

TRANSKEI

TOUSSAINT

THE FLOOD OF sentimental adulation which South African Government propaganda channels have poured out over Dr. Verwoerd, has kept a consistent note; the Bantustan scheme, we are told, was 'his inspiration', 'his creation'. Attempts have been made to portray it as a 'visionary' 'liberal' scheme of national independence for the various African tribal groups of South Africa, as an 'inspired' 'experimental' searching for a new form of national freedom, as a real sincere essay in the development of 'separate freedoms'. The Nazi-admirer, former Ossewa Brandwag petty führer Vorster, who stepped into the dead man's shoes, made haste to announce that he would carry on 'on the path on which Dr. Verwoerd fell', and would pursue with equal faith the course of Bantustans which Verwoerd chartered six years ago.

What is the truth of the Bantustan programme? Where is it leading? What does it achieve in reality after all the fulsome words of praise have been stripped away? This is an appropriate time to attempt an answer to these questions. But an answer is not easy. South Africa has erected a smokescreen of words around the Bantustans, through which the truth filters out only thinly and slowly. Perhaps even the phrase 'Bantustan policy' is a smokescreen. For even now, six years after its announcement in South Africa's Parliament, there is only one 'Bantustan'—only one ethnic group area operating any form of self-administration even within the straitjacket of Pretoria civil-service control. That area is the Transkei, the test case of Bantustans.

'The Xhosas are the first of South Africa's distinctive Bantu peoples to win their right to self-determination. But they will not be the last. In the years to come others will follow them. That is firm policy.'

Thus the official pamphlet on 'The Transkei and the Case for Separate Development', published in December 1963 from South Africa House, London. It remains firm policy—or so it is said. But thus far, no-one has followed. Most realistic observers of what has happened in the

Transkei do not believe any others will follow. For the government, the experiment has proved to be fraught with danger, an essay in the dangerous art of trying to ride a tiger. The Transkei, despite all its weighted electoral system, its emergency regulations, its clamp down on civil liberties, its gendarmerie of venal chiefs and bought headmen, is perpetually on the edge of a real and direct challenge to Pretoria, and to its ideology of apartheid, its suzerainty and its domination.

For the people, the promises of 'self-determination' and of 'separate freedoms' have been revealed as too false and hollow to attract any other peoples anywhere to claim such conditions for themselves.

Consider the evidence. A scheme of 'self-determination' leading to eventual full independence—this is the official claim for the scheme—may be tested in practice. Does it advance the national readiness or capacity for independence? Does the economy progress, and grow towards viability or self-sufficiency? Do the people advance in education, in technical know-how and in experience of administration? Does internal security, public liberty, popular democracy flower? Look at the Transkei.

CRIPPLED INDEPENDENCE

An eminent British historian, Sir Keith Hancock, recently gave his considered opinion on some of these matters, in the course of a lecture to the South African Institute of Race Relations. The output per head of population in the Transkei, he told his audience, is falling, five years after Verwoerd's inspirational scheme, three years after the first elections of a Bantustan parliament. This fall in production would indicate the likelihood of deepening poverty and hunger in the territory. But such hunger, he explained, is mitigated only by the fact that the territory still exports the bulk of its able-bodied male population—and a fair part of its female population—to work in the mines, farms and factories in the rest of South Africa, remitting their earnings home to prevent starvation of their families. Present trends, he said, made it virtually certain that the Transkei would be an economic cripple before it was politically independent.

'To my way of thinking', he said, 'a state which has no prospect of earning its keep is only fictionally independent.'

This 'fictionally independent' area has some 1.6 million people, it is unlikely that more than 300,000 are adult males; of these, an average of 80,000 each year are employed in South African gold mines alone—the most vigorous and able-bodied of that male group. They and other

emigrant workers send back £4.5 million per year from South Africa to the Transkei. An even sharper picture of the fictional independence of the area is given by the 'budget' solemnly presented to the Transkei Territorial Authority by its 'government'. For the year 1964-65, the budget totalled £8 million, of which £6.5 million came from the South African Government; a further £8 million was spent by the Verwoerd government in paying salaries of South African civil servants on official duty in the Transkei. The largest single source of revenue was the 'General Tax'—more often and opprobriously called in South Africa the 'Poll Tax'. This tax was budgeted to bring in £600,000, of which £500,000 would be collected in South Africa from Transkeians employed there. In January 1966 it was officially announced that the tax year had in fact ended with a surplus of £2.5 million—a feat which was duly trumpeted as a triumph for Bantustans. Only the careful follower of Transkeian affairs discovered that the surplus resulted from '... the over-estimation of expenditure by some departments, together with a lack of skilled labour to carry through the industrialisation and building programmes'.

The 'industrialisation programme' is more fictional than real. The figures were given to Parliament by Minister De Wet Nel. From May 1948—(Repeat 1948. No misprint!)—to May 1965, the government, he said, had established nine industries in the Transkei, employing in all 1,389 Africans! Seventeen years! A programme of industrialisation creating eighty-two new jobs per year! In August 1965, it was officially announced that 'since self-administration' i.e. 1963—new Transkei industries have absorbed a total of 841 workers, of whom some 400 are in one establishment. The total number of jobs available and filled in the territory, the announcement claimed, was 32,000, the majority of these in the towns designated 'white'. (See below.) But, it said, in the first five years, 260 African technicians will have been trained! In Pretoria, it claimed, fifteen Africans were being taught to drive buses, twenty-four were being trained as mechanics and twenty-five as railway officials. The purpose of these railway trainees, pathetic as it is, is not related in any way to Transkeian independence. We have it on the authority of Minister of Railways in the South African Government, Mr. B. J. Schoeman, that '*Railways in the Transkei will remain in South African control whether the Transkei is independent or not*'. (Speech 27.1.66.)

ECONOMICS OF POVERTY

Industrialization is a sick joke in the Transkei. Perhaps of more real substance is shopkeeping, formerly an almost entirely white preserve. Measures put into force to ensure that trading stations in the territory

are transferred to Africans are taking effect slowly, at considerable cost to the territory, and at very favourable prices for the traders. There were some 630 white-owned trading stations in the area, almost all of them in local monopoly positions. By June 1966, 237 of these had been offered for sale to the South African Government agency known as the Adjustment Corporation, set up to effect the transfer from white to African ownership. Of these 237, the Corporation had made offers for eighty-six shops at a total cost of £800,000, slightly less than £10,000 apiece. How many of these offers have resulted in completed sales of shops is not clear, but figures show that since the beginning of 1966, forty-five properties in 'reserved' areas—that is areas no longer open for white occupation—had been transferred to Transkei citizens, and a further forty-six were in course of transfer. To accompany this creeping change, it was revealed in June of this year that thirteen Africans had completed their training as managers of trading stores and were employed in that capacity in the Transkei; five more were being trained! More significantly, of the thirty-eight trading stations owned by the Bantu Investment Corporation, thirteen were being managed by Africans.

This snail-pace change takes place as part of what is referred to as the 'five-year plan'—which ran from 1961-2 to 1965-6. The total estimated expenditure in the territory during this period—covering all planned economic development—amounted to just under £9½ million. The total figure, £6 per head over five years, looks even less impressive when broken down into the categories of official statistics:

For village development:	£1.67 million
irrigation:	1.75
forestry:	3.51
soil conservation:	2.38
fibre cultivation:	.14

These figures are worth careful consideration. The figure for village development does not represent spending on improvement of existing villages, but rather on the development of new villages in places close to the Bantustan border. These new villages are needed not for Transkeian purposes. They are essentially dormitory towns from which white industry in the areas just across the border will draw cheap labour, without any responsibilities for social services and family welfare which will fall on the Transkei. Forestry requires large-scale capital resources for road, transportation and haulage, and can only be developed by the Bantu Investment Corporation. If the Transkeian people benefit from it at all, they will do so only indirectly and over

very long term. But in the short term forestry serves a different purpose, of shutting off large tracts of land from peasant occupation, of assisting the growth of a landless peasantry, and thus of speeding the growth of the dormitory labour-reservoir villages near the borders.

ADVANCING BACKWARDS

If the economic change is slow, perhaps even so slow that conditions grow worse, not better, development towards political independence is proving equally slow and equally fettered by white South African chains. Only education has been transferred fully to the Transkeian government. Yet the very decision to do so, forced on an unwilling Verwoerd government by mass pressure in the area, immediately revealed the perils for white supremacy raised by even emasculated and bogus independence. 'Bantu education' created by the South African Government to maintain white supremacy was immediately abolished, and the first hesitant steps towards a wider education started. For the rest, little change. In mid-1945, for example, the Transkei's own police force was formed. The most significant change was that of name. For the force was to consist of 114 former members of the South African police, commanded by a South African police major, white, seconded to the force, together with a South African police lieutenant and three South African warrant officers.

Figures released of the Transkeian civil service tell the same story —'the more things change, the more they are the same'. At the end of 1963, there were 468 white civil servants seconded to the Transkei from Pretoria. By the end of the following year, the number had dropped to 427. *'White officials' said Verwoerd's proconsul in the Transkei, Commissioner General Hans Abraham underlining the obvious —'White officials will be a strong factor in the Transkei for a considerable time to come'. Minister De Klerk was even more blunt. 'The South African Government has not yet given the Transkei a single essential right enjoyed by a sovereign independent state' he blurted out in defence of Verwoerd policy. 'Every department of the Transkei Government has a white official to give it leadership and guardianship.'* (22.3.66.)

Amongst the rights it does not enjoy is what is called in South Africa 'security'—what would be known elsewhere as civil rights. Proclamation No. 400, issued by the Verwoerd government in 1960 is still in full force. It gives the South African authorities in the Transkei the powers of arrest without trial or charge. It prohibits freedom of assembly. It puts stern punitive powers into the hands of local chiefs. The number of victims of this six-year-old 'emergency' measure seems to grow larger. The figures have to be pried out of the government by persistent ferreting, and even then they are vague and confusing,

deliberately so. Between January and June 1965 there were 114 people imprisoned without charge; between January and April a further sixty-two. How many have been held altogether, for how long and under what conditions of terror no one knows. How many are still held, no one knows. In this atmosphere of intimidation and lurking terror, democracy flickers feebly.

BOUGHT SUPPORT

Yet still strongly enough to challenge the proscriptions on assembly, the authority of venal chiefs and the influence and money of the South African Government. Not powerfully enough to swing the first Transkeian elections sufficiently to defeat the overwhelming preponderance of government-paid, government-appointed chiefs who take their seats in the Transkeian Territorial Authority—the 'parliament'. After the first elections in 1963, this weight of chiefs voted the Government-favoured Kaiser Matanzima into the position of Prime Minister by the narrow margin of fifty-four votes to forty-nine. It has only recently been revealed how even that majority was won. Of the fifty-four votes for Matanzima, fifteen were cast by chiefs and headmen owing allegiance to Chief Botha Sigcau. In the face of popular opposition to Matanzima's pro-apartheid policies, Sigcau wavered in his support, his henchmen waiting on his decision to decide their votes. Sigcau finally voted for Matanzima. Only this year has a South African newspaper unearthed and disclosed the story that, five months before the election, Sigcau was presented by the South African Government with the gift of a farm, 2,630 morgen (almost 5,500 acres). No explanation of the gift has been offered officially. The farm, formally valued at £5 per morgen is said by experts to be worth about £12 10s. per morgen on the open market.

With Matanzima thus installed in power by a combination of nominated chiefs and bought supporters, every aspect of Transkeian change is paltry and slow. It took until January 1966 before the zoning of all Transkeian towns for exclusive white occupation and ownership was cancelled. The cancellation applies to twenty-three towns, and in most of them only to designated portions of the town, not the whole. Port St. Johns, the most important town in the area, and the only port, is not included in the de-segregation, nor are the 11,000 morgen of land in the Port St. Johns area. Port St. Johns is to remain the domain of white South Africa, and so, too, the entire coast of the territory, no part of which will fall under the control of the Transkeian government.



THE BORDER ZONES

There is a startling contrast between growth of the economy in the Transkei and the growth of the white-owned, exclusively white-occupied areas on its borders. A new phrase has come into South African speech—‘the border areas’. This has a peculiarly South African meaning. Border areas are those on the *white* side of a Bantustan or African reserve only; the phrase does not apply to territory on the African side of the border. Nor does it apply only to the border of a sizeable area, a territory, province or region. It applies equally to the white area surrounding a single town, township or dormitory area set aside exclusively for African habitation. Since statistics generally do not distinguish between the Transkeian ‘border area’ and other border areas, the figures herein relate to both kinds. But in fact, such development as has taken place in border areas has been mainly on the borders of the Transkei-Ciskei area, and around three major white cities of Port Elizabeth, Pretoria and Durban.

By contrast with the pathetic record in the Transkei, border area industry between 1960 and 1966 grew by the capital investment of almost £90 million. It employed 52,000 people in jobs established in that period, of whom 41,000 were Africans—naturally drawn as migrant or commuting labour from ‘across the border’. In that period, state aid established eighty-eight new industrial undertakings, and assisted in the expansion of fifty-seven more. Fifty-two industries started without state aid. Reporting this, the ‘Permanent Committee for the Location of Industry and the Development of Border Areas’ says: ‘The committee is not aware of all new industries and expansions. Secondary activities such as construction, business undertakings and the provision of services which usually accompany primary employment and usually provide additional employment for twice as many other persons should be taken into account’. Dr. Diederichs, the responsible minister, estimates that ‘border industries provide a means of livelihood for 115,000 Bantu in “homelands”.’

‘The homelands had not yet reached the stage where they were able to sustain a reasonably high standard of living. . . . Developments in border areas, however, showed a satisfactory picture. . . .’ (4.4.66.)

There is no need to mince words about this. The ‘homelands’ policy of coralling as many Africans as possible into exclusive African areas—of which the Transkei is the most grandiose and advanced but not unique—has a single simple purpose. That is to provide reservoirs of cheap labour for white industrial development. The contrast between Transkeian stagnation and border growth is not accidental. It is part

of the whole *raison d'être* for the Bantustan policy, and explains fully the rigid South African Government determination not to permit any 'white'—that is to say non-Transkeian—capital into the territory for investment or development purposes. White South African capital and state development funds are to be channelled into white South Africa. While the Transkei stagnates, therefore, the state Electricity Supply Commission (E.S.C.O.M.) has spent £17 million in the past six years in establishing power stations in the border areas. The state Water Affairs Department has approved schemes to the total of £16 million in water conservancy, irrigation and reticulation. Private capital has also been poured in, and for the period for which figures are available—1961 to 1964, it is estimated that £20 million was invested in new border industries, and a further £6 million in extensions to existing industries; government investment in the same period amounted to £6½ million. Some measure of border development can be gauged then from the available figures for state investment, which it can be assumed have continued at proportionately much the same rate in the later period.

THE NEW MONOPOLIES

What sort of development is this border industry? On the whole it is large, often very large industry, and quite a considerable part of it foreign-owned. Britain's Cyril Lord has established a large textile factory in a border area; Japan's Datsu Nissan has a £1¼ million vehicle assembly and manufacturing plant in another. In the Northern Transvaal area of Potgietersrust, a border area surrounded by African reserves, Mr. Kuschke of the State Industrial Development Corporation when opening a £3.7 million farm implement plant told the assembled audience—white—'According to the 1960 census there are 160,000 Africans in the Potgietersrust area, and 'not less than one million in surrounding areas. . . . This labour force provides a basis for large-scale industrial development in the area'. Figures given by the Minister in reply to a question in Parliament in February 1965 showed that the Industrial Development Corporation had advanced the following sums to industrialists in border areas:

	advances	value
For lease and purchase of factories:	34	£5.9 m.
Loans for equipment and working capital;	39	7.5 m.
Other financial aid:	18	5.6 m.

This gives an average of over £200,000 aid per enterprise. It must be rated not just absolutely, but also relative to the aid given by the state 'Bantu Investment Corporation' to African entrepreneurs in

the 'homelands'. In reply to a question by Mrs. Helen Suzman, the Minister told Parliament (26.3.65) that the loans granted by the B.I.C. in 1964 numbered forty-two, total value £225,000—an average of just over £5,000. Averages are perhaps misleading. Yet by contrast, it is reported that in the Northern Transvaal alone, fifteen industrial enterprises in border areas had received Government loans of £7.7 million, an average for each of more than twice the year's total advance from the Bantu Investment Corporation to all African businessmen.

The attractions of the border industries are much more than the mere financial assistance which is available to white entrepreneurs, and the presence of a plentiful labour supply. Every encouragement is given, special rates of taxation, specially favourable terms for power and water supply, specially favourable rates for rail transportation of goods. But above all, specially favourable wage rates. The border areas, lying well outside the established strongholds of trade unions, are deliberately excluded from the operations of industrial agreements and wage-and-condition legislation which apply in the main towns. Wages of Africans employed in what is officially designated a 'border area' clothing factory a few miles outside Durban are 28 per cent lower than those laid down by statutory industrial agreement in Durban itself. In a sewing machine factory wages are reported to be 'lower than in Japan'. (*Star*, 14.5.65.) The Japanese motor and truck assembly plants established outside Port Elizabeth and Pretoria in designated 'border areas' pay to coloured assembly line workers wages of less than £12 10s. per week; on this basis they have managed in a few years to capture one-third of the lorry market, and one-half of the light truck market. In the King William's Town area, where an industrial council—a statutory body composed of equal numbers of representatives of workers and employers—twice recommended an agreed wage for textile workers, there are two 'border area' factories. Twice the Minister of Labour refused to promulgate the agreement, and changed its terms to permit border area factories to pay 20 per cent less than the standard rate elsewhere. Figures issued by the Trade Union Council of South Africa (T.U.C.S.A.) show that some of the border area workers receive only half the wages paid for the same job in nearby towns, work a forty-five-hour week against the town's forty, and have shorter holidays or no holidays at all.

It is to keep this capitalist paradise staffed that the Bantustan policy exists. The African workers will commute, daily, from impoverished and stagnating 'homelands', to work in white enterprises in the 'border areas'. It is of this employer paradise that the South African Government propaganda paints an idyllic picture. But not everyone is deceived, even in the South African Parliament.

Mr. Hughes: Could the Minister tell us what transport facilities are available to Africans living in the Transkei to go to work every day?

The Minister: The honourable member must please give notice of that question.

Mr. Plewman: Arising out of the Minister's reply, will he please tell the house whether the government has any intention of establishing an industry for the manufacture of seven-league boots?

The question might well be asked. It is, unfortunately, not very funny. There is nothing worth while being spent on seven-league boots or any other form of transport in the Transkei. The plan is rather different. The people are being moved bodily from the places where they now live to new villages, set up close to the white borders—but not across them. Thus, of the £57 million earmarked for the development of all African areas under Verwoerd's so-called 'five-year plan', £42.5 million is to be spent on the establishment of new rural townships.

Thus Verwoerd's new deal for the African inhabitants of South Africa. It is this path on which Vorster will lead South Africa. Verwoerd managed to cover the reality of it with clouds of words, promises and visions. But for Vorster, camouflage is no longer possible. The Transkei stands as living testimony to the way the Bantustan policy works out in fact. Truth—like murder—must out.