

A REVIEW: SOUTH AFRICA'S POLITICS OF PARTITION

by Patrick Laurence

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"The Transkei: South Africa's Politics of Partition" is a book I would have entitled: "The Transkei: South Africa's Politics of Betrayal," because it is an accurate account of how millions of people have been betrayed by a skilful few.

In this book the author, Patrick Laurence, gives a well researched account of the history of this mostly Xhosa populated territory. He painstakingly relates the attitudes of the successive white governments—from the time of Cecil Rhodes as Prime Minister of the Cape—to show that they never meant to give Africans a real say in the management of the affairs of the land. Transkei independence, like the provisions of the Glen Grey Act, of 1894, is described in the words of the historian, Professor Colin Tatz as "the process of offering blacks the shadows of power while denying them its substance."

The author devotes much time and space to presenting a full portrait of Chief Kaizer Matanzima who is the white man's ally in helping to solve, in the government's own way, the government created racial problems of South Africa. He is the man who takes it upon himself to abandon the course that all the black nationalist movements have steered, against heavy odds, from 1912, Matanzima's is the path of tribalism which is also the Afrikaner nationalist philosophy for the development of Africans in South Africa. The author states:

"Black nationalism sought to unify blacks across tribal divisions and to direct their political aspirations to a meaningful share of power in the central government and industrial heartland."

And of the Verwoerdian philosophy of "baasskap" in the bantustans he writes:

"By emphasising tribalism, the new system was a clear manifestation of the classical formula of divide and rule."

He then goes on to give a clear analysis of the political situation in the Transkei:— The United Transkeian Territories General Council: The Native Representative Council; the present revolt which culminated in the massacre of Pondo tribemen at Ngquza hill in the early sixties (the

Transkei Sharpeville); the proclamations 400 and 413 which gave tribal chiefs unprecedented and unlimited powers over their subjects, and virtually killed freedom in the territory; Selfgovernment; the various elections under the proclamations; and the ultimate goal—Transkei independence under Proclamation 400.

This is an important history book which has appeared at the right time—while the crucial issues relating to the Bantustan philosophy are still fresh in the minds of many after the October independence of the Transkei. Many Xhosas who got bored or could not keep up with newspaper accounts of the controversy over Xhosa citizenship will get very shocked (as I did) to read that not only are they no longer South African nationals, but they may have to be satisfied with a Transkei passport which will most probably be unrecognized beyond South Africa. The consequences? No travelling outside South Africa's borders. And one of the last things Laurence says about bantustans before ending his book:

"Their string of territories formed a semi-circle around the industrial heartland of South Africa and offered the opportunity of turning them into an inner ring of buffer states to replace the outer ring which collapsed with the fall of the Portuguese in Mozambique and Angola and the imminent fall of Rhodesia. The next step was to train bantustan armies."

The book is easy to read and will bring every South African up to date with the goings on of apartheid in the "homelands". It is well illustrated with maps which are bound to be a great help to people not familiar with the "land of the Xhosas". There are also pictures of some Transkeians including the brothers Matanzima, a few cabinet ministers, and Hector Ncokazi—leader of the opposition, by now getting well acquainted with the South African way of life of political imprisonment with his entire shadow cabinet. What I think after reading the book? The Transkei—is independent but **not** free.

The book itself is very strongly recommended.□