

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

JCB-6
Independence for the Transkei

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29 Bay View Avenue
Tamboer's Kloof
Cape Town, South Africa

Mr. Richard Nolte
Institute of Current World Affairs
366 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York



Presiding Chief
Kaizer Matanzima,
the probable first
Prime Minister of
the Transkei.

Dear Mr. Nolte:

Last Tuesday, January 23rd, the third day of the 1962 Parliamentary session, the Prime Minister, in a two and one half hour reply to the Opposition's motion of no confidence, announced that South Africa's largest Bantustan was to be given independence! Beginning with a new democratically-oriented constitution, drafted in consultation with Xhosa leaders, the Transkei would be helped toward full self-government.

Through the efforts of South Africa's expanding and increasingly important Information Service (it was recently raised to cabinet status), the Prime Minister's announcement was publicized in full page ads in major New York, London, and Continental newspapers, in a special film about the Transkei released in the United States and Great Britain to coincide with the announcement, and in prime-time radio broadcasts for local consumption with influential South Africans endorsing the new step. The Government obviously hopes that this positive-apartheid plan will lessen criticism at home and abroad.

Reaction, Black and White

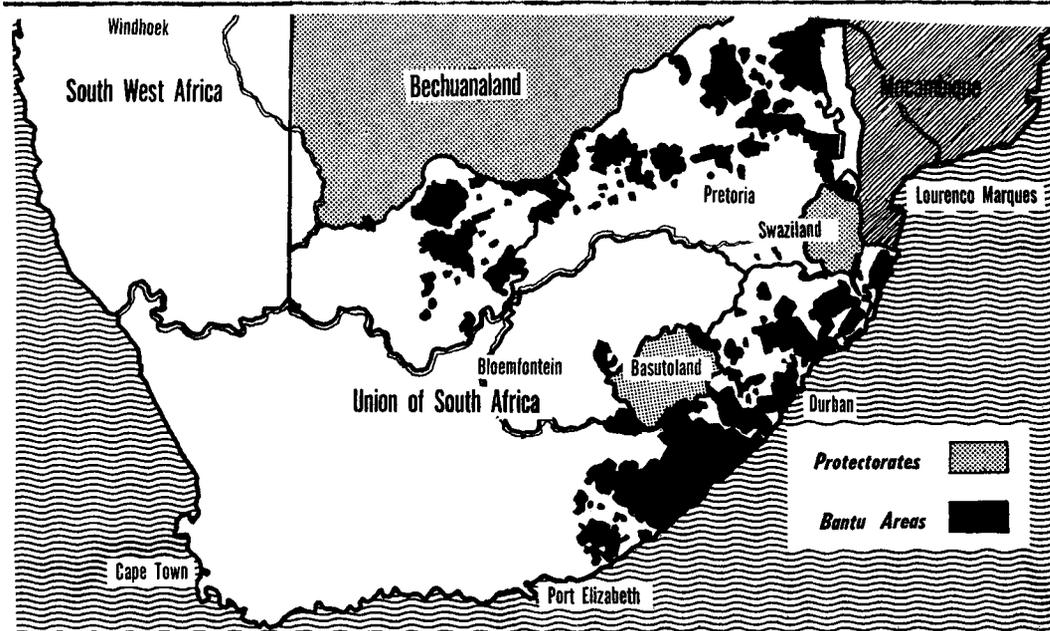
On Tuesday a group of 300 Xhosa were gathered in Umtata, the Transkei's Administrative Capital, to hear the news from the European Chief Magistrate, Mr. V.M.P. Liebbrandt, and from their Presiding Chief, Kaizer Matanzima. The Chief said, "To us this day is a day of jubilation. Self-determination is assured within the next decade.....It reflects the honesty of the Government."

While Paramount Chief Victor Poto, one of the Transkei's most powerful chiefs, was also pleased with the announcement and said it would bring peace to the Transkei

since all the people wanted self-government, other Xhosas were more reserved in their comments. Some of those interviewed in urban areas (outside the Transkei) thought it was wonderful news, but most seemed to eye it with varying degrees of suspicion and distrust. One senior school teacher perhaps expressed as well as anyone why many of them could not accept the news more wholeheartedly. "Our people do not want independence in the sense of being isolated in a small state within a state. What we want is equal opportunity in our own homeland, which is South Africa as a whole, not just the Transkei."

However, among the White population, the reaction has been generally 'wait and see'. Anti-Government newspapers, while quibbling about its moral basis, have begrudgingly admitted that it might be a step forward. Sir de Villiers Graaf, Leader of the Opposition, has given it his support provided the Government will refrain from giving the Transkei total independence, but instead work to keep it in the Republic.

The Nationalist press, of course, considers it a bold positive step that should please the African and give courage to the European. Dawie, a political columnist for Die Burger, sees the plan as a calculated risk demanded by



Map of Southern Africa showing the African Reserves which, under the Government plan will eventually become eight independent Bantustans.

present conditions, but not inconsistent with the policy the Nationalists have successfully defended in every election since, and including, 1948. They have made it clear that they stand for a policy of separate development and that they have fully intended to develop independent Bantu states as a logical extension of their policy.

Where Did It Begin?

In the Bantu Authority Act of 1951, the Government established the principle of "Bantu control over Bantu areas, as and when it becomes possible for them to exercise that control efficiently and properly for the benefit of their own people." It also provided that local self-government in the reserves should be based on the African's own tribal system.

The Promotion of Bantu Self Government Bill of 1959 carried the plan further, first by removing European representatives for African areas from Parliament, and then by officially recognizing eight Bantu Territorial Units (Bantustans) in which Africans, united on the basis of a common language and culture, were to work toward self-government.

The Transkei became the first formally constituted Bantustan in 1959. The territorial government was changed from a semi-elected one (the Bunga), in which the Xhosas had participated for some 60 years, to one based on the authority of tribal chiefs.



Mr. Daan de Wet Nel, Minister of Bantu Administration, promised at the time the Transkeian Territorial Authority was installed, that the Transkei would be given independence in a reasonable time...."once the administrative machinery is established." He told a group of White Transkeian businessmen that this "reasonable time" would be at least several generations. However, his idea of the time necessary has been radically shortened by events in the last two years.

Mr. Daan de Wet Nel

Increased world opinion opposed to apartheid has brought pressure upon the Government to prove its case, and increased dissatisfaction with the Bantu Authority in the Transkei, which led to violence and terrorism in Pondoland, moved some Chiefs to press harder and earlier for Transkeian independence.

A motion about independence was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Transkeian Territorial Authority in Umtata last April. It said "...in view of the Government's policy of separate development and the fact that the Bantu people in the Union have no representation in the Union legislature, (a) this Territorial Authority in session respectfully requests the Government to declare the Transkeian Territories as a whole a self-governing state under the control of the Bantu people, (b) that arrangements for the drawing up of the relative constitution be made by the authorities in consultation with the leaders of the Bantu people in the Transkeian Territories; and (c) that this item be given priority..."

The Prime Minister said last Tuesday that it was out of the consideration of this request that the Government had decided to give self-government to the Transkei. A five year plan to this effect will begin as soon as possible.

First of all, he said, "we will grant the Transkei a new constitution which will create a Parliament and a Cabinet of Ministers, based on the principles of Western democracy... It will be a wholly Black Parliament and Cabinet, since White inhabitants will have no political rights there, but will exercise their vote in the Republic of South Africa.



The Bunga Building - Bantu Parliament of the Transkei at Umtata

"Powers to be entrusted...will be substantial and will increase as their organization becomes capable of undertaking the remaining duties.

"Presumably control over Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare services, Lands, Roads, and Local Authorities will be placed under their jurisdiction immediately.

"External Affairs, Defence and certain aspects of the administration of Justice will for the time remain the responsibility of the Republic."

The Republic will collect the taxes from Transkeians within and outside the Territory, and will give this money, and other sums necessary to run the various departments to the Territory to administer. In addition, it will give up to 2 million rand (about 3½ million dollars) per year to help with the cost of expansion. Outside capital will be encouraged to invest in border industry (as of now, no private investment by Whites is allowed in the Transkei, but Dr. Verwoerd has intimated that the Bantu may soon be allowed to invite White investment)¹.

Resources for Statehood

The Transkei's greatest resource for statehood is its some 200 college-educated professional people, some of whom are chiefs like Matanzima, who has a B.A. from Fort Hare University. Others work in law and Government administrative offices, or teach school, or are clergymen or missionaries. There are a few businessmen. Two hundred may not seem a significant number in proportion to the Transkei's internal population of one and one half million, but compared to the number of college graduates in many of Africa's newly independent countries it is rich. I have been told it has enough talent to make up several competent Tanganyikan cabinets.

While this leadership and the potential agricultural richness of the land are encouraging, other facts present doubts about the extent of the Transkei's self-government. The first Transkeian Parliament and Cabinet will inherit problems of poverty, over-population and primitive conditions: little on which to build a self-sustaining economic and political democracy.

The Territory has:

A land area of 16,000 square miles, of which only one third is erosion-free.

About 82 people per square mile, many of them poverty-stricken, with almost all the able-bodied men working outside the Territory at one time or another in order to give minimum financial support to their families. These people

1. The tobacco millionaire, Anton Rupert, states that he can open a factory in Kuala Lumpur to manufacture his South African cigarettes, but not in the Transkei. On a 50-50 investment basis, he points out, his investment there would be more beneficial to the Bantu than those White trading stores and businesses now run for White profit only.

are in all stages of transition from primitive to urban.

Many herds of poor-quality cattle and sheep which are further encroaching on the already over-burdened land.

Two hundred miles of rugged sea coast with one possible navigable harbor for large ships (Port St. Johns) which is now clogged with sand and would have to be dredged.

One main tarred road running east and west. The other roads are gravel, rough at best and quite impassible in wet weather.

No through railway line. A line does run west from Umtata.

Slightly over 100 Africans who earned enough (according to 1958 figures) to pay an income tax.

A high percentage of illiteracy, although it is steadily decreasing.

Not enough schools, especially for those children past the first four grades. For this reason there is no compulsory education.

No University. There are some trade and agricultural schools, and teachers' colleges, but the University College for Xhosa-speaking Bantu is located at Fort Hare outside the Transkei.

A handful of semi-industries, including the forest industry and a lumber mill, which will probably be turned over to it by the South African Government.

A very few African-owned stores, bakeries, mills and butcheries, unless all those owned by the 15,000 Whites are purchased and turned over to the Xhosas.

Virtually no mineral resources. What little there is has not been developed.

Twenty two hospitals and medical clinics, most of which belong to church missions.

Eight municipal power stations and only four irrigation schemes.

A state of rivalry between the various tribes, with occasional fighting, as well as rivalries between those who cling to the old tribal authorities and those who advocate more individual freedom (often without the accompanying responsibility for others, as is found in the family tribal life).

How Independent Can Such a State Be?

The resources are few and the problems many. Progress will take time, talent and much money. Its development will be linked to the kind of economic arrangement it can make with South Africa. Initially, the Transkei's economy will be almost totally controlled by South Africa, and this may last for a very long time, until the Transkei can demonstrate its own financial self-sufficiency.

This raises the question of how independent the Transkei will actually be if it is controlled economically, militarily and, at least for a while, judicially. And how long will a semi-independent Transkei be patient with such control?

If the Transkei does gain total independence, it could very well be dominated by extremists of one kind or another. Xhosas from the Transkei now living outside its borders in the urban areas will supposedly have a franchise in their homeland. If their representation is proportional, then the balance of power in the Transkeian Government will be held by Xhosas who no longer live there, since more now live outside than inside. If, on the other hand, such representation is based on one member of Parliament from each urban area, legislation in the Transkei affecting the lives of the urban Xhosas will lie with the naturally more conservative and backward farmers. Neither case would bode well for the newly independent country.

And it is easy to conjecture, when looking at the map, about the probability of the Transkei in some kind of an alliance, if not a merger, with Basutoland, where the Communist Party operates openly. This would give Basutoland an access to the sea, and together these territories would make a great inroad into the center of South Africa. Here could be the heart of further political agitation against the South African Government.

However, it doesn't seem likely that the Transkei will ever exist as a fully independent political entity, with all its problems and lack of financial resources. It will have to rely on South Africa for help and accept the strings attached, unless help can be found elsewhere. And such help South Africa would do all it could to prevent.

Where Will it End - Eleven Prime Ministers?

Now that the South African Government has made it clear that it is serious about giving self-government to the Bantustans, the others will be making their requests in short order. Already Paramount Chief Cyprian Bheduzulu of the Zulus

has hailed independence for the Transkei as a precedent which will give the Zulus courage to ask for independence. If the Bantustan drive for independence is restrained, it could well be explosive. If carried out, however, it will result in a confusion of small insignificant African states each vying for a dominant place in the South African sun.

Unfortunately, an independent Transkei, or even eight or more self-governing Bantustans, will not really solve South Africa's racial problem. Even with all these separate states there will still be more Africans than Europeans in the remaining South Africa. The chart on the right shows that in the four largest cities the non-Whites outnumber the Whites, and this is true for all the urban areas.

The 1960 preliminary population census figures are as follows:

1.—Johannesburg :				3.—Durban :			
Whites ..	389,690	Whites ..	194,276	Bantu ..	204,071	Asiatics ..	231,385
Bantu ..	622,831	Bantu ..	204,071	Asiatics ..	231,385	Coloureds ..	25,638
Asiatics ..	27,069	Coloureds ..	25,638	Total ..	655,370		
Coloureds ..	56,951						
Total ..	1,096,541	Total ..	655,370				
2.—Cape Town :				4.—Pretoria :			
Whites ..	278,555	Whites ..	202,664	Bantu ..	202,359	Asiatics ..	7,805
Bantu ..	65,025	Bantu ..	202,359	Asiatics ..	7,805	Coloureds ..	7,225
Asiatics ..	9,134	Coloureds ..	7,225	Total ..	420,053		
Coloureds ..	365,475	Total ..	420,053				
Total ..	718,189						

The racial problem is many-sided, but it has grown in complexity because of the great and continuing migration of Africans to the city, something which even the Pass Law failed to stop. Even 15 years ago, according to the then-published Fagan Report, there were more Bantu outside the reserves than inside. Today there are at least 2 million Xhosas outside the Transkei, $\frac{1}{2}$ million more than there are inside.

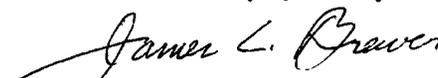
There is now talk of moving the Bantu out of the Cape and back to their native homelands. This is practically impossible. Not only are the Africans needed as laborers, but there is no room for them back in the Reserve.

It now appears that the Xhosas in the Transkei, most of whom are still living in past centuries, will be given "one man-one vote", a policy which the Government under other circumstances has strongly rejected. Meanwhile, the more Westernized and educated Xhosas outside the Transkei will have some kind of vote in the tribal land where they cannot live, but will continue without any political rights in the land where they have actually made their home - many, for a generation or more.

And where will be the homelands for the Indian and the Coloured, both of whom have also been promised self-government?

When independent Bantustans dot the landscape, and Prime Ministers abound, South Africa will remain what she was in the beginning, a multi-racial nation (only smaller). And because of that her problem will still be with her.

Sincerely yours,


James C. Brewer