

THE causes which led to the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 were many and complex: the scope of these historical notes & do not allow me to enter on a full analysis of them here. The history of the Afrikaner people in South Africa is full of contradictions and ambiguities. The Trekkers, in their northward emigration, were struggling for freedom and independence from the unjust rule of ~~the~~ British imperialism, just as their fathers had struggled for freedom from the harsh rule of "Jan Company." But the very freedom and independence they sought was that which they denied to their dark-skinned fellow-South Africans, and of which they deprived them.

This fatal flaw in the makeup and outlook of Afrikaner nationalism, however, was not ~~an~~ excuse at all for the aggressive war of British imperialism to incorporate the two Boer republics in the Empire - a war that was condemned with indignation and horror throughout the world. British imperialism, and its local representatives like Cecil Rhodes, were in no way ^{really} concerned with the sufferings of the African peoples of the Transvaal and the Free State under the Republics. In fact their own treatment of indigenous populations in the Empire, throughout Africa and Asia, and ^{- to come nearer home -} ~~particularly~~ in Bechuanaland, Natal and Rhodesia, constitutes an unparalleled record of savagery and cruelty. Some British "liberal" jingoes justified the Boer War by pointing to examples of slavery, or near slavery, in the Transvaal. But in fact after the war conditions of the Africans did not improve at all: in many ways they became worse.

The real reason behind the Boer War was the fabulous wealth which had been found below the surface of the Witwatersrand. Once again, as with Kimberley and the Cape, foreign capital came flooding into the country. A great influx of fortune-hunters came flocking into the swollen mining camp that was Johannesburg. A new class of mining millionaires - the "Randlords"-became overnight the most powerful group in the economy of the Transvaal, and demanded control of the country as their right. But the victory which had been won so easily in the Cape, with the