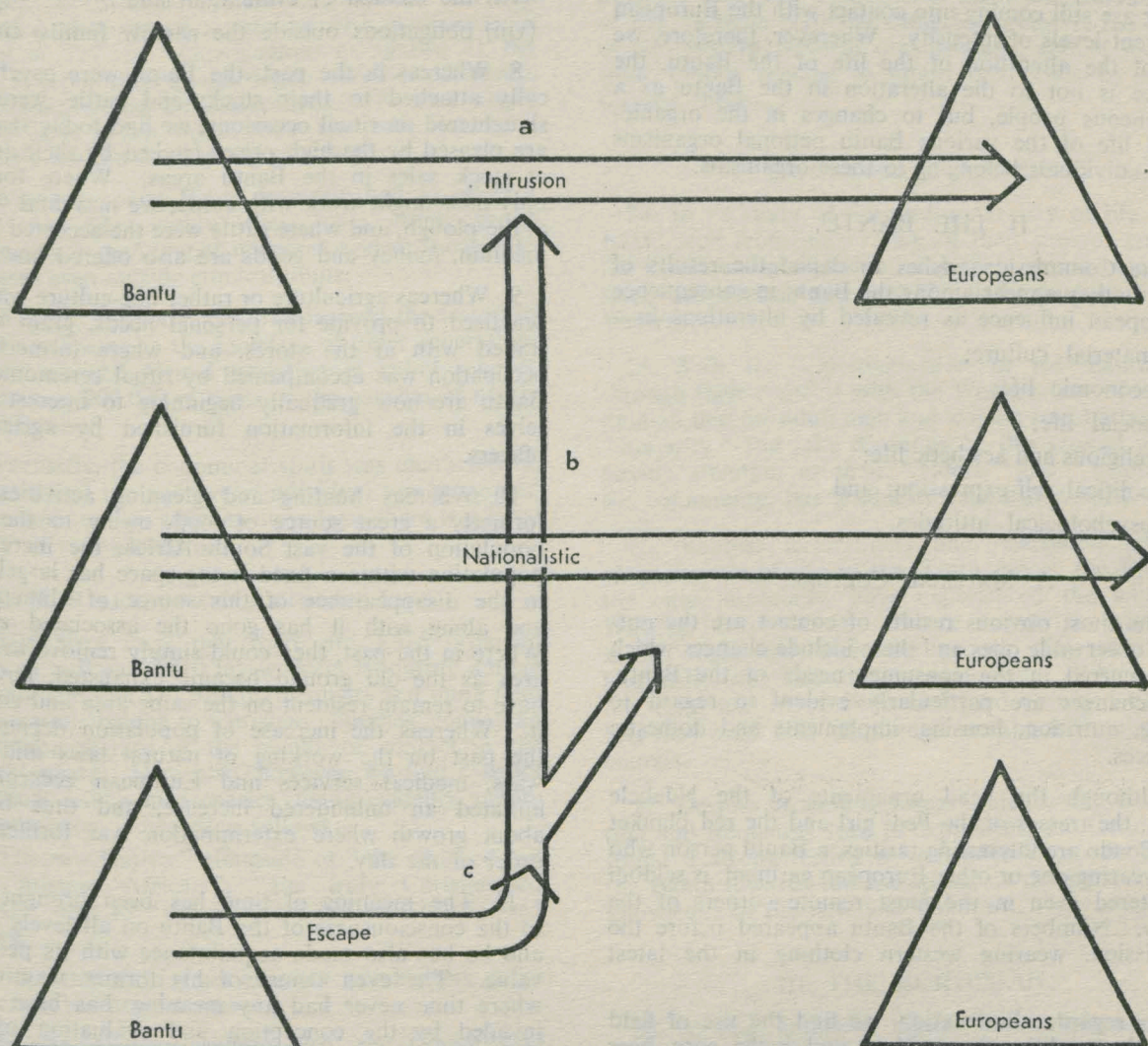


The escapist reaction on the contrary, since it is a *tertium genus* and merely a passing phase, will ultimately confront its adherents with a choice between joining

the assimilationists (intrusion) or the nationalistic elements (elimination).



93. In view of the course of the process of contact thus far, the European population of South Africa is confronted by two very clear alternatives. They must either permit the Bantu to encroach, and absorb him in their living-sphere, whether gradually or suddenly,

peacefully or violently, or else, having regard to the nationalistic aspirations of the Bantu, they must provide full opportunity for this effort to develop positively *alongside of*, and not *in opposition to*, the European sphere of life.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN AND THE BANTU

I. INTRODUCTION.

1. The situation we have in South Africa may be typified as follows: Firstly, we have the existence of a still growing European national organism with a form of Western Civilisation as its vital basis. In consequence of its higher cultural content and the dominant position it has attained in the course of its develop-

ment in this country, this growing national organism has not been influenced to any important extent by the culture of the Bantu with whom it has come into contact. It has, however, integrated the Bantu in its vital activities (in the economic domain) and has thus become dependent for its existence on the services and co-operation of a large number of Bantu individuals who are culturally and racially alien to it.

2. Alongside of this growing European organism, there is a number of Bantu national organisms falling ethnically into various main groups and which have come or are still coming into contact with the European at different levels of intensity. Wherever, therefore, we speak of the alteration of the life of the Bantu, the reference is not to the alteration in the Bantu as a homogeneous people, but to changes in the organic-cultural life of the various Bantu national organisms and of individuals belonging to these organisms.

II. THE BANTU.

3. The Commission wishes to depict the results of contact as they appear among the Bantu in consequence of European influence as revealed by alterations in—

- (i) material culture;
- (ii) economic life;
- (iii) social life;
- (iv) religious and aesthetic life;
- (v) political self-expression; and
- (vi) psychological attitudes.

A. MATERIAL CULTURE.

4. The most obvious results of contact are the outwardly observable ones and these include changes which have occurred in the consumer needs of the Bantu. These changes are particularly evident in regard to clothing, nutrition, housing, implements and domestic appliances.

5. Although the bead ornaments of the Ndebele woman, the tresses of the Pedi girl and the red blanket of the Pondo are interesting rarities, a Bantu person who is not wearing one or other European garment, is seldom encountered even in the most remote corners of the country. Numbers of the Bantu appeared before the Commission, wearing western clothing in the latest mode.

6. As regards alimentation, we find the use of field foods, the traditional porridges and kaffir corn beer alongside a liking for cool drinks and white bread in urban area. Besides the ornamented conical-roofed huts of the Xhosa, the beehive huts of the Zulu, and the pedi "lapas", we find corrugated iron lean-to's, daub-walled thatched houses and modern western dwellings even in the Bantu areas, but more especially in the urban residential areas. Where implements are concerned, we find the hoe alongside of the double furrow plough and the primitive braiding instrument alongside of the sewing machine. In the huts, we find the sleeping mat beside an iron bed, wooden bowls beside plates and wooden spoons next to knives and forks.

B. ECONOMIC LIFE.

7. The simple subsistence economy has increasingly been changed compulsively through contact with the European and especially in respect of—

- (i) the attitude towards stock, particularly cattle;
- (ii) the form and purpose of agriculture;
- (iii) the extent and value of hunting and food-gathering activities;
- (iv) the significance of the soil and its utilisation;

- (v) human and animal increase;
- (vi) the value of time and labour;
- (vii) the method of evaluation; and
- (viii) obligations outside the narrow family circle.

8. Whereas in the past, the Bantu were psychologically attached to their stock, and cattle were only slaughtered on ritual occasions, we find today that they are pleased by the high prices fetched by their animals at stock sales in the Bantu areas. Where formerly only men might work with cattle, we now find women at the plough, and where cattle were the accepted lobolo medium, money and goods are also offered nowadays.

9. Whereas agriculture or rather hoe-culture was only practised to provide for personal needs, grain is now traded with at the stores, and where formerly this occupation was accompanied by ritual ceremonies, the Bantu are now gradually beginning to interest themselves in the information furnished by agricultural officers.

10. Whereas hunting and gleaning activities were formerly a great source of food, owing to the small population of the vast South Africa, the increase of population within a fixed living space has largely led to the disappearance of this source of alimentation, and along with it has gone the associated culture. Where in the past, they could simply remove to a new area as the old ground became exhausted, now they have to remain resident on the same area and conserve it. Whereas the increase of population depended in the past on the working of natural laws and tribal wars, medical services and European control have initiated an unhindered increase, and thus brought about growth where extermination was formerly the order of the day.

11. The meaning of time has been brought home to the consciousness of the Bantu on all levels of life, and he has also made acquaintance with its pecuniary value. The even tenure of his former way of life, where time never had any meaning, has been swiftly invaded by the conception and evaluation of time. Nor is it only time, but also cattle that have acquired monetary value.

12. The place of the patriarch and the tribal head has been taken by a new father, namely the "Government", and now the dependent Bantu stretch out their hands towards him without realising the nature of the connection between this remote body and themselves.

C. SOCIAL LIFE.

13. Bantu social life has also not escaped the influence of changes caused by the operation of new economic demands as well as by those of the school and the church, though not affected so visibly as the material life.

14. For instance, from observations made by Native Commissioners, the Commission was able to determine that in the Ciskei "lobolo" in one or the other form occurs in only 46 per cent of the marriages between Bantu, whereas in the Northern Transvaal, the rate of occurrence is still 79 per cent. On the contrary, it was found that in the Ciskei 41 per cent of the marriages took place in church, as against 5.6 per cent in the Northern Areas.

15. Polygamy which was generally prevalent, especially among tribal chiefs and the prosperous classes, is gradually giving way to monogamous marriages. From a survey, the Commission was able to establish that out of a total of 983 marriages, 79 per cent or 777 were monogamous as against 21 per cent or 206 polygamous marriages. Well-to-do Bantu, such as traders and medical practitioners who would certainly have taken more than one wife formerly, voluntarily abstain from doing so today.

16. Whereas young Bantu formerly had to select a partner for life within their own ethnic group according to a preferential marriage system, nowadays they marry even outside ethnical limits.

17. Whereas formerly, children learned the lesson of living by following in the footsteps of older generations and also received formal initiation in tribal schools, there are now 900,000 of them on the benches of nearly 6,000 schools.

18. Formerly, the communal spirit was characteristic of Bantu social life and every individual was integrated with the community, whereas nowadays, there is a large measure of individualism.

D. RELIGIOUS AND AESTHETIC LIFE.

19. The mere facts that there are 3,325 ordained persons as well as 32,810 lay workers labouring among the Bantu, and that 1.7 million members and more than 4 million souls belong to Christian churches, convey an approximate picture of the results of contact in the religious sphere. Here also, however, we find a series of shadings which missionaries giving evidence before the Commission, indicated as follows:—

“The raw Native” alongside of “the civilised but non-Christian African”, “the truly Christianised Native” next to “the educated but un-Christianised Native”.

It is thus that the former ancestor worshippers strike observers at the present time.

20. In the aesthetic sphere also, the Commission heard the alluring rhythm of the drum in remote territories, accompanied by cheap “jazz” music blaring from gramophones.

E. POLITICAL SELF-EXPRESSION.

21. As far as political self-expression is concerned, the Commission gained the impression on the one hand of an effort to cling convulsively to the essentials of their own social structure, namely that of a pyramid, tier upon tier according to the principle of hereditary status and culminating in a tribal chief who is intimately associated with the entire structure, on the other hand, of a deliberate tendency towards eruption into the European administrative organisation.

22. On the one hand, the Commission listened to evidence from Bantu seeking their salvation in the enlargement and ennoblement of the traditional tribal structure (Bantu Authorities); on the other hand, there was evidence which clearly pointed towards a desire for participation in the administration of the country, by representatives elected from their own ranks to the Union Parliament, on the basis of a common electoral roll.

23. Many Bantu indicated that they were content to conduct negotiations through the medium of their recognised system of the chief-in-council. At the opposite pole, the Commission made the acquaintance of the “African National Congress”, cast in the mould of neo-western political organisations, and of incipient trade unions seeking to attain their ends by revolutionary means.

F. PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTITUDES.

24. In its study of the traditional way of life of the Bantu, and from observation of their present conduct, the Commission was struck by their strong communal spirit as contrasted with the individualism of the Westerner.

25. With the Christianisation of the Bantu, and through their contacts with the Western way of life, the opinion that the adult man and woman could attain their “majority” and take decisions on this ground without paying attention to their “elders” and “betters” in the community, has gradually established itself.

26. Whereas leisureliness and restfulness are still characteristic of life in the Bantu Areas, the Bantu in the cities especially, have experienced the tempo of Western development. Where formerly, they were safely integrated with the group, they must now frequently bear individual responsibility. Where everyone once had his definite and predetermined place in life, they must now often enter unexpectedly upon new courses.

27. Despite propelling forces which cause fermentation and frequently lead to explosions, the Commission found a strong feeling of dependency on the part of the Bantu towards the European, as the person having knowledge of the new and unknown.

III. THE EUROPEAN.

28. (i) The influence which has acted upon the European, has been more indirect than direct.

(ii) The causes of this are comprised in the fact that European culture occupies a higher level than that of the Bantu, and that the European early evolved a pattern of living according to which a dividing line was drawn between white and black, especially on social and religious, that is to say, general cultural grounds.

(iii) The indirect influence is responsible for the facts—

- (a) that the Europeans have built their industries on primitive unskilled labour, and that the Bantu have been introduced into the organic life of the European, as workers;
- (b) that the labour morale of the European has sustained serious damage through the development of this pattern of life;
- (c) that the advantages of sound immigration have been lost to South Africa, and that the entry of aliens into the country tends to influence adversely the pattern of relationships between white and black;

- (d) that the Europeans had to protect themselves by taking measures against rapid integration of the Bantu in the economic, social and political spheres, and that the original dividing line became a colour bar; and
- (e) that on account of the large numbers of culturally backward Bantu, the small number of Europeans have to bear the onerous burden of uplifting and serving them—a burden heavier than that borne by other countries with exclusively white populations.

IV. CONCLUSIONS.

29. (1) The white colonist and settler came from the West European cultural *milieu* to South Africa, and established himself in a new home, where he entered into contact with unchristianised people who, in the course of years and in the same field of life, became an appendage to the European, with the latter as dynamic centre.

(ii) At an early date, the European, so far removed from his maternal culture, constructed a defensive wall around his intimate life, and from that time to this he has tried to ensure his own survival in these alien and unknown surroundings.

(iii) The European, however, has not withheld the Western way of life of which he is the bearer in the spheres of religion, economics and welfare, from the aborigine of Africa. Rather he has radiated this new energy from his "power stations", without, however, replacing the personnel by Natives.

(iv) But this adaptation of the European in a strange land and his creation of a new way of life of his own against a Western background, took place with the African aborigines, and especially the Bantu in his immediate vicinity, at all times. In this creative process, a reciprocal concept arose and this concept was born of adaptation in the same vital milieu.

(v) Until the middle of the nineteenth century, as already indicated in Chapter 2, co-existence in the same surroundings had no uprooting effect on either side, but from then till now the Bantu have been drawn more and more into the European environment, especially as servants.

(vi) As frequently observed, the European employer gave old clothes to his unclad Bantu employee, while the Bantu slowly assumed a new pattern of living, and now this tendency was continued in a more intimate connection. Whereas formerly, the horse cart was the recognised vehicle of the farmer in the rural districts, most owners of horse carts today are Bantu; where the horse and the mounted commando formed part of the European's history in South Africa, nowadays, the horseman is characteristic of the Bantu in the Transkei

rather than of the European in the rural areas of the Transvaal and Free State; where formerly, the ox-wagon constituted part of the European farming industry, the odd ox-wagon is now more likely to be found in possession of a Bantu. A gradual process of overlapping has, however, taken place, for whereas at one time only a few Bantu were found on the roads with old motor cars, there are now many in possession of such vehicles and even some who drive the latest models.

(vii) Where at first, the European only knew the Bantu as labourers and tenants on the farm, as unskilled workers in the mining industry and as messengers and domestic servants, he now beholds the Bantu mason wielding his trowel, the Bantu teacher in front of his class, the Bantu doctor visiting his patients and the Bantu newspaper editor sitting at his desk.

(viii) Whereas a generation ago, a lecture on the "Native Problem" aroused interest occasionally, and a few students were engaged in Bantu Studies at our South African universities, during the past two decades an intense interest in the study of this all-dominating problem of existence, has arisen on the part of the Europeans. There are, namely, the Institute of Race Relations and the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs; at every university there are departments of Bantu languages, Ethnology and Native Administration; in the Transvaal especially, Bantu languages are now taught in a number of European High Schools. In books, in the press and over the radio mention of the "Colour Problem" is continually being made. In recent years, this interest even extends beyond the borders of South Africa; the European has become Africa-conscious.

(ix) In the mind of the European no less than in that of the Bantu, two poles of thought have arisen in consequence of contact. These two poles of thought are found in the conduct of students at European universities, in the approach of leading bodies studying the problem, and also on the platforms of existing and evolving political parties. These two poles, with a great number of intermediate shadings, coincide to a large extent with the poles in the life of the Bantu, namely, preservation of a characteristic type of existence on the one hand, and the fusion of all forms of existence within the same living frontiers on the other. The European is confronted with an inescapable choice. A large number of Europeans are seeking for safety in a *via media* which will not lead to a parting of the ways, at least in their own lifetime. But the leading groups at the head of the two formative poles now termed "apartheid" on the one hand, and "liberalism" on the other, are witnesses to the fact that in their minds, the time has already arrived for choosing between the maintenance of separate identities and the process of coalescence, between the traditional South African and the Neo-Western way of life.

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