
Homelands for One-Sixth

Bantustans mean too little money for developments which benefit only one-sixth of South Africa's compulsorily segregated Bantu-speaking people. The system defies the Republic's true economic needs.

FRANCIS WILSON

THIS YEAR WITH the implementation of the Transkei Constitution Act the Transkeian Territorial Authority becomes a Parliament and reverts to the pre-1951 Bunga system where not all the members are Government appointed, but a certain number (45 out of 109) are elected by the people. It is beyond the scope of this article to make a political analysis of the precise power of this new Parliament but in economic matters it would seem to have no more power than a Provincial Council. This Parliament or Legislative Assembly shall have no power over; military matters; arms manufacture; diplomatic affairs; police; communications (postal, radio, roads, aviation etc.); immigration; customs and excise; and public finance.

However, some months before the passing of the Transkei Constitution Act the Government of the Republic put into operation their new five-year plan for the economic development of the Bantustans, for which R114 million has been voted, R40 million of it to go to the Ciskei and Transkei. Copies of the plan are not available to the general public but it is known that most of the money is to be spent on soil conservation, fencing, irrigation and development of timber and other cash crops. Already in the Transkei many miles of fencing have been erected and the area planted under pine timber is expanding rapidly. The Government says that it is trying to Africanise the Forestry Department as fast as it thinks is possible.

Furthermore, the Betterment Schemes on which the Government is pinning much of its hope for the development of the Bantustans aim, in the words of a senior agriculture officer, 'to create a class of peasant farmers who will be employed full-time on their farms and who will earn all their income from this work'. The Government agricultural officers are in fact working hard to change a society from communal subsistence agriculture to ultimate free-hold peasant farming. Certainly in the betterment areas the land is looking infinitely better than it did even two years ago.

The expenditure and hard work sound impressive and lend strength to the argument that the Bantustan scheme may after all be the solution to our problems.

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To assess the significance of this proposed development, I shall criticise the plan first of all from within the Bantustan context itself and then, secondly, from within the overall economic and political picture of South Africa as a whole.

A basic practical criticism of the development plan is that the Government is not prepared to allow white entrepreneurs or white capital into any Bantustan. The Government emphasises its anxiety to protect people from exploitation and to give them the opportunity of developing entrepreneurial ability. Yet without capital and without people capable of ensuring that this capital is used to the best possible advantage no economy can develop. In South Africa the people at present most able, for various reasons, to make this particular contribution to economic development are the whites.

So much could be learned from the Gezira cotton scheme in the Sudan where European capitalists, the Sudanese Government, and the local peasants co-operated, each with clearly defined responsibilities and a share in the profits, in one of the most interesting and successful agricultural cash-crop enterprises in the world. The problem of course would be to find a really good cash-crop for the Transkei.

Another criticism is that while R114 million seems a lot of money it does not look so good when one remembers that this is for the economic development of 80% of our population over the next five years while in white areas the Government plans to spend R450 million on the Orange River Project and R1,500 million on such state-run enterprises as Iscor, Escom and Sasol. Admittedly much of this 'white' development will mean higher 'black' wages as well but African workers are only to be tolerated in these places so long as they are useful as workers.

Furthermore while much of the Transkei Development Plan looks commendable and has much in common with Nyasaland's Plan it is my belief that the psychology of development demands that people feel they are entirely responsible for their own plan. Nyasalanders are likely to listen to what Dr. Banda has to say about the necessity for hard work, drive and enthusiasm in order to develop their country because he is their chosen leader. The citizens of the Transkei are not likely to listen to what Mr. de Wet Nel or Chief Kaizer Matanzima have to say because these men are not their chosen leaders and the people have no country which they may call their own.

The most important criticism of the development plan is summed up in the words of one of the senior agriculturalists in the Transkei who said to me: "Even when the land is fully developed and peasant farming is properly established the agriculture of the Transkei will only be able to support one-third of the people at present living here." As the Transkei contains some of the best farm land in the Republic we may assume this figure to be equally true of other Bantustans. Thus we have the remarkable fact that unless important industries can be established in these areas the Bantu homelands will only provide a living for one-third—let us say one-half to allow for bus drivers, tax collectors, cobblers, traders etc.—of those living there. But we know from the latest census that only one-third of the African population of South Africa actually lives

in the "Reserves". In other words this much publicised economic development of the Bantustans will ultimately only provide work and incomes for one half of one-third—that is one-sixth of the population whose homelands these are supposed to be.

The Government reply to these criticisms is that this is exactly why they are developing border industries. White capitalists are free to develop these while the black labour lives close enough to avoid upsetting the whole political structure of the country if it works there. While, for social reasons, one fully supports as much decentralisation of the economy as is possible and welcomes the development of such places as Pine-town, East London and Port Elizabeth, yet one must point out that border industries have their limitations. It is not clear how many industrialists contemplating building a new factory would choose East London in preference to Cape Town or the Reef even if he were offered cheap sites and, perhaps, subsidised transport. Certainly the manager of one of the biggest border industries said to me that if he was starting again he would never start a border industry because the main market for his product was on the Reef and the transport costs of getting the finished product from the factory to the consumer were much too high for his goods to be really competitive. This would not be true of all factories but certainly does limit the extent to which such places as East London can develop.

Furthermore even if sufficient industry was developed near East London this would not be of much comfort to the man living on half an economic unit near Umtata, 150 miles away. Must he move to town and only see his family during his annual holiday or when he can afford the time and money to make a 300 mile journey by bus? Or if he is allowed to take his family to town with him and is fortunate enough to get a house to live in of what use is Transkei Independence to him then?

BUT OUR CRITICISM OF Bantustan goes much deeper than some minor criticisms of the five-year agricultural plan: it is intimately bound up with the whole economic development of South Africa—particularly since the discovery of diamonds in 1867, which marks our birth as an industrial nation.

Economically South Africa is the most advanced country in Africa but like the rest of the continent she is in the midst of an industrial revolution similar to those through which North America, Western Europe, Russia, and Japan have passed. Marx and Keynes have taught us that the most powerful forces behind this revolution are economic but it would be true to say that in Africa these economic forces are being greatly strengthened by social, religious and political forces as well. In any industrial revolution towns grow in size while more and more people move off the land into urban factories. With the development of agricultural techniques fewer people are able to produce more food and, as the demand for food does not increase much faster than the increase in population, the people no longer needed for food-production have to produce other things which people want, e.g. clothes, motor-cars and gramophone records. In 'under-developed' countries anything between 80-100%, of the people live

in rural areas while in the most economically 'developed' countries only 20% of the people will live on farms while the other 80% live in towns or cities.

South Africa is no exception: as the economy developed, the industrial areas grew in size while more and more people moved off the land. A hundred years ago Johannesburg did not exist: today, because of gold, more than a million people live there on one of the most densely populated spots on earth. The other industrial areas—Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban—have developed where they did mainly because the cheap transport by sea enabled them to start as trading towns. Most of the big cities of the world are situated near the sea or on some big navigable river. The point is that, apart from certain developments in the Free State because of the new gold-fields, the industrial areas of South Africa are fixed and people must move to the factories: seldom are the factories able to move to the people. Only if gold, oil or some other valuable mineral is discovered in the Bantustans will they become economically viable with their present populations. The development of South Africa has been absolutely dependent on the movement of labour to the big cities.

After the First World War as the South African industrial revolution gathered momentum thousands of 'poor-whites' moved off the land to become urban workers in the cities of the Republic. After the Second World War thousands more men, this time 'poor-blacks' moved from country to town. This movement continues at an even greater pace today: between 1951 and 1960 the population of Johannesburg increased from 884,000 to 1,111,000 the major increase having been in the African sector. In Port Elizabeth the White population increased from 79 to 95 thousand while the Black population increased from 65 to 114 thousand. The same trend is visible in all the other cities of the Republic and will continue in this direction, as more and more people, of all races, move off the land into the industrial areas. South Africa is already far advanced along the road towards having a fully integrated economy.

But Bantustan Policy theoretically wishes to reverse this whole trend. If the Government means what it says it would ultimately like to see all the 11 million Africans in this country living in the Bantu Homelands. Does the Government wish all these people to work there? If so who is going to man the industrial economy of the country? If not does the Government envisage a permanent migratory labour system?

It is not a coincidence that with the passing of the Transkei Constitution Act the Government has introduced a Bantu Laws Amendment Bill which even in its latest 'moderate' form ensures that very few Africans have a right to live in any town. In fact the Black man will only be tolerated in town as long as his labour is needed, but his wife, his children, his hopes and his aspirations must confine themselves to a 'home-land' which is perhaps 500 miles away. In Paarl the ratio of African men to women is 4:1; in Langa 8:1 while a survey of the Keiskammahoek district in the Ciskei showed that amongst the people between 20 and 45 years old the women outnumbered the men by at least 2 to 1. But the Bantustan dream is used to

justify this system of migratory labour, which is inseparably part of the whole structure of Apartheid. Migratory labour is socially disastrous, economically stupid and morally rotten and yet it is the lynch-pin of Government policy.

But opponents of the Government are told that in spite of the difficulties Apartheid, Bantustan or 'eiesoortige ontwikkeling' is the only solution of an almost insoluble problem. After all Africans in the South have a better standard of living than anywhere else in Africa and relations between White masters and their Black servants are in many cases good. But our opposition to 'Separate Development' goes deeper than this:

Moçambique Writing

RICHARD RIVE

WHEN SETTING OUT on a Farfield Foundation Fellowship to study literary trends in Africa I received information from many authorities that very little if anything was happening up the East Coast. I was told that only two people in Kenya were writing short stories, and that besides that there was nothing else.

It was therefore with a sense of hopelessness that I arrived in the pleasant and remarkably clean capital of Moçambique, Lourenço Marques. I was pleasantly surprised to find that there was a fever of literary activity, that writers were writing, and arguments were raging and that there was a flourish of creative work.

Lourenço Marques wears a façade of prosperity, well-being and stability highly conducive to literary production. I was soon disillusioned. I saw more soldiers, both black and white, in the streets than I had ever come across in South Africa. Security Police and spies were everywhere. South Africa it is said is a frightened country. Moçambique is a cautious and frightened province. Portugal uses strong-arm methods in order to establish compliance and submission, and this self-conscious feudalistic approach makes for a stultification in free expression.

An incongruity in South African policy is the fact that very seldom if ever is creativity in art forms ever stifled because it is critical of situations. In fact the only literature from the Republic which has any guarantee of selling abroad are works highly critical of the regime. I couldn't imagine a highly successful pro-apartheid novel or poem. Writers openly attack the system, are published and are read both inside and outside the Republic. Internal censorship has temporarily had to retreat before public opinion. In Moçambique things are different. Here the writer is suspect if he becomes critical of the status quo. He can

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perhaps it can be summed up best in the words of the old Chinese proverb: 'To feed a man without loving him is to treat him like a pig; To love a man without respecting him is to treat him like a house-hold pet.'

While one may commend the development of agriculture and industry taking place in the Bantustans one must realise that this by itself will solve no problems. In fact so long as Bantustan is used as an excuse to avoid tackling realistically the economic and political problems of this country it must be condemned as the fraud that it is. The future of South Africa lies not in the country districts but in the cities: and the sooner white South Africans realise this, the better. ●

be subject to interrogation, arrest, jailing, and having his works confiscated. The atmosphere is stifling for free expression and the mass of activity in spite of this is encouraging and remarkable.

The most important poet in Moçambique, and one of great standing in the local literary world is Jose Creaverinha, a Coloured man. Born in Lourenço Marques in 1922 he received the benefits of a very limited education, and is essentially self-taught. Speaking to him through an interpreter I realised that this was a man of high intellectual grasp, expressive in language and strongly feeling his Colouredism. His knowledge of Portuguese literature is phenomenal, and his use of language strong and forceful. He finds his inspiration in everyday happenings and recreates out of this rich imagery and symbolism.

In his poem "Latitude Zero" he deplores the fact that the house of his dead mother, has been broken down at the discretion of the landowner, and in its place is a desecration of all that his ancestors had stood for.

Listen to his plaintive tones when he speaks of the past,

In this place, where the father of your father's father
In sunshine and rain
Through two moons of work
Had built it (the house of reed walls) up.

He continues,

And where your grave lies, mother,
Under the Mafura trees bowed down by golden fruit,
Where beer fermented for the mass of Madala Matsinhe
Walls of cement now heavily weigh.

His bitterness reaches a climax when he says,

Registered in the lines of a plan
In the deeds office of the district,
Sleep your perpetual sleep, mother,
... today it is (that) this house of reed walls
And 35 plants of the manioca
Are crushed by the threads of steel
Of the monster caterpillar of the concession owner.

He reaches the depths of his despair when he realises the hopelessness

In this 'Latitude Zero' of this plot of snakes and stones,
In this black reserve where now we live,
We, black men, black women,
Black children.

Moçambique poetry by no means always rests at this negative level of despair. Creaverinha himself writes in varying moods. The painter and poet Malngatana shoots a wry smile at the Magaiça, the Portuguese African who goes to work in the South African mines, and spending all his money on some South African moll, comes back empty-handed, and is forced to work