

ETHNIC NATIONALISM AND STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT:  
REFUGEES IN THE ORANGE FREE STATE

by

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The problem in Southern Africa is basically not one of race, but of nationalism, which is a world-wide problem. There is a white nationalism, and there are several black nationalisms ... My Government's principal aim is to make it possible for each nation, black and white, to achieve its fullest potential, including sovereign independence, so that each individual can enjoy all the rights and privileges which his or her community is capable of securing for him or her:

(Pik Botha, United Nations, July 1976) (1)

Our burden is this. We are trapped. Our hands are tied. We have no right to seek work for ourselves wherever we want to go. We are supposed to stand around here maybe three months, five or six months or longer, waiting for work that never comes. When you go to Bloemfontein you spend your own money on the bus fare. You might get a job sometime, if you're lucky, but when you have to get fixed up at the pass office at Bloemfontein you are chased away. They say you've got no right to seek work for yourself: 'Get back to Onverwacht and wait there!' We are men with families, we have children going to school. We need money for everything. We ask how can we manage to raise our families and feed them and keep the children in school when our hands are fastened like this?

(Black work-seeker, Onverwacht, July 1980)

Outside Thaba Nchu in the Orange Free State, on the main highway to Bloemfontein, there is a sign marked Uitzicht, pointing to the south-west. The public road is wide, rough and heavily rutted. Long before it reaches Uitzicht, which is a small railway siding near the Rusfontein dam, it passes through a gap in a low ridge of hills crossing the western boundary of the Thaba Nchu reserve. Beyond that gap, 12 kilometres from Thaba Nchu town, lies one of the largest resettlement slums in South Africa. It is known officially as Onverwacht, but the people who live there also call it Botshabelo, Place of Refuge. It was barren veld in May 1979. Today it is a vast parade of shacks and tents and numbered toilet stands, occupied by more than one

hundred thousand people. Why?

Some of the other sink holes of immiseration in South Africa - Limehill in Kwazulu, Dimbaza, Thornhill and Glenmore in the Ciskei - are already notorious. So also are some of the "squatter" camps peripheral to the industrial conurbations - Crossroads in the western Cape and the Winterveld to the north-west of Pretoria, on the edge of one piece of the jig-saw of Bophuthatswana. (2) These places, in their variety and complexity, reflect complementary aspects of contemporary South African reality. On the one hand, vast numbers of black South Africans - perhaps 3 million by 1980 - have been forcibly relocated from "white" South Africa to remote and isolated dumping grounds in the Bantustans. And many more such dumping grounds appear every year - except that they remain unknown and inaccessible to most South Africans, black and white, let alone to the outside world. On the other hand, as structural unemployment rises and the vicious spiral of rural poverty continues, thousands of "redundant" Africans filter into the dormitory towns and the "squatter" camps on the edges of the industrial areas, in the desperate search for employment. There they are harassed by municipal police - the hated "blackjacks" - or, in the case of the Winterveld, by Bophuthatswana police.

The policy of ethnic nationalism, represented in the above quotation from a speech to the UN by Pik Botha in 1976, involves the imposition of ten different "national" identities which are supposed both to embrace all black South Africans and to divide them in the achievement of their political aspirations. Integral to this policy is the restructuring of the African population, both in respect of their formal alienation, their conversion into "foreigners" and "guest-workers" in the country of their birth, as has already happened to citizens of Transkei (1976), Bophuthatswana (1977) and Venda (1979), and as will shortly happen to citizens of the Ciskei; and in respect of their physical relocation from "white" South Africa to their various "homelands". Above all, it is those identified as redundant to the "white" economy who are relocated in this way: the unemployed, the unskilled, those without Section 10 rights of residence in "white" South Africa; and the "economically inactive" - women, children, the elderly, the sick and infirm. A recent computer projection by Charles Simkins shows that, although the South African state has been unable in an absolute sense to reverse the tide of immigration from the Bantustans into the common area, it has successfully enforced over the last twenty years a relative concentration of the domestic black population in the Bantustans - 35.6 per cent of men and 43.3 per cent of women in 1960, 42.0 per cent of men and 52.6 per cent of women in 1970, 46.3 per cent of men and 55.9 per cent of women in 1980. (3)

In terms of the sheer scale of population removals which have taken place, and in terms of the physical concentration of large numbers of people in small areas, events in the Orange Free State (OFS) in the last ten years perhaps best exemplify the way in which political boundaries are manipulated in order to export unemployment, to disclaim welfare responsibilities, to suppress class consciousness, to promote inter-ethnic conflict and to maintain vicarious control of the labour force through the Bantustan administrations. The story concerns four places: Qwaqwa, the tiny "homeland" of the "South Sotho national unit" in the north-eastern corner of the OFS (see map), which has a limited form of self-government; Thaba Nchu, an isolated enclave of the Republic of Bophuthatswana in the OFS; Kromdraai, a large settlement of "illegal squatters" within Thaba Nchu which grew up during the 1970s and was razed to the ground in the second half of 1979; and Onverwacht, a new slum to the west of Thaba Nchu which was planned in 1979 to develop into a South Sotho "city" of 200,000 people by the year 2000. (4) It is already serving as a commuter-dormitory for blacks employed in Bloemfontein and as a dumping ground for blacks expelled from "white" towns and farms all over the OFS. At present Onverwacht is administered from Bloemfontein by the Black Affairs Commissioner on behalf of the South African Bantu Trust. It will in due course be taken over by the Qwaqwa government.

Qwaqwa - otherwise the magisterial district of Witziesshoek - is a tiny, barren and mountainous area of 48,000 hectares. On the south-west it is bounded by the steep crags of the Drakensberg, close to the points on the Lesotho border at which armed insurgents of the self-styled Lesotho Liberation Army have infiltrated over the past year. The eastern boundary is part of the main Drakensberg escarpment, running to

the north-east - the watershed of the Namahali (Elands) and Tugela rivers which separates the OFS from Natal. The north-western boundary of Qwaqwa is a long mountain spur ending in a high cliff which overlooks the capital of Phuthaditjhaba and gives the Bantustan its present name.

After the Difaqane, Witzieshoek was occupied by Chief Oetsi and his Kholokoe followers. But the encroaching Boers complained of frequent cattle-raiding by Oetsi's people, and the Kholokoe were driven out by a commando under J. M. Orpen in 1856. In 1867 Moshoeshoe's brother, Mopeli, was given permission by the Volksraad to settle there, as part of the initial peace dispositions of the second Sotho-Boer war. (5) In 1873 a section of the Tlokwa under Koos Mota were allowed to settle, in the eastern part of the reserve. Thereafter the history of Witzieshoek is only patchily recorded. By 1916 the reserve was already over-crowded, eroded and impoverished; and a familiar pattern of out-migration had been established. From 1936 various "betterment" proposals were put into effect, involving the fencing of arable and grazing areas and the culling of livestock. Strong popular resistance to these measures culminated in the 1950 Witzieshoek rebellion and violent retaliation by the South African state. (6)

Consistently with the original territorial demarcation and with the policy of the Nationalist Government, two Tribal Authorities were constituted in 1953, for the Kwena and Tlokwa tribes, respectively, under the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951. A Territorial Authority was constituted in 1969 and a Legislative Assembly in 1971, and the Bantustan was given limited powers of self-government in 1974. (7) Elections were held in 1975 and 1980: in each case the Dikwankwetla party under Kenneth Mopeli won an overwhelming victory. But only 20 of the 60 members of the legislative assembly are elected in this way. The other 40 members are nominated by the two tribal authorities, 26 by the Kwena and 14 by the Tlokwa. Constitutionally the cabinet must include both tribal chiefs. The Chief Minister himself is rangoane (father's younger brother) to the present Kwena tribal chief, Motebang Mopeli, who is also Minister of Health, so that the internal politics of Qwaqwa are dominated by the ruling Mopeli family. The elections of March 1980 were characterized by an overwhelming absence of participation throughout the single 20-member constituency which represents the "South Sotho national unit" and by subsequent allegations of corruption against the Dikwankwetla party. (8)

The "South Sotho national unit" is officially coterminous with the de jure population of Qwaqwa, i.e. "those sections of the population of the RSA and former homelands of the RSA which, owing to origin and ethnic ties, are regarded as citizens of the homeland of Qwaqwa". (9) However, according to the census figures showing the de facto distribution of the 1.36 million people comprising the "South Sotho national unit" in 1970, only 24,000 (less than 2 per cent) were at that time resident in Qwaqwa, the Bantustan with which that population is officially associated; 8.4 per cent were in other Bantustans, mainly the Transkei and Bophuthatswana; and 90 per cent were in "white" South Africa (two-thirds of these in the OFS, one-third in the southern Transvaal). (10) The estimated de jure population of Qwaqwa in mid-1978 was 1.79 million. (11) Far more important than the absolute increase in numbers are the changes which have taken place in the de facto distribution of this population. Qwaqwa has experienced an influx on a staggering scale. Its de facto population was estimated to be 200,000 in 1977 (12), 250,000 in 1978 (13), and 300,000 in 1980. (14) Assuming this latest estimate to be reasonably accurate, mean population density is now at least 1,613 persons per square mile or 622 persons per square kilometre, compared with 54 persons per square kilometre in 1970. (15) In fact, the population density in the settled areas is much higher than this, since many parts of Qwaqwa are too steep for grazing let alone for human habitation. Residents describe the place as one big location. It is rural, after all, only in the sense that it lacks urban infrastructure. With some degree of understatement, Benbo observed in 1978 that "the country is over-populated in relation to available employment opportunities, is poorly situated with regard to the industrial areas and markets of Southern Africa, has no notable mineral or agricultural riches, while a lack of capital and a topography which makes the development of infrastructure exceptionally costly and difficult are some of the most important factors retarding economic development". (16)

There are no reliable figures to indicate where the immigrants into Qwaqwa have come from. I would guess that perhaps 60 per cent have come off white farms, particularly in the northern, eastern and north-western districts of the OFS; and the remaining 40 per cent from the towns within an arc approximately described by Harrismith, Vereeniging, Klerksdorp, Wesselsbron and Bloemfontein. By 30 June 1976 the Department of Bantu Administration and Development had "assisted in resettling" 56,229 South Sotho in Qwaqwa (17); and, presumably, many more since then. Otherwise, probably the majority of people have moved voluntarily in the sense that they were not physically removed by GG (South African government) vehicles but made their own way to Qwaqwa. They have done so for a variety of reasons which reflect the complexity of what is happening in the OFS as a whole. In view of the prevailing paucity of basic information, it is impossible to present a systematic account of this. In many areas, though not uniformly, farmers are cutting down on their labour, expelling squatters and the few remaining labour tenants, and refusing to accommodate the families of farm workers whose sons have taken up contracts in the mines or elsewhere. Correspondingly, in response firstly to conditions on the farms which vary a great deal but are for the most part appalling, and secondly to the prospect which opened up in the 1970s of employment on the mines for higher wages, many individuals and their families have decided to set up a base in their "homeland" and to search for employment as migrant labourers in the towns. That they continue to do this in the face of very high unemployment within Qwaqwa is an indication of the conditions from which they have come and of the desperate search for security. A shack in Qwaqwa, put together with corrugated sheeting at high second-hand prices, albeit with no arable or grazing land, with no urban infrastructure, no employment and minimal social services (except schools, which are many and attract boarders from Kroonstad, Welkom and other OFS towns), represents the first and only secure home that most immigrant families have experienced.

Immigrants were also responding to a sustained campaign to encourage South Sotho to come "home". This was initiated in the early and middle 1970s by the Qwaqwa government together with Chieftainess 'MaMpoi, mother of Chief Motebang Mopeli. Since immigrants are directly incorporated into the existing tribal hierarchy and immediately subject to a network of bureaucratic controls connected with access to residential sites, to local jobs and services and to the labour bureau, the effect of this campaign has been to establish hegemony over a political constituency which would otherwise have remained dispersed and fragmented and wholly out of reach of the Dikwankwetla party machine. Thus do the Bantustan leaders conspire in the process of immiseration.

In 1978 Mopeli rejected the option of "independence", but said that it might be considered if the size of the Bantustan were increased to half of the OFS. (18) He had earlier been quoted as saying that the ultimate aim of Qwaqwa was to "form a union with Lesotho which will include the South Sotho living in the Transkei and Eastern Free State". (19) This aspiration is taken seriously neither by the South African government nor by the Lesotho government. Pending satisfactory settlement of its own claims to "conquered territory", which is quite unlikely at present, Lesotho will not find it attractive to absorb another 48,000 hectares, Qwaqwa's present land area, together with its resident population of more than a quarter of a million people, since Lesotho already faces its own crisis of structural unemployment. (20) An additional derisory area of 14,000 hectares of compulsorily purchased white farm land is due to be added to Qwaqwa under the 1975 consolidation proposals. Having substantially failed in his bid for extra land in the OFS, Mopeli's strategy has been to articulate the grievances of South Sotho minorities in other Bantustans. For example, the Qwaqwa cabinet declared Transkei Independence Day, 26 October 1976, as a day of mourning for many thousands of South Sotho of the Herschel and Maluti districts who were not consulted about their future status and whose subsequent secessionist impulse has been harshly suppressed by the Transkei authorities. (21) Otherwise, Mopeli has taken a particular interest in the predicament of South Sotho immigrants into Thaba Nchu.

Because of its long-standing association with the Seleka Rolong, a branch of the Tswana, Thaba Nchu became "independent" as a territorial fragment of Bophuthatswana in December 1977. The history of this association is a fascinating one. The Barolong fled from the ravages of the Difaqane along the Vaal river and settled at Thaba Nchu in 1833, apparently as vassals of Moshoeshe, although there are at least three different interpretations of the transaction that took place. (22)

Their chief, Moroka, who allied himself with the Voortrekkers first against Mzilikazi and then against Moshoeshoe, achieved effective political independence after the collapse of the Orange River Sovereignty in 1854. As a result of a bitter dispute over the succession to Moroka, however, Thaba Nchu was annexed by the OFS in 1884, and its "common" land appropriated. The remaining territory of the Barolong, under freehold tenure, largely disintegrated in the following twenty years through the alienation of individual titles to whites. (23) Many Barolong were evicted and dispossessed: Moroka's biographer, S. M. Molema, remarked that about 10,000 "went to live in Government and municipal locations in the various towns of the Orange Free State and elsewhere, and thus swelled the African urban population, which seems to be the problem of the mid-Twentieth century in South Africa". (24)

Solomon Plaatje recorded the further misery and distress which the 1913 Land Act inflicted on Africans in the OFS. He describes a public meeting at Thaba Nchu on 12 September 1913 at which "a thousand Natives" were bitterly disappointed when they were told by the Secretary for Native Affairs, Edward Dower, to acquiesce in their eviction and dispossession under the Act. (25) The Beaumont Commission of 1916 merely crystallized the disintegration of Thaba Nchu. (26) In his addendum to the Report of the Natives Economic Commission, 1930-32, F. E. W. Lucas noted that no additional land had been set aside for the Barolong, despite the recommendation of an 1884 commission; that many freehold landowners had got into debt and given bonds over their farms, which resulted in the alienation of much land to whites and the eviction of Africans; that the reserve was over-crowded and over-stocked, vegetation was scanty and land erosion very bad; that "large numbers of Basuto and Amaxosa have drifted into the district from time to time and have remained working on the farms"; and that the Barolong tribal system was breaking down, and not much use was being made of the chiefs. (27) Since 1936 some steps have been taken to reintegrate the fragments of land which constituted the reserve, nearly doubling its size through the acquisition of Quota land. As a result many people have been resettled in Trust villages. But the process of consolidation is not yet complete; and there remains considerable confusion over whether the boundaries of Thaba Nchu which now appear on official maps (such as the 1977 edition of the 1:250,000 topo-cadastral sheets) accurately represent the land available to Africans within Thaba Nchu.

The 1970 census recorded an ethnically mixed population in the reserve: 24,300 Tswana, 12,000 South Sotho and 3,600 Xhosa in a total population of 42,000 (28), all politically subordinate to the Barolong Tribal Authority. In the following years many more Basotho left white farms, the smallholdings round Bloemfontein and the small dorps all over the OFS, and drifted in to the existing Thaba Nchu "locations" (Morolong, Mokwena, Ratlou, etc.); to resettlement villages known as Bultfontein I, II and III (20); and to the remaining Barolong freehold farms and Trust villages. A large concentration of illegal squatters developed to the north of Thaba Nchu railway station in an area which became known as Kromdraai. It had been demarcated as grazing land, but thousands of people moved there apparently because plots had been fraudulently "sold" to them or because they had been led to believe that stands would be allocated to them. According to a press report, "It is the rejected who come to Kromdraai - those who can no longer work, those who cannot 'fix up their passes' - from the small dorps and farms all over the Free State. The authorities of Thaba Nchu (in Bophuthatswana) do not want them and say they must go to their own place - Qwaqwa. But Qwaqwa is far away and overcrowded already". (30)

Initially, an attempt was made to deport them to Qwaqwa. In 1974, for example, Mangope was reported to have made Bophuthatswana government vehicles available to the Central Government for this purpose. (31) A reader of the Bloemfontein Friend commented on this in 1976: "When approaching Thaba Nchu by rail one is alarmed to notice the uncontrolled development of the squatter town now generally known as Kromdraai. For those who have the welfare of the Black people at heart, it was a great relief to see Government vehicles transporting these squatters to Witzieshoek. Black leaders in Thaba Nchu were happy to see one of their major problems so easily solved ... It is only hoped that the Sotho politicians using these squatters for their own political gains will realize what hardships they have caused and are still causing to innocent people and that they will have the courage to accept responsibility for the problems they are creating." (32)

But mass immigration continued, and the issue developed into a confrontation between politicians of Bophuthatswana and Qwaqwa, respectively. A Qwaqwa cabinet minister complained that South Sotho in Thaba Nchu were discriminated against in respect of work permits, residence rights and language of instruction in the schools. In turn, he was accused of interfering in the domestic affairs of Bophuthatswana. (33) In 1978, the population of Kromdraai was estimated to be 38,000 people. They were living in poverty and squalor, in shacks roughly constructed from mud-bricks and corrugated sheeting. (34) They were regularly harassed by the Bophuthatswana police as "illegal foreigners", and this pressure was intensified shortly after "independence". Several massive raids took place in 1978. On 24 April, for example, 301 people were arbitrarily arrested, their children intimidated, their livestock dispersed and impounded; some were shot, others were raped. Those charged and convicted for squatting were fined R40 or imprisoned for 40 days in Bloemfontein gaol, by arrangement with South Africa. Another big raid on 21 December 1978 led to R60 fines or 60 days' imprisonment. The practice became lucrative for the Bophuthatswana authorities. On several occasions, indeed, the South African police intervened to persuade the Bophuthatswana police to behave more moderately. Basotho tenants in the Thaba Nchu "locations" also complained of exploitation and harassment by Barolong landlords. In May 1978, Mopeli appealed to Mangope to leave South Sotho in Thaba Nchu alone until they could be resettled. (35)

During 1977 and 1978 various negotiations took place between Bophuthatswana and Qwaqwa and the South African government over the provision of land for the relocation of Basotho from Thaba Nchu. (36) A land swap was arranged by which 25,000 hectares of compulsorily purchased white farms on the east bank of the Modder river would be used both to enlarge the Thaba Nchu enclave and to create a South Sotho city to the west of it. (37) Removal of the Kromdraai squatters to the area known as Onverwacht began in late May 1979 - in winter - and was completed by December of the same year. Kromdraai itself reverted to bare hillside, scrub and grazing. Only the graveyard remains, and rusting upturned vehicles are scattered across the veld. In Onverwacht people were provided with numbered toilet stands and had to build their own accommodation from whatever materials they were able to obtain. Most of the shacks are haphazardly constructed from corrugated sheeting and they are extremely hot in summer and bitterly cold in winter. Basotho were also removed from the Bultfontein settlements, from the "locations" in Thaba Nchu and from Barolong farms and Trust villages such as Ha Ntsieng near Waghorn station in the east of the reserve, Paradys in the north and Dipudungwana in the south. People are still pouring into Onverwacht from elsewhere in the OFS, courtesy of GG. Many others are using Thaba Nchu as a staging post for being transferred to Onverwacht, so that the areas in the reserve from which Basotho have already been removed have rapidly filled up again. They qualify for stands in Onverwacht by producing i) a Qwaqwa citizenship card, ii) a valid reference book and iii) a marriage certificate, and by paying R1.00 for the allocation. Chief Minister Mopeli, however, is acknowledged as not insisting on Sotho identity as a criterion of Qwaqwa citizenship, with the result that there is a significant minority in Onverwacht who are identified as members of the Xhosa ethnic group but as citizens of Qwaqwa.

Conditions are very bad. Most families are grossly overcrowded. They live in tents or shacks on plots of 30 x 15 metres and share a bucket toilet which may be emptied by lorry twice a week. There is no privacy. Water is scarce, despite the provision of pipes and tap outlets in three of the four sections occupied by July 1980. There was an outbreak of typhoid early in 1980, denied by officials in Bloemfontein and Pretoria. By 9 July 1980 there were 258 "adult" graves and 269 "children's" graves in the cemetery: a stark indication of high infant mortality.

Unemployment is also very high. There are a few local and temporary construction jobs with GG at wages substantially lower than for similar work elsewhere. The rate of mine recruitment at Thaba Nchu is well down on previous years, averaging about 200 per month in the first half of 1980. (38) About 60 per cent of these men come from Onverwacht, but most of them carry re-engagement guarantee certificates and very few novices are recruited. Hardly any white employers visit Onverwacht to engage contract labour; those who do often renege on the terms and conditions offered. Even when men are recruited through the local office which serves as a labour bureau, they are seldom offered, irrespective of their qualifications and experience, anything other

than unskilled manual labour ("pike en foshel") at wage rates which they cannot afford to accept because they cannot feed their families thereby. Many households appear to be solely dependent on a pension, a sum of about £50 payable every two months, or on the appalling wage of a domestic servant. For example, a woman who is her household's sole breadwinner may rise at 4 a.m. in Onverwacht to travel to her employer's home in Bloemfontein; she works a 6-day week for which she is paid R25 or R30 a month, out of which she must find R12 for the monthly bus ticket before starting to feed her family. Residents in Onverwacht spend an enormous amount of time, energy and money in surmounting or circumventing the bureaucratic checkpoints that constrain access to residential sites, to reference books, to work-seekers' permits, to jobs, to local services, to pensions. They bitterly resent the vicious circles which prevent them i) from seeking work at all (the soekwerk stamp) and ii) from seeking it outside Onverwacht. Men and women trudge daily to the office, an ex-farmhouse several kilometres away from the slums, and despair of any prospect of improvement.

Despite all this, the people from Kromdraai in particular express some relief because they are no longer subject to arbitrary arrest and intimidation by the Bophuthatswana police. In the Qwaqwa election of March 1980 they voted solidly for the Dikwankwetla party because they believe that Chief Minister Mopeli persuaded the South African government to provide a refuge for the Basotho who were being harassed in Thaba Nchu. Mopeli thus gained considerable political credit for leading his subjects "out of the land of Egypt into the land of Canaan". But he is unable to provide land or jobs for them, and this credit may swiftly evaporate as frustration and anger intensify in Onverwacht. One focal point of frustration and anger is the forced auctions of livestock which have taken place. Another is the schools, which are over-crowded and where facilities are utterly inadequate: 600 students stormed the police station at Onverwacht on 11 July 1980. (39) On 14 September, according to a press report, two men were arrested by Bophuthatswana security police while Mopeli was addressing a crowd of 20,000 at Onverwacht, after rumours of a possible assassination attempt against him. (40) It is not clear why Bophuthatswana police should have been involved.

One tragic irony of this episode in the appalling story of South Africa's internal refugees is that, according to press leaks in 1979, Thaba Nchu has been excluded from the Van der Walt Commission's proposals to consolidate Bophuthatswana. "The idea of surrendering Thaba Nchu is certain to bring heartache to the Bophuthatswana President, Chief Lucas Mangope, as it has been in the hands of the Tswana-speaking Barolong tribe for 150 years. Nearly 70,000 Basotho are reported to live in the area today." (41) We still await the report of the Commission and the government's reaction to it, but if this is confirmed the boot will be on the other foot and thousands of Barolong are likely to be trekking far to the west, to the main areas of Bophuthatswana.

Qwaqwa's "greatest asset", in Mopeli's view, is its human potential. He has also recognized that "At present and in the distant future the people of Qwaqwa will be its main export. For that reason the quality of the article must improve so that there is a great demand for it among the industries of Southern Africa". (42) The South Sotho "homeland" will shortly consist of two entirely separate "city-states" - in fact grotesquely over-crowded rural slums. Contrary to Mopeli's aspirations, mass removals to Qwaqwa and to Onverwacht are a mechanism for the concentration of poverty and unemployment in remote and isolated rural areas. There is absolutely no prospect that jobs will be created for these people either locally or at a distance. The Bantustan governments have thus increasingly assumed the function of direct repression of South Africa's relative surplus population. In political terms, the strategy of ethnic nationalism has given a vicious ethnic twist to conflicts which might otherwise develop along class lines or as part of the wider struggle against white supremacy. In economic terms, the effect of the strategy is to maintain, physically intermingled with this surplus population, a minimally organized, grossly exploitable reserve army of labour, whose wage income is systematically depressed through acute competition for occasional unskilled employment. People are preoccupied, of course, with the problems of physical survival from day to day. But there are still strong empirical connections - through schoolchildren, migrant labourers and the dispersion of families - between the black townships in "white" South Africa and the rural slums in the Bantustans. For this reason one may envisage crisis points in the dumping grounds that co-ordinate, to some

extent, with the crisis points in Soweto, Port Elizabeth and elsewhere. They will, inevitably, be staggered in time. The outstanding question, therefore, is not the human potential for "development" in Qwaqwa but the human potential for resistance to the repressive infrastructure of ethnic nationalism and to the South African state as its political sponsors.

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Notes

- (1) Star, 2.7.76.
- (2) See the following sources in particular: C. Desmond, The Discarded People (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1971); Uprooting a Nation (London: Africa Publications Trust, 1974); A. Baldwin, "Mass Removals and Separate Development", Journal of Southern African Studies 1, 2, April 1975, pp. 215-27; Bophuthatswana, Fact Paper No. 4 (London: International Defence and Aid Fund, 1977); Control, Development Studies Group Information Publication 1 (University of the Witwatersrand, February 1979); "Eastern Cape Resettlement. Black Pawns in a White Game", Inquiry No. 2, October 1979 (Rhodes University); "From Difaqane to Discarded People: South Africa's Internal Refugees", African Research & Documentation No. 22, 1980; G. Maré, African Population Relocation in South Africa (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1980); M. Nash, Black Uprooting from White South Africa (Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1980); J. Yawitch, "Black Women in South Africa: Capitalism, Employment and Reproduction", Africa Perspective, Dissertation No. 2, 1980 (University of the Witwatersrand).
- (3) C. Simkins, unpublished computer projection, 1980.
- (4) Friend, 17.5.79.
- (5) J. M. Orpen, History of the Basutus of South Africa (Mazenod, 1979, originally published 1857), pp. 133-9; P. Sanders, Moshoeshe, Chief of the Sotho (London, 1975), pp. 209, 216-7, 298.
- (6) Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances in the Witziesshoek Native Reserve, U.G. 26-1951; S. Moroney, "1950 Witziesshoek Rebellion", Africa Perspective, February 1976.
- (7) T. Malan & P. S. Hattingh, Black Homelands in South Africa (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 1976), p. 194.
- (8) The actual voting figures were not officially available in Phuthaditjhaba in June 1980, owing to an impending legal case brought by the opposition parties against Mopeli, his cabinet and the Qwaqwa legislative assembly concerning "irregularities" in the conduct of the poll. See Friend, 12.6.80; Rand Daily Mail, 19.6.80. Two former cabinet ministers, C. Koekoe and J. R. Ngake, who were sacked from the Qwaqwa government in 1979, sought first to take over the ruling Dikwankwetla party in a bid to discredit Mopeli, and later to form another party, Matla-a-Sechaba, to oppose Mopeli in the 1980 election. Their support appears to be confined to Welkom and Kroonstad, outside Mopeli's immediate sphere of patronage. Three other parties also contested the election.
- (9) Qwaqwa Economic Revue (Pretoria: Bureau for Economic Research, Bantu Development [BENBO], 1978), p. 21.
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1979 (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations [SAIRR], 1980), p. 71.
- (12) BENBO, 1978, pp. 21-2.
- (13) Informa XXVI, No. 9, September 1979, p. 4 (Pretoria: Information Service of South Africa).



- (14) Oral estimate from magistrate's office, Witziesshoek, March 1980.
- (15) Malan & Hattingh, op. cit., p. 16.
- (16) BENBO, 1978, p. 9.
- (17) Ibid., p. 26.
- (18) SAIRR Survey 1978 (1979), p. 295.
- (19) Friend, 14.9.76.
- (20) See South African Labour Bulletin 6, 4, November 1980.
- (21) SAIRR Survey 1976 (1977), p. 254; Survey 1979 (1980), p. 318.
- (22) Sanders, op. cit., pp. 63-5.
- (23) S. M. Molema, Chief Moroka (Cape Town; 1951), pp. 166-70; B. Setai, The Political Economy of South Africa (University Press of America, 1979), p. 15; C. Bundy, The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry (London, 1979), pp. 205-6.
- (24) Molema, op. cit., p. 170.
- (25) S. Plaatje, Native Life in South Africa (New York: 1969; originally published 1916), pp. 102-116.
- (26) Malan & Hattingh, op. cit., p. 25.
- (27) Bantu World, 27.1.34.
- (28) 1970 Population Census Report 02-05-06.
- (29) Conditions there ten years ago, at the time they first appeared, are briefly described by Desmond, op. cit., pp. 210-12.
- (30) Voice, 8.4.78.
- (31) Rand Daily Mail, 2/30.10.74.
- (32) Friend, 25.9.76.
- (33) See the correspondence which took place in September and October 1976 between S. O. Seata, representative of Thaba Nchu in the Bophuthatswana legislative assembly, and J. R. Ngake, then Qwaqwa Minister of Education. Friend, 27.9.76; 5/18/30.10.76.
- (34) Voice, 8.4.78.
- (35) Friend, 13.5.78.
- (36) World, 22.5.77; Friend, 19.9.78. Colin Legum refers to a "secret agreement" between Qwaqwa and Bophuthatswana in The Western Crisis over Southern Africa (London: Africa Contemporary Record, 1979), p. 160.
- (37) Friend, 8.2.79; 3.3.79.
- (38) TEBA office, Thaba Nchu.
- (39) Star, 11.7.80.
- (40) Star, 18.9.80.
- (41) Rand Daily Mail, 27.9.79.
- (42) Informa XXVI, No. 9, September 1979, p. 1.

