

THE CITIZEN

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Tuesday 4 May 1982

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PARKER

NEW Yorkâ\200\231s Carnegie
Foundation is to under-
write an 18-month
scientific study into the

causes of Black poverty
in Southern Africa,
similar to the pre-war
Carnegie Poor White
Study.

With Carnegie's modern history of ideological, anti-South African bias, it is reasonable to expect that the final report will be both leftist-tilted and highly politicised.

Before the commission even begins work, therefore, it is important to spell out that changes in South Africa's political structures will not (and cannot) break the Black poverty cycle overall, or push the Black community generally towards better living standards.

. For their problem is

vastly different to that
of the Afrikaners of 50
years ago.

Official statistics immediately make clear the No 1 stumbling block to Black advancement in South Africa: one, indeed, that is already tearing away at the very fabric of our society. And that is uncontrolled population explosion.

Slice it as you like,
the figures are chilling.
In the year 1900 South
Africa's Black population stood at around 3-million.

By 1960 that figure
had zoomed to
10 927 922; by 1970, to
15 339 975.

The 1980 figures are
deceptive, because the
intervening decade saw
the breakaway of
Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda. But
lumping official population returns for all four
nations together gives
a total of around 22-
million.

In 1958 Dr Verwoerd forecast that South Africa would have a Black population of 19-million by the year 2000. He was way out. That figure was reached

Black South African children. The (more their numbers grow, the less food, housing and jobs there will be for them.

(and topped) by 1976. Latest official projections are that the country's - Black population (excluding the TBV areas) could range between 28,9-million and 30,4-million in 2000, and between 36,8-million and 42,1-million in 2020. CA Early South Africa's Blacks have climbed aboard a sui-

cide express. If they are -

bonest, politicians, economists, demographers and ecologists alike must all agree that nothing threatens South Africa's long-term future more than this Black baby boom.

Already, as the millions pile on millions, the pressures are increasingly felt, in the form of impossibly overcrowded homelands, hungry mouths, malnutrition, growing scarcity of housing and other essential services, ever-increasing swarms of job seekers, shifts to the cities and seemingly uncontrollable inflation.

A great number of interlocking factors explain this increase in fertility.

Before the White man came to Africa, death rates approximated birth rates. Medical science, control of the great killer diseases such as malaria, improved sanitation and maternal and child care, changed all that.

Result? The health of the population has markedly improved. The death rate has declined. People are living many years longer.

By interfering with nature, we reduced the death rate. To compensate, it is now necessary to interfere with nature a second time: to reduce the birth rate.

A list of recent statements by top experts offers a capsule view of the gravity of the situation:

October 13, 1981: Dr Flip Smit, vice-president of the Human Sciences Research Council, warns that planners and policymakers are ignoring the far-reaching changes in population structures.

At present, only about 19 percent of Black women use con-

traceptives against 58 percent of Whites and 51 percent of Coloureds, he says.

According to present low projections, South Africa's current school population of 4-million Black pupils will increase to 7-million in the next 20 years. Unless the birth rate is reduced, drastically, Blacks will find it difficult to raise their standards of living.

November 10, 1981: Dr J de Beer, Director-General, Department of Health and Welfare, warns of catastrophic results should South Africa's population growth rate continue at too high a level.

Strong action now, he stresses, could mean 30-million to 60-million fewer people in 60

yearsâ\200\231 time, or a difference of hundreds of millions in a centuryâ\200\235.

Such measurers, he says, should have the support of all leaders.

â\200\234Leaders who condemn and politicise the efforts for lower fertility should first acquaint themselves with the price they and their descendants will pay for this attitude.â\200\235

March 31, 1982: Mr P J Loubser, MEC in charge of Cape hospital services, warns that unless South Africaâ\200\231s population growth is controlled, â\200\230â\200\234â\200\230the country faces disasterâ\200\235.

He adds: â\200\234Everything possible should be done to turn the tide against the population explosion.â\200\235

Mr Loubser courageously expressed what many privately feel: that the time has come to tackle family planning programmes with the urgency of war-time measures.

South Africa has had privately-funded family planning (FP) programmes for decades.

Since the early 1970s, the Government has been funding both private and officialâ\200\231 programmes. Although these programmes are conducted by highly-

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motivated, dedicated people, the harsh fact remains that they are simply not succeeding.

By all means, letâ\200\231s give credit where credit is due. Measured by the handful of years since the programmes really began, a fair amount of groundwork has been laid.

But, measured by results, and especially by the overwhelming magnitude of the problem. FP overall is a failure.

To hammer home the point, South Africa is one of the biggest contributors to the world population explosion. According to the World Fertility Survey, even India today has a better record.

Indeed, South Africa's fertility control programme lags behind that of such high-breeding countries as Cameroon, Haiti, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Senegal, Thailand and Tunisia.

The rate of population growth here is 10 percent higher than in Brazil, 68 percent higher than in Australia, 220 percent higher than in West Germany.

The final blow is that even little Lesotho has a lower fertility rate than does Black South Africa.

To be brutally frank, in this touchy sphere South Africa is still living in some remote, puritanical past. South Africans are forever being urged to contribute to altruistic schemes to assist with Black schooling, feeding, rehabilitation and winter relief programmes.

Such schemes may relieve consciences. They are a million light years

from getting to the root

of the Black poverty problem.

And, ironically, unless we can reduce Black population growth, inter-racial tensions could be exacerbated rather than

relieved.

TOMORROW: Are
commerce and industry
doing their Lit?