

Sunday Tribune April 15 1990

The British pioneered apartheid

WITH respect to Professor Guy Butler (*The role of the English in the new South Africa, April 1, 1190*), the English democracy of the 19th Century, with its extension of franchise, rule of law and humane values, was a liberal smokescreen for the beginning of “colour” discrimination and oppression. In reality, the British waged land wars against the indigenous Africans in 1799, 1811, 1819 and 1834. With the discovery of the diamond mines more land was expropriated, more people made homeless and deprived of their livelihood. These developments show British liberalism for what it really was:

- Africans were dispossessed of their land and cattle by the British military conquests. The territories annexed included Transkei, Griqualand West, Pondoland, Bechuanaland, Matabele and Mashonaland.
- Cecil John Rhodes introduced cheap labour on the mines, skilled Africans were paid less than unskilled whites.
- He started residential segregation in 1870. In 1894 he passed the Glen Grey Act which made Africans homeless and landless.
- On franchise and humane values, Rhodes vividly expressed British Liberalism in these words: “I will lay down my own policy on this Native question. Either you have to receive them on an equal footing as citizens or to call them a subject race... there must be pass laws and peace preservation acts, and we have to treat Natives where they are in a state of barbarism in a different way to ourselves. We are to be lords over them... we must adopt a system of despotism such as works as well in India....”

In 1865 Shepstone introduced the reserve and location system. He also created a Department of Native Affairs. Lord Carnarvon Shepstone, Selbourne and Milner were the pioneers of the Union because of the need to unite against the “Native question”. Regrettably Hofmeyer, Botha and Smuts extended the structures built by the English liberals. It is on this foundation that the Afrikaner ethos developed.

Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed

Chairman: DCRA

Durban