

SOUTH AFRICA'S BANTUS¹

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Among the some 37 independent governments of the world's fastest changing continent, the Republic of South Africa rates special attention for two reasons.

Occupying only 472,000 of the continental total of 11,500,000 square miles, the republic is the undisputed "workshop of the continent." Seventy per cent of the free world's gold comes from her mines and 75 per cent of Africa's steel from her mills. Fifty per cent of all the motor vehicles, railroads and telephones operating in the continent are additional proof for South Africa's economic strength. The resulting national income surpassed \$7 billion or \$420 per capita already in 1963 and 1964 which is not only an African record but compares favorably with countries like Italy or Greece. Of this total, incidentally, an estimated \$300 million is used for military preparedness.

The Republic of South Africa stoutly defends the proposition that Africa is not the exclusive preserve of any one race but "multi-national." The continent's largest white community, consisting of 3,106,000 Afrikaans- and English-speaking descendants of Dutch and British settlers, considers South Africa its homeland. This is still a minority within the country's total population of 16,222,000, but nowhere else in Africa is the white segment that large or as significant a percentage of the total.

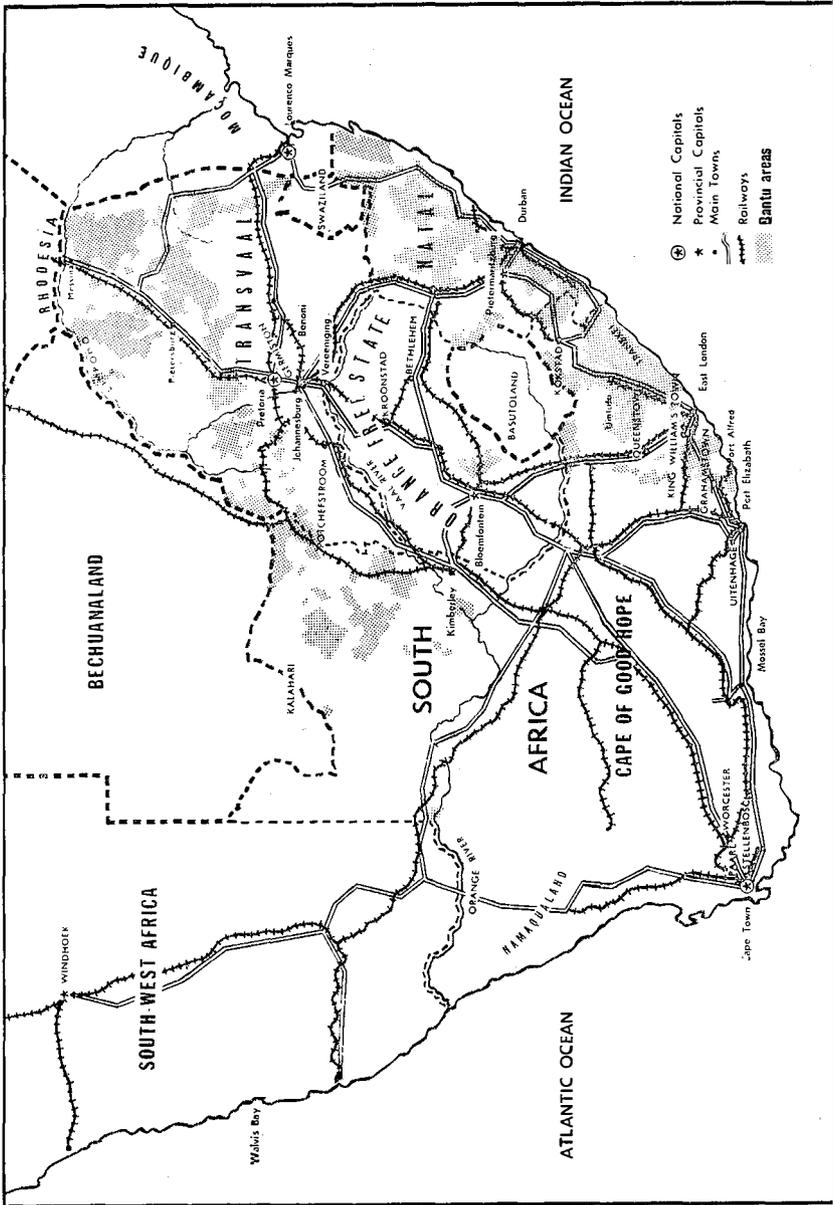
South Africa's majority people are 11,007,000 black Bantus. In addition, and separated from blacks as well as from whites are 1,502,000 Coloreds,² and Mulattos, offspring of racial mixtures of previous centuries, and 487,000 Asians who are mostly Indians.

Official South Africa is firmly convinced that the only realistic way for the four population groups to live and let live side by side is complete segregation. *Apartheid*, as this is called in their language, is the law of the land. Under it each population segment remains a separate social unit and the few inter-group contacts are strictly regulated. White leadership is assured by excluding the three non-white groups from the right to vote, to bear arms, or even to organize interest groups such as labor unions.³ In comparing their policy of *Apartheid* with integration efforts in the United States, South African officials point out the following differences: The U.S. Negro is westernized while most of the Africans are tribalized; the ratio of black to white in the United States is only 1 to 10 but in South Africa it is 4 to 1; the three million whites have a record of more than three centuries of survival and development in Africa, and racial problems in the United States or in any other western democracy do not ease their apprehension about the consequences of multi-racialism of South Africa. Official South Africa does not interpret segregation or

¹ Much of the information offered here was gathered during a sabbatical leave spent in the Republic of South Africa.

² The term "Colored" in South Africa does not identify a Negro.

³ A limited franchise for Bantus will be discussed under "Bantustans."



Source: Department of Information, Republic of South Africa, Private Bag 152 Pretoria, South Africa
Map 1

Apartheid as discrimination but rather as a coordination of black and white, which permits each its own development according to culture and social background. In order to make this system work, the white minority for the time being must maintain a "benevolent" guardianship over the non-white groups and especially over the 11,000,000 Bantus.

THE BANTUS

The term Bantu refers to the common language and tribal heritage of the black majority population in all of southern Africa. In the Republic's everyday usage it goes beyond that and covers anyone and any part of the multitudes of black-skinned people.

An important fact of South African life, from home to factory, is cheap Bantu labor. The reasons for it are not hard to find. Without the right to vote or bargain, the black man must depend on representatives who are appointed by the white man's government.

A special "Department of Bantu Administration and Development" regulates his everyday life.⁴ It sets all standards for housing, training, job classifications, etc. Under the directive, under which it operates, a Bantu can neither live nor work alongside a white person. The obvious result is that the earnings of dark-skinned people remain lowest on the scale. Only in facilities which serve exclusively a non-white clientele, from government offices to hospitals and schools, may black and white work together. But even here the pay scale favors whites by a considerable margin. Government data indicate that about 10 per cent of the national cash income is received by the 66 per cent of the population which is black. However, such a figure is not conclusive because in South Africa's Negro employment the paternal type of compensation from company or government housing and feeding to all kinds of social services is still the preferred practice.⁵ In deviation from that in 1963/1964 some 30 private industries, lead by Rembrandt Tobacco and O.K. chain stores, came out with new hourly minimum wages "for the benefit of greater Bantu purchasing power." The point that Negroes would be the sole beneficiaries of this revolutionary move was so obvious that the printed announcements did not even elaborate on it. Thousands of fortunate Africans now earn about \$300 annually. This is still below the already-mentioned national average of \$420. It also seems skimpy by United States standards, but it is far above the scale of any other African country. In evidence for it, one million black laborers from South Africa's independent neighbors annually seek employment in the republic in spite of the many social and political disadvantages. After serving for a contracted period they plan to take their wealth home but more often they return richer only in the experiences offered by an industrial society.

⁴ Parallel departments exist for the two other non-white groups, the Coloreds and the Indians.

⁵A chain of employer-subsidized super kitchens with up to 50,000-meal capacity each was started in the Republic's metropolitan areas. The purpose is to provide Bantu workers with their "diet needs" and thus increase their productivity by as much as "30 per cent" (South African Digest, July 17, 1964).

Unfortunately, the biggest employer of black labor, the Department of Bantu Administration, rejected this new minimum scale as not in accordance with productivity. One far-reaching result is that young black people prefer the better pay of industrial jobs to professional or semi-professional services. Only the government can employ Bantu teachers, nurses, civil servants, and their money rewards are still lower than \$2.80 per day.

BANTU AID

Basically all branches of the government in Pretoria, the capital city, struggle with the Bantu problem. Over the years their efforts have resulted in the Native Land Act of 1913, its amendment of 1936, the Native Building Workers Act of 1951, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and similar laws. Each in its name implies the area in which it was meant to improve the African's living standard. The land act prohibited the sale of tribal lands and its amendment returned already sold tracts to tribal ownership. The building act was a dual breakthrough. Not only was it an attack on slums, but "in order to reduce construction cost" it permitted Bantus for the first time in history to qualify as bricklayers carpenters and other artisans, of course only on native projects. The education act created a complete Bantu state school system.

Now with both prosperity prodding from within and animosity from without, the government of Prime Minister Verwoerd decided to coordinate all these efforts in a first five-year plan which started in 1961. It was preceded by a thorough survey, published as the Tomlinson report. Its realization is a compromise between the survey's recommendation and the ability and willingness to finance it.

The plan is heralded as South Africa's own brand of Negro "emancipation without chaos" and is the largest Bantu aid program in existence. The black people are to progress "under the guidance, tutelage and trusteeship" of the whites towards self-sufficiency and self-government. It is not anticipated that the program will be completed by 1966 and, by the looks of things, maybe even not in the second millenium. Nevertheless, official Pretoria professes righteousness and will go to great lengths to defend its program.

BANTUSTANS

The primary task of the plan is to create special and autonomous districts for the black population. The always-controversial issue as to who has more historic rights to the land in South Africa is settled to the disadvantage of the Bantus. The white man claims that when his ancestors moved from the Cape to the interior, they found Bantus in full occupancy only in certain eastern and northern sections (see Map 1).

In a move towards "positive Apartheid" the government, lead by Prime Minister Verwoerd, now guarantees the Bantu's "inalienable" rights to these areas to the full exclusion of white ownership. Along these historic lines South Africa is being divided into homelands for black and for white people, but under one white-managed central government. With the help of the already-mentioned Land Repurchase Act of 1936, these

so-called Bantustans will eventually be rounded out to 65,625 square miles. Thus, 13 per cent of South Africa is set aside for the black 66 per cent of the people. It is claimed that the Bantu lands are more fertile than other parts of the republic and that 100 acres there compares with 147 acres in the white man's region. So far only 41.7 per cent of the 11 million Africans live in these homelands. Pretoria, of course, is not blind to the impossibility of moving all black people into Bantustans. The argument that such a step might rob South African industries of labor would not be decisive any longer in the age of automation.

In order to preserve the "historic ethnical division" the various Bantu tribal groups, the Xhosas, Zulus, Southern and Northern Sotos, the Tswanas, Venda and several others will all have their own Bantustans. Even if the intent of this division is not politically but only culturally inspired it, plus the geography, will assure permanent close cooperation between the black states and their paternal white associates.

A FIRST BANTUSTAN, THE TRANSKEI

Dr. Verwoerd would have liked to affiliate the Bantu-inhabited Basuto-, Swazi- and Bechuana-lands with his Bantustan scheme, but these three are British protectorates on their way to full independence. Thus, the government concentrates on the largest Bantu land within South Africa, the Transkei, home of the Xhosas. "The Transkei was the first Bantu homeland to enjoy the benefits of Western Civilization and has therefore reached a higher stage of development than any other Bantu area."⁶

In November, 1963, the Xhosas within the Transkei as well as those who live and labor in other parts of South Africa voted for a first Transkeian parliament. A precedent was thus established. Even urbanized Bantus who are several generations and hundreds of miles away from the old tribal grounds become automatically "internal" citizens of a specific Bantustan. They must pay taxes to it and for that they will be represented in their residence locations by a so-called "ambassador". The supreme law for all, of course, will remain the constitution of the republic.

Within the new black states the law of the tribes based on common land ownership is to prevail. It requires the preservation of a strong chief-in-council system, the traditional tribal aristocracy. Already decades ago Negro chiefs became salaried South African civil servants. All this is now incorporated into a new Transkeian constitution. A paramount chief is still the highest authority in his region and his salary can not be superseded by that of a member of his Bantustan government.

Tribalism also dominates the new Transkeian parliament. Of its 109 members 64 are uncontested chiefs and only 45 are elected. This legislature selects the chief minister and his cabinet to whom Pretoria turns over portfolios in stages. Education, for instance, is already in the hands of a Bantu minister, with a white secretary in assistance. Post and telegraph will have to wait, and defense and foreign affairs remain permanent domains of the Pretoria government.

⁶ "South African Quiz," Department of Information, Pretoria, 1962, p. 30.

The economy of the Transkei is tribal-agricultural with the vast majority of the Xhosas still living in kraals with few modern facilities. For betterment the forementioned five-year plan offers "reclamation and rehabilitation." In a compromise between tribal customs and modern needs the 70 per cent of the acreage which is still *common* grazing land is being fenced in by sections. The purpose is to withdraw part after part from usage for contouring and soil recuperation. It is claimed that the land is so good that nature alone will restore fertility after contour plowing. On the cultivated 30 per cent of the land the people are taught to use fertilizer and to leave one out of four plots fallow.

The opinion of the white principal of the Transkei's one agricultural college illustrates the persisting difficulties. After 30 years of assistance he feels that the Xhosas are still so close to the tribal cattle-equals-prestige concept, that they are best served with a triple purpose animal. Without even the benefit of hayfeeding a Xhosa cow must yield milk and meat and also serve as a beast of burden.

Industry in the Transkei is not even in its infancy. A scheme for lumber and sisal production has been started and a lumbermill is combined with a Bantu school furniture factory. A small spinning and weaving mill operates more as a training school for black housewives than as a market producer. All others including garages, trucking, carpenter shops, small restaurants and the like are secondary industries with a 1963 total gross output of \$2,250,000 or \$1.50 per capita. In keeping with the announced goal of an all-black economy, Pretoria does not permit the investment of any outside, meaning white, capital in the Transkei or in any other Bantustan. The existing embryo enterprises are financed by a government-sponsored Bantu Investment Corporation. However, the country's big industries are urged to build new plants along Bantustan borders. The hope is that the labor can commute and yet management's influence can be kept out of the affairs of the black state.

Of course, the Transkei has towns, which, in contrast to rural kraals, have electricity, running water and sewerage. But they are still inhabited by white people. Since in principle only Africans can reside in a Bantustan, the government works for removal of all "white spots" in urban as well as rural areas. White farmers are actually bought out by the "Native Land Trust." But the townspeople are organized constituents with a general franchise. Therefore, even in Umtata, the capital of the Transkei, where the new black parliament and government functions, hotel and restaurant facilities are still off limits to Negroes. Likewise, residential areas and services such as the post office, banks and railroads remain segregated.

BANTU TOWNSHIPS

Of the roughly one-half of the Bantu people who are not inhabitants of Bantustans, 28.7 per cent are the urbanized Negroes. Like underprivileged peoples everywhere they occupied slums and shantytowns until Pretoria started a rehabilitation program within the framework of the Bantu Aid plan. For an appreciation of the need and magnitude of

the job it should be remembered that in South Africa, Africans form the majority population in all metropolitan areas.

Johannesburg, for instance, the republic's largest city, has twice as many black as white people. Hence, the well-to-do found it necessary to install burglar alarms, secure windows and doors with iron bars and stay off the streets in residential areas after dark.

Supported by matching funds of the central government and by taxes levied upon employers of "native labor," the municipalities presently are engaged in huge slum clearances. The goal is to have all Africans living in publicly-built townships. South West Township or, for short, Soweto, six miles outside of Johannesburg, is already South Africa's fourth largest city with 467,000 inhabitants. The philanthropic value of this project unfortunately is diluted by numerous *Apartheid* clauses. Africans, even wealthy businessmen or doctors, by law now are transferred to these townships as quickly as housing becomes available. There they become tenants of the municipality with, at best, a thirty-year option but never the right of ownership. Thus the government ends all African private or group property rights, the so-called "freeholdings," in all areas but the Bantustans. All real estate of black people must be sold and the only court recourse the seller has is over the amount of compensation. Africans who can not or do not wish to move to the tribal reservations live now at the complete mercy of a government which is elected by white voters only.

Residence rights in townships depend upon opportunities for employment, which is to say, on the need for African labor. All black people must carry the hated passbook which contains a work record.⁷ This not only requires red tape for employer and employee alike, it also makes the passbook holder anxious to remain on the job no matter what the pay. Cases where the loss of employment tears a family apart and sends a member to a Bantustan are not infrequent.

In addition, the central government also wishes to make the townships "projections of the Bantu homelands." They are subdivided according to ethnical divisions. Thus, even an urban Bantu in a township does not get away from tribal grouping. If his wife's tribal classification is different from his, troubles are endless. The effect is containment of all black population under tribal leadership in a liaison between townships and Bantustans. Even as improvements over shantytowns, the native townships remain 20th century ghettos. Between them and the "white" city must be a no-man's land. All roads and means of transportation leading to and through it are off-limits to white people unless the visitors have special permits.

Houses in the towns are of a low-cost construction (from \$420 up), but clean. Rents are cheap under a government subsidy. Improvements such as sewers and running water are available as a rule but the people seem to be reluctant to shoulder the cost of home installation since no

⁷ Since the unfortunate Sharpeville incidents, police checks on passbooks have eased up considerably.

ownership rights go with it. For the same reasons the grounds show little landscaping. Churches, shopping areas, youth clubs and other centers of diversion are available. Entertainment, such as movies and beergardens, is adjusted to tribal taste. A license for a second cinema in Soweto was refused as being discordant with tribal culture.

Foremost among the problems is that the cost of providing the barest necessities for a township crash program is so staggering that additional developments just have to wait. Hardly a street is paved, planned parks remain weed lots, and a public high school has to get along without electricity.⁸

Americans will appreciate the transportation problem which is caused by the sudden growth of towns in what only yesterday were mining dumps. The new suburbanites are all commuting workers and only very few have cars. "Non-white" buslines and trains are put into service and new roads are being built. Yet the average Bantu has to leave his house at 5 a.m. to be at his place of work between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. Equally time consuming is the homeward trek with endless waiting at "2nd class" bus stops and in "non-European railway stations. In metropolitan Johannesburg about 100,000 Negroes still lived in shantytowns in 1964 compared to half a million that had been already resettled.

BANTUS ON THE JOB

Another 100,000 Bantus in Johannesburg alone and equivalent numbers in other cities are the live-in servants in homes, hotels and offices. Their *separate* quarters must satisfy very specific ordinances and their meals are popularly known as "boy's rations." In South Africa's surburbias the servants' huts are easily recognized landmarks. These domestic helpers are such an important and also convenient segment of the republic's economy that eventually they might be the only remaining Negro residents of "white cities." Consequently, their permits are most difficult to get. Employee as well as employer are reluctant to make changes.

For major projects industry and government recruits black men or women, but never married couples or entire families, directly from tribal areas. For the duration of the "contract" these Bantus are housed in two types of accommodations—the hostel or the compound.

Hostels are mass housings, a kind of labor camp, where the single dwellers take care of their own meals but with all other facilities provided. When hostels are located near Bantu townships, they naturally become sources of unrest and make increased police protection necessary. On the other hand, the control of 25,000 tribal people (the number of hostel residents in the Johannesburg area) away from families and transplanted into westernized surroundings becomes equally difficult in some isolated spot.

Compounds are provided by South Africa's most important industries, the mines. Here thousands of Negroes are housed, fed, clothed, treated when sick, etc. The mining companies are pioneers in the process of

⁸ Morris Isaacson School, Box 10, Javoon-Soweto, Johannesburg.

integrating Bantus fresh from the reserves into the modern labor process. They offer training, scientific diets, recreation, facilities for saving and sending money home, modern hospitals and numerous other services. One result is that the returned miner's prestige back in the Kraal is about as high as that of a young man who comes home with a college diploma.

The remaining 29.6 per cent of the 11 million Bantus are rural dwellers. They are literally serfs, often supplied by the courts or the police as farm labor in lieu of punishment. Their tenancy depends on their usefulness to the white farm owner. They have the poorest conditions of all. Their homes are imitation kraals in some proximity to the farm house. Their clothing is a combination of tribal garments and western discards. Their work is the same herding and plowing which their ancestors have done for generations but they don't own the cattle or the land. Thus, they are equally away from the advantages of tribal and western life.

In a step towards betterment the government offers financial assistance to those farmers who permit the construction of schools for their employee's children. In 1963, 2,000 such Bantu farm schools were in operation.

BANTU EDUCATION

As everywhere else in Africa, mission schools were the first institutions which offered formal education to South Africa's Bantus. A government-sponsored survey, named after its author, Eiselen, recommended that the government take over for better educational results. In spite of some church resistance, Pretoria accepted the Eiselen report in 1954 as a policy basis. By 1958 all personnel, curriculum matters, certification and examination in schools for Negroes were centralized in the Department of Bantu Education. Lay school boards have only advisory capacity. Since then, it is claimed, so much progress has been made that in 1963 65 per cent of all African children and 83 per cent of those between the ages of 7 and 14 were in school.

Bantu education is not compulsory as yet. Reasons frequently given for this status, aside from taxes and cost, are that African tradition assigns to children certain full-time obligations such as cattle herding and similar chores. Where this presents a conflict school enrollment should be persuasive only.

A centralized Bantu curriculum is coordinated with that of the compulsory white schools. Regionally adjusted programs might be more suitable. However, officials insist, "it would be labeled inferior by Bantu parents and therefore rejected." Thus, children from kraals and native townships compete in subject matter and examination with their more generously endowed distant white classmates. The one difference in background is that Negro pupils start at the age of seven and white students at six. An expert in Bantu education, the white rector (president) of the Bantu University College of the North summed up the situation: "Black students have no more or less upstairs than whites, but environmental factors require more adjustment from them."

Since taxes from Bantu income would not even begin to support a school system, money must come from the budget of the central government. A result is that Bantu school plants are not on a par with those of white districts. Double sessions are still frequent and the distance from home to school is very great in some instances without the availability of any type of transportation. All over South Africa one sees black school children walking on the soft shoulder of highways to and from school. More complete school facilities would probably be inconsistent with or even clash with the pupils' home surroundings. One black high school principal explains optimistically that, in spite of certain limitations, "We have no discipline problems and our children at the age of 14 accept instructions in three languages, Bantu, English and Afrikaans." Yet only a small Bantu minority remains in school at the end of primary education and only two per cent of the pupils attain the two top high school grades which lead to University entrance. For the others continuation and adult evening programs are available, but not to the extent needed. The more capable can attend schools for agriculture, police work, training in nursing and similar occupations. Colleges for Bantu primary teachers, where the need is especially great, are a combination of years of higher general education with one or two years of special training in a subject matter major and teaching methods.

A South African specialty are two colleges for the sons of tribal chiefs. They illustrate the intent to perpetuate a loyal tribal aristocracy, especially in the Bantustans. Their elite student body, coming from the best homes of the tribal homelands,⁹ is served by an excellent faculty which writes its own manuals instead of having to use prescribed textbooks. The curriculum combines a top selection from western and African culture. The highest place in the Bantu school system is held by three university colleges.⁹ They are distributed among the Bantustans "in accordance with the needs of the ethnical groups." Faced with the task to provide top leadership for 11 million people, these academic institutions must offer *all* the courses which lead to a variety of bachelor's and master's degrees. They are expanding with large government and private endowments. The second of the three, University College of the North in Turfloop, in the Transvaal's Soto region, was opened in 1960. It compares favorably with any beginning college in the United States. With a student body of 245, it had six graduates in 1963. Combined enrollment for all three schools in 1963 was 624. To that can be added 1,200 Africans in correspondence courses of the University of South Africa.

Less than 2,000 Bantus then are preparing for the high echelon positions needed for the emancipation of 11 million fellow Africans, and behind them are only 3,000 high school students in the two senior grades preparing for the difficult matriculation tests in 1964 and 1965.

⁹ As colleges, rather than full universities, they are under the tutelage of the University of South Africa.

Pretoria urges the many white officials in Bantu administration and education to speed up the training of their black replacements. Also, the three university college faculties should be the very foundation of such a program. So far they have only two Negro professors.

"Our students have plenty of jobs waiting, but we can only guide and not force them," explains an academic official. His expressed hope is that the government, as a step in the right direction, will follow the mentioned example of private industry and raise Bantu professional salaries.

BIG, NOT LITTLE, APARTHEID

By way of explaining inequality in earnings, the argument is advanced that South Africa's Negroes live in a subsidized world of their own. They pay less rent, less fare on native busses, lower admission in non-white cinemas. In other words, the government maintains for them a discount living standard.

The Bantu's answer is that this social climate more than anything else accounts for his general lack of ambition and his apathy towards education. He has a "what is the use" attitude. An African teacher in a letter to a newspaper asks, "Do you do good by educating black children? Isn't it better to be dumb and black and sleep through the night?"¹⁰ The Republic of South Africa does not have a single integrated beach, pool, parkbench, public restroom, to say nothing of hotel or restaurant. Even a small Bantu school with only one white teacher on the faculty must maintain separate staff facilities. The "whites only" signs are still the most obvious man-made feature in the landscape. They spell out discrimination for everyone to see.

Officials in Pretoria are sensitive to the point of bitterness if they are criticized about it. They challenge the observer to take a good look at their long range efforts in the Bantustans, townships and compounds. There they spend hundreds of millions of dollars on what they consider a workable solution of the race issue. Their unchangeable philosophy is segregation and they believe that it can be achieved with respect and dignity for both black and white. They call it *Big Apartheid* in deference to the insulting signs expressing *Little Apartheid*.

The future Commonwealth of South Africa, they claim, will be a place of coexistence in which all signs of discrimination will disappear because there will be no need for them. Bantu leaders on the receiving end are not quite that optimistic. They accept the economic betterment plans of their white government for lack of an alternate. They know that all the African summit meetings, short of an all-out war, will not make a dent in Pretoria's determination. They hope that once a measure of economic stability is reached for South Africa's black population, social and political freedom will become unavoidable. Most white officers in the republic's Bantu administration agree with this prediction.

¹⁰ Johannesburg "Star" of November 13, 1963.