

## ELECTION POSTSCRIPT

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THE General Election which took place on 17th January 1961 resulted in 10 seats for the Afro-Shirazi Party, 9 seats for the Zanzibar Nationalist Party and 3 seats for the Zanzibar and Pemba People's Party. A petition has been lodged with the High Court over the Chake seat in Pemba, where an Afro-Shirazi candidate was returned with a majority of one vote. In the meantime attempts by each of the major parties to form a government with the help of the Z.P.P.P. have resulted in stalemate, for a split took place among the Z.P.P.P. Elected Members when one of them decided to support the Afro-Shirazi Party. The President and the other Elected Member, however, stood firmly by the resolution of a Z.P.P.P. delegate's conference held at Wete, Pemba, on Sunday 22nd January, which instructed them to support the Z.N.P. in the Legislative Council.

To resolve the deadlock and save their own party from cleavage, the Z.P.P.P. held another conference on 28th January, attended by 80 delegates, and proposed a three-party government, with a Z.P.P.P. Chief Minister and Assistant Minister—the A.S.P. and Z.N.P. to have two Ministries each, and each of the three parties to recommend one person for the three nominated seats. If either of the two major parties were to reject these proposals, a two-party coalition would be formed with the other. The Z.N.P. accepted the proposal, in the belief that it might save the country from further confusion; the A.S.P. has at the time of writing not agreed even to discuss the matter with Z.P.P.P. delegates.

The stalemate continued, until on 11th February the Administration finally decided to hold new general elections, probably during the first week in June.

In order to understand how inter-party rivalry could have become so bitter as to have resulted in the virtual postponement of effective responsible government in Zanzibar, one must go back to the 1957 elections, which established the A.S.P. as the 'majority' party, with 5 out of the 6 elected seats in the Legislative Council. It had campaigned on an extremely moderate platform; and indeed the party can be said to have been considerably helped by the Administration itself, if the following

extract from the British Government's report on the election can be taken as an authority: "The immediate result (of the Nationalists' campaign) was a series of urgent appeals to the Elections Office from the leaders of the African and Shirazi Associations for protection against what they claimed to be an attempt to extinguish opposition and to establish a single party supremacy of a dangerously familiar kind. . . . The intervention of the Elections Office, which undoubtedly encouraged the African and Shirazi Associations to pursue the independent line which they had already marked out for themselves, was bitterly resented by the Nationalist Party leaders as deliberately designed to discredit their party." The author of this report is no longer employed in the Colonial Service.

In any event, all the propaganda resources both of the Administration and of the settler-controlled Zanzibar press were mobilised against the Z.N.P. The main bogey conjured up was that of the unspeakable Colonel Nasser, for the wounds of Suez were still fresh. The Z.N.P. was said to be backed by the Egyptians.

Our policy in the election campaign was one of non-racialism and socialist transformation. We opposed racialism very strongly, while equally opposing the 'multi-racialism' expounded by the settlers on the mainland. The Afro-Shirazi Party was described as an 'African' party by the press simply because it was considered by both Government and settlers to have a pro-British bias; the Z.N.P., on the other hand, was dismissed as an 'Arab' party—an attempt to isolate it from the national liberation movements on the mainland as representing a foreign, or minority, interest.

The attempt to impose racial politics on Zanzibar at that time succeeded, and the Z.N.P. was defeated without the consolation of a single seat. But the party emerged with all the more vigour from the elections, convinced only that the results were an indication of how hard it would have to work in order to spread progressive ideas and raise the political consciousness of the population. The three years since then have been used to reorganise the party, and to embark on a great campaign of mass education. Mass rallies and demonstrations revealed that political action can be as effective outside the Legislative Council as in it; and perhaps our main achievement was our campaign against the establishment of an American rocket base in Zanzibar. The Administration was forced to abandon its 'Project Courier' and

we found ourselves tagged with a new label. We had become 'Communists'.

A vast propaganda campaign was launched against the Z.N.P. before the 1961 elections. Some of the politicians from the mainland even took a hand in engineering the party's defeat, because the Z.N.P. had taken a strong stand against the idea of an East African Federation before complete political and economic independence. A famous mainland leader sent an experienced party worker to assist the A.S.P. in its election campaign, in spite of the fact that both major parties in Zanzibar are members of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA).

Thus, when we entered the election, it was confidently believed by our opponents that we would be resoundingly defeated; instead, we lost by one disputed vote. We maintain that the people of Zanzibar have voted for an uncompromising stand against colonialism, against foreign bases on their island, and for radical progress. It is now the task of our party, encouraged by our gains, to organise in order to win at last the real self-determination that we believe to be our right.

