

BANTUSTANS — FACT OR FALLACY?

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(By courtesy of the "Rand Daily Mail")

IT is commonly known that the Government bases its whole racial policy on the creation of African homelands which are to be politically and economically so strong that they can ultimately become independent states. Responsible leaders of the National Party have always said that no individual or group can permanently be denied full political and economic rights, and the policy of separate development must consequently be judged by its ability to provide these rights. If it cannot provide them, the policy must collapse and should therefore be rejected before it is too late.

IN this article I shall discuss those two facets. Can the African homelands become independent political units and can these units be economically viable?

There are 160 separate reserves in South Africa. Obviously there cannot be 160 independent states, and a look at the map of the African areas as supplied by the Tomlinson Report makes it equally obvious that the majority of these isolated reserves cannot be incorporated into larger units. That immediately disposes of these territories. Under the policy of separate development they can never enjoy full political rights.

The only areas which can remotely be taken into account as possible future states are (i) the Transkei, (ii) Zululand, (iii) the Ciskei, (iv) the territory in the far north-east of the Transvaal inhabited by the Venda in the west, the Tsonga in the east and by a Sothu-speaking tribe in the south, and (v) the scattered areas in the Western Transvaal, inhabited by Africans who belong historically, linguistically and culturally to the same complex as the people of Bechuanaland.

No Zulustan

A Bantustan has already been established in the Transkei, and for argument's sake we shall accept the possibility that it can become politically viable.

In Zululand the possibility of a Zulustan can be ruled out, and that seems to be the impression in official circles also. There are several reasons why this is so. In the first place, otherwise than in the Transkei, the chiefs are unwilling to co-operate.

During the first half of 1963 the council of chiefs was asked by the Government to co-operate in the first steps towards the establishment of a Zulustan. But they made their co-operation conditional on a referendum of all the Zulu people on the issue.

Upon that the Government dropped the matter like a hot brick, and soon afterwards it was officially announced that for the present no further Bantustans were being envisaged. Other factors may have played a part in the decision, but one feels that if the Government had been sure that the rank and file of Africans were favourably disposed towards separate development, it would have seized the opportunity to demonstrate this fact to the world by a referendum of the people concerned. It therefore obviously realizes that the Africans do not want separate development.

But a second and far more potent reason why there can never be a Zulustan is that the reserves in Natal are scattered from the Portuguese border in the north right down to the Cape border in the south. Large-scale consolidation of territories would have been necessary, involving the expropriation of vast and costly White-owned land, and this would have meant the isolation of the whole Natal coastal strip from the rest of the country.

The Tomlinson Report in fact states that separate development cannot be implemented without

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such consolidation. It says: "Save for a few blocks such as the Transkei and Vondaland, the Bantu areas are so scattered that they form no foundation for community growth." (Page 181, section 13 of the report.)

Consolidation would entail vast purchases of White-owned land, and the Government has already said that no further land will be bought for Africans beyond the 1936 arrangements. The inevitable conclusion is that the Government has no intention of establishing Bantustans in the scattered areas.

No further Bantustan

That immediately also disposes of the reserves in the Western Transvaal. In fact, the Tomlinson Report made it clear that separate development in this area would be possible only if Bechuana-land were joined to South Africa or at least large portions of it ceded to us. In the present international atmosphere that possibility can be ruled out, and in any case it would have required large purchases of White-owned land in order to incorporate large isolated reserve blocks.

The Ciskei has not been seriously considered as a Bantustan. It is less than a quarter of the size of the Transkei and has about one fifth of the population of that territory. Its natural resources are small. The Tomlinson Report recommended that the Ciskei be incorporated into the Transkei, but that has not been done, and in view of its isolated situation it could hardly be done.

That leaves only the area in the Northern Transvaal. Actually there are five large and a number of smaller reserves in this region, but vast tracts of White-owned land would have to be bought up in case of consolidation, and this the Government will not do. Not one single reserve is large enough to be viable. The largest block is the one inhabited by the Venda-Tsongo-Sothu groups, but the independence of this small, heterogeneous area is unthinkable.

The Tomlinson Commission was well aware that the Transkei was the only possible Bantustan within the present map of South Africa, and it recommended "the legislative declaration of all European areas and Crown lands which may be

No right-thinking person who has made a study of all that "separate development" involves can deny that it entails injustice, cruelty, unbrotherliness, the refusal to accord human dignity to our fellows, superiority, and group selfishness.—Rev. S. P. Freeland.



"Phew! For a moment there I thought the Volkswil was going to turn out to be the Volkswon't!"

David Marais (*Cape Times*)

situated within the (proposed consolidated) Bantustans as Bantu exchange land, and of all the Bantu areas outside the seven (proposed consolidated) blocks as European exchange land." (Page 162 section 30 of Report.) It also recommended the exchange of White spots in the Transkei for Black spots in Natal.

In other words, except for the Transkei, no further Bantustan is possible without vast and arbitrary population resettlements involving Whites as well as Blacks and the purchase of large tracts of land, and involving also the annexation of British territories. These conditions are so unlikely that they scarcely merit argument. They are either against stated Government policy or against international reality.

The mountain laboured . . .

The whole grandiose plan, for the foreseeable future, affects only the 1,380,000 people of the Transkei, and they are only 13 per cent. of the total African population of the country. When Government leaders and Nationalist supporters talk of full political self-determination for Africans in their own areas they are referring, in reality, only to one-eighth of the Africans. The other seven eighths are excluded.

The granite mountain of separate development has been in labour, and this is the mouse that has been born. If it is true what Government spokesmen say — and I agree completely with them — that we cannot indefinitely deny political rights to individuals or groups, the problem of ten million Africans and of two million Coloureds and Indians remains unanswered and untouched.

In the sphere of political self-determination for Africans, Coloureds and Indians, the policy of separate development has reached the end of its tether. It has produced the Transkei and it can produce no more. Its one asset is the Transkeian shop window. There will, so far as can be seen, be no further Bantustans. What of its promises in the economic field?

Two vital recommendations

The Tomlinson Report made several points very clear, and the most important was that the development of the reserves only in the primary sector — agriculture, forestry and mining — would not meet the case. "Planning in the primary sector will make possible a collective carrying capacity (of all the reserves) of about 2.4m — agriculture 2.1m, forestry 0.16m and mining 0.1m." (Page 179, section 10 of Report). This means that if development were to be limited to this sector, the reserves could hold about one-fifth of the present African population of South Africa, and what is more, hold them in a backward, subsistence and peasant economy. For the other four fifths there would be no livelihood in the reserves, let alone an economic future.

The second point made clear by the Report is that secondary industry would have to be established in the Reserves at a rapid rate. "The most important factor involved is that work will have to be provided for 20,000 Bantu annually (in the reserves) in secondary industry." (page 184, section 6). For this, White capital and participation would be essential, the report states.

The Government has rejected these two vital recommendations.

A crippling blow

No private investment from outside the reserves is allowed, and the Government has limited its own investment in the area almost entirely to agricultural development. But even if such agricultural development should reach its optimum (and in fact little enough has been done even here), all the reserves in South Africa together would offer a livelihood to at most a little under two and a half million Africans. This figure will naturally become a decreasing proportion as the total African population of South Africa increases. Towards 1980, for example, there would still be at most 2.4 million Africans in the reserves, and about 13.5 million in the White-owned areas, mostly the cities.

. . . OF SLIPS AND CLUES AND KNEELING BLACKS, AND LITTLE TRANSKEI KINGS . . .

by MARGARET ORPEN

(Sunday Times)

"WON'T you walk a little Vorster?" said
the Waring to the Nel,
"There's a Keevy just behind me looking for
a Poqo cell.
My Ministry has got to get its information
out
On Freedom in the Transkei that we hear so
much about.
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you give
the facts to me,
For suitable adjustment for our friends across
the sea?"

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"It's no good asking me, you know," Nel
peevishly replied
"I can't be held responsible for what goes on
inside.
Describe the happy voters in their pretty
tribal dress
(Whose multiracial tendencies, of course, you
must suppress).
In fact, just tell the doubting World, in
letters big and bold,
They're absolutely free to do exactly as
they're told!"

[With apologies to Lewis Carroll]

To understand more clearly what a crippling blow the Government dealt the economic life of the reserves when it limited development there to the agricultural sector and refused entry to capital from outside, one need think only what the situation in say the Transvaal or Free State would have been if, after the Anglo-Boer War, Britain had prohibited the entry of all investment capital into the two provinces. Our development would have been crippled. The situation in the reserves is much worse, since there is no previous development to build on.

To see what the result of this restrictive policy has been, one can turn to the Transkei, which is regarded as the most developed of the African reserves.

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In a booklet recently published by the State Information Department it is said that there are 64 secondary industry units in the Transkei with a gross output of R1,591,000 per annum. That means a *per capita* output of about one rand per annum, which is of course negligible. But an analysis of these "units" shows that they are services rather than industries. They include dry-cleaners, bakeries, grain mills, and smithies. They are almost exclusively White-owned. There is one sizeable furniture factory in Umtata.

In the field of agriculture the picture is as dreary. Government publications say that the annual yield of field crops in the Transkei is 1,708,000 bags of mealies, 58,000 bags of kaffir-corn, 1,000 bags of winter cereals and 24,000 bags of legumes. When one divides that by the number of inhabitants, it works out to a *per capita* yield of slightly more than a bag of mealies, nine pounds weight of kaffir-corn, a few ounces of winter cereals and about four pounds of legumes per annum. The value of the gross annual income from this source would be about R9 per person per annum.

As second largest source of income the booklet mentions sales of livestock, which in 1960 yielded R329,000. That gives a gross annual income per person per annum of less than 25 cents.

Starvation economy

Further statistical data supplied by the State Information Office show that there are in the Transkei 2,200,000 sheep, yielding about 4,335,000 lb. of wool per annum, and 1,014,000 goats, yielding 58,000 lb. of mohair, which means an average per person of less than two sheep and less than four lb. of wool, less than one goat and less than one ounce of mohair per person per annum. There are also 76,000 horses and 515,000 pigs in the Transkei, giving each Transkeian the produce and use of one eighteenth part of a horse and less than half a pig. There is also a dairy scheme which yielded R16,000 in 1960, giving an annual income per person of one cent.

The only other territorial income is from wages paid for workers on agricultural development, but this has no future industrial significance, except for agriculture. At its optimum it will allow 2.4 million Africans to subsist in all the reserves together, which means about 600,000 people in the Transkei, as against its present population of 1,380,000.

We hear of large African towns being built. There is nothing of that in the Transkei, since these towns are nothing more than the African townships around our cities to house workers. The only difference is that they are built on tiny reserves near the cities instead of on White territory, as is the case with, say, Meadowlands. They are meant for border industries. The main ones are Garankuwa in Pretoria North, Kwa-Mashu near Durban, the one planned for Slangspruit near Pietermaritzburg, and the one in the reserve at the very gates of East London. Such towns have not the slightest bearing on the economic development of the Transkei or of any of the main reserves.

In this starvation economy one could wonder how to explain the information given us in this Government booklet that there are 700 Bantu businesses in the Transkei. Where do the Transkeians get the money from with which to buy?

Migrant labour

The answer is indirectly given in the booklets themselves. We are told that private corporations and Government bureaux annually recruit 160,000 Africans from the Transkei alone to work in the White cities. That means 11.5% of the population. We do not know how many escape over the borders and enter the White areas illegally, but the fact is that the Transkei is wholly dependent on the proceeds of migrant labour. The effect of Government policy is a complete absence of industrial employment in the reserves. When the young Transkeian is eighteen years old he either has to leave his homeland or else see himself and his family starve. The policy of separate development, far from being an instrument to bring Africans back to their homelands, is in effect a compulsion on them to leave it.

Futile policy of separate development

That is the answer to those who speak of Africans serving their people in their own areas as skilled workers or leaders. That is how futile this policy of separate development is. It is definitely not separate, since it compels the African to leave his own area and come to the cities. Neither is it development, since by the embargo on investment capital industrialisation is made impossible.

That is the philosophy on the basis of which more and more people flock to the polls in support of the present Government. That is the background against which the much-vaunted Transkei elections should be seen.