S. to the NEWS

by PHYLLIS SCHL.A.FLY

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415

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INDEPENDENCE FOR TRANSKEI

The birth of any new nation is usually accompanied by labor pains and blood-letting. In sharp contrast was the quiet and painless birth last month of a new African country called the Transkei.

In an era when black majority rule is accepted as the wave of the future for all of Africa, the people in the Transkei have it here and now. It is a totally black government.

At the United Nations, however, the Transkei is treated like an illegitimate child. Nobody loves it but its parent. The UN, which boasts of its universality and nonexclusivity, and which has welcomed many illegitimate governments, voted unanimously to bar the Transkei, with the United States abstaining.

If the Transkei had fought its way out of South Africa in a bloody revolution, it probably would have been acceptable to the UN club of peace-loving nations. But because it seceded peaceably by mutual agreement, it is denied membership.

The historical argument in favor of the independence of the Transkei is strong. Three other nations have been carved out of South Africa and have become members of the UN: Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana.

It is claimed that the Transkei's independence is illusory because it remains militarily and economically dependent on South Africa. Such a relationship is a fact of life all over the world for most small nations that are situated close to large nations.

This paternalism, however, has a welcome side. The Transkei

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doesn r,t have tc, . spend any :resources at all to defe.nd 1tsel:f .agat st . external aggressie>n. · •Th t burden is totally a1sumed by South Afrlct,. Just think bow our ta:x:es could be reduced if we didn't have to spend any money for national **defense!**

Compared with many African countries, the Transkei'flll economiu potential is great. It has **some** of the most fertile agricultural larul on the entire continent.

The biggest handicap of the Transkei is not the pol:lcies of South Africa but the social customs that stand int.he way of using land as an economic •sset to generate capital. By West rn standards, the present small-plot subsistance farming should be shif'ted 1;o a market-crop system. This would make :maximum 11.se of the 1.ertile a.oil and improve the standard of living.

1rhe tribal chiefs who govern the T:r·Qnske:l, however, have a different soale of values. They distribute the land and assign the cattle a.s prestige rewards. Cattle are l!lot eaten or solfl, but a-0cm11u lated like a bank aeeount. Observers report that children **may** be undernourished for lack of milk in a family that <'na1a 30 cows. 'When the father needs money, be prefers to work temporarily in the mines of south Africa, rather than part with his land or cattle.

By Western standards, what the Tra:uskei needs 1.,ost is teob.1t1i.m1l assistance to adopt twentieth century agriculture and hai'"Vest the riches of the soil. But do otllers have the right to fo"ree or in:tluce a people to adopt our value system witb its heavy enrpha!iis on what we call a higher standard of material comforts, at the c(?St of upsetting the social structure of a whole nation?

By taking the route of independence, the Tra:nskei has chosen to work out its ow.n fu·ture. This new nation deserves the chance to seek its own, destiny.

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