URBAN AFRICANS

and the

BANTUSTANS

by

PHILIP MAYER

(Professor of Social Anthropology, Rhodes University)

URBAN AFRICANS AND THE
BANTUSTANS

was delivered by Philip Mayer, Professor of
Social Anthropology at Rhodes University,
Grahamstown, in Durban, on Thursday,
January 13, 1972. The Alfred and Winifred
Hoernlé Memorial Lecture is given once a
year under the auspices of the South African
Institute of Race Relations by some person
having special knowledge and experience
of race problems in Africa and elsewhere.

URBAN AFRICANS
AND THE
BANTUSTANS

by
PHILIP MAYER

Professor of Social Anthropology,
Rhodes University.

URBAN AFRICANS AND THE BANTUSTANS

I feel greatly honoured to have been invited to give this lecture. It is a privilege to take part in the commemoration of two such people as Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé. I regret that I do not share that other privilege of having met them personally, which earlier lecturers in this series have recalled so warmly. Perhaps by now it is becoming a rare one; but the liberal and humane values we associate with the name Hoernlé seem, if anything, even more precious and relevant as time goes on.

I am speaking to you today as an anthropologist. That seems appropriate, because Winifred Hoernlé is known to us all as a founding mother of anthropology in South Africa. But I think it is appropriate, too, because to some slight extent it enables me, a White intellectual, to reproduce the ideas of South Africans who are not White and not intellectual either. This is the anthropologist's prerogative — to move around, physically, or at least mentally, among people of different social and cultural backgrounds; to enter into their thoughts and experiences and then transmit the understanding more widely.

My work has brought me into contact with great numbers of ordinary African people. I have tried, among other things, to grasp their vision of the social structure under which they and all of us here are living, and their ideas about how it affects their life experience; or in brief, what it means to them to be Black in the terms imposed by South Africa today. This is what I shall try to convey to you tonight. I shall be speaking of African town-dwellers: not in the three major centres, but in towns and cities of the Eastern Cape, where most of my field work happens to have been done. In regular anthropological fashion, I propose to let the people largely speak for themselves, quoting from the utterances of about 300 people of all sorts — men and women, old and young, educated and uneducated, town-born and country-born — mostly made in the course of an investigation into work histories, which was also linked on to another research interest, in the socialisation of African youth.

Africans in South African towns are indeed a silent majority. Unlike the urban populations of most African countries they have a generally passive role in the political process; they have little reason to feel that they can in any way control or re-shape the social universe in which they live. (We found that even in the

1

large new "homeland towns" of Mdantsane, outside East London, which officially belongs with the Ciskeian Bantustan, the residents up till now seem to feel themselves subject to a White-controlled administration, with powers to regulate almost every activity, hardly less than they did in the old East London townships.[1]) It seems important that White South Africans should hear the voices of the voiceless, and that is my justification for my choice of subject tonight. Of course, an audience like this one will include many people who manage to keep in touch even across colour lines, and they will recognise much that is familiar or, may be, obvious to them.

It is only too clear that this country has an uncomfortable distinction of having to face at the same time both a British-style decolonisation problem (in the erstwhile rural reserves) and an American-style Black Ghetto problem (in the locations of the towns and cities). The view is sometimes put forward that the two problems need to be dealt with separately, by different measures.[2] Not so with the Government's multi-national policy. Here, a single device is meant to do double duty, straightening out both problems at once. The device, of course, is the bestowal of Bantustan nationalities on *all* Africans, those in the designated homelands and equally those millions who live and work outside, mostly in designated "White" cities.

Presumably these city dwellers, just as the Black residents of the Bantustans themselves, are expected to acquire in the process a new concept of South African society and to redefine their political identity. They should not think or feel as South African nationals (if that has been their identification until now) but as non-resident "Bantustanis". In fact, Dr. Koornhof put this quite clearly. The African, he said, is in town "for a specific purpose", and "if this purpose is fulfilled he must not be without a haven like an orphan, but must understand fully where his homeland is — with his people, in his own national concept, in his own homeland . . . A member of the Bantu nation in the White areas would be just as worthy a member of his nation as any member of that nation residing in the homeland." And he would also be more acceptable as a "guest" in the White area than one who "does not know his home any more".

The present speeding-up of what is known as the multi-national or homelands or Bantustan policy makes this an oppor-

---

[1] Cf. P. Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen* (2nd edition), Cape Town, 1971, chapter 19.
[2] Cf. S. P. Cilliers, *Appeal to Reason*, Stellenbosch, 1971.

2

tune moment to consider the viewpoints of African town dwellers. Over the decades, successive government have sought to define the status of these town dwellers in different ways. According to the apartheid policy, it has long been stipulated that they should only be regarded as temporary sojourners in the towns. But until recently the application of this principle has been tempered by a recognition of others, such as prolonged domicile.

Now, under the multi-national policy, it may increasingly determine day-to-day administration. The sojourners, it seems, are to be finally identified as foreigners. They will be nationals of the new Bantustan nations. "The administration . . . (of the Bantu) can in future be but a reflection of the policy of multi-national development", said Dr. P. J. G. Koornhof recently.[3] National representation and national representative councils are envisaged, in White areas, to provide the necessary links between the African workers, their South African employers, and the Bantustan governments of which the workers are to be subjects.

The question I want to raise, therefore, is what images of society and of their place in it the African town dwellers seem to have been holding so far, and how these seem to be changing, or likely to change, with the acceleration of the multi-national policy.

The speakers whose statements I shall draw on form a quota sample rather than a random sample. The representativeness of the views expressed can therefore not be assessed statistically. But on the basis of many years of previous field work experience in Eastern Cape townships, what emerges would appear to be a fair picture of the views of the ordinary African working population there.

Up till now the urban African's image of his status in South African society has been shaped by two social facts: The experience of being discriminated against, and the belief that the basis of discrimination is his colour and nothing else. Because colour cannot change, this belief has lent a specially hopeless and crushing quality to the Black man's burden. And it still does so even though, according to the Government, racialism is no longer an officially recognised basis of policy in this country. It is a topic on which informants spoke with one voice. "I am Black and the Blackness is the cause of my suffering". "Once you are Black in this country you lose all your dignity". "What decides is skin colour, not qualifications". "Being a South African implies

[3] Address to the Conference of Administrators of Non-European Affairs, Port Elizabeth, 20.10.1971.

3

that I am only a particular breed of man, not just a man". "Everything is calculated to remind one that one is an African, an inferior being". "To be an African is a curse, because of the racial policies". "The Whites are oppressing me simply because I am Black". "What one must do or not do is based on one's race. Chances and privileges are offered according to the colour of your skin, whereas in other places this depends on merit". "Why people tend to be criminals is because they have no work. Why people have no jobs is because they have no permits to live where there are jobs. Why the people do not get permits is simply because they are Black".

As to the experience of discriminatory measures as such our informants left little doubt that they very much minded the restrictions to which they are subjected, especially by contrast with what he regards as the free and prosperous life of the average White citizen. In this respect our picture seems broadly consistent with what has been indicated by previous investigations, e.g. those of Brett, Edelstein, Nyquist, Schlemmer.[4]

Here are some typical remarks about pass laws and influx control: "My movements are subject to someone else's will, not my own. The book pins one down: I can't move." "We all know the laws which make every Black man wish he were in another place." About work and wages: "There is discrimination against us in all spheres; the economic sphere is only one. The wages are low and unfair; they are merely pocket money." "Better jobs are reserved for Whites. There is no equal pay for equal work." About petty apartheid: "On benches, trains, bus stops — it causes inconvenience and is unnecessary. It is degrading." About the framework of compulsion in general: "I can't plan my future, I can't think for myself; the Government does the thinking for me." "Everything is decided for you. Yours is not to reason why but to do or die." "The Government is oppressing me and I am just enduring the situation, since I can do nothing." "Privileges are only for the White people. We are forced to be under their control and we can't even squeal because we will be victimised." "They

[4] E. A. Brett, *African attitudes: a study of the social, racial and political attitudes of some middle-class Africans,* Jhb., SAIRR, 1963; and *African attitudes: a study of the social, racial and political attitudes of the middle class African population,* Jhb., 1963.

L. Schlemmer, *Social change and political policy in South Africa,* Jhb., SAIRR, 1970.

M. L. Edelstein, *An attitude survey of urban Bantu matric pupils in Soweto with special reference to stereotyping and social distance: a sociological survey,* Pretoria, 1971.

4

have been oppressing us for so long that they have forgotten that they are indeed oppressing us."[5]

Pariah status as a vernacular model

When a person can describe himself and his life experience in terms like these, I would say that he has learnt to see himself as a pariah. I am using this term in the specific sociological sense which was given to it by Max Weber. Pariah people, in this sense, are not just lower-class people, or subjects of colonial rule, or underprivileged people. Their's is a more distinctive kind of low status, seldom found except in conquest or caste societies. I believe that many African people do see South Africa as a society founded on conquest of a more or less violent nature.

Weber explained that the development of pariah status is often due to the historical process of invasion and conquest. While the invading conquerors establish themselves on top, the tribes whom they conquered become a guest or pariah people in the land of their birth. Having lost control of the territory they come to depend entirely on producing for or serving the dominant population. At the same time, of course, they cease to function as an autonomous political group. Thus from being an independent tribe they are now a depressed endogamous status group or in other words a caste.[6]

In the country among some very conservative tribalist Red Xhosa people, one hears it said explicitly that Whites are a foreign nation who first conquered the Xhosa and then went on exploiting their victory in a "cruel" manner.[7] But those Red people also stress the foreignness of Whites in the sense of profound *cultural* opposition: in terms of Christian versus pagan, peasant versus urbanite, and so on. More westernised rural Africans have meanwhile come to see themselves and the Whites as ambraced in a common Christian culture and civilisation. It seems as if the town dwellers whom I have just quoted have combined the two ideas. In their own view, however much they may absorb of White culture, they still seem to find themselves confined to the lowest status in society. The "conquest" model represents their attempt to account to themselves for this perplexing life experience.

Let me illustrate this from their own remarks: "South Africa was a land for Blacks, it has turned into a land for Whites "

[5] T. Nyquist, *African middle-class elite*, 1971 (unpublished manuscript).
[6] For a brief exposition of Weber's view of "pariah" see R. Bendix, *Max Weber*, p. 150.
[7] Philip Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen* (Second Edition), 1971, p. 33.

5

"These selfish Whites have turned our land into theirs, because Blacks are stupid." Or in the old, still repeated formula: "When the White man came he had the Bible and we had the land, freedom and happiness; now he has the land, freedom and happiness, and we have the Bible." "I have been deprived (said another man) of all rights which are basic to citizenship; I have no vote, no say in the running of the country. The wealth belongs to the Whites. I am not a citizen. I was deprived of that — I just belong to the labour force." "One just keeps quiet now. Our world is no longer the lovely place it was before the arrival of the White man." "I am a South African who is under the White man's rule." "I am regarded as a lower-class being. I am dominated by people who are regarded as the only recognised citizens of the country."

It is not from the teaching of political leaders or agitators that the pariah idea has been learnt; it is not from the editorials of the White Press. It may be that these have meant something for the political socialisation of a small minority of the highly educated; but certainly the masses of ordinary Africans, working in the towns, illiterates and the humbly educated, must have owed their ideas and images far more to another agency. That other agency is life experience. What our data show is that the existential experience of life in White cities, as at present regulated, is enough in itself to produce in any African man, woman or child an acute sense of pariah status.

As Max Weber said: "Even pariah people who are most despised are usually apt to continue cultivating in some manner that which is equally peculiar to ethnic and to status communities: The belief in their own specific honour."[8] And indeed, far from feeling inferior, many of the people who spoke to us expressed their pride in the exceptional patience and power of endurance of Black people: "We are made of strong stuff. We are surviving under the worst suppression." "The Black are a patient nation who endure great hardships, being looked down upon by the Whites, but still live and work for them." "I have proved my Black power, which is in fact internal. No other colour would ever stand the situation which we Black have managed to endure." They represented the Whites as morally inferior, because of their treatment of Blacks. "I would not like to be White. Whites are cruel. They have no kindness." I do not feel inferior whatever insults I am confronted with. I am keeping my Black pride and don't react with violence." "A Black

[8] H. Geerth, *From Max Weber*, p. 189.

6

will never make a fool of himself to another nation. He will ask a White for a job, but if a White is bullying him, he will leave that job, however poor he is."

This pride in their stoical endurance of indignity does not mean, of course, that they feel no longing for a status that would be more dignified in itself. In its most usual form it is the longing to take their place in a united, non-racial South Africa with all of a citizen's pride in his country.

When people referred to their ideal model of society as they felt it ought to be, they generally did not speak of independent Bantustans, but of a single South Africa, whole and undivided, with equal opportunities, where race and colour would not matter. As we know, this ideal was held out by African leadership for nearly a century with the support of large sections of European opinion. It has been the most broadly appealing, and in this sense the most significant one throughout the history of African nationalism in South Africa. Even today, the opposition party in the Transkeian Legislative Assembly adheres to it and continues to belittle the symbols of independence in Umtata. If such a view can hold out even in the homelands of the Transkei, we need not be surprised at its persistence in the cities, where it has a long historical background.

Let me illustrate by quoting again: "Why not do away with all the apartheid and be one people, building our South Africa with equal opportunities for all." "This is a wonderful country, cosmopolitan in composition, but I can't meet members of the different nations without authorities intervening." "I feel that the South African Government is inefficient in the sense that it is trying to please the White electorate only, whereas this is a multi-racial country." "In spite of the disadvantages I have to endure for being Black, I am looking forward to the day when I will be treated as any other South African."

Hypothetically the ideal of a single, united South Africa could suggest to Black people a different goal — the goal of "changing seats", or taking over the dominating position hitherto held by the Whites. Militant Black power ideas have had their appeal in South Africa, for example, in some sectors of the former Pan-African movement. They may also receive inspiration from con-temporary American Negro ideologies. Some of the American experience would seem increasingly to fit the South African case, as the social reality of the townships moves closer in various respects to that of the American Black ghettos.

As far as it goes, our material does not indicate that Black

7

identification in the aggressive sense has yet become a popular idea. There was some evidence of a new pride in being African which could take the form of wanting to do things on their own, without leaning on Whites, but only rarely did we encounter reference to a hoped for reversal of racial domination, as for example: "I pity the Whites the day things will switch over, because one thing with them is that they are very weak." Of course, I cannot say how far this picture would also hold good for the larger and perhaps more sophisticated urban centres.

The multi-national alternative

Let us now turn to the question, how the new developments implied in the multi-national solution seem likely to affect the African town dwellers' images of society and of his role in society.

The core of the policy is that South Africa is to be envisaged as comprising a number of different nations and nationalities. The Prime Minister has been quoted as saying that, for his part the question whether the people of South Africa constitute different nations, or one nation, was no longer a point at issue. "Although this question is still being debated in some centres, it is quite apparent that it is only in an artificial and make-believe atmosphere by people who refuse to see what they do not wish to see."

As the multi-national idea takes root (so the argument runs) Black towns-people will cease to think of themselves as deprived citizens, rightless in their own land. The feeling of pariah status will become obsolete. This will be achieved not by way of the old dream of equal citizenship in a united South Africa, but by creating a new citizenship, a new sense of identity and new loyalties, based on the new national units or Bantustans. Not only the actual Bantustan dwellers will enjoy this, but also the masses of Africans living in White areas, since they will be Bantustan citizens, too.

We might say that this major piece of political resocialisation — the creation of new Bantustan loyalties for African town dwellers — would have three elements to work with. First, the people's attachment to their respective ethno-linguistic groups or "tribes"; secondly, their attachment to the land itself — the geographic regions allotted as their homelands; and thirdly, their pride in the new and independent governmental structures there. We will consider each of these in turn, beginning with the tribe.

(1) Tribal loyalties

For the sociologist of contemporary Africa "tribalism" is a blanket term disguising a complex web of alternatives. That a

8

person claims to belong to a certain tribe is not the point. It is only the prelude to other questions: What the identification means to him, in which situation he finds it relevant, or how he ranks it relative to his other loyalties and identities.

Towns in the Cape draw their African labour force almost entirely from one tribe or cluster of tribes, namely, the numerous Xhosa-speaking groups of the Ciskei and Transkei. In the matter of language and traditional culture these groups are mostly so similar that it seldom matters in urban contexts which one a person belongs to: the common Xhosa identity more or less submerges them. (There is much more scope for urban ethnicity in the polyglot urban areas of Johannesburg and the Reef.)

We must ask, then, what solace the Cape African town dwellers are likely to find in this Xhosa identity. Obviously it does have a meaning for them. At home and in the townships they commonly speak Xhosa; many people practise some Xhosa customs; and most have some notion of Xhosa history. In addition, many town dwellers have structural links with a community in the Xhosa homelands — they have dealings with relatives there, and with chiefs and headmen, mainly in connection with land rights — although in default of statistics we do not know if these links are as common as in Durban, where Schlemmer found 60 per cent of the African town dwellers paying allegiance to a Zulu chief, and over 50 per cent—having land rights in the country areas.[9]

On the other hand, there can be different reasons why town dwellers choose to maintain their status in the "tribal" society of the homelands. There is clear evidence that they are by no means always motivated by tribal loyalty properly so called. The logic is often purely pragmatic, the result of a profound sense of insecurity in town,[10] and often it goes against the grain of their deepest intellectual and political convictions.

The strongest evidence of "tribal" feeling comes from the so-called Red people of conservative rural background. Not only do they continue to observe traditional Xhosa customs, as far as is possible in town, and adhere to beliefs in ancestor spirits and witchcraft; but they would also agree with Dr. Koornhof that they are strangers in town; that they are there only for a "specific purpose" in his sense, that is, to earn money. People of this sort would mostly be pleased to return to the country home at

---

[9] L. Schlemmer, "City or Rural: 'Homeland'," Lecture delivered at the Sociology Congress in Lourenço Marques, 1971, p. 7ff.

[10] P. Mayer, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

9

any time if it were economically possible. There are also some very rustic and conservative Christian or School people, mainly from the Transkei, to whom this equally applies. But today one is likely of finding such people, whether Red or School, mainly in the mature and older generations. The schooling explosion (as one might call it), the betterment schemes, and increasing industrialisation, are all having an effect.[11] Besides, rural people are much more exposed to urbanising influences in the new, hygienic environment of Mdantsane than they were in the old shack areas of Duncan Village.[12] It is much more difficult to encapsulate oneself among a few similarly tribal-minded associates, and ignore the rest. One way and another, then, it is possible that by the time authority in the homesteads has passed to the younger, school-reared generation the old-style rural way of life may have virtually disappeared, and simple-minded tribal loyalty with it. There are signs of this process already starting in the Ciskei, and to a lesser extent in the Transkei.

A quite different aspect of tribal loyalty which needs to be mentioned is a sense of opposition between Xhosa proper and Mfengu, which persists among the town-born generation.[13] The two groups have long been almost indistinguishable in language and culture, but the Mfengu are of northern Nguni origin and found refuge among the Xhosa (Southern Nguni) tribes during the Shaka wars. This historical origin has left its mark. The Mfengu may be termed the Ibo of this part of the world, in the sense that they are credited with a high achievement motivation[14] and facility for acculturation, both supposedly related to their having once been "wanderers" who suffered from "status deprivation".

Mfengu people in the Eastern Cape towns claim proudly that "We were the first to accept European education and Western civilisation". "Most of the highly educated people like doctors, graduates, and so on, are of Mfengu descent." "About three-quarters of the businessmen are Mfengu. Even the inspectors are mostly Mfengu." "We are always looking forward to our careers." Xhosa informants would sometimes admit to unfriendly feelings against Mfengu. "I really don't like the Mfengu, though I admit what I say is influenced by history." "Mfengu are Europeans; most of them have no customs."

But whereas these "tribal" feelings may colour personal re-

[11] Philip Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen* (Second ed.), p. 310ff.
[12] ibid., Chapter 19.
[13] B. A. Pauw, *The Second Generation,* Cape Town, 1962.
[14] R. Le Vine, *Dreams and Deeds,* Chicago, 1968.

10

lationships in urban situations and even support political factionalism within the framework of the C.T.A., they have little to do with "tribalism" in the sense most relevant here — the sense of modern national loyalties. And in any case, the Xhosa-Mfengu distinction has been quite properly disregarded in the planning of the Bantustans. The same two homelands, the Ciskei and the Transkei, are to accommodate both tribes.

On the evidence it does not appear that tribal pride and tribal identity are providing a solid, ready-made foundation for a Bantustan national loyalty among the town dwellers. Even where they are felt, they could as well work against as for it. For example, they can be combined with a "greater South Africanism", as in the Mfengu pride at having been the first "tribe" to exchange traditional beliefs and customs for those of the Whites. "We Mfengu are the first African people in South Africa to live side by side with the White people." "We Mfengu have always been loyal to the White Government." Or alternatively, they can be combined with an aggressive Black nationalism, with the symbols of the tribe merged into those of a general Black resistance against Whites, which would equally rule out the multi-national ideal. "What pleases me about being a Xhosa is the Blackness — the belonging to an African nation." "I am proud to be a Xhosa, because it makes me a member of one of the oppressed peoples. It makes me feel strong and courageous." "Xhosa are bold. We struggled to defend our fatherland against the Whites. Our rights have been taken from us. There are nowadays Xhosa men who are arrested because they are still trying to resist." "Xhosa history is full of action. I know the stories of Ndlambe, Ngqika and others. All these figures are interesting to my generation. When we are planning something, and there is a spirit of fighting, we remind each other of our forefathers, who would face any risks. Then we feel bold."

But besides this, many African town dwellers, especially among the better educated, denounced tribalism as a denial of Black solidarity. This was one of their reasons for condemning the multi-racial policy, explicitly or by implication. "Does it really matter whether I am a Mfengu, Xhosa or what not? I am concerned with the main grouping, which is African. To me it is irrelevant whether one is Zulu or Shangaan. In fact, I detest this talk about tribes." "Differentiation into tribes only tends to separate us." "I hate being referred to as an Mfengu. The Mfengu are the people who lost the struggle for freedom from White domination. They declared that they would live in peace with the

11

Whites, in spite of the fact that their brothers were fighting the English." "I am proud to be an African, but I do not place much importance on tribal distinctions. The name of the tribe I belong to is immaterial to me." "What matters to me is that we are all Black and all Blacks are my brothers and sisters." In short, they felt that the main cleavage was between Black and White and that internal divisions between Blacks are of no account by comparison.

A different objection to political tribalism was heard from some illiterate and poorly-educated men and women (but also from some better educated people recently arrived from the country). Their emphasis was not so much on common Blackness — an ultimately political notion — but on common humanity. In town, they say, tribes should not count any more: they want to think simply in terms of human beings. "I don't think we should be divided into tribes legally. Here in East London people are all the same, they suffer and get happy in the same way." "I am not concerned about the tribe I belong to, but simply to be a human being." "I am a human being. It gains me nothing to be a Xhosa." A young man said that "Africans don't think in terms of tribes except in war-time. To be a man is enough for me."

A woman informant said with one breath that "we are all Black", and with the next that she "likes Xhosa custom best". A Mfengu man said "all tribes are the same", but then added that "Mfengu are more civilised than other tribes". There is no real inconsistency here. The speakers are expressing what a sociologist might have guessed already, that in most situations tribal differences have become genuinely meaningless to them, but that they can't help indulging in a little family feeling occasionally. Some people, it seems, were consciously trying to limit these "relapses" into tribal one-upmanship: "I have a certain attitude of hostility towards other tribes, but I don't like it. How I wish that from the beginning we were not divided into tribes." It may be that the absence of a grand symbolic focus like the Zulu kingship helps to account for the relatively diluted quality of Xhosa tribal pride.

(2) Regional loyalties: Transkei and Ciskei

Thanks to geography and history, the two Xhosa homelands — the Transkei and Ciskei — have quite distinct and different regional flavours. Most East Cape town dwellers readily identify themselves as belonging to the one or the other, and many express a sense of attachment to "their" region. But as with tribal feeling, this does not necessarily indicate a nascent Bantustan loyalty

in the political sense. Mostly it seems just the kind of nostalgic affection which a person tends to feel for the place where he or his parents were brought up. Transkeians praised to us the peaceful, frugal, rural life of "their" region, and Ciskeians the more go-ahead of theirs, in much the same spirit as perhaps a White town dweller might express affection for his old home in the Karoo, that is, without at all signifying that he would rather be a Karoo national than a South African.

I quote here from some Transkeians: "In the Transkei the air is invigorating and not polluted by too many people and too many motor-cars." "Because people cultivate their own land they don't have to buy everything." "You don't have to go in for smart dresses and expensive furniture, unless you want your neighbours to talk about you." "In the Transkei one lives a life of dignity and good neighbourliness." "One need not go in constant fear of hooligans." "We live together and people share the same ideas. Here in the locations people are always hurrying to work."

Conversely, people with a Ciskeian background typically claimed their region as "much more progressive." "The nearer you are to cities the more civilised you are." They freely expressed their scorn for Transkeian "backwardness". "In the Transkei only one per cent of the people are awake. The rest are country people who know nothing about progress." "In the Transkei people live in solitary vermin-infected huts in dull villages." "In the Transkei everything depends on custom. People are still under the control of chiefs and headman." "I do not like the moderate tempo of their style of living. I like things to move a bit fast, that is all. I am against a ruralised way of living." "A Transkeian graduate will be the same as a Standard 6 Ciskeian as far as general culture and know-how is concerned." "Even in a social meeting you find that an individual from the Transkei, especially if he is not from the main town, is very Black and backward."

An interesting thing about these statements by Ciskeians is their uncompromisingly "urban" ethos, with praises bestowed or withheld precisely according to the degree of urban and industrial advancement. Even some Transkeians had to agree up to a point, though without denying their own nostalgia: "The only trouble is that in the Transkei we are rather far from cultural things, and as a result people are behind the times."

These historical regional loyalties and prejudices, then, still *are* simply regional, and are not being re-deployed in terms of the new Bantustan political structures. It is still a matter of

identifying oneself as *from* the region, not a citizen *of* it. This is confirmed, *inter alia,* by the habit which still persists among African residents in both East London (Duncan Village) and Mdantsane, of speaking of the two towns as equally parts of the Ciskei, along with King William's Town, too.

The third element to consider is the existential fact that governmental structures have now actually been created in the Bantustans and started on the road to independence. What effect has this had on the town dwellers' images of South African society and their own status?

(3) The Bantustans

East London, with the old Duncan Village location, is surrounded in a semi-circle by areas of the Ciskeian Bantustan territory. The large new township of Mdantsane, 13 miles away, where the Duncan Villagers are being re-housed, is actually within the territory. And as East London is the nearest industrial centre for most of the Transkei, both Duncan Village and Mdantsane contain large numbers of men and women from there. Thus people in these townships are well placed to follow current political developments in both the Bantustans. To judge by their comments, attitudes run the whole range from bored indifference to profound interest and from warm approval to passionate antagonism.

For some people the effect of developments in the Bantustans seems to have been nil. They declare themselves totally uninterested or even unaware. "As for the political set-up (in the Ciskei) I am not at all informed, because I never worry myself about it at all. All I am concerned with is the welfare of my family." "I stay in East London and that's what matters. The Transkei has become a remote thing for me. I hear about Matanzima and other people. I do not really care about them. We will stay here. Here at least I get some food."

But let us rather consider those with more definite views. The knowledge that there is a place nearby where Black men enjoy their own government, where men speaking Xhosa carry authority and handle political symbols, has made an immense impression. (So far this applies only to the Transkei: few people speak of the Ciskei in anything like the same terms.) Delight at this development was expressed most unreservedly by the less educated. I shall first quote from these remarks. "I never expected to see a Black Government in the Transkei. I approve of this." "The Prime Minister of the Transkei is a Black man. I praise him

and his ministers very much." "Being Black the Transkei Government understand our difficulties better than the Whites do." "We have our own independence. With Matanzima's Government we have seen White men's hotels, garages and shops given over to such as me. Is that not progress?" "The improvement of the Transkei is due to the Government of Chief Matanzima."

Better educated people with, say, J.C. or above, were mostly more reserved and sceptical about these things. Perhaps their critical attitude may partly reflect the general estrangement of the educated element from the tribal society, which, it seems, has gone further among the Xhosa than, for instance, the Zulu. And partly it may reflect the attraction originally exercised on the more highly educated by the Transkeian opposition party. Be that as it may, they were mostly holding fast to their old image of a united South African society and were for this reason unable to see any point in Bantustan self-government, actual or projected: "God never mentioned where I am supposed to live. It is only men who determine my boundaries on the strength of my skin." "It encourages tribalism and the evils attached to tribalism are inevitable . . . I do not see why I should be separated from other Blacks, such as Sotho or Zulu."

Rather significantly, I think, some people spoke of the Bantustan policy in terms suggestive of what I have called the pariah model, that is, as something imposed on a powerless Black group by a self-interested White group wielding the conqueror's power. For example: "The Transkei homeland policy is nothing but another facet of the White man's oppression policy. They only want to restrict and bind us to a certain part of the land." "We are still dominated by the Whites who pick up all the important parts of the country for themselves." "South Africa belongs to the Whites. They govern the whole country at the expense of the Blacks. Even the countries that are granted self-rule, for example, Transkei, are only tools to propagate the policy of the South African Government." "We were not approached about this scheme. It was just an idea by certain politicians to bolster their system of apartheid." "I see the Ciskei territory as being a labour camp in which there are slaves or prisoners from which the Government can draw all they want."

In its extreme form this becomes a total scepticism about the Bantustan policy: "It is a fake story." "The whole thing is not genuine." This view seemed common among people of all degrees of education, and both of rural and urban background. "We are just promised independence which is the world of never-

15

never." "The White man will never allow the Black man to live in his own land. We are only kept to provide cheap labour, with little progress planned for us." "The Transkei and Ciskei are just showpieces to convince the world that the Boers are treating us well while they are doing the opposite." "We are only cheated and brow-beaten by hypocritical Whites who try to make us believe that we will develop to independence, and then give us little land and little power. You look foolish when somebody tells you you are independent and you are not." "In some places they say we are independent, and others that we are under the Whites. It is all the same, because only the White influence is felt."

By and large, even the most positively inclined among the better educated seemed to feel that there was still a long way to go before Bantustans would develop into "real" countries with "real" Governments. Meanwhile, both they and the uneducated did often express satisfaction that one solid advantage had already been achieved: what one man called "the freedom of 'live' and 'say'." "It is only in the Transkei where I can have freedom of say as far as political matters are concerned." "The Transkei is the only resort for us Africans. At least you feel that you are recognised. The chance is there to show our talents in different fields for the sake of our brother Africans." "The Transkei so far is the little heaven for Africans. It is improving because a Black man is playing his role. It shows that we are also capable of these things." "The Transkei offers the chance of a little freedom. It is the only place where we can show our Black power."

Naturally enough, there was appreciation of the freedom from petty apartheid and regimentation — freedom "to live where you want to." The rural Transkei had something of this attraction even before the Bantustan development, but self-government has undoubtedly enhanced it. "In the Transkei nobody tells you you are not supposed to be there." "I know I won't be confronted by these boring words 'Whites only' or 'Non-Whites'. Such things have been removed in most of the villages of the Transkei. At least that is a little consolation." "If you go to a hotel you can get accommodation for your money; not this thing you find in other places 'This hotel is for Whites only'." "Yes, I want to feel that little independence in the Transkei. Here apartheid is very active . . . We have to travel before we can get to town. Whites cannot endure our presence near towns. We are too far below their standards to deserve their privileges."

Why, then, do not more people voluntarily leave the towns, where they have found life so difficult, and go to enjoy the "little

16

heaven" of the Transkei instead? Significantly, many of the people who so much praised the new freedom and scope were town born and had no actual links with the Transkei. In some cases they had never even paid a visit there. And conversely, many born Transkeians with first-hand experience derided the Bantustan system and the achievements of the Transkeian Government. It appears that for some urban Africans the Transkei Bantustan vision functions as a dream of future escape from the hard urban reality which is all they know. On the level of reality they feel committed to the city, either by birth and upbringing, or by economic necessity, or both. They think they will never enjoy "that little freedom" in real life because the Bantustans cannot provide a living, or only for a few privileged people.

Even the migrant people who still have their roots in the country feel the force of economic necessity, pending the hoped-for day when there will be more jobs, and especially better paid jobs, in the Transkei. "The Government is trying its best to open up industries so that people will not have to leave the Transkei to seek employment somewhere else." "Chief Matanzima is providing every citizen with a job — even the illiterates can work on the roads. The only snag is that they are not paid as well as here. If I could get a better paid job in the Transkei I would return there." "If it was not for the matter of jobs I wouldn't be staying here . . . I don't like it here because the White man is troubling us very much."

Meanwhile, they expressed a dread of being sent back — as they put it — "just to starve". To many Transkeians in Duncan Village and Mdantsane the Transkei is thus a place which they both love and fear. "We are driven to our homelands where there are no industries. How are we expected to exist without work?" The fear of removal is even greater among urban people without ties in the homelands: "We are removed from towns to the so-called homelands only to find that they are hell lands."

CONCLUSIONS

There is an old saying that when you are down the only way to move is upwards. It seems likely that many African town dwellers, whether town-rooted or country-rooted, highly or lowly educated, will welcome the idea of Bantustan citizenship in this spirit, as an alternative to their present pariah status, and in the hope of the political belonging and political self-expression which are being denied to them in the wider South African framework. The rank-and-file working people, with their greater tendency

17

to tribal and regional loyalties, and their less critical view of Bantustan machinery, may be the readiest to range themselves behind "national representatives" from the Bantustans. They may find the greatest thrill in the prospect of a share in the Xhosa nation. But even the more wary educated and sophisticated people may be brought round to think more positively of the prospect in terms of business or professional openings, or office, or influence.

It is increasingly recognised in responsible White circles that African towns-people cannot be abandoned indefinitely to their present pariah status. The Prime Minister acknowledged this in plain words when he said not long ago: "One thing which no one has a right to do is to deny the human dignity of another person just because the colour of his skin is different." Much is expected from the town-dwelling African assimilating the multi-national image. "Any discrimination under a policy of multi-racialism", the Prime Minister continued, "is liable to give insult and cause frustration among people who would eventually avenge themselves", whereas under the policy of multi-nationalism it will be possible to remove the "frustration", and even to "differentiate without insulting".

Solutions which make sense sociologically are difficult to come by in the South African situation. Even in the proposed "White" South Africa (that is, present South Africa minus the Bantustans) only about 27 per cent of the population would be citizens, and the rest foreigners, citizens of other nations, without political rights. This is hardly the kind of structure which most sociological textbooks would credit with stability or survival value. But no more would the books speak of a well-entrenched minority relinquishing political dominance and economic privilege without trying to limit their losses.

Some people, even in Government circles, are beginning to advocate a less unequal sharing of wealth and *economic* power. But the White electorate's fears of sharing *political* power may have to be allayed before any new economic and social deal would become possible. If the "single plan" of multi-nationalism could achieve this, then indeed it would make a major contribution to peaceful change in South Africa. It does not seem inherently impossible to relieve African town dwellers of their pariah status by progressively liquidating economic and social discrimination and simultaneously giving them political rights in Bantustans which move steadily towards full independence.

Some African people, without being at all tribal-minded, now seem willing to make the most of any available instrument for

the political expression of their grievances and demands. The new councils, they hope, will be listened to by the Transkeian or Ciskeian authorities, who in turn will carry the day with the Republican authorities. And they hope that the spokesmen of the Bantustans will carry increasing weight. Their old idea of an undivided South Africa might yet give place to a surge of new Bantustan loyalty, if and only if the Bantustans were to appear really effective as protection of their "nationals".

I have tried to describe how wary Africans are of any new scheme designed for them by the White Government; how readily they regard it all as a "fake story"; just a new word to persuade the world "that all is in order"; or as a policy that "only benefits one party — the White one." Up till now, many ordinary people have felt that the Bantustans had not changed the situation at the only level that counts, that is, that of jobs and wages. "Though we have our own Government, we can't get work." "Nothing has changed. People still stay in the rural areas waiting for their headman to inform them if there are vacancies in the towns." If they are to feel that as "foreigners" they are even more prone to be treated as a "labour pool" and less as "human beings", even more subject to regimentation, removals and separation of families, then the sense of "insult" would be felt even more keenly.

In the world of today pariah treatment of foreigners as such is not acceptable. Even the so-called guest workers in Western Europe — unenviable though their position is in many respects — enjoy trade union rights and are not exposed to social apartheid. And unlike them, many of the urban Africans will always remain a kind of in-between category of legal but not *de facto* foreigners. Above all, if they are to be regarded as foreigners their treatment will have international implications. For the treatment of foreigners, of course, is taken to reflect the respect accorded to their home country.

If "White" South Africa were to discriminate too brutally against its Bantustani millions, relations between the Republic and the Bantustan governments would be likely to become strained. The strain might lead to still further discrimination, according to the vicious spiral that is usual in such situations. If, on the other hand, the Bantustans did *not* take a strong line to protect "their" non-resident citizens, these people might come to feel that they have sold their birthright as Black South Africans for a very small mess of Bantustan pottage, and identify resentfully with an aggressive all-Black, all-South African nationalism, for which, as we have seen, the potential is present today.

19

The essential fact is that political identification requires trust — the feeling that the State to which one gives one's loyalty protects one and takes care of one's vital interests. If Bantustan citizenship cannot convey that feeling to urban Africans — cannot change their existential experience of pariah — it seems to me, if I may paraphrase Milton — that *new foreigner will be nothing but old native writ large.* It is the pariah treatment itself which "gives insult and causes frustration", and which would have to be lived down and cancelled out before the town-dwelling Africans could feel themselves proud citizens of any country.

APPENDIX

Most of the interviewing took place in Duncan Village and Mdantsane. Smaller numbers were interviewed in Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown.

Duncan Village and Mdantsane Informants

1. Age and Sex

				M	F
17-19	...	...	...	6	11
20-29	...	...	...	83	35
30-39	...	...	...	45	28
40-49	...	...	...	25	11
50-59	...	...	...	4	2
60-69	...	...	...	2	—

2. Education

			M	F
Illiterate	...	...	7	—
Sub. A-St. 4	...	...	38	13
St. 5-St. 7	...	...	65	47
J.C.	...	...	25	18
St. 9-Matric	...	...	20	3

3. Place of Birth

			M	F
Duncan Village	...		66	43
Rural	...	...	94	39

21