarili's defeat, the whole of the Transkei even as far as Griqualand East in the North and Pondoland in the far East were gradually annexed and magistracies established. In 1894, all these areas became part of the Cape Colony as advocated by Cecil John Rhodes. But the territories were not absorbed within the system of administration of the Colony. The Governor-in-Council became the legislative authority and rule was by proclamation. Magistrates gradually took over the former functions of the tribal chiefs. The military conquest of the tribes was over, the tribal structure had collapsed under the onslaught of the new forces; the civil administration now took over to complete the final process of subjugation. The stage is set for the development of new forces within the system of capitalism itself.

THE "GREAT" TREK

CHAPTER VII

The story of the exodus from the Colony of 12,000 trekboers, comprising almost one-third of the Dutch population from 1836 over a decade, has been much magnified and lauded to the skies by Afrikaner politicians and historians as a source of inspiration and a point of departure on which to build a heroic culture based on their own form of particularism and a virulent Afrikanerdom.

The reasons for the trek are well-known. The coincidence of time with certain events provide sufficient proof that this expedition into the interior to found their own state, the decision to cut loose from all 'the things of civilisation' can be found in the accumulation of their so-called grievances. Ann Steenkamp's last words throw an illuminating light on the prevailing mood at the time when she, referring to the slaves and the Khoi-Khoi, said that it was not so much 'their freedom that drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion, so that it was intolerable for any decent Christian to bow beneath such a yoke; wherefore we rather withdrew in order to preserve our doctrines in purity, Piet Retief, another Voortrekker leader in his manifesto made it known 'Whilst we will take care that no one is brought up by us in a state of slavery, we will establish such regulations as may preserve proper relations between master and servant'.⁴⁴

How familiar these words are to-day! The very embodiment of Hitler's theories of racism and exclusivism! However, in that milieu, they merely expressed the typical attitudes of the slave-owner towards the slave. But they never discarded them even under a different set of conditions, eventually to lay them down as foundation stones for the building of a South Africa wholly based on racism and exclusivism, and as Van Imhoff once said '.... but having imported slaves every common or ordinary European becomes a gentleman and prefers to be served rather than serve, the majority of the farmers in this colony are no farmers but owners of plantations'. The Afrikaners became imprisoned by their past.

These were however merely the immediate reasons, the results of a more fundamental cause. Far deeper was the system itself which the British represented and all that it implied, a code of law and order, the freeing of the slaves, the 'Magna Charta' of the Khoi-Khoi, Ordinance 50 which repealed all pass laws in regard to the latter, the new land-tenure system and Glenelg's stinging exhortation of D'Urban's policy which led the British Government to return the area between the Keiskamma and Kei to the tribes, perhaps for the first and last time in history. Worst of all was the fact that new land was growing scarcer and scarcer until there was little left for the taking. Smith was keeping the Boers on a tight leash on the Fish River boundary.

The trek itself was by no means the ennobling vision conjured up by its propagandists. Dr. S.J. du Toit, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in the first Afrikaans history published in 1877, 'Die Geskiedenis van ons land in die Taal van ons Volk'⁴⁵ (The History of our land in the Language of our People) was the first to represent the Boer not as a semi-barbarian but a heroic figure who had been most foully treated by the British. From this account, it followed that as the trekboer grew in stature with an unquenchable love for liberty, the Blacks diminished more and more into pure savages, cannibals and less than human. In truth, the trek was more in the nature of a mass commando raid on the indigenous people for land and cattle with licence to indulge in their practices without let or hindrance. When Dundas wrote of them as 'a troublesome and disaffected' and Smith expressed his opinion of them as 'men of strong prejudices, most credulous in all respects, especially where Government is concerned, jealous to a degree of what they regard their rights, constantly at variance with one another and evincing that want of mutuality', they were not speaking from hearsay but out of knowledge derived from intimate dealings with them.

Kommissie treks had already reported favourably on the wide and empty grasslands in the upper reaches of the Tugela in Natal and this fact triggered off their departure. Three major parties, each under its own commandant, Retief, Maritz and Potgieter, mostly from the disaffected areas of the Cape, Graaff Reinet, Swellendam and the Border left in the first trek in 1836. At Thaba Nchu in the Free State where they agreed to meet, Retief was elected Governor, and Maritz, Commandant. Potgieter peeved at being given no official title, broke away from the rest and took off for the Transvaal with his group while Retief and Maritz slowly wended their way across the steep passes over the Drakensberg Mountains into Natal. This initial want of 'mutuality' amongst the trek leaders was and still is a peculiar characteristic of Afrikanerdom in which personal attitudes take precedence over principles.

In Transvaal Potgieter pitted his forces against Mzilikazi and his Zulu army. Mzilikazi was one of Tshaka's generals who had been unwilling to return to Zululand since Tshaka executed all his defeated generals. The Boers resumed their old methods of raiding for cattle and burning crops and land. And once more, despite the bravery of the Zulus, their assegais and short spears were no match for the mounted commandos who remained out of reach whilst firing their deadly bullets. As usual a great number of cattle was captured - another profitable expedition. Potgieter, like Smith followed up this defeat with another, a devastating raid with the help of the Sekhukhuni tribe until Mzilikazi had to flee for his life to Matabeleland. Potgieter immediately claimed Transvaal as his, the fruits of his victory over Mzilikazi and established Potchefstroom as his capital.

Retief and Maritz having reached the grassland in the upper Tugela, at once set about dividing up the land amongst themselves. Each family claimed and received round about six thousand acres, (they liked indefinite

⁴⁴ Eric Walker, *The Great Trek* L.M. Thompson, *Afrikaner National Historiography*

⁴⁵ *ibid*

boundaries) and quarrelled with those who arrived later under Commandant Pretorius. Retief however proceeded to Zululand to seek land from Dingane, Tshaka's murderer and his successor to the throne. Dingane agreed to give him land provided he first obtained cattle, horses and guns from Sikonyela. Retief's trick to get the cattle not only reveals the nature of the man but the fate of those who in their simplicity, are subjected to outrages committed on their persons. Dangling a pair of glittering handcuffs in front of Sikonyela, he persuaded him to try them on. Once he had them on, he snapped them fast and held him at his mercy forcing him to yield the cattle and the rest. Then he arrogantly informed Dingane to consult his missionaries to find out what happened to cruel tyrants.

Dingane, aware of the danger of the presence of the Boers on his territory and the threat to his people, realising also that he could not risk a confrontation, had him murdered by a stratagem which let loose on him all the forces of the Boers in Natal and Transvaal and some of the English who were in occupation of Port Natal, (Durban) land that had been given to one Flynn who had once healed Tshaka's deadly wound. The Boers then won Mpande, half brother to Dingane over to their side, offering him arms and ammunition, if he attacked Dingane's armies in the rear and they in turn would recognise his succession to the throne. The Boers had learnt the tactics of 'divide and rule' from the English. With Mpande in the rear and the Boers in front the Zulus suffered a decisive defeat at a river, thereafter named the Blood River. According to reports, the river ran red with the blood of Zulu warriors. Natal with the exception of Port Natal was now theirs and they founded Maritzburg as their capital.

But the British Government outfoxed them. Major Charteris was immediately sent out to take military occupation of Port Natal and informed the representative of the trekboers at Maritzburg that the British Government under the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Bill of 1836, did not recognise the independence of the trekboers as they were still regarded as British subjects. On December 16th 1838, he hoisted the Union Jack at Port Natal. The British sent Captain Jervis to secure peace and a settlement between Dingane and the Voortrekkers, by which Dingane was forced to yield not only his original grant of land to Retief but an additional cession of land from the North of Tugela to the Black Umfolozi River to the entrance of St. Lucia Bay - the Blood River territory. But the Boers were not content. They had to destroy the power of Dingane. In the ensuing war Dingane was defeated and fled to Swaziland and now Mpande was in their hands, a humble and crushed vassal. Mpande became 'King of the Zulus' but not of Zululand. For the time being, the trekboers had completely broken the military power of the Zulu, with the military help of the English.

And now the trekboers turned their attention to the English. In 1840, six months after the defeat of Dingane, they decided to make an overture to Britain requesting recognition of their independence and offered a trade alliance. They were really concerned with getting ammunition and guns without any difficulty but in the meantime showed where their true allegiance was. They entered into a federal political alliance with the Boer Republic of Transvaal. Internally they were not on a very secure footing and fearing a threat to their expropriation of Zululand, for the tribes now, that the Zulu wars were over, were trickling back to their land. They passed three Acts in swift succession. In 1840 they passed the 'Squatters' Law' limiting squatting on individual farms to 5 families to meet the need for a labour force. The following year they passed another, a 'Burghership Act' by which the original trekboers and approved settlers of one year's standing were granted two farms each of 6,000 acres. In the same year they promulgated yet another Act a 'Segregation Law' for the removal of 'redundant' Zulus to Ncapai's land in Pondoland. In truth, the trekboers were already being accused by Ncapai as having stolen Baca children for use as 'apprentices'. This was a god-given opportunity for the British to come out in defence of the Baca 'apprentices' and Pondoland. They said that peace on the missionary line would be threatened which would catch fire right up to the eastern border into the Cape Colony. Then from the Cape came a proclamation by General Napier that Natal was a British sovereign state. That was on the 2nd of December 1841.

The Volksraad, the representative body of the trekboers regarded this as an invasion of their rights and announced that it was their policy 'in the true interests of humanity to effect a true separation of the natives and the Europeans in order to prevent bloodshed'. They regarded Natalia, as it was named, as inviolate, (but not so the territories of Ncapai and Faku, Chief of the Pondos) and assumed the right to deport the Zulus there. But the astute British countered this argument by declaring that the trekboers were after all British subjects and if they resisted the British troops, it would be tantamount to rebellion. The British had to see that law, justice and principles were on their side. The new leader of the Natal trekboers, Pretorius, together with Potgieter's commandos from the Transvaal immediately surrounded Smith at Port Natal and had him hard-pressed from May to July, 1842. Fortunately for the British the warship Southampton arrived with some battalions of British Grenadiers carrying a Captain Cloete to effect peace terms. The Boers had to submit. Smith split the Boer leadership by demarcating the Drakensberg as the boundary between Natal and Transvaal. The British peace terms were to the effect that there should be 'no legal distinction of colour, origin, language or creed' between Black and White. This was sullenly accepted by the Volksraad. But it was anathema to Potgieter and he took off for the Transvaal with his hard-line fellowmen. This split in the leadership set off warring factions and soon enough, many of the trekboers fearing fresh domination and control by the English, once more began another trek, this time to the Transvaal under Commandant Pretorius. Smith did his utmost to persuade them to stay by offering them land largesse. In fact Smith alienated some 2 million acres of African land to 360 trekboers in an attempt to hold them back in the interests of getting a permanent white settlement in Natal for defensive purposes. It was probably the first time that the land-greedy Boers refused what they wanted most but their hatred of the British system was greater. When Pretorius arrived in Transvaal, there was a battle for power that led to a civil war between Potgieter and himself in which Pretorius became the victor. Potgieter left the district of Potchefstroom and trekked to the distant Zoutspansberg near the Portuguese border.

However Smith was alive to the problem. In anticipation of the Transvalers' next move, he declared the Orange Free State as the Orange River Sovereignty and annexed it in the name of the Great White Queen. Pretorius now marched in with his commandos to challenge Smith. He drove the British diplomatic agent Warden from Bloemfontein, the capital. Smith at the head of a Coloured Cape Corps then took battle against the Dutch for the first time and defeated them at Boomplaats and Pretorius fled to his last stronghold, the Transvaal. But what did the British do when the Orange Free State was in their hands? They promptly handed it back to the Boers on a silver platter under the Sand River Convention of 1852. Under this treaty the British agreed to recognise the Orange Free State as a Boer Republic with its own autonomy and agreed to bar the sale of guns and ammunition to the Basotho tribes which had taken up arms in defence of their land against the Boer invaders whilst the Boers agreed on their part to set aside locations for the tribes and to reject slavery of any kind. As Sir George Grey, the Governor, in his well-known despatch advocating federation as against separation said in regard to the Boers: 'They have the same sympathies, the same habits and frequently the same feelings regarding the native races....' (as ours).⁴⁶

The Bloemfontein Convention, two years later, merely confirmed the Sand River Convention but here in addition to the British sold out the rights of the Basotho to their land as guaranteed to the Great Moshoeshoe, Chief of the Basothos under a treaty. Not only did they betray the Basothos, but they went further to deprive the Griquas under Adam Kok and Waterboer of their land in Griqualand. In fact the British agent Warden was working with the trekkers against Moshoeshoe and even compelled him under threat of war to accept a southern boundary which would cut off a great part of his land and when he resisted, allowed the trekkers to employ such methods as they thought fit. In their wars against Moshoeshoe who was regarded as a great diplomat and organiser (he had united a hundred scattered clans into a Basotho nation) the Boers had employed the services of a lesser tribe, the Barolong under Moroka their chief, against the Basothos. Eventually Moshoeshoe was driven by the combined forces of the British and the trekkers to Basutholand (Lesotho) which only by virtue of its being a natural fortress, gave him the means to resist Boer encroachment. In 1878, the Cape Parliament passed the Disarmament Act requiring the Basotho to yield up their arms which they refused. This was later repealed because they could not enforce it. It was then that Moshoeshoe was induced to seek protection from Britain for Lesotho as a protectorate.

When Adam Kok refused to allow the Boers to occupy his lands in the district of Philippolis in the Free State Sir George Clerk the special British Commissioner and a diehard imperialist **sent** out to negotiate a peace treaty with Adam Kok, duty threatened the latter that if he would not come to terms with the trekkers, he would be pushed into a reserve south of the Orange River in an arid territory. Adam Kok was forced at the point of a bayonet to submit and the whole of the district of Philippolis was alienated and passed into trekkers' hands. The present area of the Orange Free State was built up by the British at the expense of the indigenous people of the country. The Boers were placated with what they lusted for most, land, first the land of the Xhosas, then of the Tembus, the Zulus and now the Basothos and Griquas.

Only one conclusion can be drawn, namely that the farsighted British saw the Boers as their natural allies and were eager to share the fruits of victory over the tribes with their white counterparts. In spite of the promises the Boers made to the British in regard to the acceptance of fundamental freedoms and the British knew this as a face-saving device, the Boers lost no time in drawing up a Constitution and electing a president. The 'grondwet' of this Constitution was in flagrant violation of the promises of 'no legal distinction of colour, origin, language or creed' for from the beginning, the 'grondwet' decreed that 'Het Volk het geen gelyk-stelling' (The people will not tolerate equality.) Only one location was set aside for occupation rights for the Barolong at Thaba Nchu. The rest of the Basotho returned to the land of their fore-fathers not as owners but as squatters entirely at the mercy of the Boers and made subject to the conditions of the Masters and Servants Act and other legislation of the same nature.

⁴⁶ Eric Walker, *History Of Southern Africa*

THE BRITISH HAND TRANSVAAL OVER TO THE BOERS

CHAPTER VII

With Natal now in British hands, Theophilus Shepstone was sent for (he was then diplomatic agent in the Transkei) to take sole charge of the operation in setting aside locations for the Zulus. There were now 100,000 Zulus as compared to 8,000 Whites. Shepstone carried out Sir George Grey's policy in Kaffraria of scattering the locations in Natal amongst the white farms. This was done to atomise their forces first of all and secondly to provide a cheap labour force for the White farmers. But Shepstone became notorious for going one better than the Englishman, Grey. This son of a Wesleyan missionary, who grew up in the territories, conceived a diabolical weapon that would reduce the once proud Zulu to a mental and physical slave. He decreed that all Zulus be administered under tribal law and custom even by White magistrates. Unable to find White administrators he decided to place them under the jurisdiction of specially appointed chiefs. Furthermore the Lieutenant-Governor of the province was in future to be given the title of 'Great Chief' to whom all Zulus owed homage and that he, by virtue of his position as Paramount Chief of the Zulu nation assumes the right to issue proclamations as affecting them in their name. Shepstone was the first to appoint chiefs, to reconstitute tribal units so as to reinforce the tribal system. He thought in this way to exercise control over the Zulus through their own leaders, the Government-appointed chiefs.

Thus Shepstone was the originator of the apartheid policy of Verwoerd whose singular contribution to the segregation policy of Smuts was a perverted and debased form of tribalism, to be arbitrarily imposed from above on the whole of the African Population in all spheres of life. For without land, tribalism as a system is as dead as a dodo and nothing can resuscitate it. The Boers have indeed to be grateful to Shepstone, Secretary of Native Affairs in the English Colony of Natal, for Verwoerd, when he took power, already found to hand a proven ready-made product.

Meantime in Transvaal, matters were fast mounting to a crisis in the area of Lydenberg near the Zoutspansberg Mountains where the Bapedis lived under Chief Sekhukhuni. Rumours of gold discoveries were already rife in that area and trekkers and other adventurers were already found trespassing on tribal lands. No heed was taken of his protests and Sekhukhuni in view of the fact that he was afforded no protection, was said to have refused to pay his taxes and what was most intolerable to the Boers to have resisted all attempts to dislodge him from his land, short of force. But the Boers increased pressure so that war became inevitable. The Boers appealed to the Cape and Natal for help against the Bapedis. As was their wont in the Cape, the trekboers had refused to pay taxes even to maintain their own Boer state of Transvaal and there was exactly twelve shillings and sixpence in the coffers which was, in fact, in a state of bankruptcy. Sekhukhuni was able to defeat the Boers more than once in open battle. It was then that the Boers enlisted the help of German mercenaries, deserters from the Prussian armies to help them in their task in decimating the Bapedis. As a reward they were promised free land and the cattle of the Bapedis. The result was a massacre. Women and children were slaughtered mercilessly and their lands set alight. As Lord Oliver in his book 'Anatomy of Misery' said: 'The Boers had applied against the Zoutspanberg Kaffirs, their one retaliatory tactics - starving them to death, blockading them in krantzes and caves'.⁴⁷

Lord Carnarvon, Under-Secretary for Colonial Affairs, now found reasons for intervention on the side of the Boers. On the grounds of 'humanity' and the incipient danger of 'civil war' (he did not say between whom) the British came to the rescue of the trekboers against the Bapedis. In 1877, Canarvon sent Shepstone with a small contingent of police into the Transvaal who promptly annexed it as a British colony. Sekhukhuni suffered a defeat and the Bapedis were driven to the mountainous regions of the Zoutspanberg. But were the Boers grateful to the British for rescuing them from the just wrath of the Bapedis? On the contrary, they became more and more determined to keep the Transvaal as a Boer Republic. Their fanatic hatred led to a war breaking out between the British and themselves in which the British were defeated at Majuba Hill.

Quickly an armistice was declared before British reinforcements could be sent out to save Transvaal for the British. On the 3rd of August, 1881, Britain granted self-government to the Transvaal upon the basis of a Statute which had been approved and adopted on the 23rd of May at Derdepoort already in 1849. This statute was known as 'Die Drie-en-dertig Artikelen' (The Thirty Three Articles).

- (a) The 'Artiekelen' and the subsequent legislation which flowed from them were based on the foundation stone of 'Het yolk het geen gelijksstelling': According to this principle, no African shall be treated on an equal footing with the Whites. This discrimination had been introduced in the law when the very first band of Voortrekkers had arrived in Transvaal which was then called the South African Republic. That was why in all the subsequent legislation of that Republic it was specifically stated That no African or Coloured person should receive any citizenship rights.
- (b) That no African or Coloured should become a member of any legislative body.
- (c) That no African or Coloured person should obtain ownership rights to fixed property.
- (d) That no Coloured or African person should live in close proximity to White persons.

In his authoritative book dealing with the Legislation of the period before 1885, Van Reenen in 'Land, its Ownership and Occupation in South Africa' states, 'The unwillingness to grant Coloured (African) persons ownership

⁴⁷ Lord Oliver, *The Anatomy Of Misery*

rights to fixed property arose from the fear that once they were allowed to become owners of land, the Coloured (African) persons who outnumbered the whites would eventually come to control the country and the state....⁴⁸ Thus it followed that when the question of constitutional rights arose as to what was the necessary qualification to the franchise, the starting point was, who had the rights to own land. The franchise was linked inseparably to land ownership. He who had rights to land ownership, was ipso facto a citizen and vice versa.

'At the time of the annexation of the Transvaal by Shepstone in 1877, the position was that Coloured (African) persons could not own landed property and to a large extent they were segregated as far as occupation was concerned. Tribal Natives settled in Reserves (locations) while urban Natives were housed near the towns or villages in locations'(ibid)

Shortly after the annexation, hostilities ensued between the British and the Boers which only ended by the signing of the Pretoria Convention on the 3rd August, 1881. This Convention was superseded by that of London of the 27th February, 1885.

Here the British employed as usual a face-saving device to mark their acceptance of the 'Grondwet' which did not tolerate any equality between Black and White. It was a *term* of these Conventions that Natives would be allowed to acquire land but that such land would be registered in the name of the Commissioner for Kafir Locations. It was also the duty of the Commissioner to set aside locations for the occupation of Natives. 'But', states Van Reenen, 'these Conventions did not change the factual position as far as the Natives were concerned. (our emphasis) The original basis remained that there should be no equality in church or state between White and Black.... It is interesting to note that this era which is clearly marked in the legislative development of our subject had nothing whatsoever to do with the changes and often considerable changes which occurred in the governing authorities; one has in mind the change from republican to Imperial Colonial Government in 1902, the change to Representative Government in 1907, the creation of Union in 1910 and the change of Party Government in 1924, 1933, 1939 and 1948.'⁴⁹ Notice in the above statements by Van Reenen that the British were not unaware of the legal and factual position of the Africans in regard to land rights. Thus they not only accepted the 'Drie en Dertig Artikelen' as the basis of all legislation as affecting the Africans but they masked their betrayal by the creation of a Native Commissioner who alone had the right to acquire land for the African but who was appointed not in the interests of the people but to serve White interests. Note too, the Africans were not given individual rights to the land. What this really meant in practice, was that the Commissioner was allowed the right to buy land only in those areas set aside for Africans **whenever** there was need for re-settlement and removal of Africans from one location to another.

After the Boer War of 1899-1902, when the Boers were defeated by the British, they received as compensation over three million pounds to repair the damage done to their farms and all their farms were returned. Even more they were granted extensive loans free of interest for two years. They were nursed back to their present position by the British. In 1910, after the creation of Union, when the four provinces, the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal were brought under one Government to form one state, the rights of ownership to the land by the Africans were wantonly sacrificed by the British in Orange Free State, Natal and even in the Cape except for small pockets to obtain the political support of the Boers. By so doing the British connived in the fraud which in essence meant the deprivation of franchise rights to the non-whites as well. To the British, the sacrifice of the rights of the Non-Whites was not too high a price to pay for control of the gold mines.

The Boers have the British to thank for that they were not defeated either by the Xhosas, the Bapedis or the Basothos. The British were even more than ready to sacrifice the land rights and by implication the political rights of the indigenous peoples. The principles for which they supposedly stood 'no legal distinction of colour, origin, language or creed' were dumped overboard as so much excess baggage in order to win over the Boers and persuade them to come in as joint junior partners in the new system of exploitation of which they were the forerunners.

In the meantime in Natal Mpande, the traitor chief who had helped the Boers at Blood River to defeat Dingane had died, and Cetshwayo had succeeded to the throne. His attempt to reorganise the Zulu army units in order to win back the Blood River Territory Mpande had practically handed over gratis to the English, set on fire the latent fears of the English and the Boers against the Zulus. Carnarvon sought for a pretext to crush Cetshwayo and alienate not only his land but avert any further threats to white domination. He firmly believed that by offering the Boers in Transvaal the tribal land of the Zulus, he would gain their support in the annexation of the Boer Republic to the Crown. When two unfaithful Zulu wives fled over the border into Natal hotly pursued by their irate husbands, the British Government found it a sufficient *prima facie* reason for declaring war on Cetshwayo in 1879 for trespassing into Natal. Cetshwayo was captured and deported to Cape Town where he lived at Oude Molen, a small isolated fort under conditions fit for a criminal, a broken man. With his defeat, Zululand was split up into 13 districts under quisling chiefs whose only qualification was their opposition to Cetshwayo. The whole purpose was to dissipate the energy and warlike qualities of the Zulus into internecine wars and quarrels and break their unity so that they could never face the real enemy. The result was that eventually Zululand was gradually overrun by the Boers and the English.

This period ends with the complete military subjugation of all the tribes (and the consequent dispossession of their land) which might have challenged the British conquest of South Africa. Throughout the area which today comprises South Africa, the Africans were relegated to special locations and special reserves, demarcated for them

⁴⁸ Van Reenen, *Land, its Ownership and Occupation*

⁴⁹ *ibid*

alone. Much has been made by White historians that the real struggle was between Boer and Briton but in fact the Boer never posed a threat to the British either militarily or economically, in so far as they accepted the capitalist system as a whole. The real source of the difference lay in the nature of the historical and cultural development which in the case of the Boers, was fanned by the artificial fires of a rampant and narrow nationalism and a xenophobia against the Blacks incited by their historians and politicians on an impressionable people infected by 'one of the more inhuman versions of Christianity, that of Calvin...'

In the history of this period, the British were less concerned with the fate of the indigenous people than with themselves vis-a-vis the Boers. Even W.M. Macmillan, the liberal historian was forced to protest '.... the status of independent African peoples, though never far from the surface, was steadily sidetracked... The example of habitual disregard for African interests in the Transvaal in 1852 was followed again in the negotiation after 1881, when the only recognition that African rights were involved was H.M.G.'s stipulation that the Republic should provide adequate 'native reserves'⁵⁰

⁵⁰ W.M. Macmillan, *The Road To Self-Rule*

THE IMPACT OF THE DIAMOND AND GOLD MINES ON THE ECONOMY

CHAPTER VIII

The discovery of diamonds in 1867 in Kimberly, Cape, soon to be followed by extensive gold findings on the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal Boer Republics were events of a cataclysmic nature in the history of South...Africa. These vast mineral riches were decisive factors in the course she was to follow both from the political and economic point of view. The country had now to be geared to the untrammelled and unimpeded exploitation of the mines by the most highly developed world of finance capital. This was the time when Britain was about to reach the highest peak in the development of capitalism-imperialism with vast financial resources at her disposal, all seeking profitable investment. It was indeed a stroke of miraculous good fortune for her investors for with such and other channels for investment, she was soon to reach the zenith of her power, a financial colossus and banker to the whole world. The era of colonisation had begun in earnest and Africa was the chief target in the new scramble for colonies.

Previous to these discoveries, the major export of the Cape Colony in 1863 which alone had some economic viability was wool with a value of over one and a half million pounds comprising about 70 per cent of her total exports. With the first discovery of mainly alluvial diamonds South Africa saw something she had never, seen before, a mass influx of speculators and adventurers from all the ends of the earth, especially Europe, hot in pursuit of easy wealth ready for the taking. Amongst these were Rhodes, Beit, Robinson, Barnato and Rudd later to become the tycoons of the diamond industry. The diamond boom was not to prove a mere flash in the pan and of short duration. When expert investigation further revealed the fact that a far greater store of diamonds, a veritable Aladdin's cave lay in the diamondiferous blue strata which extended deeper and deeper into mother earth and that this entailed problems of mining and large capital resources, a boom in speculation arose. Other problems arose after production. Essentially a luxury product, diamond mining demands a monopolistic control over production and owes its high price structure to an enforced scarcity of supply.

It was Cecil Rhodes who rode the tide of this speculative era, when he, after placing the first diamond on the table of the Cape House of Assembly announced: 'Gentlemen, this is the rock on which the future success of South Africa will be built'. This ruthless paranoiac, singularly ungifted in human qualities, saw further than his contemporaries and found the solution to the problems deep-level mining presented. He was the first to promote a joint stock company to draw off the immense funds of private capital. With these funds at his disposal he was able to employ all manner of means to oust, buy off and blackmail owners of individual holdings, and absorb the smaller amalgamations to finally lay the basis for the rise of a mighty monopoly, De Beers Consolidated Mining Company which stands supreme in the production, supply and sale of diamonds to the world's market. Already in 1881, £30 million was subscribed in diamond shares. The diamond industry at its inception employed a high efficiency in its production and provided the most invaluable experience for the organisation of what was to prove the most powerful industry in South Africa, namely the gold mining industry which today is the major controlling force in the whole economic structure of that country.

To give an idea of the immense profits derived from the diamond industry, it is of some interest to know that the total amount of actual capital involved was a mere twenty million pounds whereas from the date of discovery in 1886 to 1936, a period of 50 years, to total value of diamond production reached the stupendous sum of £320 million pounds of which the state alone received over £23 million in taxation. Over the years the mines have devoted part of their profits to increasing capitalisation to avoid taxation and to hide the high profits. The only threat to total monopoly over the product, lay in diamond sales taking place outside the channel of the De Beers Company - through illicit diamond buying. Even here Rhodes took all precautions (with the backing of the State machinery) to minimise this danger. It was he who created the iniquitous compound system whereby thousands of male African mineworkers under contract are housed and fed in compounds, akin to concentration camps and subjected to strict surveillance and control

When gold was discovered in the Transvaal Boer Republic twenty years later, Rhodes was one of the first to call upon international finance to shoulder the responsibilities of this project. During the period 1887-1905 a sum of £104 million was invested in the gold mines. From 1905-1932, this had increased to £148 million and 4 years later to £523 million. Already at the turn of the century Rhodes was filled with paranoid visions to paint the whole continent red from Cape to Cairo on behalf of Britain. He had by then obtained a royal charter for the development of and beyond the Limpopo (The Rhodesias) and had established the British South Africa Company and in 1890, due to his power and influence had become 'the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. Of this period Frankel was to write: 'Overseas investment was influenced by the spirit and institutions of the time; by the combination of sentiment, patriotism and opportunities for gain; by the large scope, often indirectly, combined with national support, given to the promoters of enterprises in virgin territories; by the considerable possibilities of profit to particular individuals arising from capital windfalls due to the discovery of valuable resources; by the speculative opportunities... by the large gains ... through the appreciation of values in land or natural resources... Only against such a background can the almost incredible financial exploits of a Rhodes be understood...'⁵¹ No further proof is required when one finds that the number of flotations to finance the gold mining industry during the years 1887-1890 jumped from 396 to 576, mostly emanating from the City of London.

⁵¹ Frankel, *Capitalist Investment In South Africa*

The demand for more capital was easily met for deep-level mining and the processes of recovering and refining gold. These required the most advanced scientific knowledge and the most highly developed equipment the world had to offer. It called for the creation of a highly organised large-scale modern industry and practically inexhaustible supplies of capital and labour. South Africa was now willy-nilly drawn into the orbit of world finance and world forces. The funds at the disposal of the promoters were not only used for actual mining operations and exploration but for land speculation in Transvaal. In this way two-thirds of the land area of Transvaal was bought up by large mining companies and others. The alienation of the land from the old trekboers (for the tribes were already dispossessed from the land) due to finance capital raised political questions as between Kruger, the then President of the Transvaal and the Uitlanders. Jameson's filibustering raid to annex the Transvaal to the British Crown, a move instigated by Rhodes, ended in a fiasco and caused the latter's downfall as Prime Minister. The Boer War of 1899-1902 was another struggle as between the feudal trekboers and British Imperialism and finally led to the birth of the unity of the two Boer Republics, Natal and the Cape under the Act of Union of 1910. Finance capital demanded a unified structure and a unified economy to permit of the fullest development and the exploitation of the world's richest diamond and gold mines. With Union the country entered a new phase, laying the material basis for the emergence of such a state that would meet these demands.

The gold-mining industry stands foremost in the application of modern industrial organisational know-how. Professor Clay's much quoted views can well illustrate the point:

'The gold-mining industry may claim to provide a working model of a 'rationalised' industry. Through the group system of control of the separate mining companies and the close co-operation of the whole industry through the Chamber of Mines and its subsidiary services it has substituted for the blind selection of competition of the fittest to survive, a conscious and deliberate choice of methods, equipment areas and personnel on the basis of an extremely detailed comparative study of results.. The experience of the industry is continuously analysed; periodic returns, which serve to measure every factor in costs that can be distinguished, are received from every unit and circulated to every unit; so that the individual mine manager is able to check his results against those of his colleagues in other mines and the controlling authority has continuously before it the divergences of experience that point to the technical and administrative needs of the industry. Each group maintains an extensive and highly-qualified service of experts which works on the problems so revealed; and the financial resources of the groups make it possible to give effect to any improvements - from minor process alterations to the sinking of a new shaft at a cost of half-a-million which this practical research can suggest...'⁵²

All in all there are 33 units of experts whose chief task is to exchange ideas on the streamlining of production in order to lower costs. For instance a systematic record has been kept for every successive year of each mine in production from its very beginning. Returns given in 1894 showed the 47.5% of dividends came from mines working at a depth of 1000 feet and 7.8% from those at 3000 ft. These are compared with those submitted in 1932 when 5.8% of dividends came from mines working at a depth of 3000 ft., 37.8% at 5000 ft., 11% at 7000 ft. and 2.5% at 8000 ft. It becomes uneconomic to work at much lower levels and gradually mines are thrown out of production and become marginal. South Africa since 1961 has consistently demanded a rise in the present price of gold. Due to a rise in production costs of 45 cents per ton, it is estimated that some £250 million worth of gold can never be mined... She hopes that an increase in the price of gold will bring the marginal mines back in production. However America which is the biggest buyer of gold is adamantly opposed to it.

By the end of the forties there was a considerable fall-off in production on the mines in Transvaal. Already in 1940, the Van Eck Commission stated that government experts had predicted that by 1965 the gold-mining industry would have shrunk to one-seventh of its present size. However immediate danger to the economy was averted by the discovery of even richer gold-finds in the Orange Free State in 1949 and with it, the whole of the industry received a fresh lease of life which coincided then with an increase in the price of gold. The reserves of the new mines are estimated at £4,300 million at the current gold price and in effect means that for at least another 50 years the country can rely on gold as its most important export commodity.

One of the most important by-products of the gold-mining industry is uranium. South Africa has become one of the main world sources of uranium and in 1957 there were 25 mines in production. From 1954-1955 the value of uranium amounted to over £45 million. But the sale of the mineral together with thorium is subject to special legislation and comes under the control of the Atomic Energy Board which has rights of ownership over all the uranium produced by the mines. The proceeds of the sales are handed over to the producers.

Amalgamation and interlocking of the various mining companies are continually taking place. Out of 576 mining flotations, 206 were amalgamated, 313 wound up leaving only 57 in existence in 1932. These 57 mining companies were then controlled by 6 financial houses under the all-powerful direction of the Chamber of Mines, the leading authority. The history of the growth and development of one of the most powerful groups in the diamond and gold industry, the Oppenheimer empire is a striking example. Its mines, factories and financial groups span the continents of the world from the Cape to Canada, from Italy to Australia and from Mexico to Mauretania. It mines gold, diamond, uranium, haematite, titanium, coal, copper, zinc, fertilisers, mining machinery, et al. It is involved in banking, property, farming, forestry, fishing and has now entered industry in a big way. Up to the end of 1966, Oppenheimer had invested £95 million in industrial projects alone. The three giants of the family are Anglo-American, De Beers and Charter Consolidated which together control and operate assets close to £2,000 million. The late Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, the founder is reputed to

⁵² ibid

have started the empire with just over £2 million, and took over De Beers after World War I. After World War II he developed the new Free State Mines at Welkom. At that time the market value of Anglo-American investments was £66½ million. By the end of 1968 it had already reached £478 million - in the hands of his son, Sir Harry Oppenheimer. Their wealth was in a great measure derived from the remarkable financial system they had evolved - that it was only necessary to have 10% of Anglo-American shares to hold effective control of companies worth £2,000 million.

A second feature of the organisation of the industry is the group' system. Each of the gold producing companies is a separate entity, having its own shareholders, electing its own board of directors. But a controlling interest in nearly all of the companies is held by one or other of a few large corporations possessing great financial resources with long and intimate experience and an efficient technical and administrative staff. There are some ten important groups at the present time, chief of which are the Anglo-American Corporation, the Central Mining Investment Corporation Consolidated Goldfields and others equally important.

The mining industry makes a considerable contribution to the Treasury in the way of taxes and other forms of revenue. Contributions are as follows:-

Year.	Amount	Percentage
1924-25	£4,935,548	19.5%
1929-30	£7,041,615	23.1%
1934-35	£14,033,781	36.2%
1939-40	£17,534,305	38.6%
1944-45	£24,792,292	21.6%
1949-50	£18,172,044	12.6%
1955-56	£29,369, ⁸ 70	10.7%

Between the years 1924-1940 the contribution to the state coffers rose from 19.5% to 38.6%. During this period the mining industry was called upon to provide the bulk of the finance for the Government to develop its own undertakings and services and support for the weaker sectors of the economy especially agriculture. From the period 1949-56, due to marginal mines going out of production, the Government decided to lower taxation on the mines to enable the companies to undertake further exploration. Up to 1955 the mining industry had contributed a sum of £4,800 million to the country's economy through the sale of its products of which 77.8% was gold and 9.6% diamonds.⁵³

⁵³ *ibid*

REGIMENTATION OF LABOUR

CHAPTER IX

What was the base of the empire that Rhodes with such violence brought into being? What enables the Oppenheimers and their kind to multiply their wealth and spread their tentacles to the far-flung corners of the world; that makes it possible for South Africa to court notoriety and stand up in defiance of the world's condemnation of the brutal oppression of the Non-Whites in her country? What of the human factor in this inhuman machine that assesses gold every single minute of the day and night at one end and piles up untold misery, starvation, homelessness and degradation at the other?

Colonisation in Africa at the end of the 19th century began in earnest when the nascent rise for nationhood and self-determination in the East was already casting its long shadows over the African continent. It was of vital importance to cash in on the long-reputed mineral riches of Africa, a virtually untapped continent. In the race for supremacy amongst the industrially developed Western powers, it became an imperative necessity to colonise and exploit the mineral resources with the utmost rapidity. When moreover the mineral proved to be gold, the most highly prized, the basis of the world's currency, the bringer-in of foreign exchange offering a dazzling prospect to future prosperity, time was of the essence.

Referring to this period of colonialism, Frantz Fanon says: 'Exploitation, torture, raids, racism, collective liquidation, national oppression take turns at different levels in order literally to make of the native an object in the hands of the occupying nation'.⁵⁴ Direct military conquest with all its brutality was replaced by techniques of a more 'refined' nature to force the indigenous populations to accept the new system of exploitation. Corvée, the imposition of forced labour at the point of a gun, was followed up by a veritable host of innumerable taxes - a poll tax, a hut tax, a tax on the workless, a tax on produce, on clothing and a general tax on all for the maintenance of the new state. Taxation was to be the whip and the scourge applied to those who had never learnt to translate their labour into money. Under the new laws, crimes had to be invented that had nothing to do with the preservation of the life of the tribe and well-being of all its members.

Gaols are now erected and its guardians - the police and the army, the arms of the new state now come in operation to bring the population to heel and to enforce submission to the authorities. Side by side comes the conquest of the mind so as to instil the dumb acceptance of oppression, the 'dignity of labour' ably propagated by the minions of the new state, the missionaries, the educators and the traders.

Once these preliminaries are settled and the population subdued, the despoliation starts in all earnestness. At the word of command by the new occupants the earth is disembowelled, the mammoth machines are set in motion, turning, grinding and crushing. And as the machines pound the ore unceasingly, they pound out the life of each labouring man who, at the end of his short life of sweated toil, is thrown on the scrapheap, his lungs rotted by dust, grime and dirt. Others fall in to meet a like fate for no other choice is left to them. Like a monster the machine devours men and its demands grow more insatiable by the hour with the passage of time and with the perfecting of the means of production.

But as long as men were able to satisfy their modest needs from the produce of their land and could maintain some sort of life, There remained some reluctance to bridge the gap between the life they knew and that alien life dictated by the mine owners. Yet it was precisely that choice that was denied to them. As Frankel states: 'More important and far-reaching in its effects has been the expropriation of native land (our emphasis) which has always marked settlement in Africa and still continues ... once the native's land - the basis of all his economic efforts has been taken away, the gap ceases to exist'.⁵⁵ In other words there was no alternative left to the indigenous people but to offer their labour power to the mine owners and indeed their very lives. It was Cecil Rhodes who, in reply to Olive Schreiner's accusation of inhumanity to the cries of the wives and children of Lobengula's warriors, who had been dynamited in walled-up caves by mercenaries to induce them to surrender, expressed it bluntly 'I prefer land to niggers'.⁵⁶ In these words Rhodes gave voice to imperialist policy without mincing matters.

The joint stock companies in the mining industry had the capital and the land, all that remained was to obtain the necessary labour on the cheapest terms. Already the first report of the Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines in 1889 dealt with this major question of labour: 'So long as the total supply is deficient, it is to be feared that eager competition between managers to secure labourers will be irresistible. This competition has in some cases taken the regrettable form of overt attempts to bribe and seduce the employees of neighbouring companies to desert their employers. Even without resort to actual attempts to bribe, a manager finding himself short of labour which is urgently required has, standing alone, scarcely any other remedy than to raise his rates of pay. The result has necessarily been a steady rise in rates all round which is adding a very heavy additional expense to the working of the mines'.⁵⁷

Thus the main threat to its unhampered access to this wealth was labour, cheap labour in an endless supply, lines upon lines of men driven to work at the lowest rates of pay, labour for the taking, docile, quiescent labour. It was a great pity that slavery had officially come to an end. Rhodes saw his dream coming to life - the whole of Africa bending to his will, its manpower falling like leaves in the wind to be scooped up by the huge shovels of

⁵⁴ Franz Fanon, *The Wretched Of The Earth*

⁵⁵ S.H. Frankel, *Capitalist Investment In South Africa*

⁵⁶ Felix Gross, *Rhodes Of Africa*

⁵⁷ S. van der Horst, *Native Labour In South Africa*

his machinery to feed his diamond and gold mines. The road to achieving this was clear. First the land was to be expropriated and a set of conditions created to harry force and compel the Africans to come forth and learn to appreciate the fact that they will have to spend their lives in daily work'. Hence the indigenous people now deprived of their former means of existence, of any alternate means of earning a livelihood, beset by taxes to be paid for in hard cash are forced to follow the only road now left to them - the road to the mines which at first trodden by a reluctant few, becomes a high road sending out clouds of dust as the numbers mount and mount almost to a mass exodus. The once inhabited villages become derelict, homes for women and children bereft of husbands and fathers, the disabled and the dying - a backwater of life.

Organised recruiting for the mines began practically at the inception of the mining industry. From the start, the policy was laid down to remove all African mining and other recruited labour from democratic processes, that is, from the right of the individual to be free to sell his labour to the highest bidder; freedom to go in search for a new job at higher pay; from the right to organise his fellowmen in a trade union to protect his interests and to be accepted simply as a worker and to have those rights which every worker is entitled to.

To debar him from the exercise of those rights, the Chamber of mines created a monstrous machine for recruiting labour - the Witwatersrand Labour Association and the Native Recruiting Corporation, both of which come under its control and whose affairs are run under one management and one board of directors. This monopoly recruits all mine labour in terms of a quota system agreed upon by each respective mine in production. With one single buyer of labour, all competition between the various companies is at once ruled out and all avenues closed for the worker to force the companies to raise his wages for no strikes are permitted. No mine worker can apply directly for employment nor can he even state his own preferences within the narrow compass of the unskilled. His type of work is fixed, so also his wages and the kind of life he leads on the mines. He now gets a number, is assigned a cement block for his bed in his particular compound and becomes a disembodied pair of hands, an object to be shoved here or there according to the previous quotas agreed upon by the mine owners.

In all the neighbouring territories, recruiting agencies have long been established, smaller tributaries which keep an even flow into one main conduit system leading only in one direction - the diamond and gold mines. Already as early as 1898, the gold mines were employing over nine thousand Whites at £26. per month and nearly seventy thousand Africans at about £2.10/ per month with food. Notice the gap in wages from the beginning. Even then, Rhodes had to complain that the Africans in South Africa were overpaid whereas in the North (Rhodesias) the pay of his mineworkers was only 4/- per month without food.⁵⁸

The allocation of mine labour according to quotas previously agreed upon is regarded as of a highly secret and confidential nature. Between the Chamber of Mines and the Government there is an understanding particularly in regard to mine wages. The mines have special priority in the recruitment of labour and its recruiting agencies have the status of government departments. These work in close liaison with every government in power and have given an undertaking that the wages of mine labour shall on no account compete with those offered by farmers. This agreement becomes a source of disquiet to the mine owners especially when contract labour becomes scarce. For instance, before the new Free State mines were opened in 1948, Oppenheimer had decided to make changes in the housing conditions of his mining labour force. The compound system besides being a deplorable system contrary to all civilised norms, was not conducive to the build-up of a sound experienced mining labour force. He believed that by building mining villages and permitting some form of family life, he would ensure the stability of his labour force.

But it is an open secret that the Hertzog Government was adamantly opposed to this, saying that this would further deprive the farmer of labour and create other problems - the permanent settlement of Africans in the so-called White areas which was contrary to White policy. Oppenheimer was forced to demolish these villages and replace them with the Compound system. At all times, finance capital practises a conciliatory policy even when it is to its disadvantage, knowing all too well that what it may lose on the swings, it will gain on the roundabouts.

But mining policy and practice as applied to migrant labour, would not have succeeded to the extent it did, if it were not for the full and undivided support it had, from the imperial governments and the successive South African governments of whatever colouration that came into power after the Act of Union. Every political party understood that whatever else they could do, their primary duty was not to rock the boat of an economy almost wholly dependent on mining profits made possible by the brawn and sinews of large masses of black unskilled migrant labour. In an age of automation, the economy of South Africa is an anomaly, an anachronism further exacerbated by the apartheid policy that has logically extended the former segregation policy of the imperialists to the whole system and to deny the whole non-White population their political and economic right in the country of their birth. The spate of laws has doubled, redoubled and twice redoubled to harness a capitalist mode of production to a virulent **political** creed based on apartheid. Production must be confined into the strait-jacket of an ideology that clogs up the economy and subjects it to unnatural strains. This ideology is a study of dehumanising processes whose purpose is to increase exploitation and create a fatalism amongst the oppressed so that they can never revolt against the barbarism practised on them.

The viciousness of a system which denies the African the right of a worker when he is in fact a worker and the most valuable asset of the country; denies him a family life when he is a father of a family; denies him the right by the Colour Bar Act, the Apprenticeship Act, the Industrial Conciliation Act, the Job Apartheid Act from

⁵⁸ F.Gross, *Rhodes Of Africa*

becoming a skilled worker and yet complains of his low productivity; denies him the legal right to live in a town even when he was born there and knows no other home; states categorically that he is a helot in 87% of the land and does not afford him an inch in the eroded 13% especially set aside for him, creates a macabre and a violent society of untold suffering for the Non-Whites and a constant relentless vigilance on the part of the Herrenvolk to plug the gaping holes of a system which has a constant tendency to fall apart. The problem for the rulers is that, in order to maintain their political and economic power in an age of automation, they must turn the historical clock back and still further back to preserve their oppressive system and yet be able not only to assure the overseas investors of the soundness of their economy but also to provide the white electorate with a luxurious standard of living, cushy jobs and all the amenities of life. The only way of doing this is to put increasing pressure not only on the African population which provides the main labour force but on all other Non-White sections who are now undergoing pauperisation under the impact of discriminatory legislation, like the Group Areas Act, Colour Bars and Job apartheid etc. Violence must be constantly employed under such a fascist system. It has now become a way of life reinforced by the ever-increasing ferocity of the laws. This violence constantly spills over and reaches even the highest echelons of the Herrenvolk. The assassination of Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid at the highest point of his career, was no mere accident and reveals more than anything else the nature of a society which has been built on and maintained by violence. Verwoerd was driving his politics too hard at the cost of the economy.

Independent states like Zambia and Tanzania which have strongly proclaimed their opposition to the apartheid regime of South Africa, have prohibited the South African recruiting agencies like Wenela from operating in their countries. This has rendered the labour shortage even more acute. This factor as well as the pressure by world-wide economic and political forces make South Africa when in a crisis, revert to her fundamental position - her policy of apartheid. The screw of oppression must be turned even harder. The weight of recent legislation aims not only at pauperisation but channelling the whole of the Non-White population of fifteen million into the conduit of migrant labour, a rootless mass ready at hand to render service to the Herrenvolk. As Froneman M.P. Deputy-Chairman of the Bantu Affairs Commission stated on the 6th February, 1969, "We are trying to introduce the migratory labour pattern as far as possible in every sphere. That is in fact the entire basis of our policy as far as the White economy is concerned, namely a system of migratory labour."⁵⁹ Already in 1960, according to the Froneman Commission of Enquiry, South Africa has recruited a total of 836,000 migrant labourers from neighbouring states, mainly from Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho and Botswana, consisting of 312,344 for the mines, 337,656 for the farms and certain coal mines and 186,000 women and dependents. This number will no doubt have increased to a million by now.

The system of migrant labour fits in perfectly with the policy of apartheid. It is in keeping with the feudal outlook of the present government whose present outlook and character has been fashioned out of its historical past. -To the trekboers the town was a foreign product with a culture of its own. The advantages which any city enjoys in a modern society, the development of the forces of production, its generally higher level of civilisation in terms of culture and education become also part of it. We thinking of a settled urban proletariat. The outlook of the descendants of the trekboers, the present Afrikaners, towards the town and the English who dominate in the town, is no less suspicious than that of their forebears. What they fear most is that the African settled proletariat in the towns will imbibe this culture. The towns provide a favourable milieu for the dissemination of ideas where the oppressed workers will learn to know class oppression, become class conscious and so equip themselves politically to lead the struggle for their emancipation. In 1960, Africans already constituted 88% of labour engaged in mining, 85.5% of those in agriculture, the two basic industries in South Africa with 54% employed in secondary industry in the towns. The position in industry becomes even more significant when one considers the whole Non-White people. According to the latest statistics of 1967, Non-Whites comprise more than 75% of those in the secondary industry.⁶⁰

From these facts it can be seen how completely the whole of the South African economy rests on the productive labour of the worker-peasant, the migrant labour force and the urban Non-White working class. For as the working man becomes more and more proletarianised, he is likely to divorce himself from all tribal affiliations and learns to think of himself as a member of the working class. It is this growing class consciousness that the Herrenvolk want to see destroyed at all costs, for it constitutes a mortal threat to their hegemony. In 1967, Parliament had already accepted a proposal to take steps to ward off this danger by reducing the African urban labour force by 5% annually. The President of the South African Chamber of Commerce made a very strong protest against this move, stating that according to a very conservative estimate of the national cost in the annual removal scheme of 5% would be no less than £70,000,000 per annum. The mass removal now taking place throughout South Africa of men, women and children from the urban areas and dumped on the bare veld, where the fabric of life is torn down with such fiendish disregard for all human values and such calculated unnecessary cruelty, has become a daily occurrence in the life of the people.⁶¹

The latest Proclamation entitled 'Bantu Labour Regulations' which came into force in April of 1969 is intended to destroy any possibility of a threat of a class-conscious proletariat arising at any time to challenge the regime by speeding up the mass removals schemes.⁶² The purpose of these mass removals is to turn the whole of

⁵⁹ Rand Daily Mail, 06/02/1968

⁶⁰ Union Statistics For 50 Years

⁶¹ Defence And Aid Information Service, 06/02/1968

⁶² Unity Movement Of South Africa, *The Revolutionary Road For South Africa*

the African population of twelve million into a nation of migrant labourers, but is more specifically directed against the African proletariat of over four million living more or less permanently **in** the town locations. Under the provisions of the Act, the urban proletariat is deprived of all rights as part of the settled urban population. He now loses all rights of occupation to his home (legally of course he never had any rights to own property in the urban areas) his children will not be permitted to continue their schooling in the locations once he is forced to leave, whatever skills he may have attained in his job will now rust from disuse and he is deprived of all that once gave life to his being.

Every worker is now compelled to register at the tribal bureau in the distant homelands of his particular ethnic group, possibly a thousand miles away and will be placed under the jurisdiction of a tribal chief and the Bantu authorities., He will now be dubbed a work-seeker, not a worker (a term reserved only for the Whites) and the bureaux who now have taken him in charge, will place him in certain categories of labour. He will be signed on contract for 360 shifts or a year whichever is the shortest and shunted off to **the** towns, the factories or the farms away from his family. This is the pattern which is to be followed under the new labour Regulations, R74. It will be a criminal offence for any work-seeker to seek to evade these draconian regulations. He is not allowed to leave his tribal area on any account to take up employment outside the tribal confine. This diabolical scheme has been devised, enacted and applied to ensure that the Black labour on which Herrenvolk power depends, must be on their terms and completely at their mercy. Where is place for trade unions in this system of regimented and enslaved labour? How do men even learn to think when they are faced with the horror of living under such a barbarous regime? How can a man start thinking of liberation when his life is spent in a state of flux, forever part of a seething, shifting mass of millions of men scurrying across the land in search of the barest minimum to sustain himself and his family. In 1960, a decade ago, the total male labour force consisted of five and half million men and nearly three-quarter million women. Rhodes' dream is coming true to life. The black man and his children are falling like leaves in the wind to be scooped up by the huge shovels of the Herrenvolk of South Africa, the ardent disciples of Hitler in particular and fascism in general.

THE LAND ACT OF 1913

CHAPTER XI

Far-reaching indeed were to be the effects of the deprivation of tribal land. The 'expropriation of native land' was and **still is** the first and foremost aim of colonialist policy in Africa epitomised in Rhodes' cry 'I prefer land to niggers.' From that the second aim followed when he made it clear that nine-tenths of the indigenous peoples will have to spend their lives **in** daily labour, in physical work.

The wars of conquest were to decide who ultimately were to be the masters over the land and the labour power of the Blacks. When these wars came to an end, the tribes had already been driven to the occupation of small scattered reserves and locations on crown land. From there they spilled over into the so-called White areas or drifted back to their former lands in the hands of the trekboers, now not as owners but *as* labour-tenants who worked for agreed periods without payment from the farmer for the right to grow crops and run stock on the farm; as squatters renting land at an agreed rental per annum, or as share-croppers as in the Orange Free State, planting and sowing grain and sharing half of their produce with the boer or simply as serf labour.

In the Cape those Africans who had the vote were able to acquire property rights within certain limited areas. In the Transvaal though Africans could acquire land in the name of the Commissioner, they individually could not obtain title deeds although they had paid for such land. For the rest of the five million Africans pacing hungrily in the reserves, the stage was set for their exploitation. Expropriation of land lays the basis for the exploitation of labour and are two sides of the same coin. The Boer war of 1899-1902 which broke out after the defeat of the main contestant - the African people, was merely a tug of war between the representatives of finance capital and the feudal landowners as to which section of the Whites was to have the final say over the body of the defeated Blacks. That struggle between the two White sections has not even today, been finalised. One of the fundamental differences between the two white sections lay in their respective attitudes to the land as such. As long as the Boers were able to deprive the Blacks and themselves gain possession of their land, they firmly believed that they had established their hegemony for all time. They have always regarded the Blacks as the enemy from whom the land had to be wrested by force. Their dream was and still is to turn the whole African population into serfs, tied to the land and offering free services to the white baas.

However in the Transvaal, there was no law to stop the African from becoming a leaseholder or even disposing of his leasehold rights. At the time of the annexation of the Transvaal by Shepstone, the British upheld the inequalities contained in the laws appertaining to the Africans. Even after the defeat of the Boers in the Boer War of 1902, the Imperial Government bent so far backward to maintain the status quo, that it gave full support to the creation of group areas according to section 37 of Ordinance 58 of Transvaal of 1903 which stated: 'The Council may with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor (The Transvaal was then under military rule) lay out on land under its control, such locations for Natives as may be deemed desirable and erect suitable buildings thereon for the occupation of such Natives and make charges therefore to be fixed by regulations and compel all Natives residing in the municipality except such as hold letters of exemption ... to reside within such locations.'⁶³

At this period in the history of the Transvaal, land companies in search of ore-bearing land were busy buying up the farms of the old trekboers with offers of high prices or taking options on farms. Money literally poured into the old trekboer's pockets. Goodfellow states: 'In the Northern areas of Transvaal company lands were made **to** yield a revenue by the collection of rent from anyone who lived on them.'⁶⁴ In short both the farmers and the land companies were exploiting the shortage of land amongst the Africans by leasing out their vast holdings and extracting high rentals from African squatters. When gold was discovered, all the land in the Transvaal with the exception of the locations and reserves came under the provisions of the Gold Law (Act 35 of 1905). Under this law a further section was demarcated as the Witwatersrand where a complex of gold mines was in process of completion. This was designated as a Proclaimed Area and was so sacrosanct that all Africans were debarred even from leasehold and residential rights. This was to be the thin edge of the wedge. Time was to prove that the whole of the Transvaal would soon become a proclaimed area and that ultimately the whole Non-white population would be debarred from even residential rights except in their own locations. This situation has now come to pass within the last decade or so during the rule of the present Government.

Such was the position before the Act of Union (1910). Under Union, the rights of the Africans to become citizens of the land of their birth were sold out in the three provinces of Natal, Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Those few voters in the Cape were protected by a fig-leaf, stating that a two-thirds majority in the House would be required to deprive them of their voting rights. This hurdle was overcome under a later Pact Government of Hertzog and Smuts. The principle of no equality between Black and White in church or state won the day when the Act of Union was passed. To the British the sacrifice of the whole non-White population was not too high a price to pay for the control of the gold mines. The fruits of peace and the exploitation of the non-Whites were now to be shared between the two White sections. Imperialism had decided that it was politic to woo the Boers and allow them to come in as junior partners in its imperial plans.

It is common knowledge that much of the discussion at the National Convention prior to the Act of Union

⁶³ Van Reenen, *Land, Its Ownership And Occupation*

⁶⁴ D.M. Goodfellow, *Modern Economic History Of South Africa*

centred round the so-called Native question. The British wanted to allow some concessions to the educated Blacks so as to establish some sort of a petit bourgeois class which would work in the best interests of imperialism and act as a sort of liaison between the masses and the rulers. But to this the die-herds of the Boer Republics were utterly opposed. Thus it came about that all white parties agreed that only those of European descent who had acquired Union nationality by birth, domicile as a British subject or by naturalization, could become members of Parliament. It was to be a white parliament representing white interests. More than that it became the voice of the majority of the white electorate - the Dutch farmers of the Boer Republics who were to learn the first lessons in swinging the whole country into its own feudal and racist conception of a state.

The betrayal of the hopes of the Africans to citizenship and having equal rights to the land as the Whites resulted in the first stirrings of political consciousness amongst the African educated section - those few voters in the Cape who had some rights to defend. These were in that class known as 'exempted natives' but nevertheless carried an exemption pass from the daily humiliations and harassment of the dompas system. Important was the fact that they could acquire property rights which gave them some standing of leadership in the social and political world, narrow and circumscribed as they were at the time. In the former Boer Republics however, the mass of the population up to 1911 were held under martial law. In Natal the Africans lived under the complete domination of Government appointed chiefs so ably planned by Shepstone. When in 1912, the first major piece of legislation of the Union Legislative Assembly was in the form of an attack on the rights of the African people more especially in the Boer Republics, the cup of discontent was filled to the brim, especially amongst the more politicised Cape voters who were the first to understand that their own position as 'exempted natives' was threatened. They were galvanised into action and thus the Native National Congress was born in a moment of peril to defend their few rights. But the nature of the organisation could only arise out of the conditions prevailing at the time.

Sol Plaatjie who writes of this period immediately after Union and who was a protégé of the liberals and missionaries in his book 'Native Life in South Africa' (1916) states: 'All too little (if anything at all) is known of the, services rendered to the common weal by the native leaders in South Africa. In every crisis in the past four years.... the native leaders have taken upon themselves the thankless and expensive task of restraining the Natives from resorting to violence. The seeming lack of appreciation with which the Government has met their success in that direction has been the cause of some comment among Natives ... they have asked whether the authorities were disappointed because, by their successful avoidance of bloodshed, the native leaders had forestalled the machine guns... But..., this apparent ingratitude has not cooled their ardour for peace ...'⁶⁵ Plaatjie voices the almost hopeless task of the African leaders who had been brought up under the tutelage of the liberals and the missionaries actively intervene as peace-makers between the rulers and the just wrath of the masses to plead for forbearance and a change by heart. It was understandable that they would consider as their first task, the sending of a deputation to the very Government which had framed the Bill, another to England, the heart of the Empire in whose War the Africans had been called upon to sacrifice their lives and to remind the British of the promises of the late Queen Victoria of 'blessed memory' that they would be treated justly.

To gain support for their demands the leaders of Congress called many meetings of protest against the Bill so that even the churches were forced to add their protests as well. But typical of their methods the latter asked the Government to provide more locations before attacking the land rights of the Africans. All these protests and appeals were however treated with contempt when on the 28th of February, a Free State member of parliament moved 't'l'at the Government be requested to submit to the House during the present session a General Pass and Squatters Bill to prohibit the African people from wandering about without a pass, from squatting on farms, and from sowing on the share system.' As if that was not enough, another Transvaler added an amendment 'And further to take effective measures to restrict the purchase and lease of land by Natives.'⁶⁶

As Sol Plaatjie so aptly describes of them, they were like a lot of 'bloodhounds long held in the leash'. The Boers whipped up the racial fears of the hits throughout the land, declaring that the laws of the Boer Republics were most just and fair for they told the Africans the truth that the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State was a White man's country, that he (the African) was not going to buy land there or hire land there' and that if he wanted to be there he must be in service' and that the White man 'was going to keep it so.' In reply to the missionaries, the Free Staters declared that if more reserves and locations were to be granted the 'farmers would suffer from lack of labour.'

The liberals of the Cape put on the defensive, tried to still the fears of the Boer electorate lest they turn against the Government and pointed out that the land held by the Whites per head 'were fifty times the amount held per head by the Natives. ...' 8 acres per head in the Cape, 6 acres in Natal, 1¼ acres in Transvaal and ½ acre in the Free State⁶⁷. 'Liberal objections to the term skepsels (creatures) whenever the Free Staters referred to Africans, failed to stem the tide of xenophobia and race-hatred against the Africans. This filibustering tactic was to be the method increasingly practised in later years but this was the first time. By means of these rabid offensive tactics and manners, the liberals, brought up in the rarefied atmosphere of parliamentary procedure, were outmanoeuvred. Botha, the first Prime Minister 'and acceptable to the British gradually swung over to the 'Volk' and to placate the Free State Hertzog was appointed Minister of Native Affairs.

After three short readings, the Bill was steamrolled through Parliament, adopted hurriedly by the Senate, and

⁶⁵ Sol Plaatjie, *Native Life In South Africa*

⁶⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁷ *ibid*

on June the 16th 1913 became law. The Bill was recast in such a manner as to give it the semblance of a paper restriction on European encroachment on Native rights. There is no such person in South Africa as a white squatter although it is insistently affirmed that the law applies equally to Europeans and Natives, says Plaatjie. The Bill when finally passed was known as the Natives' Land Act of 1913 and set aside as 'Scheduled Areas' some ten million morgen consisting of Locations already in the hands of the African tribes at the time of the passing of the Act. In these 'Scheduled Areas' the density of the Black population had already reached an average of up to 90 persons a square mile and in Zululand, 140 persons per square mile at a time when even the major cities could show only a population of not more than 20 to 30 persons to the square mile. The purpose of the Act was to eliminate that class of semi-independent peasantry known as squatters from occupying leasehold land and to level out all classes amongst the African peasant to the lowly status of serf labour.

1. The chief clauses of the Act stated unequivocally that:

- (a) A native shall not enter into any agreement or transaction for the purchase, hire or other acquisition from a person other than a native any such land or of any rights thereto, interest therein or servitude thereover and
- (b) A person other than a native shall **not** enter into any agreement or transaction for the purchase, hire or other acquisition from a native of any such land or of any such right thereto interest therein or servitude thereover,

2. From and after commencement of the Act no person other than a native shall purchase, hire or in any other manner whatever acquire any land in a Scheduled Native Area, or enter into any agreement or transaction for the purchase, hire or other acquisition, direct or indirect, of any such land or of any right thereto or interest therein or servitude thereover except with the approval of the Governor-General.

Having rendered the squatters homeless and penniless, the Act now started to reassure the farmers under Clause 6 that as far as occupation by Africans of land outside the Scheduled Areas, there shall be: 'nothing in the law or in this Act shall be construed as restricting the number of natives who, as farm labourers, may reside on any farm in the Transvaal and that in any proceedings from the contravention of this Act, the burden of proving that a native is a farm labourer shall be on the accused and that no native shall be deemed a bona fide employee unless he renders 90 days free service at least in a calendar year on the farm.

The express purpose of the Act was to freeze the land area already occupied by Africans and although the Act stated, that Africans may buy land in these Scheduled Areas, the truth was that the land was inalienable and could not be bought or sold. These Scheduled Areas comprised only one-eighteenth of the total area of the whole Union in which the then rural population of 4½ million people (excepting the ½ million urban Africans) had to live.

Immediately after the Bill became the law of the land, Plaatjie undertook a tour of the Orange Free State and Transvaal to see with his own eyes the effects of the Act. He found farmers jubilant. Hertzog had already made a swift tour of those areas and had been busy berating the farmers for keeping squatters and had warned them that the penalty clause (Section 5) would be ruthlessly applied, namely, that every landowner who accommodated any squatter on his farm would be fined £100. And if after the fine is paid, an additional £5. for each day that the squatter's cattle remain on the farm; if any squatter refused to sell his stock and hire himself out to the farm as a labourer he must take to the road. immediately with all his stock. He must be kept moving day and night on the highways; that landowners were debarred from allowing Africans to purchase grazing land or allowing them to graze their cattle. The harshness of the legislation was to be applied in full against the squatters whose main crime was that they did not fall in that class known as serf labour and worked as an independent peasantry. Thus every loophole was to be closed to prevent them from escaping the full impact of the Act.

By a mere stroke of the pen more than a million squatters were deprived of their former rights and those who refused to turn themselves into serfs and sell their cattle, became nomads wandering the roads of the Free State in that bitter winter of 1913 looking for shelter and grazing for their cattle. Plaatjie heard tales of fugitives fleeing with their starving beasts for an unknown destination, others perforce had to sell their cattle for a song, and had departed with their families for Johannesburg. Dutch farmers were offering wages at £2 per squatter family per month with the proviso that their cattle would henceforth become the property of the landowner. In the Orange Free State, Plaatjie's greeting was acknowledged by a Dutch policeman in these words 'Dag jong.' (Good day, boy). And who, when asked about the squatters made the following telling remarks 'Some of these arme skepsels (poor creatures) I knew to be fairly comfortable, if not rich, and they enjoyed the possession of their stock living in many instances just like Dutchmen ... (That was the rub). Many of them are now being forced to leave their homes and if ever there was to be a fool's errand, it is that of a Kafir trying to find a new home for his stock and family just now.' Plaatjie cites a case of a Dutch farmer's wife who could not understand why such a harsh and stringent measure should have been applied against her good servants and not against the many idle and prowling loafers and decided to speak to her husband. The next day the 'Oubaas' himself appeared at the scene where all the bags of grain had already been harvested and stood ready to be shared amongst the squatters and himself. The workers feared the worst. The 'baas counted no less than 12,300 bags and knew that his share would reach a total of 6,150 bags representing £3,000'. Plaatjie could see what must have passed through the boer's mind. Would he have succeeded in getting so much with so little trouble, with no effort at all on his part if poor Whites had tilled his land instead of these 'natives'?

But conditions at that time worked against the full implementation of the Land Act. This was a political decision and

not an economic one. The level of economic development was such that the African peasants were prepared to trek with their cattle rather than become penniless paupers on the land of the Dutch farmers. The squatters were cultivating the large lands of the trekboer landowners much to the latter's economic advantage. Primitive accumulation of capital was in the making and that accumulation had to reach a degree sufficiently high to raise the whole country to that level where it could enter a higher level of production - industrialism. Since the Land Act worked against any benefit accruing to the white farmers, the majority of Africans 'were received back under the old conditions'. As Endre Sik says: The law proved to be a complete failure. The farmers themselves when the first panic was over, began to disregard it.⁶⁸

The Government too, startled at the first catastrophic results and realising that the law had missed its aim ... applied the blind eye to it under the pressure of the Boer farmers'.

'The Act also appointed a Committee to investigate the land question and if necessary recommend additional reserves. This report was subsequently laid on the table of the House in May 1916.

The Commission stated:

- (a) that the area of South Africa comprised 143 million morgen. The urban areas were inhabited by 660,000 Whites, mainly English and 800,000 Blacks and covered an area of $1\frac{3}{4}$ million morgen.
- (b) The remaining 141 $\frac{1}{4}$ million morgen should be divided into:
 - (i) Native areas, 4 million people into 18* million morgen. i.e. 12%.
 - (ii) European areas, 660,000 Rural Whites mainly Boers occupying 123 million morgen. i.e. 88%.

Neither the areas recommended in 1916 by this Commission, nor the smaller areas as recommended by the local committees to which the matter was next referred were however made available' says Franklin.⁶⁹ 'A new generation had to grow up to manhood when a fresh Act, another infamous Act, the Native Land and Trust Act of 1936 before some additional land outside the original 10 million morgen designated as Native areas in 1913, was to be made available.

⁶⁸ Endre Sik, *History Of Black Africa*

⁶⁹ N. Franklin, *Economics In South Africa*

UNION LAYS THE GROUNDWORK FOR INDUSTRIALISM

CHAPTER XII

During the following two decades from 1913 up to 1936 when the notorious Native Representation Act and the Native Land Act of 1936 were passed, South Africa now a union of four provinces laid the basis for the rise of a modern capitalist state. These were momentous years in the history of the country. The advantages of a centralised government soon showed massive economic benefits. A single railroad system connected the four widespread provinces and led to an integrated economy with a common system of taxation, tariffs and customs and a single parliamentary system, a judiciary and a unified code of laws which applied to all the provinces. Such conditions favoured the highest development of the mineral industries especially those of diamonds and gold which now provided the main sources for the accumulation of capital from which agriculture and secondary industry manufacture, drew the greatest benefits. Imperialism was creating the new state of South Africa on lines best suited to serve imperial interests.

From the date of discovery (1869) up to 1936, the value of diamonds alone had reached the stupendous amount of £320 million. Gold production exceeded all expectations by rising at a phenomenal rate, from 8,799 fine ounces in 1913 to 11036 ounces in 1936.⁷⁰ (Table 12. Frankel, *Investment in Africa*.) From 1887 to 1932, the mining industry produced more than 162 million ounces of gold which realised over £1,145 million.⁷¹ Of this prosperity the State took full advantage and reaped a rich harvest in taxation. Taxes for the financial years for the period March 1911 to March 1937 amounted to over £106 million from gold mining alone and from all mining, the amount exceeded £146 million. To put it more succinctly, the state received in taxation in 26 years an amount almost equal to the total capital invested in the gold mines for the period 1905-1932, viz, £148 million.

'The gold-mining industry had become the most potent single factor determining a rise or fall in the extent of employment, saving and investment. The prosperity and the degree of economic activity in the country continue to depend mainly on the sums available for new investment in this industry.' (Frankel). In short, the mining industry had become the kingpin of the whole economy. Due to increasing rationalisation Of the gold industry, working costs per ton milled were actually reduced from £19.6 in 1896 to 18s 11d in 1937 while working profit per ton milled remained fairly stable, falling from 13s 1d to 12s 6d despite the high increases in wages to white workers, heavy expenses of deep-level mining and the inflation of the war-years (1914-1920). The rate of profitability of the mines depends on wages and salaries paid to labour. The wage bill for 17,000 white miners in 1913 amounted to £5,894,000. In 1936, employment of white labour had doubled while wages had more than redoubled and risen to £13,138,000 an average of £386 p.a. for each white miner. During this same period the number of black miners had risen from 184,000 to 286,000 with a total wage-bill of £9,773,000 an average of £35. p.a. the proportion of wages between black and white being in the region of 1:11.⁷² This gap between unskilled and skilled is one of the highest in the world and since 1966 has actually widened to 1:17.6.⁷³

During these two decades African wages remained static at 2s 3d per shift for a maximum of 360 shifts. Of the expenses involved in the extraction of gold, the greatest single item in most years was for wages and salaries. In 1930, the value of gold won on the Rand mines was £45½ million while the amount spent on wages and salaries was £15,726,173 exceeding the total of dividend and tax payment. In 1936, the (total) amount of expense in wages and salaries was £25,704,865. 'Where such large amounts were spent on labour, it followed that the industry should seek to make the most economical use of its labour force. The ability of the mining industry to draw upon the cheap labour of the native population was unquestionably the greatest single source of the economy. How greatly the entire extractive industry including the mining of coal and base metals availed itself of cheap native labour was clearly evident that in the widely separate years of 1915, 1925 and 1935 the percentage of European labour was 10.3, 10.7 and 10.76.'⁷⁴

The mine-owners had worked out to the finest percentage the ratio of employment between white and black labour which would yield the maximum profits. This balance is delicately poised between the demands of the white skilled worker who at the same time is part of the white electorate and the gradual takeover of more and more skilled jobs by the black unskilled, voteless masses as more and more mechanisation takes place. 'When the rock in the mines was skilled laboriously by hand, it was accounted native work. When machine drilling was introduced, natives learnt to use the machine efficiently and were not replaced. The graduation of natives from unskilled to semi-skilled and skilled operations expanded the use which the mining companies could make of cheap labour.'⁷⁵ Like all mine-owners cheap labour must be made even cheaper. Thus despite the increasing takeover by Africans of more and more skilled operations there has been no commensurate increase in wages up to today. Increasing productivity of African labour increases the sum of profits...falling to the mine-owners of which the state claims its share.

Indeed the mining companies found it more profitable to extend the field of operation of black labour

⁷⁰ S. Frankel, *Table 12, Capital Investment In South Africa*

⁷¹ *ibid*

⁷² *ibid*

⁷³ *ibid*

⁷⁴ De Kiewiet, *A Political History Of South Africa, Social And Economic*

⁷⁵ *ibid*

to more skilled occupations at the same low rate of pay, than to ask the Government to lower the rate of taxation. To the white worker the policy of the mining companies was anathema. The mine-owners were undercutting him by the extended use of black labour. Hardly was the ink dry on the signing of the Act of Union in 1910 when the statutory colour bar in mining which the Transvaal Volksraad had previously enacted, prohibiting Non-Whites from blasting and other semi-skilled operations, was now re-enacted in the Mines and Works Act of 1911 to apply to the whole country. 'Now almost within the first year of Union an Act of Parliament recognised that a new social and economic frontier had taken the place of the old frontier of land and settlement'⁷⁶. The new social system which had come to birth in South Africa with the creation of Union and the rise of industrialism had mapped out a specific place for the conquered African who, having been robbed of his land, had nothing else to offer except his labour power in order to maintain himself and his family. For the mine-owner as well as the ruling classes this vast store of untapped labour would open the glittering gateway to prosperity and riches.

The white mineworker from the beginning regarded the black worker as a threat to his privileged position and a competitor against whom he had to do battle '.... South African (white) labour fought its battle on two fronts. It fought the characteristic vanguard action of labour in the Western world against capital. It differed from other labour movements by fighting a rearguard action against a group of a different race and a lower order of skill, without organisation or political support, but which belonged nevertheless to the labouring population. In that population the trade unions were an elite, a self-conscious and self-regarding group.'⁷⁷

The strike on the gold mines in 1913 by the white miners mainly English-speaking, who had brought their craft traditions with them, for the right to form their own trade union sounded the first tocsin that class interests were beginning to penetrate the economy. South Africa was being drawn into the world economic community. This strike became of national importance and rocked the country to its foundations. The deadening grip of the standard of wages set by the mines which in turn fixed wages throughout the whole country was being challenged for the first time. The miners gained their rights and white trade unions were allowed to organise as long as they practised the colour bar in regard to membership. In a report of Native Grievances Inquiry 1914, it was stated that pressure of white miners in trade unions was strongly exerted against any 'dilution of labour'. They held the view that 'rather than give way to the colour-bar they would prefer to see low-grade mines close down, despite the resulting unemployment and misery which such a calamity would cause.'⁷⁸ In 1914 the new Federation of Trades called for a general strike of white workers which directly affected the mines railways, both monopolies. The Government could not afford even to its henchmen, the white workers, the right to strike (for fear of the Blacks) and called out its Defence Force. The Riotous Assemblies Act was immediately passed to prohibit all meetings.

When in 1922, another strike broke out on the gold mines and led to a rebellion by the white miners in Johannesburg in protest against the gradual infiltration by the Blacks of skilled jobs, the Smuts Government was ruthless in crushing them. The lesson was driven home. The real issue at stake was the deeper problems of the relationship between white and black workers in the whole set-up. The ruling class had to stop at its very inception, the strike spreading to the exploited African worker who had nothing to lose but his chains and who would at once realise the efficacy of the strike weapon. It had to make it clear to the white workers, those who had the right to organise in trade unions, not to rock the boat. It had to make it clear above all else that the most holy of shrines, the temple to the worship of Mammon - the gold mines, was to be held inviolate. It had to make the white worker understand that he must regard himself first and foremost as a member of the white racial group and not as a member of that distinct and particular group, known as the working class. Once he accepted his place in the South African society he would be given a share of the profits obtained by the increased exploitation of the labour of the African worker. Therefore he must accept a certain amount of dilution in the sphere of skilled work, to maintain that delicate balance that affords the highest profits which incidentally secures him the high wage out of all proportion to his skills. In other words, the white worker was given a share in this super-exploitation. 'Long before Verwoerd came to South Africa, imperialism had mapped out a political and social order that would maintain and perpetuate the existing economic structure. Every herrenvolk government is charged with the duty of protecting the mining industry as the primary industry round which others revolve.'⁷⁹

In the milieu of South Africa, trade unionism could only be the instrument that the elite section of the working class, the white workers, could use profitably (within limits to be sure) for the black worker, voiceless, unrepresented in the institutions of the state as he is, and unrecognised as an employee, remains a helot and an outcast in his own country. The herrenvolk of South Africa have ringed him with so many laws that he is tied hand and foot to an industrial treadmill. No economic agency can free him from his plight nor even alleviate the heavy burden placed on his shoulders. 'The so-called trade union movement in South Africa is merely part of an intricate machinery for negotiation created by the bosses themselves for the control of the workers. The leadership cannot by any stretch of imagination be regarded as leaders of the working class. Its function is not only to deceive the workers into thinking that they have organisations to fight for their rights but to curb their militancy and direct it into harmless channels of negotiation.'⁸⁰

⁷⁶ *ibid*

⁷⁷ De Kiewiet, *A Political History Of South African Society, Social And Economic*

⁷⁸ *ibid*

⁷⁹ I.B. Tabata, *Presidential Address to APDUSA, 1962*

⁸⁰ *ibid*

World-War (1914-1919) and its aftermath accelerated the divisions within the economy not only between black and white but between the Whites themselves. Class divisions were breaking up tenuous bonds that held 'Het Volk' together - the common traditions of language, race and culture rooted in the land. Hard on the heels of the old trekboer with his wealth vested in land, cattle and rack-renting his land to the Blacks, came the bywoners (by-dwellers) loud claimants to part occupation of his vast acres. Sheila Patterson noted that in the Transvaal Republic, the Volksraad was debating the plight of the 'poor burgers who sat around the President's stoep clamouring for loans, donkeys and mealies.'⁸¹ Deneys Reitz wrote of them 'our commando has of late, mostly poor whites from the burger erven, the slum quarters of Pretoria, a poverty-stricken class that has drifted in from the country districts after the rinderpest epidemic of 1896 - these had become so debased by town life and had so little stomach for fighting that their presence amongst us was a source of weakness rather than strength.'

The growth of poor whiteism was the direct outcome of the Roman Dutch law of inheritance which prevailed in the Cape until 1894 and in the Orange Free State and Transvaal until after the Boer War. The law decreed that in the event of the owner's death the property had to be divided amongst all the heirs. Thus, over the years intense subdivision took place which led to increasing pauperisation, poor whiteism in with a consonant low moral fibre of this class. Do Kiewiet speaks of an heir inheriting 1/148,141 share of a farm of 2,527 morgen. He remarks that at the end of the Boer War at the time of the Treaty of Vereeniging (1902), there were already ten thousand poor whites.⁸²

'After World War I for two years there was a short period of great prosperity - high gold prices and a great demand for South African wool, wine etc. Gold and diamond mining showed an upward trend, agricultural exports were on the increase reaching in 1919-1920 twice the average figure of the pre-war period. But steeply rising prices profited a long chain of commission agents ... as well as big trading companies which had a monopolistic control over the produce of farms, the railways, granaries etc. The boom made farming dependent on finance capital.'⁸³ Agriculture was now drawn into the vortex of world-wide economy. The slump that came in 1921 found the farmers completely unprepared. Those who had mortgaged their land to the hilt to effect necessary improvements, buying machinery, fertilizers and had gone in for irrigation in a big way, were made bankrupt. In times of upheaval, land becomes the best investment. Industrialists increasingly invested their profits in buying up farms. Land now passed from the hands of the trekboers and the poor Whites into the possession of big land companies and land speculators who could stand up under the strains of deflation. The feudal economy of the trekboer was beginning to feel the impact of world-wide forces and had to submit to their dictates.

In 1924 the Carnegie Commission of Enquiry on the poor Whites estimated them to have reached alarming proportions almost .100,000, a sixth of the total white population and a third of the Boers. Within a single decade there was a mass exodus of poor Whites from the rural areas to the urban areas throughout the four provinces more especially from the Orange Free State, Transvaal, the Eastern Cape and Natal. Between 1891-1911 the white urban population had increased by more than 200 per cent. In 1911, the white urban population had reached 52 per cent of the white population, by 1931 their numbers had increased to 61 per cent and in 1951 had been estimated to be in the region of 78 per cent of the total white population. The tempo of urbanization and rural depopulation, more especially between the period 1921-1936, received a great spurt when capitalist investment in mining and manufacturing began to speed up the rate of economic development in industry leading to an increase in urban employment. During this period out of 104 magisterial districts of the Cape Province, no less than 61 showed an absolute decline in rural population. 'In the Free State 26 out of 33 districts, in Natal, 9 out of 33 and in Transvaal 7 out of 41 recorded absolute losses,'⁸⁴

In 1924 the Carnegie Commission spurred on by Hertzog devoted half a million pounds to the rehabilitation of the poor Whites. Special schools, hostels and rehabilitation centres were built for the schooling of their children and jobs were, found for them. It was during this period that the Broederbond was formed, the secret junta which, representing the petty bourgeois elements of the Afrikaners, (Boers) mainly predikants, Afrikaner intellectuals and teachers, sought to whip up the Yolk by a rabid exclusive nationalism with the aim of winning over the electorate. But it was on the poor white declassed elements that the Hertzog Government found its base. The brutal handling of the 1922 Rand Strike of the rebellious white miners and the wanton shooting of many white strikers lost the Smuts Government (representing the mine-owners) their return to power and a Pact Government consisting of the Nationalist Party under Hertzog and the Labour Party under Creswell took over the reins of power. The Labour Party representing the English-speaking section of white skilled labour held up as its policy the protection of white 'civilised' labour as against the black 'uncivilised'.

The events that led to the 1922 white Miners Strike presents a picture typical of the deformations within a society where at every level of the white world, the human needs and aspirations of the Blacks are consistently disregarded as if they do not exist. Ultra-left and ultra-right met at a point and formed an alliance. From the extreme left came the Communist Party of South Africa recently formed, with revolutionary slogans of 'Workers of the World, Unite' and from the right came the Nationalist Party under Hertzog and the Labour Party under Creswell with their so-called anti-imperialist slogans against international capital. Already even in the early stages of its life, the Communist Party showed its opportunism. It held the mistaken belief that the Nationalist Party under Hertzog was going to lead the black masses in an

⁸¹ S. Patterson, *The Last Trek*

⁸² De Kiewiet, *Political History Of South Africa, Social and Economic*

⁸³ Endre Sik, *The History of Black Africa*

⁸⁴ S.A Horwitz, *Political Economy of South Africa*

anti-imperialist struggle for self-determination. In this struggle white workers would play a leading role, Demagoguery and chauvinism reigned supreme in all these parties which had placed themselves at the head of the white miners' strike. The Communist Party had already been tainted by *herrenvolk* attitudes and yielding its little finger to chauvinism.

Creswell's role in the Pact Government (1924-1933) at a critical turn in the history of the labour movement in South Africa was to increase the split in the working class through legislation designed to separate the black worker from the white worker in every sphere of work - that of an agent of the ruling class. The unity of interests which cement working masses in a distinct and separate group in a struggle against their exploiters was wrecked from the start. Hertzog who knew nothing of the class structure, ignorant of the art of manipulating and directing labour into harmless and fruitless channels found in Creswell, a man highly skilled and practised in this art. Even in 1929, when at the next election Hertzog found himself with a clear majority and could very well do without the services of the Labour Party, he kept up this Nat-Labour alliance despite its falling fortunes in order to keep Creswell in his cabinet.

When the Pact Government came to power, it found that while the white urban population had doubled, **the** black urban population had more than trebled. In 1921, the Blacks already reached 587,000, 22% of the urban population. In 1936, it reached 114,228, 38%.⁸⁵ The former Smuts Government had already taken steps to stop the 'influx' by passing more and more amendments to the Urban Areas Act putting fresh curbs to the entry of Africans to towns. (Bantu Urban Areas Consolidation Act, 1923) and had already placed the Apprenticeship Act (1922) on the Statute Book. This Act prohibited the granting of apprenticeships to those sections of the population which did not enjoy compulsory education. Since all the sections of the Non-Whites, Africans, Coloured and Indian were excluded from this right, the Act virtually excluded them from any apprenticeship to skilled trades.

It was during the not so unholy alliance of Nationalist and Labour that the black man first understood that a new social and economic frontier was being erected against him. This frontier was not to be decided by the fortunes of war, nor by the superfluity of his presence but because of his absolute indispensability to the development of the whole country. Parliament which acts as the executive of the ruling classes, the mine-owner and the farmers fully understands the vulnerability of the economy where a whole white prosperous society rests on a black proletariat living in abject poverty.

The institutions of the Government were now used to close all avenues to the promotion and integration of the black worker in the industrial set-up along the familiar lines first enunciated by the mining industry and the farmers. There was to be no competition for this cheap labour between the mine-owners, farmers and industrialists, it being understood that the mines have priority amongst the employers of labour. It was the Pact Government that first viewed this problem with all seriousness, resting as it did on an unskilled poor white electorate. It passed a series of colour-bar labour laws against the black worker that has no equal in the civilised world. These later formed the basis of Verwoerd's Government to entrench its diabolical apartheid policy.

Hertzog's first move was to create a Department of Labour whose chief function was to establish areas of employment in which the unskilled Whites could be protected against competition from their black counterparts. Unskilled Whites now fell in the 'civilised' category and municipalities and other public bodies were compelled to employ them at 'civilised' rates of pay. By 1928, nearly sixteen thousand found jobs on the railways, roads, irrigation schemes at wages ranging from 3/- a day to 5/- with free housing. If this was the pay of the 'civilised' labour, what indeed was 'uncivilised' pay? The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 one of the most important acts passed during the Pact Government dealt chiefly with white labour and had as its primary aim the harnessing of the trade union movement to the machinery of the Government and the buying of industrial peace by incorporating the trade union leadership. In terms of the Act, it should be noted that the African was not to be regarded as a worker although by now a few African trade unions had been formed on the Rand but operated illegally. A companion Act to the Industrial Conciliation Act was the Wage Act promulgated at the same time to exercise control over the unskilled by means of a Wage Board composed of employers and Government officials whose job it was to fix wages throughout the country in every trade. Together the two Acts were formidable in their wide power. **Their** recommendations empowered the Minister of Labour to give the force of law to whatever standard of wages they proposed. It was an unwritten law that their recommendations must be based on the whole discriminatory policy and system of colour bars practiced by the Government under the all-embracing term of 'civilised' versus 'uncivilised', white versus black.

When the Mines and Work- Act of 1911 was declared ultra vires in 1923 in a court of law, the Pact Government in 1926 amended the law to reverse the court's decision and restore the colour bar clauses. Thereafter certificates for engine-driving, blasting etc. were denied to Africans. Another far-reaching piece of legislation was the Bantu Administration Act 38 of 1927, which brought the whole African population under Government control and management. By a curious anomaly the President of the White South African Republic becomes the supreme chief of the African peoples and gives him wide powers to rule all African areas - a very wide term - by proclamation. He is given the right to banish, deport and depose any African who disseminates certain doctrines'..., or 'utters any words or does anything with the intent to promote any feeling of hostility between natives and Europeans'. Between 1952 and 1964 for example, more than 130 Africans had been banished from their homes to distant places because they opposed the Bantu Authorities Act which sought to impose tribal institutions and tribal authorities on a people who had already out-grown the tribal system.⁸⁶ The Natives Taxation and Development

⁸⁵ *Union Statistics for 50 Years, 1960*

⁸⁶ Alex Hepple, *South Africa*

Act of 1925 removed all African taxation funds from the common treasury so that the African population had no right to obtain any aid for education, agricultural or social needs from the common pool. All social and human needs had to come out of their own slender resources instead of their impressive labour contributions to the accumulation of wealth in the whole society, which is reflected in taxable incomes. Indeed a Verwoerd could scarcely improve upon this massive onslaught on the rights of the African peoples as an integral part of the population of South Africa.

It is significant that it was an English-speaking member of Parliament, for Dundee, Natal, Sir Thomas Watt who gave his full blessing to Hertzog's oppressive policy in March, 1926. 'The white man, English as well as Dutch is determined to do all he can to remain and what is more, to rule. He hopes to get the sympathy and support of the mother country. If that is withheld he will not be deterred. To those who say that England cannot be a party to a great act of injustice, I would reply that this matter is, to us in South Africa such a vital fundamental matter, that no ethical considerations such as the rights of man and equal opportunities, for all Non-Europeans will be allowed to stand in the way. It is a question of self-preservation with us. We are now a self-governing nation with full power to manage our own affairs. Naturally, we recognise our duties and responsibilities to those under our control and also our position as part of the Empire.

We do not allow the natives to vote except in the Cape Province; we do not permit them to acquire land outside definite areas, or to get drink or to hold firearms or to visit labour centres looking for work without an official pass. Europeans in South Africa have a deep, instinctive and abiding feeling that, if they and their descendants are to remain there, they must not give full political and other rights to the blacks who outnumber them by four to one.'⁸⁷

Hertzog could count upon the support of the opposition. When he was returned to power for the second time in 1929, he enfranchised the white women to extend the White electorate. In this way he sought to nullify the importance of the Non-White vote in the Cape which held the balance when both the two white sections were almost equally divided. In furtherance of the policy of segregation to which all white parties subscribed, he drew up three bills:-

- (a) The abolition of the common roll and the exclusion of the Non-Whites in the Cape.
- (b) The establishment of a Native Representative Council as a sop to still the fears of the African who had lost the vote.
- (c) The pegging of African land ownership.

Dropping his alliance with the Labour Party, he made overtures to Smuts for a Fusion Government. This was to enable the bills to become law since they affected the entrenched clauses in the Act of Union which required a two-thirds majority vote in both houses. Hertzog offered Smuts the Deputy premiership and Fusion came into being in 1935, for one purpose only to deprive the Africans of the vote and ownership to the land. The subjugation was complete.

⁸⁷ Heaton Nicholls, *South Africa In My Time*

THE RULE OF CAPITAL

CHAPTER XIII

In spite of its highly developed gold and diamond mining industry and the phenomenal growth of industrial development, South Africa remains essentially an agricultural country. Its agriculture provides a large contribution to the national income. In 1911-12 this amounted to £23.1 million reaching in 1961-2₁ the sum of £268.5 million. The increase in value between 1911 and 1956 of arable products alone, had grown sixteen fold and in output, thirteen fold. In foreign exchange it comes second to mining and brought in 1961 the amount of £179.6 million.

Wool	109.3	million	
Hides and Skins	21.1	"	
Fruit	69.1	"	
Maize	38.1	"	
Fish	19.0	"	
Sugar	16.8	"	
Other Foodstuffs	78.4	"	
Beverages and Tobacco	7.4	"	
Total	359.2	"	= £ 179.6m

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Despite its massive contribution to the national income, agriculture's share in comparison with the other chief sectors of the economy, mining and industry₁ is steadily falling to third place, from 17.4% in 1911-12 to 10.8% in 1960-1. It is now being called the sick sector of society within this booming economy but this is a simplification. It is in fact the most complex sector, containing within it the greatest contradictions. It has been thrown into near chaos by the high protection afforded it and the disequilibrium of the market; it maintains the greatest gap between the rich and the poor and is the last stronghold of feudal servitudes and tyranny under a vicious apartheid regime.

Through historical conditions, landownership and the outmoded feudal subsistence production of the boers gave rise to a like backwardness of outlook and led to a malaise in agriculture, a symptom of which was the growing number of poor white farmers and sharecroppers. (bywoners). In 1913, at the first census after Union, rural white numbered 660,000, mainly boers who were in occupation of 123 million morgen.⁸⁹ From the beginning, imperialist policy was to sort the tares from the wheat and to allow for the emergence of a class of rich boer farmers who would bolster up the Botha and Smuts regimes and lead the boers through self-interest into the new exploitive system and blunt the edge of this stubborn and highly individualistic national group. The only way was to foster new techniques in farming and the application of new scientific methods, in short the land had to produce for a market economy. Agriculture, under the new regimes, had to receive vitalising injections to be able to support the new urban populations arising out of the development of the mining industry and manufacture, wholly alienated from the land.

Of overriding importance to each successive government was to keep the boers in possession of the land and to protect their heritage against outside pressures of whatever nature. This attitude arose out of political considerations rather than economic and because the ruling class had to deal with a backward community, has led inevitably to an extension of authoritarian measures and increasing control by that class which benefited the most - the rich landowner farmer whose interests the government of the country represented. According to Frankel, 'From 1910 to March 1936, the State spent over £71 million from loan funds, and over £41 million from revenue for agriculture were made available from mining revenue. Of the total expenditure from loan funds amounting to over £71 million since Union, nearly £20 million (a large part of which was spent on irrigation) has had to be written off or classified as non-recoverable. Further assistance to farmers, farmers' relief measures and relief of distress account for another £20 million expenditure from loan funds.'⁹⁰

Farming in South Africa is generally regarded as difficult and full of risks owing to irregular rainfall, lack of phosphates in the soil and lack of rivers especially navigable ones and overabundance of insect pests. Arable area accounts for only 15% of which 6% intensively cultivated and commercialised, but livestock farming is the mainstay of the country. Torrential summer rains over the greater part, run over the hard-baked soil, dry for more than half the year, causing erosion and increasing drought conditions exacerbated by bad farming methods, overstocking, ruination of marginal lands and little knowledge and practice of scientific farming. But the farming community though composed of disparate elements, widely unequal in wealth and property, nevertheless constitutes the greater part of the white electorate and had to be protected by the state. 'With the exception of wool, every important agricultural commodity is dependent on an artificial internal price structure or some other form of protection'. There has grown up a whole system of tariffs, subsidies, quotas, price regulations, marketing schemes and control boards. According to Mr. Tommie Toer, vice-president of the Midlands Agricultural Union R76 million was spent on subsidising farmers in 1968.⁹¹ The railway system was devised to

⁸⁸ Quarterly Bulletin Of Statistics, *March 1963*

⁸⁹ *ibid*

⁹⁰ S.H. Frankel, *Investment In South Africa*

⁹¹ Rand Daily Mail, 19 March 1969

conform to the demands of agriculture, especially export products which are subsidised by an artificially low transport charge. From 1930-34 taxed incomes from farming were actually less than cost of artificial measures incurred by the central Government. In 1933-4 farming incomes subject to tax were only 1.6% of total taxed income. Low contributions made by agriculture are due both to special exemptions under the Income Tax Acts and the low net income obtained from agricultural operations.⁹² Agriculture lay like a huge sucking insect on the revenues obtained from the mining industry. To-day it has spread its tentacles and has now fastened itself on the body of the whole society by methods all designed to afford protection in a world where the mechanisms of a market economy rule supreme above all political considerations.

Franklin's (*Economics in South Africa*) has a belief that 'Agricultural policy, if it is to promote welfare, must aim to do three things:

- (a) To provide food abundantly and cheaply,
- (b) to conserve the soil and moisture reserves on the country and,
- (c) to ensure a reasonable living on the land for all those whose labour is needed to produce food and agricultural raw materials which can be produced in the country more economically than they can be imported. Those who complain that hitherto the Government has given more attention to the problems of maintaining the incomes of farmers than to the problem of ensuring a cheap and abundant supply of food or of conserving the fertility of the soil'⁹³

But he fails to understand that in order to challenge foreign finance capital, the Afrikaner landowner class had to find his accumulation of capital by the only means he had in his possession - the land.

Professor C.S. Richards in an article called 'Subsidies, Quotas, Tariffs and the Excess Costs of Agriculture', (*S.A. Journal of Economics*, 1935) states: 'It is doubtful whether any industry in this country has been assisted by government more than agriculture. By subsidies and protective duties, assistance both direct and indirect, the State has endeavoured to promote its wellbeing and prosperity. The time for an impartial survey of the whole agricultural position is long overdue. It would be interesting exactly how much agriculture is costing this country and how far this expenditure has been justified by results. ...' Assistance to farmers takes the form of both permanent and temporary measures. From the time of Union to 1933, 89 Acts of Parliament were passed dealing with permanent capital improvements, irrigation, short-term and long-term loans, credit facilities, establishment of a land bank, etc.⁹⁴ but it is with the temporary measures that Richards deals exhaustively. 'The special or temporary measures have been actuated with one object, namely, to interfere with the normal operation of the forces of supply and demand to raise prices and to endeavour to assure to the agricultural community a higher proportion of the national dividend than what competition would grant them'.⁹⁵ This is one of the contributory causes of the crisis in agriculture.

Owing to this protection policy, vital items of food, chief of which are maize, wheat, sugar, butter, cheese, meat, fruit, all receive export subsidies, have advances written off by the Government and are sold at a loss on the world market. What is most reprehensible is that these losses have to be borne by the consumers at home where the domestic price is raised to over the export losses, a decision arrived at by the big monopoly producers who are represented in force on the various control boards. '... it falls most heavily on those sections of the population which are relatively the greatest consumers of these products, sugar, butter, maize and wheat etc. namely the poorer sections of the European population (especially the unskilled) and particularly does it fall with its fullest effect on that silent section of the community without whose co-operation neither agricultural nor mineral wealth could be exploited, the Non-Europeans. The coloured community and the urbanised natives, drawn into the industrial machine are obviously most adversely affected - but voiceless and unrepresented their position and claims are constantly ignored. In his In his work-out of the excess .costs to the population for a single year, 1933, Professor Richards has been able to expose the enormous weight of the burden that falls on those sections of the population - the unskilled of all races. Taking only maize as an example of this bare-faced robbery he comes to the following conclusions:

COMMODITY	S.A. PRODUCTION	EXPORTATION	INTERNAL CONSUMPTION	PRICES
Maize	Lbs 840,500,000	Amount lbs 341,919,854 Value £333,087	lbs 406,912,296	S.A ... World 9/- La Plata Maize 7/5 London Exchange per 200 kb bag
SUBSIDY FOR EXPORT	GOVT. CONTRI- BUTION TO CONTROL BOARDS	EXCESS COSTS TO S.A. CONSUMER	LOSS ON EXPORT	REMARKS
£43,000	£560,000	£102,000	£214,000	Total award to farmers: £919,000 in 1933 on maize alone. (Import restrictions omitted)

⁹² Frankel. *Investment In South Africa*

⁹³ Franklin, *Economics In South Africa*

⁹⁴ Frankel. *Investment In South Africa*

⁹⁵ Prof. C.S Richards, *South African Journal Of Economics*, 1937

In a summary of the total excess costs on all the export commodities, Professor Richards arrives at a figure of nearly £7½ million for 1933. As he states:

- (a) The higher domestic price charges to the consumer than the selling price abroad represents a transfer from the consumers to the producers, to the farming community, for the purpose of subsidising relative agricultural inefficiency whether of labour, or of land or both.
- (b) The export subsidy payable from Government funds is another transfer from the taxpayers to agricultural producers.
- (c) The loss on export is a clear national loss making an annual gift to other countries. It is a transfer from South African consumers via the farmers to consumers in other countries.⁹⁶

In 'New Despotism in Agriculture' Professor Richards shows how the Marketing Bill (now Act) under which control boards are established over every export commodity are composed of producers who can assume arbitrary powers, fix prices and establish virtual control over the export sale. At home 'Prices are fixed so high so as to induce a large increase in production which ultimately leads to stocks piling up and makes it impossible to maintain the price'.

What Professor Richards feared in 1933 has now come to pass. The size of the maize crop reached in 1961-2 was 53 million bags (200 lbs per bag) export has reached 18 million bags with a total loss of R10,406,000 for that year. Domestic price rose from 9/- in 1933 to R3.05 per bag in 1960-1 and there is now a move to increase the domestic price. According to a report the Congress of the South African Mealie Producers Institute (SAMPI) (Rand Daily Mail of 12th February 1970) is asking that the price of mealies per bag should be increased to R4.05.

The dilemma to-day is South Africa is that farmers are resorting to increased production on less productive lands knowing that prices are based on the highest cost of production and that they stand to make super profits on the more fertile soil.

The result of this increasing anarchy is that economists and agronomists view with unconcealed horror the increase in erosion. According to Professor Davis (University of Natal) more than 400 million tons of valuable top-soil were eroded annually ... that South Africa's rivers were no longer rivers, but storm-water drains and that the Great Tugela River was also reaching this (stage). 'By 2030, a third of South Africa would be covered by true desert'. Referring to cases of 'economic greed' in the sugar belt, he warned that river banks were being destroyed by being used as additional land for sugar. (Rand Daily Mail, 19th March, 1969).

On the following day, the South African Agricultural Union demanded immediate aid from the Government to farmers whose crops and pastures have been destroyed by the prevailing drought which has been continuing this year, 'Without aid, hundreds of farmers who have lost millions of rands in fertilizer, fuel, seed and in labour this year will be unable to plant for 1969-70 season ... the drought has cut mealie production to eight bags a morgen, the lowest figure for many years....'

But these bare facts give little of the extent and depth of the organic changes taking place in regard to the land and agriculture and the rural populations. In truth, a silent revolution is taking place in the countryside since 1911. Capitalist farming for commercial production is rapidly making strides and ousting landowners and is, albeit slowly, breaking down all forms of patriarchy, creating new classes and new social relationships. One of the major triumphs of the capitalist mode of production in farming is that it loosens the grip of the two backward classes - the landowner and the small proprietor who hamper its development and brings for the first time land into the arena of the market economy to be fully exploited. The entry of capitalist economy in agriculture presages a new era and transforms production through the application of scientific methods through understanding of agronomy and machinery into a social mode of production in contrast to its former individual production. Large-scale production based on social modes by means of division of labour and capital resources conquers the last stronghold of feudal economy. But this transformation can only be brought about by putting an end to servitudes, petty production and feudal trash.

The limitation of land area constitutes a natural monopoly, however, unlike the other means of production, labour and capital. It is even more so, when land remains private property. When put to use, the land-owner is able to claim ground rent over and above interest on capital investment in the land. It is this monopoly as well as his claim to ground rent which acts as a double brake on the complete and full flowering of agriculture. The land monopolist is in a position to blackmail society, increase his rentals, raise the value of his land without lifting a finger to its improvement. While the capitalist exacts from society complete freedom over his capital as well as over the soul and body of the worker, he is unwilling to release land from the stranglehold of the land monopolist. He is too cowardly to fight for the need to nationalise the land. This has become his achilles heel. In ruining the small farmer, driving the costs of food too high for the worker alienated from the land he creates untold tensions in the society and brings about conditions for an overturn. What is now taking place in South Africa bears eloquent testimony to the revolutionary effects of the penetration of capital into this sector as the following statistics prove:

⁹⁶ *ibid*

Province	Value per Morgen 1950-51	Area Morgen Held	Value per Morgen 1951-52	Area Morgen Held	Value per Morgen 1952-53	Area Morgen Held	Value per Morgen 1953-54	Area Morgen Held
Cape Province	£4.31	4839	£4.36	5104	£5.21	3565	£5.57	4808
Natal	£11.03	378	£12.38	430	£15.48	331	£15.90	273
Transvaal	£10.88	1148	£17.81	473	£11.92	1216	£13.50	1231
Orange Free State	£9.59	926	£11.59	995	£11.55	992	£13.72	945

Year Books

Taking the year 1950 as a starting point and the Orange Free State as an example of the chief wheat and maize growing area, land values jumped from £9.59 per morgen in 1950 to £13.72, an increase of more than 50% within the space of four years. During this period maize production rose from 7.6 bags per morgen to 8.7 bags. The domestic value of crops and animal products during the period 1950-54 rose by 36% showing a direct relationship between the increase in prices and the inflation of land values. By 1958 the basic domestic selling price was fixed at 23.05 per bag by the board and the price paid to the producers R2.95. In the Orange Free State alone the total value of the inflation during the four years amounted to more than £7- million. This £7¼ million was appropriated by the landowner class as capitalised ground rent due to the land monopoly over and above the profits in the higher selling price of staple foods. Capital that should have been employed to promote agriculture and to produce cheaper food was devoted to acquiring land at inflated prices to line the pockets of monopolists and speculators.

Leo Marquard (Peoples and Policies of South Africa) quotes from the Afrikaner press to show how farmers evade super tax by buying up land at exorbitant prices. A leading article in *Die Burger* (1951) explained how this was done. A farmer with a £20,000 wool cheque might have to pay £11,000 in supertax. To avoid this he buys a farm worth £15,000 for £20,000 on condition that the first three payments would be regarded as rent and thus deductible for tax purposes. The result of this was not only loss of revenue to the state but it meant that farms went out of production and that the price of land became artificially inflated.

One of the chief manifestations of capitalisation of agriculture is the exodus of the bywoner class and the subsistence small farmer. Between 1946 and 1951 the number of bywoners had declined from 9,335 to 332, for gradually they had found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Their share of crops had fallen from two-thirds to a half leading to pauperisation until finally they were driven out of production. Patriarchy and antiquated modes of production ended in a whimper. Sentiment found no place under the shock of the new irreconcilable economic for. An Afrikaner paper 'Die Transvaler' said in 1951, 'The depopulation of the platteland carries with it the danger of an Afrikaans proletariat. When the dispossessed Afrikaner in the town begins to hate the handful of rich plattelanders with their extensive possessions in a way which the Communists could exploit and encourage, it will mean the end of the organic unity of the Afrikaner people.'⁹⁷ (The myth of organic unity had long been exploded by the rule of capital and the growth of class divisions as a close look of the statistics given below will reveal:

CENSUS:	1952-3	1953-4	1957	
Morgen	No. of Farms	No. of Farms	No. of Farms	Size Morgen 1957
1 - 100	35,982	35,873	28,854	790
10 - 500	38,358	35,892	24,934	5,852
501 - 1000	20,349	19,340	24,081	15,135
1001 - 1500	8,245	8,022	8,127	9,657
Total	102,934 = 86% of total	99,127 = 5.8% of total	85,996 = 85% of total	31,434
1501 - 2000	4,439	4,392	4,092	6,963
2001 - 3000	4,471	4,420	4,671	11,050
3001 - 4000	2,388	2,382	2,572	8,659
4001 - 5000	1,355	1,448	1,524	6,653
Total	12,653 = 10%	12,642 = 10%	12,859 = 13%	33,315
5001 - 7500	1,703	1,782	2,039	12,213
7500 - 10000	838	827	884	7,555
10000 - 15000	537	557	696	8,235

⁹⁷ S. Paterson *The Last Trek*.

Over	15000	299	314	415	9,874
Total		3,377 = 2.8%	3,480 = 2.8%	4,034 = 2%	37,877
Total		118,964	115,249	10,889	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>No areas given. No areas given Undivided farms excluded. Census 52, 53, 57</i></p>					

It must be noted that the statistics provided only the number of farms according to area but do not give figures showing production, amount of mechanisation and fertilizer used, i.e. the role of capitalisation. Division according to area does not give a true picture and glosses over the real state of affairs - the gradual ruination and poverty of existence of the small farmer without capital. A farm may be small according to area but due to intensive cultivation and high capitalisation may yield as much as a large farm. Nevertheless despite the inadequacy of statistics one may draw certain conclusions.

- (a) A wide class differentiation is taking place. A study of the 1952-3 census reveals the fact that the majority of farms, 102934 i.e. 86% fall in the category of those under 1,500 morgen, while 836 farms have an area ranging from 10,000 - 15,000 morgen and over.
- (b) The 1953-4 census shows a definite trend, a decrease in the number of small farms and an increase in the very large farms,
- (c) During the five years 1952-7 there is a tremendous loss of more than 16% - 16,938 in number of small farms under 1,500 morgen. The small farm is being ousted from production.
- (d) The 1957 provides not only the categories but also the total area of each group. Thus the area of all the farms under 1,500 morgen, i.e. 86% is much less than either the 13% of those under 5,000 morgen or the 2% in the range of 57001 - over 15,000 morgen. To put it another way 4034 farms in the large category cover more morgen in extent than 85,996 farms in the first category. A new class of farmers, speculators, land barons, commonly referred to in the Afrikaner press as 'Morgenheimers' (a pun on Oppenheimer) are rearing their heads out of the morass of ruination taking place.

A feature of this capitalisation and rise of a monopoly class is the growth of absentee landlordism. In a report Dr. C. Neethling, head of the Department of Economics and Markets according to *Die Burger*, (23rd June, 1959), stated that 5,419 farms in Natal and 2,074 in the Orange Free State were occupied by non-Whites showing the extent of absentee landlordism⁹⁸.

A letter in the Afrikaner paper *Die Volkskas* (1952) gives more instances. 'In the Orange Free State, there is one district where 57 farms are managed and controlled by natives. The owners will not give fellow-Afrikaners an opportunity or, if they do, the conditions are often so severe that only a native can endure them (S. Paterson). A Dutch Reformed Church estimate states that absentee landlordism in some cases reached 30 - 40% in areas where the farm is run by managers with a force of African labourers. 'Of the 104,000 farms including undivided farms in 1958, 75% were farmed by the owner, 3% by managers and the remainder rented or share cropped or operated in some other ways⁹⁹.

During the following two decades since 1950 when fears were first expressed about the disappearance of the small farmer and the coming to an end of yet 'another traditional way of South African life,' the inroads of finance capital into this sector have been tremendous. Agricultural bodies which formerly concerned themselves exclusively with getting cheaper and cheaper black labour now make a loud outcry that the 'invasion by powerful moguls of finance and industry will have a disastrous effect on established traditional farmers. Many individual farmers would face ruin because the giant financial concerns were able to pour so much money into their operations and farm on such a colossal scale..... In effect it is like a huge foreign population swarming into the country and overwhelming the established population.'¹⁰⁰ The Congress of the Transvaal Agricultural Union expresses great concern 'at the increasing influence of big money in farming since this is considered a safe investment.' The South African Maize Producers (SAMPI) urged the Government to take steps to protect the smaller and medium farmers from the invasion of financial interests in farming. For the small man agriculture is today a business with many risks. The risk is not so great for the financially rich companies which are investing money drawn from outside the agricultural industry. This capital is often gathered under special arrangements with the state to protect existing industries and encourage new industries., 'What has happened in poultry and egg production could spread to other branches of farming. It is well known that these so-called outside groups were planning to go in for cattle and crop farming activities on a vast scale.'¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ L. Marquard, *Peoples and Policies. 1951*

⁹⁹ H. Houghton. *South African Economy*

¹⁰⁰ Sunday Times of S.A. 06/07/1969

¹⁰¹ *ibid*

The tale goes on. To these complaints Dr. Du Plessey, advisor to the Government made reply saying that the Government could not tell a farmer or a company what they should do on their own property. He however urged those in the mealie belt, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State to devote more time and capital to cattle farming instead of maize production. There were many districts in the mealie belt where mealies should never have been planted but farmers were expanding every year. Between 1951 and 1960, 932,000 morgen more had been planted with mealies and between 1961 and 1968, 1,571,000 morgen more. With capitalisation comes increasing application of scientific methods and mechanisation. Taking the period from 1937 to 1955, motor lorries increased from over 8 thousand to over 52 thousand, tractors from over 6 thousand to over 87 thousand power-driven threshing machines from over 3½ thousand to nearly 15 thousand.¹⁰² Farmers are using eight million rand more fertiliser than three years ago and the value of machinery, tractors etc, had gone up by R63.8 million in this period.¹⁰³

Big farming pays as the following statistics of scale will show, taking only two examples:

ECONOMIES OF SCALE IN AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

A. PINEAPPLES, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, 1959

Tons sold per annum	No of farms	Operator's earnings p.a.
99 or less	29	R 456 (loss)
100 - 499	30	43
500 or more	10	2,632

B. MILK, NATAL, 1947-8

Gallons of milk sold	No of farms	Operator's earnings p.a.
17,500 or less	20	R 22
17,501 - 25,000	19	314
Above 25,000	25	962

Union Statistics for 50 Years

But at the same time as this penetration is taking place, on the other side of the scale, the small and medium farmer is getting more and more in debt. According to De Villiers Graaf, 'More than 62% of the farmers were in debt and about 40% of the land was under mortgage debt'.¹⁰⁴ In order to call a halt to this increasing pauperisation the Government promulgated the Agricultural Credit Act, No, 28, 1966. This Act repeals no less than 35 Acts of Parliament passed since 1924. The aim of the legislation is to create finance facilities for the category of farmers who are no longer considered credit-worthy by financial concerns. What is interesting in this article is that for the first time it is known that the State Advance Recoveries Office is already handling approximately 49,000 different accounts and that the Department of Lands has financed 8,000 tenant farmers.¹⁰⁵ It appears however that the traditional farmer will find the noose of increasing indebtedness growing ever tighter round his neck. But it will be the state who will benefit. His future is doomed. The pre-requisites for the capitalist mode of production is in the last stages of completion. The decks have now been cleared:

1. The actual tillers of the soil are wage labourers employed by a capitalist farmer who is engaged in a field of exploitation and expects a return on his investment.
2. The capitalist pays the landowner a sum of money at definite periods for the right to invest his capital in this specific mode of production. This sum of money is called ground rent. Ground rent is that form in which property in land is realised economically, i.e. produces value.
3. Here we have all three classes - Wage labourers, Industrial capitalist and Landowners, constituting together in their mutual opposition, the framework of modern society. (Karl Marx).

¹⁰² Union Statistics for 50 years

¹⁰³ Rand Daily Mail. 12/2/1970.

¹⁰⁴ Rand Daily Mail. 27/09/1968

¹⁰⁵ Farmers Weekly. 12/04/1967

THE 1936 SLAVE ACTS

CHAPTER XIV

Hertzog did not underrate the importance of his move to expunge the African voters from the common roll. If he succeeded in this, he would have established Afrikanerdom well on the road to complete political hegemony as well as close the door to what must inevitably develop - the growing demand on the part of the whole Non-white population throughout South Africa for the extension of the vote which in time must lead to the granting of the full franchise. In his first policy statement (1924) at Smithfield, Free State, after winning the elections, he made no bones about his determination to settle the 'Native Question' - the major political thorn being the African vote in the Cape. However economic questions demanded his immediate attention and hence came a spate of labour legislation against the Non-white working class.

The tactics he employed to fulfil his life's ambition revealed him as a fanatical and devious politician. From the beginning a huge conspiracy was mounted against the African people in the form of a Select Committee whose sole task was to prepare the ground for the assault, gathering material and taking evidence from individuals in regard to the African vote and the land question. These two questions were linked together as an inseparable whole. Cutting across party affiliations, he called a joint sitting of both Houses in 1929, on the eve of the next general elections and laid before them a new set of Native Bills. During the debate, he and Smuts found a formula which later led to the Fusion Government, 'That as long as the Natives got their rights (which?) it was not essential that they should continue to share the ballot box.' Hertzog won the elections on the basis of what they called the 'Kafir Manifesto', warning the white electorate of the dire danger of the black vote. When the House met in 1930, the two avowed enemies Smuts and Hertzog, agreed that the Bills be re-introduced without debate at the first reading, then taken to the Select Committee before the second reading. The original Select Committee then took over again, scheming and plotting for five years more from 1930 - 1935 to ensure the success of the Bills. Each member was sworn to secrecy and all precautions taken to draw a veil of concealment over every move.¹⁰⁶ It was part of the plot not to alert the Africans in good time to make it possible for the leadership to rally the whole population in opposition to the Bills or arouse the liberals, the mentors of the black educated section in the various joint race-relations committees to give weight to any opposition that may arise.

Fusion came into being in 1935 for the sole purpose of providing the necessary two-thirds majority to enable the Bills to become law. It was in September of that very year that the African people suffered a severe traumatic shock when Hertzog called five regional conferences throughout the length and breadth of the country, Maritzburg, Pretoria, Mafeking, Kingwilliamstown and Umtata, chief towns in the various provinces where the Bills would be read to the representatives of the people in each province, chiefs, headmen, religious and political leaders. The common method was to designate repressive legislation in terms opposite to their real meaning, for example, the Native Representation Bill in reality robbed the African males in the Cape of their vote on the Common roll and threw them out of the body politic.

Instead the Government created a Native Representative Council, an inferior and dummy body, with a white chairman and a hierarchy of white officials which at the same time was to be an electioneering body for the election of three white representatives to the Assembly and another three to the Senate to act on behalf of the Blacks; also a Land and Trust Bill which abolished the right of the Africans to buy land anywhere in the Union except in the already overcrowded reserves and established a Native Trust which was to acquire 7¼ million morgen out of the moneys provided from time to time by Parliament. Up to today, 34 years after the Act was passed, this amount of land has never been bought and the 10 million pounds never been allocated. The third Bill, the Amendment to the Urban Areas Act set a further limit to the entry of Africans to the towns and robbed them of the right to sell their labour to the highest bidder.¹⁰⁷ This was a corollary to the other two and was designed to subject labour to further regimentation, for without the vote or land or freedom of movement the African worker would be completely at the mercy of the employers and the farmers.

Those summoned to attend the conferences were said to have represented 1½ million people. This was to be the first time that the people were ever called together, ironically enough, to see themselves beheaded. It was to be the last. But it was vital to the success of Hertzog's plan. As he said in Parliament, without the full co-operation of the African people, the Bills, even if they were to become law, would be as dead as if they had never been passed. He found little co-operation but instead a great deal of opposition. Recovering from the shock, the people had been aroused as never before. Even the chiefs, paid stooges of the Government, felt the pressure of the seething anger of the people and went so far as to question the arrogant Government officials closely as to the situation and extent of the land promised them further demanded to see Government maps and declared that the land promised them, the 7¼ million morgen, was already in occupation by the people. Some of the excerpts from the five conferences, though put in diplomatic language, reveal a bitter disillusionment. Here the influence of the liberals over the leadership is clearly palpable.

"The abolition of our franchise will be a signal for political declassing or degrading of the Bantu race as a

¹⁰⁶. Heaton Nicholls. *South Africa In My Time*.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*

whole into a sort of semi-slave or helot group of the South African population. From every conceivable point of view, this is not a step forward, but a step backward towards primitive stagnation' (King Williamstown.)

'This conference further appreciates the Government's proposal to fulfil the promise of allocating additional land for Native occupation as proposed in the Land Bill, A promise was made to the Natives at the passing of the 1913 Act and therefore is long overdue. Such proposed additional land however ..., is still inadequate and could be augmented by the releasing of more morgenage in these territories.' (Transkei)

'This conference welcomes the proposal for the establishment of the Native Representative Council ... provided, however, that the establishment of this body shall in no way interfere with the Native franchise rights.' {Transkei, Mafeking, King Williamstown)

'The conference considers that instead of the abolition of the existing Cape Native vote, the time has come when full citizen rights shall be extended to the African people of the other provinces of the Union.' (Mafeking)¹⁰⁸

The attack on the three most important sectors of the African population simultaneously, the vocal section of African voter, the landless peasantry with fraudulent promises of land and the fresh restrictions on the labouring classes shook the whole population and brought them together in one concerted outcry.

Retracing the history of that period, the resolutions taken at the five conferences called by the Government reveal how far indeed the Africans had progressed and become an integral part of the body politic. Already in 1935, the mass of the people had turned their backs on tribalism and were facing in a different direction, first by compulsion, for the British had to destroy the rallying points of resistance - chieftainship, and then by choice, as the new capitalist system showed its advantages both materially and intellectually. Here the role of the missionaries and the political wing of imperialism, the Liberals, played a not unimportant part.

The birth of the African National Congress (A.N.C.) in 1912 as a result of the crisis caused by the 1913 Land Act was due to the growing political awareness of the people. Owing to the dominating influence of liberal ideas, however, the methods it employed to the middle of the 20th Century, were class conciliatory, limited to respectful pleas and petitions to the great white mother, Queen Victoria or later to the Great White Father - General Hertzog or Smuts as the case may be. This was the age of trusteeship when the blacks, accepted the position of inferiority.

With the birth in 1919 and the meteoric rise of the Industrial and Commercial Union under the leadership of Kadalie, a Nyasaland worker with some education and a striking figure with hetronic ability, a new element was introduced in the slow progress of the society which still had its being in the land. The I.C.U. used the strike weapon to obtain wage increases, spoke about class solidarity, criticised ruling-class methods and brought about a militancy first amongst the dock-workers. It was singularly free from racialism and the Coloured and African dockworkers stood together against intimidation of the police. Its influence spread to all the seaports in South Africa until even the peasants rallied to it, believing that this was the organization which would bring thorn freedom. Kadalie welcomed them all. His wish to seek affiliation with international trade union bodies had the effect of slowly strangulating the body and brought about its demise. Knowing little of social democracy and its role in the bourgeois state, he was persuaded to hand over the I.C.U. to Ballinger, a British trade unionist for the purpose of re-organising it. Ballinger was going to purify it, limit it to economic demands and in fact killed the spirit that gave it life and vigour. It is now generally acknowledged that the I.C.U. would not have stood the test of time and was bound to fail for it was neither fish nor fowl, neither a trade union nor a political body.

Hertzog's adamant refusal to postpone the Bills from becoming law forced the African leadership to issue a call to all organizations of which there were now many, due to the complexity of economic life, and the many sided development of political and social interests, to meet in a convention to decide what action the nation should take in view of this grave threat to their future status in their land. Little did they know that history was in the making that momentous day in Bloemfontein, December 1935, when the Community Hall in the location came alive with all shades of opinions, not only from the staid platform where the liberals sat, but from the soap boxes outside the Hall where the rightwing elements - the wait-and-see fraternity vied with a Marxist group from Cape Town which advocated boycott of all the elections under the bill.

The calling of the federal body representing all sections of the community was a great achievement which cut across narrow party loyalties. Up to today it has remained the great watershed in the history of the maturation of the African oppressed. The compromise of the following year hatched between the African National Congress. and Hertzog to work the election machine to the Native Representative Council, the Assembly and the Senate was in fact not a compromise but a betrayal. This was inevitable when viewed from the point of view of the history of the A.N.C., its acceptance of inferiority and its subservience to the liberals. The desertion of the A.N.C. branches and the Communist Party in 1941 from the Convention to man the apartheid organs of the government did not break Convention as it was intended to do. Instead a new Convention rose from the ashes of the old, to rebuild the

¹⁰⁸ D.D.T. Jabavu . *Native Views On Native Bills*

organisation and turn it into a new direction.

For the next decade two distinct irreconcilable political streams emerged, the road of collaboration of the African National Congress and the Communist Party and the new road of Convention which now openly began to advocate the boycott of and non-collaboration with the instruments of oppression.

The role that the white liberals played in Parliament as Native Representatives can be understood only in the context of their connections with the financial bourgeois for whom they acted as spokesmen. Always outvoted, scorned by the nationalists, subjected to cheap jibes (Kafferboeties) and unmannerly heckling in Parliament, they lead a dog's life. Nevertheless they could not relinquish their job which was to maintain the illusion in the minds of the Africans that they, the liberals were their true leaders and dedicated to their upliftment. But in truth their mission was to hold back the militancy and the just wrath of the people against the mounting oppression. They had to throw oil upon the troubled waters, conciliate the oppressed to their lot so as to keep the system safe for capital investment.

Even in 1913, seven long years after the Land Act had been passed, knowing all too well that it was never the intention of the Hertzog Government, nor ever the intention of any government to provide land for African settlement, Edgar Brookes, the liberal, made play with the illusion that Hertzog had been serious in his promise and had meant to keep the promise he made in 1936. 'We are now establishing a trust, and allow me to tell you that in the interest of the Natives as well as in the interests of the Europeans, we are going to be liberal towards the Natives in the future. We can be so because the danger in connection with the franchise has been removed.'¹⁰⁹ and which was repeated later to the effect:- 'The government wishes once more to give the assurance that it is their earnest desire to see that the obligations towards the Natives of the Union arising out of this Bill in conjunction with the representatives of the Natives Act passed by the joint sitting of the two Houses shall be faithfully carried out and trust that this statement will be regarded as sufficient guarantee of the same.'¹¹⁰

To these promises the All-African Convention (Western Province Committee) replied sharply in its monthly bulletin (1945). 'Of all frauds of the rulers in South Africa, the Land Act of 1936 is the greatest. The people were hungry and starving for land and the promise of land was too great a temptation for them. They fell for the bait to the extent of giving up their franchise without a struggle. It was the definiteness and the solemnity of Hertzog's assurances of the millions of morgen of land that were to be given that gave him the victory over the African. And what was the bait: The bait was exactly the same amount of land which the commission had awarded in 1913 for African occupation, i.e. 7¼ million morgen.

When one of Smut's ministers said in reply to Brookes, 'I do not think that when the Native Laws were passed the intention was that land should be acquired in order to provide accommodation for these squatters. But then the question may be asked What must become of them? Let me say immediately that there is lots of room for these people on the farms. There is a serious shortage of labour on the farms and if they would go to the farms they would get enough work there' The Minister of Native Affairs, Van der Zyl himself, with a studied economy of words bluntly stated., 'We do not buy this land for the Natives to settle down and become a peasant. We buy it for the Natives to plough while they go out and work.' Indeed what could have been clearer.'¹¹¹

During this whole period, a spurious activity was whipped up with the help of the imperialist press and Communist organs round the elections under the Native Representation Act. Bungas and Advisory Boards (local apartheid bodies in rural and urban locations) were given blood transfusions by these collaborators in the A.N.C. The energy and vitality of the masses was directed into working the government machinery. The end of the Second World War in 1945 brought about a general rise in the militancy and temper of the population. Thousands of Non-whites had fought and died in a war in which they had no stake. The Native Representative Council (N.R.C.), aware of this, resorted to more fiery wordy battles with the government. Finally in 1946, when the African mine-workers spontaneously went on strike and were shot down in cold blood, the people showed their utter rejection of the N.R.C. and boycotted the elections. Faced with this boycott, the opportunist A.N.C. / C.P. came out with the slogan 'Return the boycott candidates.' Against this background, the N.R.C. was forced to adjourn itself sine die until Verwoerd in 1948 brushed it aside as irrelevant.

¹⁰⁹ Hansard 1936. *Hertzog Speeches*

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹¹ Senate Debates, 1943. (Goolam Gool. *Land and National Oppression*)

THE NEW ROAD

CHAPTER XV

The period from 1936 to 1948 was one of the most fruitful periods in the history of the liberatory movement. The ideas of Convention which gained ground are best expressed in the statement 'The New Road'

'The New Road means firstly, that we completely reject every form of segregation. Thus we reject the Hertzog Smuts Acts. We reject the Land Act. We reject the Representation Act as well as all the Pass Laws and all legislation based on colour-bar discrimination. We can no longer be a party to our own oppression. Therefore there can be no collaboration between ourselves and the oppressors. And consequently, the Convention calls upon the members of the Representative Council to resign collectively from this instrument of deception. They must side either with the people, or with the oppressors against the people. Secondly, the New Road means that we can no longer tolerate leaders who cringe and compromise and who climb into position on the backs of the people. Thirdly, the New Road means that we realise that the other sections of the Non-Europeans suffer from the same forces of oppression.... only through unity of all the sections of the Non-Europeans, Africans, Coloured and Indian can we successfully face the oppressor.... defend ourselves against further attacks..., but also fight for the right to be full and respected citizens in our own country....'.¹¹² Convention saw in the landless peasantry the greatest potential for the building of a national struggle. It was they who provided the greatest source of labour for the mines, the farms and industries. It was they who due to increasing impoverishment of the reserves and the high death toll of their children (50 per cent) were forced to leave their families in their hundreds of thousands to earn a meagre wage in the so-called white areas. It was they who were treated as less than human and bore the greatest burdens. Convention took up their fight for land and in particular, opposed the Rehabilitation Scheme of the then Smuts Government, This Rehabilitation Scheme was a scheme not for the rehabilitation of the reserves but for the re-organization of the reserves for the greater exploitation of the peasantry to serve the needs of the Herrenvolk.

The sinister plans of the Government were exposed in the pamphlet which Convention published under the title 'The Rehabilitation Scheme - The New Fraud.' For the first time the true facts were given publicity as to the utter state of landlessness amongst the African people; that 700,000 white farmers had rights of ownership over 124 million morgen of land while six and half million Africans were to be herded into a mere 16¾ million morgen only if and when Hertzog kept his promise to award 7¼ million morgen. As the pamphlet stated 'It is quite obvious that there can be no talk of rehabilitation in the Reserves while the land position remains as it is. No amount of juggling will alter the plain fact that the root of the problem is LAND HUNGER. It is not that the Government does not realise this. Their deliberate ignoring of this stark fact and their stressing instead of overstocking reveals their real intentions.... They are not concerned with the welfare and prosperity of the African people in the reserves. If they were really concerned about it they would go straight to the root of the problem and give the Africans LAND commensurate with their numbers. But this would cut across their plans. It would be the negation of their whole policy, for this shortage of land is not an accident, it is a deliberate policy on the part of the Government.'

The plan was to reshuffle the population to residential sites in one area so as to leave open spaces which could be used for grazing, as if this would in fact relieve the heavy pressure on the land. The real intention of the Government was revealed in its proposals to build villages for those who in their life time would never be able to obtain a plot of their own to plough. Type A villages were to be built near forests where work of some nature would be made available. Type B near factories which could be erected in the reserves, or near border areas as a source of cheap labour and Type C for those who would spend the greater part of their life as migrant labour away from their homes. The scheme was intended to comb out the able bodied, landless peasant use him as a migrant labourer and when his lifeblood has been sucked out, throw him back into these heartless village settlements to end his life in misery and squalor. 'It is young blood that is wanted. The young men must be driven from their homes into the village settlements, the labour depots, and from there they must enter the inescapable channel that leads them to the mines and the farms. The whole diabolical scheme.... is part of the whole plan to which Smuts referred in Parliament when he assured the farmers that the Government was taking steps to help them to increase their labour supply.'¹¹³

The fight against the Rehabilitation Scheme in the Transkei sparked off other revolts in many far-flung areas, in Witsieshoek in the Orange Free State, Sekhukuniland in the North-Western Transvaal, Zeerust, Pondoland and Zululand. With the battle for life increasing in intensity the peasants on the mines went on strike in 1946. But the African population in Johannesburg betrayed by the craven A.N.C. leadership who were busy squabbling in the Native Representative Council, stood aside while the mine-workers were shot down in cold-blood. Nevertheless so great were the repercussions on the N.R.C. that the people boycotted the elections and forced the N.R.C. to adjourn sine die.

It was when Convention took up the struggles of the peasantry, organised their own peasant defence and welfare bodies into the federation of the Transkei Organised Bodies (TOB) that they joined the Convention in

¹¹² "The Voice" – *Bulletin of the All-African Convention. March 1945*

¹¹³ I.B. Tabata . *The Rehabilitation Scheme - The New Fraud.*

greater and greater numbers. Their opposition to the enforced fencing of their land under the Conservation Act, the culling of their stocks, the expropriation of their areas under the various removal schemes where they had lived for generations, the tyranny exercised by the Whites on the trust farms, the role of the policemen-chiefs, the weight of taxation and the multifarious problems of their life were always fully discussed at every Convention Conference and placed in perspective as part of the struggle of all the oppressed for democratic rights as envisaged under the 10-Point Programme with its policy of Non-Collaboration. When the President of APDUSA was arrested in 1948 in the Transkei, the peasants in the Mount Ayliff District, where he was imprisoned, were ready to storm the prison if he had been sentenced. It was this relationship through long years of close understanding and contact that earned Convention the support it holds throughout the Transkei up to today.

In the meantime the new leadership of Convention under the name of the ANTI-CAD organised the coloured people in a federation first in Cape Town in a spirited struggle against the Government's attempt to create a Coloured Affairs Department (CAD) a counterpart of the African institutions for enslavement. It sounded the alarm, and the ANTI-CAD was able to mobilise all sections of the Coloured people for a boycott of these hated institutions designed for an inferior race and applied the non-collaboration policy. In this fight, the Communist Party in the Cape and the mixed White and Coloured trade unions over which it had some control kept aloof, using their newspapers to inveigh against the boycott policy and with the aid of the imperialist press threw a blanket of silence over what was then the biggest issue at the time that beset all minds and which was hotly discussed on the buses, the trains and in every factory. The organs of the Communist Party made the teachers in the Teachers' League of South Africa (a militant body of over 3,000 Coloured teachers which later affiliated to the Unity Movement) its target as a petty-bourgeois group, ridden with Trotskyites etc., who were busy misleading their people. But so successful was the boycott and the application of its non-collaboration policy that the plans of the Smuts' government were then foiled. Yet the struggle against the CAD and the Coloured Affairs Council (CAC) served only as a platform for a wider struggle, the struggle of all the oppressed for democratic rights. At all its meetings, the ANTI-CAD waged an ideological war against racialism, segregation and the scourge of slave mentality. In all its pamphlets, conferences and propaganda its standpoint was that since oppression was common to all the Non-Whites, unity of all the oppressed under one common programme and policy was the first condition for their liberation.

The Unity Movement came into being in December, 1943 after both these federal bodies, the Convention and the ANTI-CAD had each fully accepted and endorsed the 10-Point Programme as the minimum programme of principles - the basis for the struggle of all the oppressed for full citizenship rights together with the policy of non-collaboration. Here it is necessary to explain why the federal bodies in the Unity Movement regarded the policy of non-collaboration as a necessary component of its programme of principles. First of all, 'The policy of non-collaboration far from advocating inaction and abstention, (as it was accused by its political enemies) was, on the contrary, in the given conditions of South Africa, an injunction to engage in political action of the highest order. When the leadership of the Unity Movement put this policy before the people, it was compelled to explain its full meaning and significance. To do this it had to unfold the nature of the system that oppressed and exploited them and the methods used to maintain it..., that without their participation (in the machinery of their own oppression) it would be impossible to maintain the present oppressive structure.' Then again, 'The minimum programme, the 10-Point Programme of the Unity Movement, taken by itself, can be regarded simply as a bourgeois nationalist programme, though point seven, which deals with the land question already envisages a development beyond formal democracy. But when taken together with the policy of non-collaboration, with which the policy is inseparably bound, it takes on a different connotation.'¹¹⁴

'This different connotation' is implicit in the constitution of the African Peoples' Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA) which was founded in 1961 as a unitary body on an individual membership basis by the leadership of the Unity Movement. This satisfied a long felt demand coming from various outlying areas where there were no advanced political bodies. APDUSA with its forward-looking policy is setting a pace just as the federal organisations of the Convention and the ANTI-CAD did in their time and place in the development of the struggle. In its constitution APDUSA added a third dimension under point C of the Unity Movement to which it was affiliated. So that while it fully endorsed the Programme and Policy i.e. 'To struggle for the liquidation of National oppression of the oppressed people in Southern Africa, that is the removal of all disabilities and restrictions based on grounds of race and colour and the acquisition by the whole Nation of those democratic rights at present enjoyed only by a small section of the population, namely the White people', and the Programme as 'the Ten Point Programme of the Unity Movement as laid down by the founding Conference of the Unity Movement in December, 1943 with its policy of non-collaboration, an added aim stated that 'The democratic demands and aspirations of the oppressed workers and peasants shall be paramount in the orientation of APDUSA both in its short term and long term objectives, because of 'the vital importance of those classes generally accorded a lowly status in society, the toiling masses who carry society on their backs.'

The need for unity became more and more imperative as World War II was drawing to an end. When the war ended, the Unity Movement sent 'The address to the Nations of the World' to the United Nations. It stands foremost as one of the great documents from an oppressed people. It recognised that no UNO could free the suffering nation of

¹¹⁴ Unity Movement of South Africa - *The Revolutionary Road For South Africa*. May, 1969.

South Africa, that it had to free itself. The need for unity of the oppressed became more and more imperative. The rank and file in the A.N.C. urged its leaders to conclude unity with the Unity Movement. They feared that once the war ended, Afrikanerdom would be once more in the saddle wielding its sjambok on the body of the oppressed. The leaders of Congress forced by pressures from below met the members of the Unity Executive on three occasions, even as late as 1949, before Verwoerd came to power. At the last meeting the Unity Movement went so far as to offer a third of the seats on the Executive (the rest to be contested) provided the A.N.C. accepted the Programme and Policy of the Unity Movement, but unity was rejected on this basis. In face of the growing danger this rejection of unity on a firm programmatic basis was more than a slap in the face of the Unity Movement. It was a death blow to the hopes and aspirations of the oppressed people of South Africa. The failure to achieve unity has had even wider repercussions on the safety of the contiguous independent black states and indeed on the whole of Africa. Today these are being threatened by the snorting bull of Afrikanerdom on its borders which cannot permit any black state to practice any form of egalitarianism for by so doing these states will put to naught the lying propaganda South Africa has tried to instil into the mind of the civilized world, that Africans as a people will revert to barbarism once the white man removes himself.

REVOLUTIONARY PROSPECTS

CHAPTER XVI

PART I

The normal course of capitalism is, particularly in agriculture, to rid itself of all vestiges of feudal relations on the land and to define and usher in on the stage of history those classes which have a historical future. The ruination of the small and medium white farmers in South Africa to **sill** the ranks of the white working class reveals that in the final analysis, economic laws take precedence over considerations of colour and race. A polarisation of the classes in society takes place and clears the decks for the final joining of battle between the two major opposing forces, labour and capital.

South Africa does not fall within the category of normal development as in the case of the countries of Europe, for it was and is not permitted to do so. From the point of view of the majority of the population the Non-Whites, South Africa is a slave state. It is a slave society within the milieu of an industrial age, that is monopoly capitalism. In the process of normal development the feudal serfs were freed from the land to allow for the full and untrammelled expansion of capital, bringing with it a maturing of the working-class into a class-conscious proletariat, where the latter is gradually absorbed within the bourgeois system with its bourgeois democratic norms. In South Africa, chattel slavery while officially abolished in 1834, was always present in the society and although the African population was never part of the slave population, finance capital, after it arrived on the scene to exploit the gold and diamond mines, found a white society indelibly stamped with the patterns of its slave-owner past, a society eminently suited to re-impose a system of slavery on the Blacks. Though it did not introduce the chattel form, it nevertheless imposed a system that retained all its attributes.

In casting the Non-Whites out of the democratic integument of the bourgeois state, depriving them of political and economic equality and creating a society of two nations, a higher and a lower, the ruling class was fully cognisant of the dangers inherent in the policy of creating a society divided unto itself. Here were all the factors present for a conflagration, a small vocal Non-White intelligentsia hemmed in by segregation laws, a large Non-White working population rooted in the towns and forcibly retarded by a system of anti-Non-White labour legislation and a peasantry dispossessed of the land breaking out in intermittent peasant revolts, the latter alone far outnumbering the whole white population. Imperialism also recognised that these factors expressed in historical terms, must sooner or later bring to birth inevitably:

- (a) the rise of nationalism amongst the Non-Whites and the demand for equal democratic rights., with the Whites,
- (b) the growth of a class-conscious proletariat within the industrial sector which must intensify the revolutionary processes and influence the course of the national struggle to proceed further than the bourgeois democratic stage and
- (c) the development of the agrarian revolution which will link up with the workers' struggle and the national movement.

Once a merging of these forces took place amongst the various sections of the oppressed took place, it would pose the greatest threat to the overlordship of the Herrenvolk both at home and abroad and change the course of the whole of the continent of Africa itself.

Thus imperialism from the beginning took steps to retard to try and stop the development of these historical processes by a system of racial and class laws. It saw in the policy of segregation the best method of containment. Segregation in all spheres of life became all pervading doing its work subtly like a cancerous infection while the patient who is at first unaware of the disease, gradually learns to live with the pain and finally accepts his end fatalistically. Segregation which the Non-Whites learnt to accept and practise, bred inferiority, slavishness and the idea of the superiority of the Whites. Segregation was so arranged that no Non-White knew any other way of life from the day of his birth to the moment of his death.

Buttressed by the divide and rule policy, segregation became like an impregnable fortress. Each section of the Non-Whites, Africans, Coloured and Indian was carefully split up into well-defined groups with varying rights, each self-contained and moving along chosen spheres of work. Communication between these groups and the ruling classes was established through the agencies of each group composed of those classes which were allowed to develop, the clergy, the teachers and as in the case of the Indians, the upper crust of a small merchant class. The differences in the background of each were always carefully stressed by the ruling class, the differences in race, culture, colour and physical appearances were skilfully interwoven in all ruling-class propaganda to reinforce in the minds of the Non-Whites, their separateness and the complete impossibility of their ever finding a common ground amongst themselves. For once the mind of a people is conquered, it becomes enslaved. The voluntary acceptance of segregation amongst the leaderships within the three Non-White groups led them even to practise segregation amongst themselves so that no African could communicate with the Coloured or Indian group on the basis of equality and vice versa.

The role of the white liberals was to establish direct communication between themselves as the spokesmen of imperialism, and the Non-White leadership in the Bantu-European Councils, Coloured-European Councils and the Indian-European Councils but never councils in which all the oppressed discussed together on terms of equality apart from them. The liberals carried out to the letter the divide and rule policy,

holding their pulse on the state of health amongst each section, informing the rulers the 'right moment to relax, bend the rod a little or tighten up the screw of oppression. The masses never had direct contact with the ruling class, never saw or met them as a general rule. But they could always meet the liberals, who were available **at** any time, who came to their weddings, funerals, opened their church bazaars, sat and had tea with them. The Non-Whites took pride in seeking their advice on difficult matters affecting race relations. The bond between the top strata of the Blacks and the liberals was most rewarding and of great benefit to the ruling class.

The oppressed did not see or want to see the other side of the coin, the fact that the liberals belonged by wealth, position and upbringing to that very class that oppressed them, the fact that they had chosen this highly skilled sphere of human relations across the barriers with a definite purpose in mind, to protect and shield their own class from the hatreds engendered by their own actions. In general, the liberals were the most educated, the most far-seeing section within the ruling class, inseparable from it yet taking a calculated pose of standing apart, of non-involvement.

It was in Congress that the liberals found another fertile field for disseminating herrenvolk propaganda. Congress was a loosely organised social and political body without shape or form with a long tradition of gathering closely round an individual leader and depending on his personality to hold the flock together. Having no clearly formulated programme of principles, it had generally accepted a vague kind of nationalism tinged with a great deal of tribalism and racialism. It had more than a foot in the past with its worship of chiefs and the institution of chieftainship which in the sum total made it a nest for collaborators and political turncoats. With the rise of the I.C.U. and the new ideas arising from the development of industrialism, Congress became a stagnant backwater on the political scene.

This was the terrain which the Unity Movement found in 1945. In its view the time had arrived for a new nation to be born. By exposing the machinations of the ruling classes, its divide and rule policy and the role of the liberals, the Non-Whites for the first time began to understand the nature of the society and the reasons for their enslavement. The Unity Movement was the first to show the common oppression, the discriminatory laws applicable to all the Non-Whites, despite the variations in the application of them. It went further to condemn the oppressed for their acceptance of inferiority and docility. It revealed to them their contributions to the building of the society in which they were treated as lepers. It opened new vistas to their minds so that for once the oppressed saw themselves as human beings, as the most valuable asset in a society that despised them and began to shed their inferiority, their acceptance of tutelage. In doing this, it laid down the basis for unity of the oppressed, a maturing of a political outlook for the building of a national will and a determination which must irresistibly move in the direction of a struggle for national liberation and the overthrow of the oppressive system. What the ruling classes had feared so long was in process of conception.

They were only too keenly aware of the new ideas and of the role of the Unity Movement which had broken the umbilical cord that bound the oppressed to them. They never made the mistake of permitting the powerful press of the Chamber of Mines to be used in the service of the Unity Movement, never allowed the ideas and the policy of the Movement to be mentioned in their columns, never reported the meetings of the Movement or Convention although the halls in Cape Town and elsewhere were overflowing with thousands of people. Conscious of their class interests, they never relaxed in their vigilance to throw a veil of silence over any threat to their position or anything containing a potential threat to their continued rule.

The irrefutable logic and truth of the new ideas of the Unity Movement with its hammer blows against the system of oppression were bound to weaken Congress still more as a potent force which would ultimately have led to its disappearance from the political scene. It was at this point that the Communist Party, a body sufficiently well-organised with independent means and a programme of its own, placed its African members in key positions in Congress to wield it as an instrument to suit its particular aims in national and foreign policy all the while maintaining its close connections with the liberals.

With the coming to power of the Afrikaners in 1948, under the rule of the Broederbond, perhaps permanently, the new decade opened the most critical period for imperialism in South Africa. The policy of segregation which had so long wrapped the Non-Whites in a quiescent and dormant cocoon had now reached the end of its cycle. Verwoerd was inheriting a rising nationalism amongst the Non-Whites, a growing awareness of the need for unity in the face of this impending danger, the pre-condition for the waging of an independent struggle for liberation.

The difference in policy between imperialism and Afrikanerdom towards the Non-Whites is clearly manifest. Whereas Verwoerd saw in apartheid, the means to put a stop to the growth of nationhood amongst all the Non-White sections, imperialism saw in it the very opposite, the goad that will draw the oppressed closer together at a faster tempo. Feudal capital, as represented by the Afrikaners saw South Africa as self-sufficient, a closed-in circuit with an inalienable right to practise apartheid as it saw fit while imperialism saw this self-same policy in its wider setting, as a mortal threat to the security of its investments both in the country itself and its expansion along neo-colonialist lines in the whole of Africa. The inflexible policy of the Afrikaners, according to imperialism was bound to arouse the deep-seated resentments amongst the newly independent black states and must in the course of time lead to a stoppage of migrant labour to the gold mines in retaliation against this policy. Experience taught it that the Unity Movement with its policy, its programme and its whole stance on political questions which the liberals called 'extremist' were most to be feared and a force to be reckoned with. Its advanced ideas were fast becoming part of the thinking of the Non-Whites and its organisational structure and form were eminently equipped to lead the movement for liberation. At all costs the unity of the masses as exemplified by the Unity Movement had to be destroyed.

With the banning of the Communist Party in 1950 which now sought cover in the African National Congress and virtually took control of it, a god-given opportunity, as it thought, presented itself to imperialism to deliver a death blow both against the extreme right wing - the Broederbond Government as well as the extremists on the left, the Unity Movement. The electorate had rejected the representatives of imperialism - the United Party. Indeed where else could it turn but to its tried and trusted friends, its collaborators in Congress? And so a diabolical plan was hatched to harness the dissatisfaction of the black oppressed to its own plan of executing the defeat of the Broederbond Government. More was at stake for imperialism than scruples. Congress was to be used to create chaos, sow dissension in the land and in this way the groundwork would be laid for the defeat of the Afrikaners at the next elections under the slogan that the United Party alone could bring peace, law and order in the land.

Thus it came about that the Congress Alliance was formed as the instrument to execute the plan on behalf of imperialism. It was an amalgam of different forces, a front of the Congress of Democrats (C.O.D.) an organisation of white liberals, the South African Indian Congress, an Indian merchant class dominated organisation (SA.I.C.) and the Coloured People's Congress, a body created by the Coloured members of the Communist Party to represent the Coloured people in the Alliance (C.P.C.) together with the A.N.C. and the C.P.

The Alliance then embarked upon a series of non-violent campaigns, Days of Defiance, Pass Burnings, Boycotts of Afrikaner goods, Days of Mourning, One-day Strikes, all of which by no means deceived Verwoerd. He met the threats in a manner typical of his class. He dealt with the Blacks in the traditional manner the whip, the chain and the torture. Thousands of the most militant fighters, many of whom belonged to the rank and file of Congress were needlessly sacrificed in a struggle which certainly was not theirs. Then he turned upon the liberals in the Congress of Democrats (C.O.D.) who, in order to give the campaign a fresh lease of life after the rounding up of the Blacks, had resorted to small acts of sabotage. On them he unleashed the more refined but no less vicious methods of Hitler. For once the whites received a taste of the kind of punishment formerly reserved only for the Blacks.

After 1957, with the arrest of the A.N.C. / C.P. leadership, the Alliance was to all practical purposes dead. The toll of life, injury and arrest ran into thousands.

In 1959, Congress youth, in despair at the failure of the policy of the Alliance and resentment of the white leadership in the Alliance broke away from the mother body to form the Pan-Africanist Congress. (P.A.C.) In Cape Town it whipped up a demonstration of mainly migrant workers from the barracks at Langa to which the Government replied with bullets. Indeed the Sharpeville massacre was Verwoerd's reply to all peaceful protests. The world has some to know all the atrocities committed by Verwoerd not only on the men and women who had participated in the campaigns of the Congress Alliance but on the whole population. The Chamber of Mines for its own reasons, had rallied its powerful press to boost all the stunts of Congress. Its silence when the Smuts Government had committed atrocities of the same nature against the Blacks is significant.

PART II

It is first of all necessary to understand why the A.N.C./C.P. decided upon a loose ad-hoc grouping of white bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements in the Alliance to lead a struggle against the Government as against joining the federation of organisations under the Unity Movement with its principled programme and policy. Under certain historical conditions, it is necessary for the organisations of the working class to join in a united front on specific issues in face of a common danger. A threat to each means a threat to the whole working class. But there was nothing in common in the Alliance except the fact that each separately was opposed to the coming to power of Afrikanerdom. In other words, the Alliance was formed to serve the interests of a section of the white bourgeois and petit bourgeois elements and not in the interests of the working class nor in the interests of the whole oppressed Non-White population. The purpose of the Alliance was intended to bring imperialism back to power with its segregation policy as against Verwoerd with his apartheid.

When the whole Non-White population stands outside the electoral machine, its fight is not for the 'lesser evil', the liberal standpoint, but against the whole machinery of oppression, against both herrenvolk parties. Any party or organisation of the oppressed which involves itself in the squabbles for power between the various sections of the oppressors serves only their interests and not the interests of the oppressed who seek to free themselves from both their strangulating bonds. In this regard, the Unity Movement had made its policy clear from the beginning that there shall be no collaboration with the instruments of oppression, nor class collaboration of any kind.

'The Revolutionary Road' (*Unity Movement of SA Statement 1969*) had this to say on the stunts of the Alliance, 'The enormity of the crime committed by the liberals and the Communist Party against the oppressed people of South Africa is to be seen in their role outside South Africa. They deliberately conceal the real struggle for liberation with the express purpose of smothering it while at the same time mount a vast anti-apartheid campaign to win the support of well-meaning people all over the world. For what? In fact, Africa and the people of the world have been subjected to a huge confidence trick. In terms of the South African set-up anti-apartheid means anti-Afrikaner Nationalist

In casting his net Verwoerd did not limit himself to the leaderships in the Congress Alliance nor to the actual participants in the campaigns. He mounted a terror against the whole Non-White population both in the towns and in the country. He was determined to wipe out the whole Non-White opposition.. The leaderships in the federation of the Unity Movement were subjected to the same torture and terms of imprisonment under the 90/180 Days solitary imprisonment. Many of them have had the second five year ban slapped on them, have been confined or deported from the towns and lost their jobs. Some of them are today rotting on Robben Island while others have fled into exile. It is to be noted that even then the Chamber of Mines press did not state these as leaders or members of the Unity Movement or its affiliated organisations but mentioned them merely by name as individuals i.e. loose molecules without standing and without political beliefs.

One of the affiliated organisations of the Unity Movement, the African Peoples Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA) has openly condemned the duplicity and cynical opportunism amounting even to racialism practised by the Communist Party in the name of the Congress as revealed in the documents captured by the South African police and used in the Rivonia Trials. Amongst these were the Minutes of a secret meeting of what is known as the 'Centre' the most authoritative organ of the Communist Party of South Africa.

'This meeting was concerned with formulating a policy to be presented to the Congress Alliance. The minutes contain inter alia the following, '... The fact that the A.N.C. has been illegalised in South Africa while its allies that is, (the C.O.C., S.A.I.C. etc.) have remained legal, have combined to present a false picture of the resistance movement in this country - a picture which has been taken advantage of by the enemies of the movement, to depict the A.N.C. as a collaborationist organisation dominated by non-Africans. It is essential that this picture be corrected. All sections of the democratic movement should fully understand and appreciate this need, and co-operate in seeing that PARTICULARLY IN FREE AFRICA the African National Congress of South Africa, both in theory and practice, comes forward and is accepted as the recognised spokesman of the entire democratic movement in this country. We ask all our members concerned in various organisations to give unqualified support to this ruling'. In the same document they sing high praises to what they designate as the 'White progressive and bourgeois elements' who 'had been most active in mass protests'.

In the same document also reveals the fact that it was part of Communist Party policy that the A.N.C. should not open its doors to members of all racial groups because 'This would undermine the specific national character of the A.N.C. and weaken its influence among the African masses it would never enjoy the whole-hearted support of the Indian and Coloured people'.

As APDUSA (May, 1967) correctly states, 'here the cloven hoof of imperialism' reveals itself. This tortuous reasoning which permeates the whole document peppered with 'revolutionary' phraseology while the sum total is a thoroughly reactionary policy, is not the result of a confused mind. It is deliberately calculated to deceive the masses, strangle the movement and reduce the struggle of the oppressed to nullity. Having captured the African National Congress, the liberals have now installed it as the spokesman of the 'entire democratic movement'. It must be noted that this 'democratic movement' includes **THEM** together with the 'bourgeois elements' who 'had been the most active in mass protests'. How does it come about that the African National Congress is the spokesman of both the white bourgeoisie as well as the oppressed Blacks in South Africa? How is this possible? Against whom is the fight then?' Terror, violence and intimidation now reign supreme over the land to enforce the draconian laws. All organisations in the

liberation movement are banned or virtually banned from organising the masses. Day by day more and more inhuman laws are passed to increase the pace of exploitation and to hold down the growth of a real struggle for freedom. One lesson has emerged from the stunts and the betrayal of Congress and the Communist Party alliance that it will hardly be possible in the future to draw the masses again into taking sides in the squabbles for power between the Herrenvolk parties. Betrayal will take a different form in a different setting. Lacking a political understanding of the relationship of forces and betrayed by their leadership, the people had to learn through the fire of experience. The dust that has been kicked up what has proved to be merely of an episodic nature, concealed and hid from view the real forces for liberation. These are tremendous forces arising from the very conditions of life, completely independent of herrenvolk politics and bourgeois elements in the travail of forging a path of its own.

No struggle in the towns even if led by the most advanced and devoted group can even think of bringing the revolutionary struggle to a successful conclusion unless it gains the support of the majority of the oppressed - the landless peasantry, those on the white farms and in the reserves who number over six million. Today these numbers are being augmented by wide scale expulsions of hundreds of thousands from the towns as part of 'influx control'. To most of the population in the urban areas, these migrant labourers, who crowd the bombelas to the mines as recruited labour, and who perch aloft like birds on the crowded trucks are an anonymous mass, scarecrows of humanity who flit like shadowy phantoms by day and night from one corner of the country to another. Yet that is the very force that will move mountains, the subsoil of the future revolution.

Few know what has been going on amongst these landless millions penned up in these so-called homelands. Their cries have long gone unheeded. It is only when the mobile squads of para-military units in full battle dress, escorted by vans of both white and black police storm in these eroded areas to arrest, imprison, set home on fire, burn crops and shoot to kill that a trickle of information leaks out to the towns.

Little is known of the appalling misery and desolation that exists in these so-called homelands and the effort required to maintain life. These areas, enclosed by an iron curtain are riddled with police informers. No one is permitted to enter or leave these areas, to meet or discuss freely. No newspaper correspondent is allowed to investigate the outrages committed on the body of the oppressed. The emergency laws, Proclamation R400 and R413 have never been withdrawn since the fifties and hang like a damocles sword over the population prohibiting meetings of more than ten people. The Transkei Bantustan does not dare to ask for the suspension of the laws lest it expose its role as police-men chiefs and traitors. Stark hunger piles up the dead children and sick men and women. So great is the hatred of the chiefs who operate these Bantustans that whenever, Matanzima, First Minister of the Transkei Bantustan arrives in Cape Town to meet his countrymen, there is a thunderous cry from the whole urban population as well as the migrant labour from the men's barracks, 'Down with Proclamation 400' followed by 'Down with the Bantustans'. Only under the protection of Verwoerd's police is he able to address his own people to save him from their wrath.

The revolt of the peasantry, traditionally slow to move, throughout the fifties, broke out in Witsieshoek in 1950, against the imposition of the Rehabilitation Scheme spread in yet a mightier form to places as far distant as Zeerust on the Botswana borders, Sekhukhuniland in Western Transvaal, Pietersburg, Zululand, Glen Grey in the Cape and right across to Pondoland throughout this decade. It was then that Verwoerd rammed the full weight of the Bantu Authorities Act down the throat of the peasantry and by so doing added fuel to the fire against the Rehabilitation Scheme. The deep-going intensive revolts of the peasantry brings the whole view of the revolutionary struggle in South Africa into perspective. This thoroughly reactionary piece of legislation installed a structure resembling in outward form that of the old tribal structure without its content. Under Verwoerd, each tribal authority composed of a hierarchy of chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen was not linked to the people who in ancient times had elected them freely and democratically but to the machinery of the Government which having appointed and nominated them as 'representatives of the people', used the machinery to serve its own interests for increasing a system of exploitation.

To each Bantu Authority, a strong arm is attached, a tribal court for the purpose of imposing its will on the people, to impose fines in and mete out harsh prison sentences to those who dare break the Verwoerdian laws of enslavement. In the mind of the people who today groan under the weight of the oppression, these tatterdemalions of history, dressed up in tribal finery, the Government-appointed chiefs, in the Bantustans like the S.S. guards of Hitler, are no more than police-informers who have been placed in power to draw their very blood in those concentrations camps for slave labour - the reserves.

It is no wonder the masses hold in high esteem, those chiefs who stood up against the administration, who, because they refused to administer the Verwoerdian laws were deposed, shot or sent into exile for life. In these revolts thousands upon thousands of peasants fought the police and the mobile squads and hundreds killed. The atrocities committed by the soldiers, the brutal raping of pregnant women, the violence inflicted on the youth during the Pondoland Revolt still burn in the minds of the people.

In view of this it is not surprising that at the sitting of the Commission of Enquiry on the Pondoland Revolt, two demands were made by the Pondos:

- (a) The return and re-instatement of their exiled chiefs,
- (b) The right to sit in Parliament in Cape Town where the laws are made.

This may sound a contradiction in terms but the first expressed in negative terms their opposition to the regime and the Bantu Authorities in particular and the second, a straight-forward democratic demand.

The struggle of the oppressed masses in South Africa is both anti-imperialist and anti-Herrenvolk. It is a revolutionary struggle for national liberation. The 10-Point Programme of the Unity Movement gives in the clearest form, political expression to the aspirations of the whole Non-White population professional classes, traders, intellectuals, workers and peasants. It seeks to rid society of all discrimination based on race and colour.

The feature that distinguishes the liberation movement in South Africa from any other is that there is no bourgeois class to lead the struggle for democratic rights. In an age of decadent capitalism, when the national bourgeois can no longer play a progressive role the question is posed, on whose shoulders then will the mantle of leadership fall? That heavy responsibility has perforce to fall on the only class left that can play a historical role in bringing about a change in society - the class-conscious proletariat. Under conditions of national oppression, the working-class in general though well-defined, is weak, ill-prepared, without a cultural background and no tradition of working-class methods of fighting. Here the party has to project itself as the representative of the proletariat, act on its behalf and place itself at the head of the democratic movement to bring about this change. It does so in the firm belief that the struggle will, for the first time, establish the rights of the Non-White workers to be recognised as citizen-workers both in law and in practice, on terms of equality with their white counterparts. That party will arise and take a distinct form and shape out of the various cadres which have helped to build APDUSA throughout the country.

By so doing the party will make certain that the Non-White worker will be released from the weight of the past, of tribal attitudes, feudal bondage and national oppression, with the right to form or join those organisations relating to his own particular interests. It is not difficult to realise what a tremendous and revolutionary impact this participation in the struggle will have on his inner life and his whole mental outlook. A thousand years will be lived in a day. A sense of class solidarity and class power will manifest themselves which will carry him through to the next confrontation which already looms all too large in front of him.

Learning from actual experience, the Non-White worker will soon discover that in the democratic state, he has only reached the stage of the proletariat of the West. He will now come under the complete domination of capital and the political domination of the representatives of that capital. The franchise which he now possesses gives him the right to decide which section of the capitalist class shall rule over him. Having done away with national oppression, class oppression rears its ugly head, to blot out his sense of new-found liberation. When the working class realises this it will understand that it has not yet fulfilled the mission of its class, that its real enemy all along has been and is capital and that in order to obtain real democracy, he has to carry the struggle further, against capital itself, deprive the owners of capital of their means of production and their source of power and place these in the hands of the exploited - the working class.

The road that a nationally oppressed people takes to bring about a social change cannot be equated with the struggle for socialism in the metropolitan countries of Western Europe. The worker in a nationally oppressed country is not only in a minority but he feels first the oppression of race and colour. Those who say that he can make the leap from a pre-national struggle directly over to socialism are out of touch with the realities of the situation. The suffering of the Non-White peoples throughout the years of subjugation, maintained under segregation, now re-inforced under apartheid remains a living horror in their minds. The democratic stage is a necessary and essential bridge. In the process of the struggle, he develops those attributes that equip him for the task of leadership.

Another important aspect in the waging of the democratic struggle is that while he realises that he has to take over the leadership of the democratic struggle, he is small in numbers. He has to look for close allies who are as deeply involved as he is in bringing about the democratic revolution. This he has already found in the landless peasantry who is crushed both by capitalism and feudalism. The peasantry, no matter how great in number and how desperate its plight, is unable to conduct a revolution by itself, its struggle for the land has always taken the form of scattered revolts that have ended in bitter suppression since the dawn of history. History has shown untold instances of how other classes have always used the peasantry as a means to obtain power for themselves and betrayed them. The peasantry need leadership and can find only in the working-class that leadership which does not seek to exploit it, a leadership which is wedded to its interests.

It is when these two streams join together, the town and the country, in a confluence that the democratic revolution stands a chance of not only being brought to fruition but that the way is opened up towards achieving a higher stage. Together they will have the power to destroy not only all forms of feudal and national exploitation but also capitalism itself.

Under these circumstances, the struggle for democratic rights becomes an integral part of the social revolution and inseparable from it. There is a dialectical connection between the two stages not to be mechanically interpreted. Once a movement is seen in action - a mass of people, men and women moving forward to stake their claims, the pace necessarily slow at first gathers up momentum and takes a leap forward and yet a higher leap. That has been the lesson both in nature and in the progress forward of all human history. As the counter-revolution gathers its forces together to assault the barriers reached by the oppressed, the masses steel themselves to make the thrust forward into history in order to achieve their own destiny, impelled by the spirit that moves mountains - a spiritual strength, a belief in their ability to do so.

That is how the Unity Movement envisaged the struggle. This has determined its approach to the national problem and this is why it was able to lead the peasant masses into the main stream that unites the national and the agrarian struggles. It is out of this rich soil created by such a confluence that the young working-class emerges with all its vigour to play its historical role. Consequently the bourgeois revolution, i.e. the struggle for democratic rights becomes interlaced with the first stage of the socialist revolution and a link in the chain of a world-wide struggle for socialism. ♦