

SOUTH AFRICA

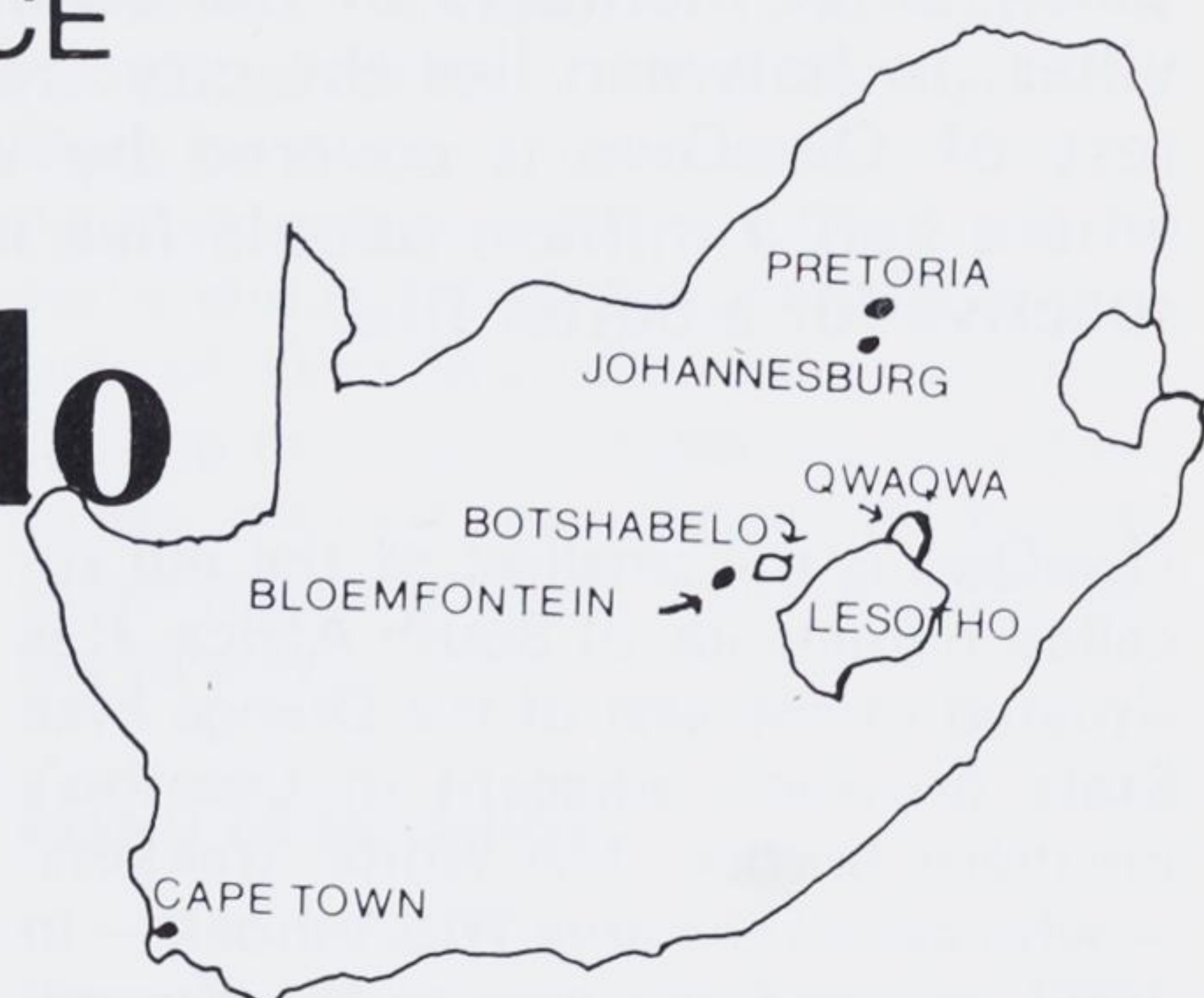
human rights flyer

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TWO SLUMS ON THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

QwaQwa and Botshabelo



The South African government leaves no doubt about the fact that the future of black South Africans lies in the 'homelands'. Last year a first important step was taken toward the 'independence' of KwaNdebele. This failed, however, because a majority in the 'legislative assembly' of KwaNdebele voted against independence. Consequently, it looked as if QwaQwa would become the next candidate for independence. The recent political developments are very much reminiscent of what happened in KwaNdebele in 1986.

This South Africa Human Rights Flyer probes into the present situation with regard to QwaQwa and neighbouring Botshabelo and the decision-making process to grant independence to QwaQwa.

A decision which at best will be postponed temporarily because the KwaNdebele legislative assembly voted in favour of independence in the beginning of March of this year.

QwaQwa is a minuscule 'homeland' attached to the northern border of Lesotho. Threehundred kilometers west of QwaQwa lies Botshabelo, a slum area right in the centre of the rural Orange Free State. The South African government seems determined to incorporate Botshabelo into the QwaQwa homeland. This is widely regarded as a first step towards QwaQwa's 'independence'. If these and further steps are taken then again millions of blacks will lose their South African citizenship; they will become 'strangers' in their own land.

QwaQwa and Botshabelo do have several things in common. Both are the product of an idea that has been cherished by the apartheid regime for decades: blacks would have to live in separate areas, far away from the white cities, and separated on tribal grounds. In QwaQwa this idea has been realized by means of the homeland policy. Botshabelo is not an official homeland, but a 'township'. This doesn't make much of a difference, however.

Both QwaQwa and Botshabelo have a population of about half a million. The majority of them have gone to one of either areas, because the pass laws prohibit them to live in the cities and there were no other opportunities. In both cases the cancellation of the pass laws has not resulted in a decrease in the influx of people. New regulations and existing legislation prevent the growth of the number of Africans entering urban areas. 'Orderly urbanisation' is what the apartheid regime says it advocates. 'Shifted urbanisation' is what it amounts to in QwaQwa and Botshabelo. In both cases the result has been slums. Agriculture is hardly feasible, commerce and industry have to be lured with massive subsidies and jobs are available in the white cities only, kilometers away. Unemployment is rampant and poverty widespread.

The incorporation of Botshabelo into QwaQwa serves no purpose at all. The only logic that can be detected in the apartheid philosophy is that there should be one ethnic group for every

homeland. Both QwaQwa and Botshabelo have been designated for blacks belonging to the South Sotho, and so a merger into one homeland looks like common sense reasoning. The logical consequence of such a merger is for QwaQwa to be declared 'independent'.

The imminent incorporation of Botshabelo into QwaQwa is reminiscent of what happened in the homeland of KwaNdebele last year. To that 'homeland' the adjacent area of Moutse was added. This was generally seen as the overture to KwaNdebele's declaration of independence. Indeed, it was announced in May 1986 that KwaNdebele would become independent in December. Opposition to incorporation by Moutse, however, was now the overture for KwaNdebele's opposition to 'independence' and finally the authorities were forced to abandon the proposed 'independence' altogether.

It seems that the state intends to try and prevent a repetition of these events by just waiting for opposition to die down and then realize incorporation. In the meantime, however, that opposition has arisen in Botshabelo. The people of Botshabelo have nothing to expect from incorporation. It would place them under the authority of a homeland government with which they have no affinity whatsoever. Moreover, neither the people of Botshabelo nor the people of QwaQwa would thrive by 'independence'; it makes them strangers in their own country and citizens of a mini state without any means of existence.

LIVING IN POVERTY, WAITING FOR A BETTER LIFE

QwaQwa - 'an island of stability'

Between the hills lies Phuthaditjhaba, QwaQwa's capital city. On one hill live the representatives of the South African government in the homeland. Big houses, large gardens, tennis courts, a swimmingpool and a school for white children are part of a separate quarter, divided from the rest of the area by a big fence. The other hill is the habitat of the black elite: members of the Cabinet and their appendages live in huge villas. In between lies the city: residence of the local tradespeople. The rest of QwaQwa is covered by what is in fact one big slum. This is where half a million people live in sheer poverty and without any perspective for a better life.

QwaQwa is the smallest of the ten so-called homelands of South Africa. It is situated in the east of the Orange Free State province, adjacent to Lesotho's northern border. The White 'trekkers' — who called the area Witsieshoek — in 1867 assigned the area to the Kweni. In 1873 the area was also designated

to the Tlokwa; both groups belong to the Sotho people.

In the second half of this century Witsieshoek was enlarged step by step by the apartheid regime to form the homeland QwaQwa.

In 1953 a 'tribal authority' was introduced for the two population groups

and finally a 'legislative assembly' were set up. In 1974 Witsieshoek, which in the meantime had been renamed QwaQwa, became the seventh 'self-governing homeland' of South Africa. The last step in this development — the declaration of QwaQwa into an independent state — has yet to be made. Under the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act (1970) all South Sotho citizens of South Africa have 'de jure' been bombarded QwaQwa citizens. At this moment they number 1.3 million. In 1970 the 'de facto' population of QwaQwa numbered around 24.000.

Population growth

QwaQwa's population has increased rapidly since the turn of the century. The first cause of this growth was the 1913 Land Act. Blacks were prohibited to own land outside of the reserves and white farmers were allowed to lease land to only five blacks per farm. Landless and unemployed blacks were forced to take refuge to Witsieshoek. In 1916 there were 5.000 people and by then even a government appointed commission of inquiry stated that the land was overpopulated.

Until 1970 QwaQwa's population grew steadily, but from that moment on there has been a massive flow of immigrants. According to a conservative estimate QwaQwa had a population of already 400.000 in 1983. This influx was not only caused by the introduction of the Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act; it was only an extra implement to put pressure on the Sotho population of South Africa. Other causes were the deteriorating circumstances on white farms in the Orange Free State and in other homelands.

About 60 percent of the immigrants originate from white farms in the Orange Free State. Their life was made increasingly unbearable. They had to work for a pittance while very often they were not allowed to keep cattle of their own and to cultivate small plots of land. At the same time, more and more farmhands were made redundant because of mechanisation. Redundant farm labourers and people too old or too sick to work were often just sent away. Settling in QwaQwa is their only alternative.

Another part of the immigrants comes from one of the neighbouring homelands, notably from Thaba 'Nchu, a

QwaQwa: People walk long distances to collect water from a single communal tap.





tract of land threehundred kilometers west of QwaQwa and part of the 'independent' homeland of Bophutatswana. Many black farm labourers had come to Thaba 'Nchu for the very same reasons others had come to QwaQwa. Officially, Bophutatswana has been destined for Tswana people, but many non-Tswana had come to Thaba 'Nchu as well. This provoked tensions, because the authorities found that non-Tswana's were not entitled to the scarce amenities in Thaba 'Nchu. The harsh response by the authorities against non-Tswana's inspired many to leave for QwaQwa, for instance.

QwaQwa absolutely lacks the means to cope with this enormous population growth. In 1984 QwaQwa's territory was enlarged from 48.000 to 62.000 hectares, but much of this area is mountainous and not fit for habitation or grazing.

Housing

Only people who have a permit to remain in South Africa's urban territories are eligible for settlement in QwaQwa's sole city, Phuthaditjhaba. There are both houses for rent and houses for sale, but most immigrants cannot afford them. The great majority of people settling in QwaQwa have been referred to the so-called rural 'closer settlements'. These villages are often built on former pastures of older villages. These villages don't have farmland and there are hardly any facilities. The population is considered to build shacks themselves. Sewage and garbage disposal have to be arranged by the inhabitants themselves. Because of the population growth, QwaQwa's rural area has steadily become swarmed with this kind of village. In fact, the countryside is one vast settlement, only in one sense 'rural' because it lacks an urban infrastructure.

Health care

The growth in health care services has not kept up with population growth. There is one hospital in QwaQwa, with a capacity of 345 beds, six doctors with a permanent appointment and some temporary staff. There are nine clinics, eight of which are located in rural areas. Once a week these clinics are visited by a hospital doctor and otherwise the clinics have to make do with a staff of nurses. The Ministry of Health employs a total of 490 nurses. These facilities are absolutely insufficient. The hospital beds are often shared by two persons or more; other patients have to lie on the floor. Likewise the clinics cannot deal properly with the flow of patients. Patients are often not very content about services rendered. Instead of having to pay two rand for a visit to the hospital doctor, they rather consult private doctors or take refuge to people who claim to possess supernatural powers; these are often more expensive but within easy reach.

A new 350 bed hospital is being built in Phuthaditjhaba. It will carry out treatment for which the QwaQwa population now have to travel all the way to Bloemfontein. The old hospital will be reserved for tubercular patients and psychiatric patients. However, the construction of the hospital has been delayed time and again and the costs are a constant worry to the homeland government. Moreover, it is suspected that the site of the new hospital will make it accessible to the more well to do of Phuthaditjhaba only. The rural population will notice little of the new services.

Education

The education facilities are on a better level, given the numbers. About one

third of QwaQwa's budget is allocated for education. There are 90 primary schools and 31 secondary schools, twelve of which offer matriculation. There is a special section of the University of the North in QwaQwa.

A closer look reveals that education in QwaQwa is not as good as it seems. Education is organized along the lines of 'seperate development'. This means that education in QwaQwa is not only meant for the youth of QwaQwa. In principle all the South Sotho youth, whether or not they live in QwaQwa, are supposed to go to school there. Indeed, ethnic restrictions and age restrictions have forced many of the young people to go to schools in QwaQwa.

Especially secondary education is hardly available in the Orange Free State; in the two last classes leading up to matriculation the teacher-pupil ratio is about 1/100. Students from outside of QwaQwa often have problems finding housing. The trouble they have to go through to support themselves often prevents them from actually going to class.

Means of existence

Employment hardly exists in QwaQwa. Agriculture as a means of income is negligible; there is hardly any arable land. Mineral riches are scarce as well. For these reasons unemployment is widespread. Since 1976 The QwaQwa Development Corporation (QDC) has tried to attract industry to QwaQwa. The QDC, half the board of directors of which have been appointed by the QwaQwa government, says its chances for success are high. The QwaQwa government is claimed to be 'dynamic and positive', and the population 'peaceloving, strict and conscientious'. The QDC tries to sell QwaQwa's remoteness by saying that 'it is as far as the markets of Witwatersrand, Natal's urban areas and the gold fields around Bloemfontein.' The QDC claims to have been successful in attracting 170 firms which employ 14.000 people, but this has first and foremost to do with attractive conditions which QwaQwa is able to offer to companies, thanks to the gigantic subsidies the South African government is providing. No capital needs to be invested in land; that is being leased by the QDC with rents that have been subsidized for 75 percent. For a period of seven years 95 percent of the labour costs are being paid for. Half of the necessary capital can be borrowed against an interest subsidized for 75 percent. Moreover, the firms attracted in this way pay very small incomes. A 1984 study pointed out that 60 percent of the workforce (mainly women) got less than 47 rand, while the formulation of the conditions on which subsidies are given, state that it is possible for firms to receive 49 rands on labour

cost grants per employee. Even if a company employs a number of more expensive workers, then it is in fact possible to work with a workforce which costs next to nothing.

Even if the figures sampled by QDC are right, then still the employment attracted by it would be a drop in the ocean. The QDC wouldn't deny that. 'Thousands of people are unemployed', said one QDC staffperson some time ago. 'We can't say exactly how many, but one thing is certain: the official statistics are worthless. If rumour spreads that one factory is about to be opened, 500 or more women stand outside its gate on the very first day, hoping to get a job'. QDC's activities have changed little with regard to the fact that many people in QwaQwa are dependent on income earned outside of it. The latest more or less reliable estimates say that 9500 people commute to nearby Harrismith and Bethlehem. Others, 51.000 people according to the same estimate, have been contracted as migrant labourers in the major industrial areas. For this sort of work the citizens are dependent on the meditation of the six job centres in the homeland. They can - illegally - try to find work in (the rest of) South Africa. How many people actually do this is not known.

Salaries in the government services are an important source of income. The public sector has grown considerably since QwaQwa was granted 'self-rule'. Civil servants belong to the privileged in QwaQwa, as do most of the inhabitants of Phuthaditjhaba. Only there work can be found, the best connections with the industrial areas outside of QwaQwa and it is there that the job centres operate the best. The rural population — the great majority of the people — often have to rely on family support or temporary incomes.

The political set-up

Since its inception in 1974 QwaQwa has had a 'legislative assembly' consisting of sixty members; twenty of those have been elected; forty have been appointed by both the 'tribal authorities' the Kwena and the Tlokwa. There is a Cabinet with eight ministers. All these institutions are dominated by the Dikwankwetla Party, lead by Kenneth Mopeli, who acts as Prime Minister. Mopeli is at the centre of an intricate network of closely related political interests: those of the Cabinet and of the members of the legislative assembly, of the Mopeli clan and of the tribal authority of the Kwena, existing almost entirely of the Mopeli clan. All segments of QwaQwa's ruling establishment seem to have some interest in the present state of affairs, notably in the flow of South Sotho people to QwaQwa. The QwaQwa government sees this as an argument to claim extra land; the population growth streng-

thens 'Phuthaditjhaba's' position at the negotiation table vis a vis 'Pretoria'.

The ruling political party, Dikwankwetla, seeks ways to get more grip on its ranks and file. The ridiculously low percentage of the now 1,8 million or so South Sotho in and, for the greater part, outside QwaQwa who took the trouble to cast their vote during the 1980 elections, was a blow to the prestige of the party hierarchy. If Dikwankwetla is ever to pronounce itself in favour of 'independence' — rumours to that extent are widespread — then it would have to mobilise more support for its cause. The chances for that are bigger when more and more South Sotho settle in QwaQwa.

This tribal authority of the Kwena thrives by the flow of immigrants, notably in its rivalry with the Tlokwa tribal authority. The area of the Kwena is bigger, with relatively more rural space. This creates more room for new immigrants and every new immigrant is supposed to contribute to the power of the Kwena tribal authority.

Even the lower heads, the village chiefs, benefit from the arrival of new settlers. Some of them ask money for a piece of land for the newcomers to settle on. Sometimes they make money from the fines they have initiated on the gathering of wood and clay; the new inhabitants need these for building material and fuel.

The population in the 'closer settlements' have hardly any opportunities to escape the several layers of the homeland hierarchy. Their only connection with the outside world is by signing a contract and become a migrant worker, but even in this instance they rely on the tribal authorities: they control the job centres. The only thing for them to do is to resign themselves to their fate and so they make up a passive support for the interests of the ruling elite.

The position of civil servants, teachers and businessmen is entirely different. They are not at all interested in the political structure of the homeland system. Their loyalty to QwaQwa coincides with their personal advantage. Many of them are inclined to use their position as a stepping stone for more ambitious ones in (the rest of) South Africa. Many have, therefore, kept their houses in the urban areas. The authorities have to manoeuvre carefully not to antagonize this sector in the QwaQwa society. One of the ways to achieve this is not to elaborate openly on the question of 'independence'. QwaQwa's independence would mean that all South Sotho living in QwaQwa, including civil servants, teachers and businessmen in Phuthaditjhaba, would become strangers in the rest of South Africa. In that case they might as well forget ever to hope for a good position in South Africa.

Advertisement of the QwaQwa Development Board in City Press, 25-1-1987.

Experience being beckoned by an island!



QwaQwa - an island of stability

The creation of new opportunities for QwaQwa and its people, such as the development of a new industrial area near Harrismith, affords you the opportunity to realise your career aspirations within a dynamic and progressive organisation. The QwaQwa Development Corporation is primarily concerned with economic development and the improvement of the quality of life in QwaQwa. These activities have significant impact on the creation of new employment opportunities which manifest in higher standards of living and all the other facets of social upliftment. The corporation is fully committed to providing excellent opportunities for personal growth and development of all its people, whatever their race, colour or creed and now wishes to make the following appointments:

Senior Accountant

The successful person will be responsible for controlling and supervising specific accounting functions of the Corporation as well as managing and supervising subordinate personnel.

The successful candidate should be in possession of a B Com degree with Accountancy as a major subject or should have completed his articles with an auditing firm and have 3 years appropriate experience.

Head: Public Relations

To be considered for this position applicants should be

in possession of a B degree with Communications as a major as well as three years appropriate public relations experience.

The incumbent will be mainly responsible for maintaining and improving relations between the Corporation, local councils, the local community and the QwaQwa Government Service, and actively promoting the Corporation's public image as well as keeping the public abreast with regard to business development activities and projects.

Fire Station Officer

To be considered for the post the applicant should have at least a Senior Fireman Certificate and a valid First Aid Diploma. A heavy duty licence is also required.

You will mainly be responsible for supervising the fire station as well as fire fighting in QwaQwa.

Investigating Officers

The Corporation presently has several posts for investigating officers in the various development

departments. The duties mainly comprise identifying business opportunities as well as undertaking viability studies with regard to loan investigations.

Qualification requirements for these posts are a B degree in the commercial sciences or a similar diploma with at least one year commercial experience.

Typists/ Receptionists

The incumbent's main functions will be to: • do typing for departmental personnel • receive clients and visitors • do diverse administrative duties.

To be considered for these posts applicants should be matriculated with typing as a subject and have one year appropriate experience. A knowledge of word processing will be a recommendation, but training will be provided.

In addition to a competitive salary the company offers fringe benefits which include • housing benefits in the case of breadwinners • medical scheme and pension fund • generous leave • leave bonus as well as • congenial working conditions.

Please address your application with comprehensive details not later than 30 January 1987 to The Manager: Manpower, P.O. Box 5063, Phuthaditjhaba 9866 or telephone Mr PJW Schutte at (01432) 9311.



**QWAQWA
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**



Botshabelo

Botshabelo : product of apartheid

It is not on any official map and from the main road only the roofs of some colourful houses can be seen. If one leaves the road from Bloemfontein to Thaba 'Nchu one is able to see what lies behind the hills of the Orange Free State: a slum area in the middle of the countryside, built of corrugated iron and clay, too big for the eye to catch it in one glimpse. This is where half a million people live; after Soweto it also makes it South Africa's second biggest black township.

Botshabelo is a product of South Africa's homeland policy. The only black enclave in this part of the Orange Free State was, since the introduction in 1913 of the Land Act, a small piece of land called Thaba 'Nchu. This enclave is part of the Bophutatswana homeland, designated by the apartheid regime to be the homeland of the Tswana. However, apart from the Tswana, there were even more South Sotho living in the area. The Sotho have had an age-long bond with the area; they lived there as early as 1833, when the Tswana appeared.

Sharing the area between them was never a problem for the South Sotho and the Tswana. Problems arose, however, when Bophutatswana was put on

the road to 'independence'. The authorities in Bophutatswana believed — according to apartheid ideology — that Thaba 'Nchu should be 'ethnically pure' and that the South Sotho would have to move. From the moment Bophutatswana was made 'independent', in 1977, the authorities systematically started to exert pressure on the South Sotho living in Thaba 'Nchu. Sotho speaking children were sent to Tswana schools, Sotho cattle was seized, members of the Sotho were threatened, beaten up, and imprisoned by Bophutatswana police. Sotho were made to pay special taxation, among other things. South Sotho then started to flee the area, to Qwa-Qwa for one, the very homeland they

belonged to according to apartheid logic.

In these circumstances trilateral negotiations were started between the South African government, the authorities of Bophutatswana and Prime Minister Kenneth Mopeli of QwaQwa, who set himself up as representative of the South Sotho. During these talks it was decided to allocate a piece of land for the Sotho refugees from Thaba 'Nchu. The South African Development Trust bought the 'Onverwacht' farm, bordering on Thaba 'Nchu, and in the course of 1979 some 50.000 people moved across the border.

They were glad in any event to have been freed from the intimidation practices of the Bophutatswana authorities.

The other parties involved had reason to be satisfied as well. Bophutatswana had restored its 'ethnic purity' and had gotten rid of 50.000 people who were burdening the economy of Thaba 'Nchu, a not very flourishing area. Mopeli saw his growing prestige as a representative of all the Sotho. The South African government could now give the impression to be a 'neutral media-

tor', which had settled this 'tribal conflict' with an 'ad hoc solution'. This 'ad hoc solution', moreover, fitted wonderfully into the plans the government had had for a long time. It had even before the start of the unrest in Thaba 'Nchu studied whether the bordering region would be fit for a big settlement to be positioned there.

Growth

The first people to arrive in 'Onverwacht' — later the place was renamed Botshabelo ('hiding place') — were given a tract of land measuring 15 meters by 30 meters, fenced off with wooden poles and provided with one latrine. They were given food for three days and a tent. Government officials urged them to build something more stable; that way the camp would look more like a settlement and besides, the tents were needed for new settlers, so the corrugated shacks were built. There wasn't a sewage system, people used buckets instead. Initially, water was provided by a tank lorry; until the end of 1981 there was a shortage of water. Infant mortality was widespread and there was an outbreak of typhus.

At the end of 1981 — by that time there were surely more than 100.000 people living in Botshabelo — there was only one clinic, one police station, no post office and no electricity. Some brick houses had been built, but prices ranged from 3.000 to 4.000 rand — a sum of money only few people can afford in Botshabelo.

In the eight years of its existence Botshabelo has grown enormously. This has made it South Africa's largest black township after Soweto. Many of the present population originate from white farms in the Orange Free State. They left those farms for the same reason many people now live in QwaQwa. Since the abolition of the pass laws these former farm labourers are in theory eligible to trek to the urban areas. Many of them, however, neither have the money to find a place to live in the city nor the education that would give them a chance of a job. The black townships, moreover, are overpopulated and several laws, the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, the Slums Act, and the various council regulations make it possible for the authorities to evict people who have no home.

This has also happened to people who have lived in the urban areas for years. In the Mangaung section of Bloemfontein, for instance, no houses have been built since 1986. Many people live there without permission, others have sought refuge to Botshabelo. The former inhabitants of Luckhoff have been sent to Botshabelo. This part was traditionally meant for 'coloureds' and blacks, but the authorities have decreed that it be reserved for 'coloureds' only.

'If Onverwacht goes under QwaQwa, we will trek'

Botshabelo is the temporary terminus in the wanderings of the 179 farm families from Herschel. From 1966 onward Herschel was a part of the Ciskei homeland. In 1976 it was given to Matanzima, leader of Transkei, as a present on the occasion of the 'independence' of this 'homeland'. "From that moment on our lives were made increasingly difficult, we had to leave", says one of the farmers. "We are Sotho-speaking people, so we were told to go to QwaQwa. We were promised land, a very beautiful farm near Harrismith. We waited in QwaQwa for more than three years. In 1982 Koornhof (the South African Cabinet minister responsible for the homelands) promised us this farm, but when it was bought, it was given to the QwaQwa government, not to us. Pretoria says they gave the farm to Mopeli and it is our problem with him if he will not give it to us."

"Then Mopeli told us to go to Onverwacht. On 3 July they came with trucks and took us to Onverwacht. They gave us tents and food for three days. We are still living in those tents. But we will not build shacks because they will think we have given up. No, that problem is theirs. Pretoria gave our land in Herschel to Matanzima. We were not consulted. We do not want to live under that system in Transkei. Then they said they would give us the Harrismith farm. We have the minutes in writing. But they gave it to their man, Mopeli, not to us." Another problem is the old people. We have many old ladies in their eighties and nineties who lost their pensions when they were moved. They say this is a different system and we must reapply. These old people got no money from July to now. We hope next month the new applications will come through."

Now they tell us this place Onverwacht will also be incorporated. We will pack up and leave. We cannot live under these homelands. We have tried. All we want is a piece of land for ploughing and grazing. Our stock is still in Herschel. We refuse to sell it. We are still waiting for our land. There are 28.000 people stranded in Herschel. They do not want to be under Transkei. We all want to be part of South Africa."

"If Onverwacht goes under QwaQwa, we will trek."

Kenneth Mopeli seems to have found his place in the homeland system. Recently he had a cottage built worth 450.000 rand. This sum was not exorbitant, a QwaQwa official said, when one considered that it would include a specially constructed cable and water reticulation system from a nearby spring. "And after all, we are talking about a head of state."

"We heard this was the only place to go to."

"Poly Plas says it with flowers", is the headline of a propagandist article about the unlimited possibilities of Botshabelo. Poly Plas is a firm which produces plastic flowers, with one subsidiary in Botshabelo. Roland Barnard, the manager/owner, has reason to be cheerful. Labour cost subsidies enable him to make big profits, and he really likes Bloemfontein, where he lives. "It offers all the facilities a man could wish for himself, and it doesn't have all the hustle of big city life." The inhabitants of Botshabelo have less reason to be cheerful.

The enormous growth of Botshabelo has not been accompanied by an equally extensive growth at the level of amenities. There are no macadamized roads in Botshabelo, there are fewer than ten telephone connections, no sewers, and one public tap for every 200 people. There are no trees and even grass won't grow. There is hardly any public transport and no recreational facilities. Nearly the entire population still lives in shacks. The winters in the Orange Free State can be severely cold and the summers very hot. In none of the seasons the cots offer sufficient protection.

Means of existence

Many of the former rural population of Botshabelo had brought some cattle with them, assuming that there would be sufficient grazing land. But there is no room for cattle in Botshabelo.

Other means of existence are lacking as well. The continuous flow of new settlers does create some jobs. For

those and all their families sharing an allotment with an other family — in 1984 there were an average of 2,3 families per lot — land has to be made 'ready for building'. Many women find work in the digging of wells and ditches for the water conduit system. They earn 3.50 rand a day. Some have even fewer proceeds collecting garbage. This sort of work provides 4.000 to 5.000 people with some sort of income. About 25.000 daily travel up and down to Bloemfontein, the closest urban area. Another 30.000 people work as migrant labourers in the Orange Free State goldmines; once a month or less they return to Botshabelo.

The South African Development Trust has done its utmost to attract industries to Botshabelo. The extremely favourable conditions in QwaQwa have had a certain effect on Botshabelo.

Nonetheless, less than half the capacity of the industrial zone has been occupied. Until now 43 firms have been lured into accepting the favourable conditions; seventeen are from Tai-



Botshabelo.

Betty Makoma, dumped with her family and possessions by Government trucks, starts building a new home.

wan, two from Hong Kong, and four from Israel. These industries employ 6.000 people. The wages that are paid are low. Wages of 10 to 12 rand a week occur — a hamburger and coke in the only snackbar on the industrial estate often cost more than a day's wages. The employers don't feel ashamed. 'They won't earn more, they know nothing, learn slowly and are lazy', says a Taiwanese manager about his workforce. The Development Trust isn't happy about the level of the wages; it has 'strongly urged' employers to up the minimum wage to a level of 30 rand a week.

Estimates indicate that 70 or 80 percent of the population has no job at all. Many have left Botshabelo to find work elsewhere, illegally. Others have put their hopes on the Botshabelo job centre. Everyday, starting at five o'clock in the morning there are hordes of people standing in queue in front of the TEBA office, the mine job centre. If there have been reports of 'tribal conflicts' in the mines, the numbers will be in the hundreds of people. The mine management often lay off the people involved in these conflicts and attracts new workers in their place. Many job seekers fold a ten rand or often a twenty rand note into their

passbooks hoping that the employee behind the ticket office will choose them.

Incorporation

Botshabelo is being governed on behalf of the Development Trust by a 'pleni-potentiary for black affairs' in Bloemfontein.

Representatives of Dikwankwetla, the ruling party in QwaQwa, have an advisory say in the government of the township. Just after the inception of Botshabelo, QwaQwa's Prime Minister, Mopeli, seemed to have won a certain amount of prestige, all the more so among those who had fled from Thaba 'Nchu. Mopeli is regarded as the man who 'led them out of Egypt', as someone said. Mopeli squandered his goodwill, however, by promising that there would be land and jobs in Botshabelo; those promises he couldn't realize. Only some of the elderly people still trust him; their experiences with the whites in Thaba 'Nchu have prepared them for the thought of leading a quiet life as Sotho among Sotho. The younger people, by far the majority (70 percent of the Botshabelo population is under 30) do not share these sentiments.

For years there have been rumours

that Botshabelo will be incorporated into QwaQwa. Since the beginning of this year these rumours seem to have become more concrete. The tentative date for the impending independence is 18 February. In a joint statement the Minister of Education, Viljoen, the Minister of Constitutional Reform, Heunis, and Prime Minister Mopeli denied these rumours, but at the same time Mopeli said that it was a 'public secret' that incorporation would take place sooner or later. A little while later Under-secretary Wilkens confirmed that the decision to incorporate Botshabelo into QwaQwa had in fact been taken; the date hadn't been settled he said. Apparently, a suitable moment is to be selected.

It is generally expected that Botshabelo's incorporation into QwaQwa is a first step toward QwaQwa's independence. Mopeli denies that a decision to that extent has been taken, and the South African government has repeatedly claimed that QwaQwa will be made independent only if the population agrees. The population of Botshabelo are not inclined to believe this; there is hardly any sense in locating them in a homeland without there being plans for the 'independence' of the homeland.

The population of Botshabelo has not been consulted on the question of independence, that much is certain. May be Pretoria is trying to forestall commotion by not raising the matter. Resistance against the plans would not get a chance to develop and so the plans could be carried out silently and unexpectedly.

In the meantime there has been open resistance. Last year members of the Botshabelo Crisis Committee were hit by petrol bombs and fired from their jobs. In February of this year hundreds of students held a peaceful demonstration against incorporation. They were dispersed with teargas and dogs and 156 people were arrested. Mopeli doesn't dare to enter Botshabelo; he chose a spot 'Excelsior', 60 kilometers away, to give a speech.

There he announced 'harsh' and 'merciless' measures against the opponents of incorporation. The Ministry of Education has started training courses in youth camps; some fear that the young people to be trained here may be used as a gang to intimidate opponents of incorporation.

An 'independent' QwaQwa has nothing to offer to the population of Botshabelo. To begin with, the citizens of the 'independent' homelands automatically lose their South African citizenship. Being 'strangers' they would even have fewer rights in South Africa than they possess now: they would only be allowed to enter South Africa if they have a job. Unemployment in South Africa is widespread, and the inhabitants of 'independent' QwaQwa (and adjacent Botshabelo) would therefore be condemned to a life of poverty, imprisoned on a small piece of land.

Moreover, the population of Botshabelo doesn't feel like to be included in the partwise traditional homeland structures. 'In QwaQwa we have a tribal system', says one young citizen of Botshabelo. 'There are chiefs and councils. Our parents came from farms. I grew up here, went to school here. When I came here I was twelve, now I am twenty. I want a job. I want to be South African, I don't want to belong to one of those homelands'. •

"What's the difference?"

Piet Mokoma (aged 54) was moved from a farm in the Bothaville district in the Orange Free State. "How can they say we wanted to come here? We had no choice. The farmer chased us off the farm. I am not so young anymore and my sons do not want to work for 20 rand per month. They want proper jobs so they can feed their children. I asked the farmer for more money. He said we were cheeky. He said my sons are lazy because they don't want to work on the farm. He told us to leave. He didn't even give us transport here. We had to pay to get here ourselves."

"We heard this was the only place in the Orange Free State we could go to. So we came here last year and built a shack. All we have is some furniture and some corrugated iron. My sons go to the labour office everyday to look for jobs. Here are sixteen of us, including my children and grandchildren. Two of my daughters have found jobs at the factories. They earn 60 rand per month each. All sixteen of us have to live off 120 rand per month. My wife and I are too young for pensions, they say. But we have worked all our lives for nothing. We are tired. And what do we get? More trouble. We built our shack last year. Then the officials came and told us we were in the wrong place. We did not get permission. They say that area 'K' is for rich people. So they told us to move. We packed up our things again and today they brought the trucks and moved us to 'U'. So even when you move you are not settled."

"In Botshabelo or on a farm, it's the same. It's not that life is better here in Onverwacht. It's not likely we'll ever get jobs. But on the farms even if you were sick you had to work. They said we were lazy if we didn't work. The only difference here is that there is no farmer to tell us what to do. When the drought came, the farmer made me sell my cow. We cannot keep cattle here. What's the difference?"

Another victim of internal removals in Botshabelo will be elderly Koos Ntshana and his handicapped wife Monica, whose sons brought them in May 1986 from the Winburg farm where they had lived most of their lives. According to Mr Ntshana his sons meant well. "We were too old to work on the farms. My sons are working on the mines at Welkom and the farmer said if we could not give him workers, we must go. So last year my sons brought us here to section 'F'. I am happy here if I can stay, but we are hungry. I have asked for a pension. I asked months ago and they say I have to come back next month. I don't think they transferred our pensions from the farm. We live by getting food from the neighbours. My sons come and visit us every three months. They bring us some money, but they have their own families to feed."

"I have planned a garden, but water is very difficult. We have to queue at the tankers for water, then carry it here. We cannot carry enough for the garden and it is very hot, so the plants burn in the sun. We are old and we cannot carry enough water for the house, so we have to ask the neighbours for help. Wood is another problem. You see these thorns. We have to walk over there to the mountains to collect firewood. It takes the whole day. Even on the farm I had some land for a vegetable garden and I had cattle, but I had to sell them before I came here. I would like a piece of land of my own. I am a farmer."

"I have heard from the neighbours that we must move. I have not heard from the Commissioner. There are the notices. They say it is because this area is for richer people. We have no toilets or taps here. They promised us serviced sites. If we must move, what can I say?"

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