

ZULUS WERE WELDED TOGETHER BY SPEAR & BLOOD

A response to Sowetan of 16 January '84 on Mr Mphahlele's article — the question of identity.

The issue of Sowetan, (Jo'burg based newspaper) 16 January 1984, carries with it rather a very controversial article by Eskia Mphahlele. Mr Mphahlele is indeed a very respectable academic, intellectual and writer. It is true that an intellectual is ever conscious of his humanistic status and place. But some times it is tragic that some people intentionally or unintentionally imitate the mannerisms of other people. Some intellectuals forget their own background, national character and culture or, if they remember them at all, recall them with contempt. Obsessively, and with no reservations, they deny themselves in order to transform their identity. Hoping to attain the distinctions, and the grandeur, which they see in another. They attempt to rid themselves of perceived associations with their original society and culture.

Some intellectuals admire all the imported value-systems from Europe to such an extent that they criticize and condemn their historical backgrounds. And when they do that they try to sever their connections with all the objects attached to them, thus becoming quasi-intellectuals, because they have alienated themselves from their history, and religion — becoming a second-hand personalities whose mode of consumption has been changed, whose minds have been changed, who have lost their old precious past and intellectual qualities and have become empty within.

Mr Mphahlele, may not be the type of an intellectual I describe, but I have some reservations in what he says in that article. He says: "Just too many Zulu speaking people have acknowledged with

pride the oft-repeated statement pressmen love to trot out on their copy that the Zulus are the 'most populous tribe' in South Africa. I have just too many Zulu speakers, in and outside 'KwaZulu' official circles and the rural populace, say they are the 'Zulu nation'". Mr Mphahlele knows the Zulu history, no doubt about it. Zulus were a nation until they were conquered in 1879 at the battle of Ulundi, this is a historical fact. But Zulus never lose sight of the fact that they are South Africans of Zulu extraction.

To be proud of being a Zulu or Xhosa or Tswana or Pedi or Tsonga is not being ethnocentric, but being proud of one's roots. Are the Zulus, Xhosas, Pedis, etc then not supposed to be proud of their origins?

Are the Zulus supposed to de-Zulise themselves and become neither fish nor fowl — for what recognition? Colonial wars made the Zulus South Africans and they will die as South Africans. Chief Buthelezi has never pursued the politics of Zulu interests in opposition to the interests of South Africa. Chief Buthelezi's leadership pursues national goals and is directed at giving every cultural group in the country a full and meaningful role in national politics. It is clear, that Mr Mphahlele adopts an unpleasant attitude towards the Zulus. The writers, literature, missionaries and explorers of the 19th and early 20th centuries were putting on record what is true — a reality about the Zulus, be it about customs, traditions or dignity. In KwaZulu, the concept of "nation" as used by Pretoria was never accepted, and KwaZulu leadership knows very well the neo-colonial connotations of the words, "na-

tion", "nation states" or "homelands". It must be known that the Zulus are the Zulus and they will never be ashamed of referring to themselves as Zulus even if they live in foreign countries. They were built and welded together by spear and blood.

When the Court Poet to Senzan-gakhona said: "A cord of destiny let us weave, O Menzi, scion of Jama, That to universes beyond the reach of spirit-forms, we may ascend" was indicating that the Zulus are the people whose destiny was to traverse space and more from universe to universe and to transform the human being into a conscious citizen of the cosmic order. This was the evolvement of the ideal of nationhood. King Shaka the Great adopted this court poet's ideal as the wain inspiration of the revolution (Imfecane) which he led after his father's death. It was the ideological blueprint on which he built the Zulu nation. Now, can any Zulu dismantle this — it is impossible. It is true that the basis of national unity is the nationalistic feelings of the Africans the feeling of being Africans irrespective of tribal connections, social status or educational attainment, but we cannot stop to honour, venerate our African heroes such as Shaka, Moshoeshe, Makana, Hintsa, Khama, Mzilikazi, Sekukhuni and many others. That is why I take African nationalism as the umbrella nationalism of these other nationalisms. The same thing applies to allowing ourselves to bend over to Black Consciousness. Our people don't know Black Consciousness, therefore they cannot accept it because to them it is foreign, unless we first stir up Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi, Tswana etc, consciousness and then Black or

African consciousness, then perhaps we can reach that unifying identity. But to impose a foreign ideology on the people, is really dangerous and myopic, because a man eking an existence on a parched land with a dusty bowl, doesn't know Black Consciousness and we need him in our struggle for the new South Africa.

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KANGWANE SIYINYANDZA



Hon. E. Mabuza in his office.

KaNgwane, home of the Swazi in the Republic of South Africa, is the second smallest "national state" in South Africa.

At present the state is made up of two blocks — the Nsikazi area north-east of Nelspruit, bordering the Kruger National Park, and the Nkomazi, Mlondozi and Mswati districts which have a common

border on the north and west sides of Swaziland. The Swazi are part of great Nguni family and are closely related to the Zulu with whom they share ties of blood, language and culture. Two thirds of the Swazi who live in the Republic of S.A. form an entity on their own.

In terms of Pretoria's apartheid

system, this region is now a 'homeland' so-called. The place is indeed picturesque — with those mountains and bushes.

OVER OUR DEAD BODIES

KaNgwane Government created in 1976 by Pretoria is still in phase 1 but there are lots of developments and lots of improvements in spite of disturbing issues such as the Ingwavuma and KaNgwane land deal.

In the years to come these Swazis will still be there, and they will be there forever as part of South Africa. Therefore all that KaNgwane leadership does is to promote the lives of these Swazis. So, for them to be taken to Swaziland Government is indeed untenable, and they vow — 'over our dead bodies' "Nobody likes to go because there is a lot of commotion, said Mr E C Mango, the Deputy Minister to the Chief Minister. And, indeed KaNgwane Swazis have been cemented together, and the border adjustment issue has helped a lot to unite the people. Even though there are divisive elements, but KaNgwane people are firm on their resolution. These border adjustments have completely destroyed the healthy attitudes between the two Swazis (KaNgwane and Swaziland), and the Hon. E. Mabuza confirmed that "relationship is extremely hostile".