

# Let's Talk about Bantustans

It is now almost ten years since the bantustan idea was practically introduced by the Nationalist Government as a lasting measure towards the solution of the "native problem". Of course the idea of territorial segregation in South Africa is an old one. It was in 1913 that Sauer, a supposed liberal Cabinet Minister in the then Government, first suggested the apportionment of parts of the country to accommodate the aspirations of the native population. In the many years that followed, the percentage allotted to natives varied until it was established in 1936 to the present 13%.

## Nations

What the Nationalists did under the "able" guidance of their theoretician, Verwoerd, was to convert the naked policy of wanton discrimination and segregation to the euphemistic "separate development" policy which "guaranteed" the eventual growth into complete sovereignty of eight bantustans or homelands which would be autonomous states to cater for the various "nations" that make up the South African native population.

At first the whole idea of separate development was rejected by the entire population, including elements of the Afrikaner camp. It was rejected by the liberals, Progressives, United Party, and naturally by the blacks. It was seen by the blacks naturally as a big fraud calculated to dampen the enthusiasm with which they picked the cudgels in the broader political fight for their rights in the country of their birth. People who took part in it were roundly condemned by everybody as sell-outs and Uncle Toms and nobody took them seriously. They were clearly seen as people who deliberately allowed themselves into an unholy collusion with the enemy.

In the white ranks, too, the idea was heavily criticised and seen as extremely immoral. However, as the *verligte* elements of the Afrikaner section began to show interest in the ideology, a number of people began to pay attention to the idea. This was boosted up mostly by the attack launched by *verligtes* on what they called "petty apartheid". Typical of opposition politics in this country, these *verligtes* were given

**The refinement of the centuries-old system of white settlerdom by the Nationalist government (from the creation of separate voters rolls in 1949 to the establishment of the tricameral parliament in 1984) encompasses the theory that South Africa comprises many "nations", each to be given its own homeland or bantustan. It is the intention of the regime to repatriate into these bantustans all Blacks who still live in white South Africa (87% of the land). This devilish scheme is based on the old Roman idea of "divide and rule". Hence the BCM has been resolute in its insistence on Black Solidarity and repossession of the land. This is encapsulated in its banner slogan "One People, One Azania, One Nation."**

a lot of support by the English press simply because of their small difference with the Nationalist staunch line. In the process, a lot of people began to see merit in the *verligte* view of separate development primarily because a number of newspapers had changed their policies in an attempt to appease the *verligte* movement.

## Two views

With this background in mind it therefore became necessary for us black people to restate in very strong terms the case against the bantustan idea. There are two views regarding bantustans. The first one is that of total acceptance with the hope that any demands made by the blacks through peaceful negotiations will lead to granting of further concessions by the white power structure. The second is that as a strategy the bantustan philosophy can be exploited towards attainment of our overall goals. Both views are dangerously short-sighted. The first one needs but little attention since it is an obvious sell-out and can only be accepted by people who have already sold their souls to the white man. The second one leads to a lot of confusion part of which is in fact a subconscious acceptance of the bantustan idea *per se* by the masses who cannot appreciate the nuances of the debate surrounding the so-called strategy.

Why are we against the bantustan idea? Black people reject this approach for so many reasons, none of which are as fundamental as the fact that it is a solution given to us by the same people who have created the problem. **In a land rightfully ours we find people coming to tell us where to stay and what powers we shall have without even consulting us.** The whole idea is made to appear as if for us, while working against our

very existence; a look at some aspects of the policy shows this very clearly.

## Fraud

Geographically, i.e. in terms of land distribution, bantustans present a gigantic fraud that can find no moral support from any quarter. We find that 20% of the population are in control of 87% of the land while 80% control only 13%. To make this situation even more ridiculous, not one of the so-called "Bantustan nations" have an intact piece of land. All of them are scattered little bits of the most unyielding soil. In each area the more productive bits are white-controlled islands on which white farms or other types of industry are situated.

Economically, the blacks have been given a raw deal. Generally speaking the areas where bantustans are located are the least developed in the country, often very unsuitable either for agricultural or pastoral work. Not one of the bantustans have access to the sea and in all situations mineral rights are strictly reserved for the South African government. In other words bantustans only have rights extended to 6 feet below surface of the land.

Added to these observations is the fact that the operative budgets allowed the bantustans for development projects are kept so low. Control of industry and its growth in all the bantustans is locked up in the hands of the Bantu investment cooperative which, though meant to be non-profitmaking, is reputed for its exploitation of the aspirant African traders and industrialists in all the bantustans. The so called Border industries now beginning to mushroom at the edges of the bantustans are orientated to exploit the labour force from within the bantustans. Most of them are sub-

sidised by the government and their products are tax free. In spite of such advantages, they go on to pay all-time low wages which are about one-third of what they would normally pay in urban areas. In addition it should be noted that these industries at border areas are often outside the geographical confines in which most Industrial Council agreements operate; and since the black workers have no trade unions to push their case they are virtually left at the mercy of employers who are under no obligation to pay them according to rates operative elsewhere in the country.

Politically, the bantustans are the greatest single fraud ever invented by white politicians (with the possible exception of the new United Party federal policy). The same people who are guilty of the subjugation and oppression of the black man want us to believe that they can now design for blacks means of escape from that situation. The point is that this is not the intention of the policy. The actual intentions of the bantustan practices are the following:

To create a false sense of hope amongst the black people so that any further attempt by blacks to collectively enunciate their aspirations should be dampened.

To offer a new but false direction in the struggle of the Black people. By making it difficult to get even the 13% of the land the powers-that-be are separating our "struggles" into eight different struggles for eight false freedoms that were prescribed long ago. This has also the overall effect of making us forget about the 87% of land that is in white hands.

To cheat the outside world into believing that there is some validity in the multinational theory so that South African can now go back into international sport, trade, politics, etc. with a soothed conscience.

To boost up as much as possible the intertribal competition and hostility that is bound to come up so that the collective strength and resistance of the black people can be fragmented.

### Participation

The question then that immediately arises is whether the bantustan leaders do not see the barrenness and fraudulence implicit in this scheme. We have some men in these bantustans who would make extremely fine leaders if they had not decided to throw in their lot with the oppressors. A few of them argue that they are not selling out but are carrying on with the fight from within. There is no way of ascertaining the truth of these assumptions. Perhaps it is not necessary that this should be ascertained at all especially because no matter how one views it, the ultimate truth is that **participation in the bantustan set-up is dangerously misleading to the black population.** We shall concentrate here on the merits and demerits of using the system to fight the system, and forget about these bantustan leaders who believe sincerely in the policy of apartheid. After all, as one writer once said, there is no way of stopping fools from dedicating themselves to useless causes.

There are in South Africa at the moment a number of people whose participation in bantustan politics has led the black people in part and political observers throughout

the world to begin to take a second look at bantustans with the belief that something can be achieved through a systematic exploitation of the bantustan approach. The argument runs that all other forms of protest, disagreement and opposition are closed to black people and that we can call the bluff of the government by accepting what they give and using it to get what we want. What most people miss is the fact that what we want is well known to the enemy and that the bantustan theory was designed precisely to prevent us from getting what we want. The authors of the system know it best and they give us any concessions we may demand according to a plan prearranged by them. When they created these dummy platforms, these phoney telephones, they knew that some opportunists might want to use them to advance the black cause and hence they made all the arrangements to be able to control such "ambitious natives".

Matanzima and Buthelezi can shout their lungs out trying to speak to Pretoria through the phoney telephone. No one is listening in Pretoria because the telephone is a toy. The real lines between Pretoria and KwaZulu, between Pretoria and the Transkei are very busy day and night with Torlage and Abrahams (commissioners at the time for KwaZulu and Transkei respectively - EC) telling the system every step Matanzima and Buthelezi are likely to take three months hence and how best the system should respond to such stances.

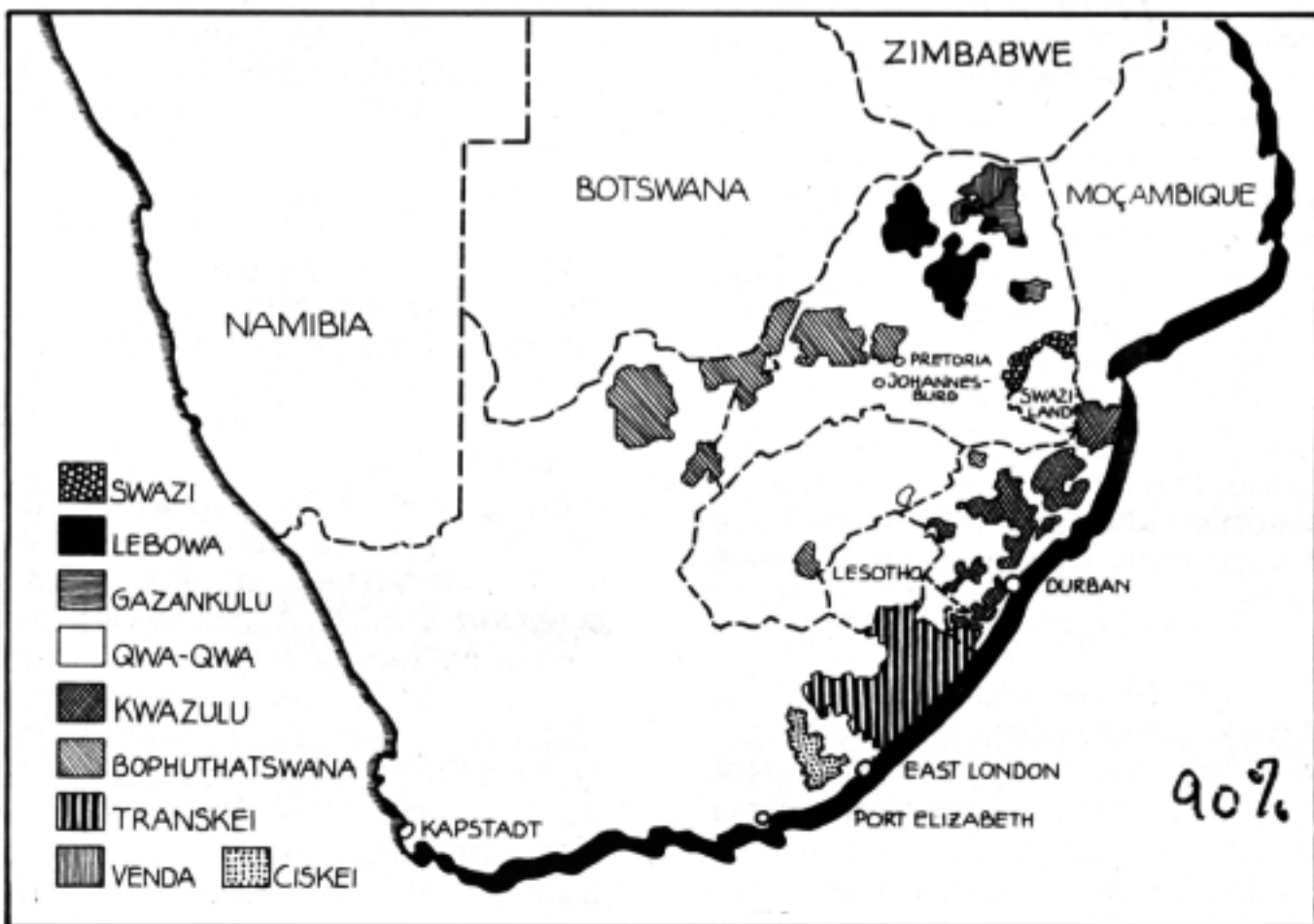
### Painful

What is most painful is that Matanzima and Buthelezi are perhaps more than anybody else acutely aware of the limitations surrounding them. It may also be true that they are extremely dedicated to the upliftment of black people and perhaps to their liberation.

Bantustan leaders are subconsciously siding and abetting in the total subjugation of the black people of this country. By making the kind of militant noise they are now making they have managed to confuse the blacks sufficiently to believe that something great is about to happen.

Many times they have manifested a fighting spirit characterising true courage and determination. But if you want to fight your enemy you do not accept from him the unloaded of his two guns and then challenge him to a duel.

As a result blacks are sitting on the touchlines cheering loudly while Matanzima and Mangope are per-



forming. The picture is also confused by the exaggeration given by the white press to the possibilities open to these leaders. The white press knows fully well of course that it is to their advantage to misdirect the attention of the blacks. The white press knows only too well the limitations of bantustan theory; that it is a far cry from what the blacks want but goes on to build up the image of Matanzima and Buthelezi in order to harness them to the path they have already chosen and to make the non-analytic masses believe that a great victory is just about to be achieved. Also, by widely publicising the pronouncements of the bantustan leaders and attaching extremely liberal connotations to these pronouncements, the white press has confused the outside world to think that in South Africa not only is there freedom of speech but that the Bantustan leaders are actively plotting for the ousting of the white government without the government taking any action.

#### Gatsha

Thus for white South Africa, it is extremely important to have a man like Buthelezi speaking and sounding the way he is doing. It solves so many conscience problems that South Africa has been having for so long. **It has been said that the combination of Buthelezi and the**

**white press make up the finest ambassadors that South Africa has ever had.**

For me as a black person it is extremely painful to see a man who could easily have been my leader being so misused by the cruel and exploitative white world. It becomes so apparent that whatever one does in the context of the bantustans is likely to be exploited for self-aggrandisement by the white world. When you agree with the government you are an exemplary native, who sees value in being led by whites. When you use bantustan platforms to attack what you do not like you epitomise the kind of militant black leader who in South Africa is freely allowed to speak and oppose the system. You exonerate the country from the blame that it is a police state. South African information bureaux throughout the world carry long coverages of activities and pronouncements by bantustan leaders to highlight the degree of open-mindedness and fair play to be found in this country.

#### Tribes

No, black people must learn to refuse to be pawns in a white man's game. This type of politics calls upon us to provide our own initiative and to act at our own pace and not

that created for us by the system. No bantustan leader can tell me that he is acting at his own initiative when he enters the realms of bantustan politics. At this stage of our history we cannot have our struggle being tribalised through the creation of Zulu, Xhosa and Tswana politicians by the system.

These tribal cocoons called "homelands" are nothing else but sophisticated concentration camps where black people are allowed to "suffer peacefully". Black people must constantly pressurise the bantustan leaders to pull out of the political cul-de-sac that has been created for us by the system.

Above all, we black people should all the time keep in mind that South Africa is our country and that all of it belongs to us. **The arrogance that makes white people travel all the way from Holland to come and balkanise our country and shift us around has to be destroyed.** Our kindness has been misused and our hospitality turned against us. Whereas whites were mere guests to us on their arrival in this country, they have now pushed us out to a 13% corner of the land and are acting as bad hosts in the rest of the country. This we must put right.

 **ONE PEOPLE ONE AZANIA**

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# Black Souls in White Skins?

Basically the South African white community is a homogeneous community. It is a community of people who sit to enjoy a privileged position that they do not deserve, are aware of this, and therefore spend their time trying to justify why they are doing so. Where differences in political opinion exist, they are in the process of trying to justify their position of privilege and their usurpation of power.

With their theory of "separate freedoms for the various nations in the multinational state of South Africa" the Nationalists have gone a long way towards giving most of white South Africa some sort of moral explanation for what is happening. Everyone is quite content to point out that these people — meaning the blacks — will be free when they are ready to run their own affairs in their own areas. What more could they possibly hope for?

#### Do-gooders

But these are not the people we are concerned with. We are concerned with that curious bunch of nonconformists who explain their participa-

**In this, the first article signed by 'Frank Talk' in August 1970, the role of the mischievous fringe group known as the "white left" is examined. Having established the starting point of BC (viz that only the oppressed can liberate themselves), Steve proceeded in the next article ("We Blacks" on page 27) to enunciate other basic principles of BC.**

tion in negative terms: that bunch of do-gooders that goes under all sorts of names — liberals, leftists, etc. These are the people who argue that they are not responsible for white racism and the country's "inhumanity to the black man". These are the people who claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the black man's struggle for a place under the sun. In short, these are the people who say that they have black souls wrapped up in white skins.

The role of the white liberal in the black man's history in South Africa is a curious one. Very few black organisations were not under white direction. True to their image, the white liberals always knew what was

good for the blacks and told them so. The wonder of it all is that the black people have believed in them for so long. It was only at the end of the 50s that the blacks started to be their own guardians.

#### Bilateral

Nowhere is the arrogance of the liberal ideology demonstrated so well as in their insistence that the problems of the country can only be solved by a bilateral approach involving both black and white. This has, by and large, come to be taken in all seriousness as the *modus operandi* in South Africa by all those who claim they would like a change in the *status quo*. Hence the multiracial political organisations and parties and the "nonracial" student organisations, all of which insist on integration not only as an end goal but also as a means.