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SOME RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDE-LINES WHICH MAY LEAD TO MORE SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN LEBOWA AND OTHER BLACK HOMELANDS: PART 1*

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INTRODUCTION

Although my research was undertaken primarily in Lebowa and conditions in Lebowa will be referred to throughout, it is not impossible that most of the recommendations could have application in the other Black homelands.

The recommendations made below are intended to indicate certain guide-lines by which greater co-operation and trust could be instilled in Black farmers in the homelands so that the new opportunities in agriculture can, on one hand, become part of their own aims and efforts and, on the other hand, fit in better with their own culture. These are also aimed at closing certain obvious gaps in the efforts of the group who are handing over to stimulate improved agricultural practices in the receiving group and to expand certain positive aspects that do exist in this regard. All the recommendations arise directly from the results of my research in Lebowa, with particular reference to the area of the Bantwane. However, where possible, they are correlated with conditions elsewhere.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are set out in point form, which does not necessarily correspond with any order of priority.

Creation of alternative work opportunities

In order to prevent agriculture being practised in Lebowa only by women, old men and pensioners alternative work opportunities outside the agricultural sector will have to be created on a very big and imaginative scale in the homeland itself. In my opinion, this will be the only way to break the link between basic security in life and a small piece of agricultural land, which is still the prevailing view of the Blacks in Lebowa (and also in the other homelands). The absence of alternative work opportunities is directly responsible for the fact the all who have rights to cultivate land on the trust and tribal farms cling desperately to them, on the one hand, as a place to retire to, and, on the other hand, as a guarantee that if work opportunities in the White area are for some reason not favourable, they do have some security to fall back on. At the same time, all who do not at present have rights to cultivate land aspire to such rights. The necessity for severing this connection or getting rid of this one-man-one-plot idea is by no means new. It was already strongly argued by the Tomlinson Commission in its report of 1955 (Summary: 154). The continued existence of the outdated view about security means that there is at present no hope that the true Black farmers, of whom there is already an encouraging core, will be allowed room for development. In their own words, they are being "bound with the same rope" as those who never will, want to or can farm. At present great numbers of small farmers must seek refuge on small pieces of land, which in most cases is impossible because of the many new needs (good or bad) that have resulted from contact with the Western way of life. The consequence is that the men go to work during their most productive years in the neighbouring White area and leave agriculture to their wives and other elderly people (Coetzee 1977: 344 et seq.).

Industrial development

The provision or creation of alternative work opportunities implies, in the first place, that industrial development and mining development within Lebowa will have to receive attention on a much faster and far higher priority basis. This was also argued very strongly by the Tomlinson Commission (Summary 1955: 133 et seq.) for all the homelands. Unfortunately, such development has not yet in practice gathered any real

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momentum in Lebowa. The necessity for a development policy in respect of developing areas that is aimed simultaneously and complementarily at both agriculture and industry is not foreign to international economic thinking. For example, UNO's Economic Commission for Africa (United Nations 1966: 15) has this to say: "agricultural modernization and industrialization are closely linked. In 1965, there is no longer a question of continuing to set industry against agriculture; rather, each of them must be developed as well as possible and at the same time, which is by no means impracticable. This statement of principle is certainly not an adequate basis for advising a state what proportion of its total capital investment it should allocate to industry and what to agriculture ..... the proportions depend entirely on the particular situation in the country concerned".[1] The development co-operation that already exists should therefore be able, in co-operation with White private initiative by way of the agency system, to concentrate far more effectively on industrial and mining development.

Small industries

Arising from and supplementary to this whole idea of provision of alternative work opportunities in mines and industries one must ask, on the basis of personal observations and findings within the area of the research, for consideration for the promotion of home industries and the development of Dr Schumacher's thoughts on the application of the intermediary technology of small and labour-intensive industries (Hunter 1969: 269 et seq.).[2] My limited research in this field showed that there are definitely natural Black entrepreneurs outside the industrial sector in the area of the research who are economically active over a wide spectrum (Coetzee 1977: 182 et seq.). Contact with the Western way of life has largely destroyed the self-sufficiency of the family and made room for professional specialisation over a wide front. The best example of this is perhaps a brick-maker on the farm Kikvorschfontein 57JS who, in addition to a secretary, employs 40 people full time. His estimated turnover per year is in the region of R42 000. It was also my finding that these people have not always had learning, or even appropriate training, and much capital, but rather that they display a good deal of spirit of enterprise, integrity and perseverance under difficult circumstances.

Unfortunately the fact of their existence is known to few, with the result that there is a crying need for specialised knowledge on, for example, marketing, management and planning, on the pattern of the existing agricultural extension. In my opinion, the newly established development corporation in Lebowa should turn its attention to this aspect in order to:

(i) Identify and learn of the existence of such natural entrepreneurs;
(ii) arrange for extension of a specialised nature where required; and
(iii) arrange for assistance of a practical nature as required.

However, I believe that it is necessary to guard against pushing such natural entrepreneurs beyond their capacity or restricting or protecting them too much by regulation.

Patterns of land tenure

It was mentioned above that the present patterns of land tenure in the area of the research (and in the whole of Lebowa) do not at this stage appear to be of really decisive importance in the process of agricultural development. Because the present sizes of agricultural land are, however, in most cases too small (even within the framework of the Tomlinson Commission's full economic units) to assure existing farmers of a profitable living and to make farming attractive to the younger generation (Coetzee 1977: 382 et seq.) it will have to be made possible in some way for progressive farmers to use larger areas of land. One thinks of the following possible changes:

(i) Because not all the land has yet been bought up in terms of the Bantu Trust and Land Act, 1936 (Act 18 of 1936), all newly purchased trust farms present a golden opportunity of offering bigger farming opportunities to those Black farmers who have already proved "successful". This could, if necessary, be done on a progressive basis or subject to possible conditions, such as rent payable in advance, minimum debt, continuous inspection and supplementary assistance where required. This principle is in fact already being applied experimentally on a small scale in Lebowa (Coetzee 1977: 430) and offers an ideal opportunity for the development of a core of true farmers in the Western sense of the word without affecting existing rights or altering existing patterns of land tenure.

(ii) I do, however, also agree with the view of Firth (1969: 26) when he states that "there must inevitably arise in the life of all advancing societies a stage when the state has to intervene to regulate the formation of systems of land tenure".[3] The best time to make a re-evaluation of existing patterns of land tenure and create opportunities for changes seems to be as progress is made with the creation of alternative work opportunities within Lebowa itself, otherwise the same problems may be experienced as Hughes (1971: 66 et seq.) mentions in connection with the implementation of the Rhodesian Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951: "An official Government report made the point that the Act 'has not achieved what it was designed to achieve. It has not created a free market in land and cattle rights in the tribal areas. It has not resulted in rights of cultivation of arable land being transferred, whether on a permanent or a temporary basis, to those best able to make the land produce more. On the other hand, it has created a landless class. It has created a great deal of ill-feeling among the class towards agents of the government. It has disturbed social stability' ".. De

Wilde (1967, Vol. 1: 145) also warns that "unless people thus made landless can find wage employment in agriculture, commerce, industry and government or are given opportunities to get farms elsewhere, there will be serious unemployment and great pressure to subdivide the land once more in defiance of legal prohibitions and to the detriment of its productivity".

The Tomlinson Commission (Summary 1955: 153 et seq.) also recommended years ago that a revision of the present systems of land tenure in the Black homelands was very necessary. In view of the experiences mentioned above elsewhere in Africa, however, it would have to be linked to rapid industrial development and the creation of alternative work opportunities. On the trust farms (and possible also the tribal farms) provision could therefore be made in due course for an evolutionary consolidation of agricultural land in the hands of progressive and influential Black farmers. To prevent the appearance of land barons, prescribed maximum sizes over which an individual could obtain right of use could perhaps be fixed. To set the ball rolling it might be possible to begin forthwith with a system of obligatory leasing out in cases where plots on trust farms (and possibly on tribal farms) are not being cultivated. Whether these eventual changes should be undertaken by the central government of Lebowa or the local tribal authority (as in the case of the Rhodesian Land Tenure Act of 1970) can still be considered. However, in view of the financial implications of the purchasing of land, it is felt that the existing allocated plots should not be bought now, but that it would be preferable to continue with the system of registration of guaranteed right of use that can pass by inheritance.[4]

(iii) A third possibility which could be considered on certain tribal farms is a return to the traditional system as far as it is practically possible. If each married woman had a small piece of land which she could look after herself (hoe, keep clean, harvest, etc.) while the ploughing, planting, fertilising and spraying of the lands could, if necessary, be done on a communal and scientific basis with the help of communal tractive power and implements, there would certainly be an increase in production. However, in this case there would be no opportunity for the cultivation of individual farmers on the Western pattern.

(iv) A facet that will certainly have to receive more attention in the future is specialisation in agriculture. Here one refers specifically to field husbandry activities and stock farming. Although reference has been made to the fact that it is a very strong culturally-determined view of the Bantwane (including other Black ethnic groups) that both stock-breeding and field husbandry must be part of a family's farming activities, indications have nevertheless been found in the area of the research that a few farmers are already prepared to specialise (Coetzee 1977: 350). For example, by specialisation it would be possible to make more land, which at present serves as grazing, available immediately for bigger fields. This idea could, if necessary, be tried out on the newly purchased trust farms. Such specialisation, however, is not entirely strange because most Black farmers on the smallholdings in the area of the research were in any case almost completely committed to field husbandry activities and were therefore obliged by circumstances to specialise.

In view of what has been said above, the proposed changes therefore do not imply an immediate and total transition to a system of private land tenure, but rather a combination of possibilities which could eventually lead to a form of private right of use, with the possible exception of certain tribal farms. Considering the positive indications observed on certain private holdings in the area of the research, it is felt that the following proposition of De Wilde (1967: 156) possibly also has merit in respect of Lebowa: "In the long run individually-owned and operated farms, where income is commensurate with the effort made, are likely to be more conducive to the development of the sense of responsibility, the spirit of initiative and the capacity to make decisions which are so essential to the progress of Africa". The possibilities of this development are, however, very closely linked to the provision of a secure living outside the agricultural sector.

Economic strength

In addition to handicaps arising from the traditional culture of the receiving group and deficiencies in the aims, methods of operation and methodology of extension of the members of the group handing over, it is very clear that the economic strength of the receiving group is a severe handicapping factor in the realm of agricultural development (Coetzee 1977: 382 et seq.). One therefore cannot do other than recommend that more help and support be granted to the Black farmers in one way or another. This is not just a matter of some system of provision of credit, but also of the overhauling and extension of supportive services in marketing, transport, the existing resale system and the establishment of agricultural co-operatives. Such assistance is also of decisive importance for the success of the whole extension action.[5]

In the case of extension of credit, De Wilde (1967, Vol. 1: 198) perhaps sums the matter up best when he says "from interviews with African farmers, one is often tempted to conclude that the shortage or unavailability of credit is one of the most important obstacles of agricultural development. However, a proper assessment of the role of credit is often difficult to make. The sorry record of repayment that characterizes the administration of agricultural credit in many countries indicates how difficult it is to establish an effective credit system. There are instances where liberal credit has obviously acted as a disincentive, an invitation or opportunity to the farmer to work less hard and to save less. At the same time one can also cite many

cases where development efforts have been at least partly frustrated because farmers who were obviously trying to do their best did not have sufficient access to credit".

Becker (1975: 165) points out that in Lebowa there is in fact provision to extend credit to the value of R120 per year to approved Black farmers, but that these facilities are seldom granted because of the difficulty of recovering the loans and the heavy losses to the authorities as a result of the need to write off numerous bad debts. Another danger in granting loans is that the money, because of the low standard of living of the receiving group, will be spent on necessities of life other than agricultural requirements. It therefore appears that assistance in the form of credit could be granted only if it was coupled with a series of differentiated conditions. The many years of experience in this regard built up by ACAR (Associacao de Credito e Assistencia Rural) in Brazil (Wharton 1969: 428 et seq.) could provide a guide-line. "The basic philosophy underlying the ACAR approach in supervised credit is the belief that the small farmer, who is numerically the largest, can be helped by the threefold combined provision of credit, supervision in loan fund use, and instruction in improved farming methods, so that he will eventually reach a level where he can continue to increase his productivity on a sustained basis and where he has sufficient internal capital to become more eligible for credit from standard sources."

Under this scheme applicants for loans are selected and, if a loan is granted, the receiver must not only be prepared to spend it according to a recommended plan, but also to apply his production methods in a prescribed way (p. 430). Various experts make periodical visits to the borrower's home and plot to give assistance and to ensure that the conditions intended are being met.

Another possibility is the direct provision of tractors with the necessary implements which could be used to cultivate the plotholders fields at prescribed tariffs. The imaginative and practical way in which LECUSA (Lesotho Credit Union Scheme for Agriculture) provides tractive power, with certain conditions, in Lesotho (Moletsane 1974: 1-10 and 13 et seq.) could certainly prove a useful guide-line. Under this scheme tractors are made available to people to plough their lands, to plant and to help with their harvest. The provision of such tractors, however, forms part of an agreement that the person will use only prescribed seed, pesticides and fertilisers and that he will pay for a certain portion in cash. The tractors are also handled by trained drivers.

Should it be felt that the provision of tractive power should preferably be left to private initiative, I would still like to suggest that control be exercised in some way over people who hire their services out for the ploughing and cultivation of other's lands. Obligatory registration and passing a competency test would be possibilities for setting certain standards and guidelines. I have heard many complaints about the poor and inadequate way in which farmlands are cultivated by private Black individuals with tractors. Offering courses in the handling and maintenance of tractors would certainly meet a big need. The help of White farmer initiative could possibly also play a part in this.

It was very clear from my research that the extension of credit or assistance in the realm of agriculture through stimulating local agricultural co-operatives has not in practice succeeded in such a way as to fill the great need for such bodies. There were also definite gaps to be seen as regards the resale scheme (Coetzee 1977: 317 et seq.). In view of the meagre economic means of the receiving group and the fact that they are almost 100 per cent illiterate, it is very strongly recommended that the State undertake the initiation of agricultural co-operatives. In this way it would be possible to establish one big agricultural co-operative in each district with small primary co-operatives as branch offices on the various farms, with properly trained and salaried clerks to do the necessary bookkeeping and buying. To leave this extremently important measure of assistance to the initiative and co-operation of the receiving group appears at this stage to be quite unrealistic. Dumont (1969: 216) rightly points out that the State must take the initiative in such circumstances: "as a general rule, the state will even become the initiator of the co-operative movement. This may be sheer heresy to the militants in the old European co-operatives, but it is indispensable to cut down on delays and spread out the movement. This is doubly so because the cultural and economic lag between the peasant and the businessman is much more pronounced than in Europe."

A practical contribution to the great number of material needs in the realm of agriculture could also be made by giving the prizes awarded at agricultural shows in the form of practical resources such as seed, fertiliser, pesticides, etc., rather than as small money prizes (Coetzee 1977: 330). In this connection again, prizes should not be awarded only for the best product, but also very definitely for achievement, such as the highest yield per ha of various crops, the highest calving percentage in the case of cattle, the most chicks, etc. In this way the Black farmers could be taught in an indirect way to keep records which, in need, could be checked by the area extension officers. To prevent fatalistic attitudes developing towards the winning of prizes, provision could be made that one person could only win a first prize in a particular section every other year. The bigger funds that would be needed for such prizes should be of limited significance in terms of the development they would help to stimulate, particularly in view of the popularity of agricultural shows in the area of the research (Coetzee 1977: 442). This suggestion could therefore serve a dual purpose. First, the prizes could help to a limited extent to provide the practical requirements of the farmers and, in the second place, they could serve as an incentive, linked with the desire to compete,

to motivate people further in the realm of agriculture.

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1. *Cf.* also Hunter (1969: 81 et seq.) and Dumont (1969: 99 et seq.) for discussion of this aspect in the context of the Afrikaner.
2. *Cf.* the thoughts of De Lange (1973) in his work: "Small industry a first step towards industrialization".
3. *Cf.* also the remark of De Wilde (1976: 135).
4. *Cf.* however, also the recommendations of the Tomlinson Commission (Summary 1955: 153 et seq.).
5. The problems and extent of this whole aspect are very clearly explained by De Wilde (1967, Vol. 1: 198 et seq.), Hunter (1969: 161 et seq.), Dumont (1969: 211 et seq.) and Wharton (1969: 426 et seq.).

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