
Five Aspects— Four Bad

A. P. ZWANE

On behalf of his party the leader of the Swaziland Progressive Party comments on the Swaziland Constitutional Committee's report to the British Government

THE SWAZILAND CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE has just released its long-awaited report on the recommendations it would like to place before the British government for incorporation into a new constitution for Swaziland. Both the Swaziland Progressive Party and myself are now studying the recommendations with a view to making our criticisms public in a more detailed form later. At this stage I can only make preliminary comments on four of the most important aspects of the report.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The committee proposes that apart from the Speaker, the Legislative Council should be made up of:

4 non-voting official members (who would represent the predominantly White government);

12 unofficial Swazis chosen by the Swazi National Council and approved by the Paramount Chief;

12 unofficial representatives of the Whites and the Coloureds.

According to these figures White and Coloured interests could have 16 voices. The African traditionalists, who claim to speak for all the Swazis, though they do not have the mandate to do this, would command only 12 votes. According to this arrangement the Whites and the Coloureds who together constitute a minority in the nation have been given enough representation in the Legislative Council to make them a political majority. The Swaziland Progressive Party regards this as a clever trick to perpetuate White domination in a new guise. Unfair advantage is taken of the African's poverty to entrench White domination with the consent of the traditionalists. In his historic speech delivered in April 1960 the Ngwenyama outlined some of the principles which should determine the relations between Black and White and which should guide Swaziland's destiny. He stated that he favoured policies which made "all the people of Swaziland feel secure." To achieve this end, he continued, they should "come together on an equal basis." These are sound principles. The disparity in the representation of the Africans and the Whites in the Legislative Council will violate these principles.

The loading of representation against the African emerges more clearly when it is borne in mind that although a numerical minority the Whites enjoy economic dominance, educational superiority and political

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power. For them to be represented in the way recommended by the Committee only means that they will be free to use all the advantages just enumerated to protect their interests at the expense of the weakest section of the nation—the Africans. I am amazed that the Africans in the Committee ignored this very real danger to their people. This structure is not acceptable to the Swaziland Progressive Party because it is unfair; it perpetuates race discrimination in ways which leave the dispossessed with no alternative other than to seek to dispossess the possessing or to seek redress through violence; it is an insult to the self-respect and dignity of every right-thinking Swazi.

THE NGWENYAMA

The Committee was curiously solicitous when it came to the Ngwenyama's position. At every stage it expresses concern about anything which might weaken it. When translated into concrete terms in the report, this concern amounts to nothing much more than allowing him to "request the executive council to reconsider the advice it has given to the Governor." The power of "consent" boils down to the fact that he can only delay legislation. Neither the executive committee nor the legislative council is under the obligation to defer to his wishes. In simple language the unctuous concern merely recognises the Paramount Chief's right to protest and not to alter legislation. This is not much different from reducing him to a mere rubber stamp of the political set-up designed to promote, to an ever increasing extent, the interests of the White minority.

The Swaziland Progressive Party is determined to give the country a constitutional monarchy under British protection. The two-pillar structure to which the traditionalist Africans have subscribed in the report will have the ultimate effect of making the monarchy unpopular. This could, in the end, destroy it. I have said elsewhere that I believe the people of Swaziland want their king. The surest way to destroy his influence, prestige and popularity is to place him, as the constitutional committee has done, in the position where he can be regarded as the mere puppet of White imperialists.

An important aspect of the Ngwenyama's position which must not be ignored is that the recommendations give the Swazi National Council, which is not in any way democratically-elected, sole and exclusive power to choose African representatives in the Legco. The Swazi National Council represents only one economic-cultural class in Swazi national life. This class has not always distinguished itself in serving the best interests of the Swazis. The proposals deny the right to vote to the overwhelming majority of educated, business and professional men and women of African descent. These people are at the very moment playing no insignificant part in helping to develop their country. These people, from whom the progressive leaders of the Swazis are to a large extent drawn, are the very group which the Committee has disfranchised. In the view of the Swaziland Progressive Party, this is a glaring injustice. It violates the principle of making "all the people of Swaziland feel secure."

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The principle on which the recommendations are based seeks to make the Swazi a nation built on two

racial pillars. The Whites are told to "develop along their own lines" while the African is pushed back to a system which militates against the best interests of the country. The practice of a dualistic authority is bad in principle. It is wasteful of human resources. It encourages racial loyalties which in the end will produce bloodshed. It encourages the racial exploitation of the weak and entrenches White domination. The duplication of services is a luxury which a small country like Swaziland cannot in any circumstances afford. We have neither the resources to finance the committee's version of apartheid nor the personnel. Why should the Swazi National Council do what the Legislative Council can perform with greater efficiency and more cheaply?

The dualistic approach reaches its point of highest absurdity when one considers the system of election. The Whites and the Coloureds will vote as individual citizens. No African, no matter how educated or progressive or useful to his country, has been considered for this right. The report wants the Africans to vote on the "tinkundla principle." The same document defines *inkundla* as comprising "chiefs of a given area grouped together under an appointed Nduna or chairman." Swaziland will be divided into 25 *inkundla* constituencies. Each *inkundla* will be an electoral college electing two representatives on to the Swazi National Council which will, in turn, elect from its members the 12 Africans to sit on the Legislative Council. The latter will, in turn, have to be approved formally by the Paramount Chief.

The obvious intention here is to shut out the progressive sections of the African community from having a voice in how they shall be governed in the country they are doing so much to develop by the side of the other sections. This is not just political discrimination; it is a refined form of race oppression when the government's proclaimed policy and that of the Committee is to rid the country of race discrimination.

GANGING-UP AGAINST THE AFRICAN

According to the report the most backward White man or Coloured will have the vote, while the most highly-educated African does not have it. The report states: "Every Eurafrikan should be given the right to elect whether he wishes to be represented in the Swazi National Council or on the roll for Europeans and Eurafrikans." If every Coloured man can have the better of two worlds, why deny the African this right in his own country? We do not begrudge the Coloureds their good fortune. We only insist on being treated fairly and justly. We constitute the majority, whose numbers exceed those of the Coloureds.

A feature of the recommendations we note is that by giving the Whites and the Coloureds rights denied the African, the report seeks to encourage the Whites and the Coloureds to gang-up politically against the African numerical majority. This is a dangerously short-sighted policy which will land Swaziland in disasters now overtaking race-conscious countries in other parts of Southern Africa.

POSITIVE ASPECTS

I should be failing in my duty as leader of the Swaziland Progressive Party if I did not draw attention to

and express gratitude for one positive aspect of the Committee's recommendations. All the members put in a strong recommendation that race discrimination should be removed from our national life. One visible result of this is that legislation has been proclaimed removing the racial bar from quite a number of planes of our national life. I should like to urge the committee to adopt a similar attitude when it comes to the principles on which we shall build the new nation as well as the methods to use to teach Black and White the "habit of collaboration."

Finally, I should like to appeal to the British government, through its representatives in this country, to adhere firmly by those principles of race equality which bind the Commonwealth together. There is no room in Swaziland for any form of apartheid. We want to be spared the disasters which have soured the relations between Black and White in race-conscious countries of Southern Africa. In this country, we want one loyalty, one form of government, one system of laws, one flag and a truly united people! ●

"No Politics" is Politics

C. J. DRIVER

A review of Contrast

A NINETY-ODD PAGE edition of the South African quarterly *Contrast*, closed the first year of the magazine's existence with a fanfare of work by established writers—Guy Butler, Alan Paton, Uys Krige and others. To celebrate *Contrast's* birthday, too, the editors included a summary of the critical reception of *Contrast* in an article called "Retrospect," in which they patted themselves gently on the back. And they deserve praise, even if it is partly self-praise: it is an achievement to keep anything to do with literature in South Africa alive for a whole year, even if one's acclaim of that achievement is tempered by a distrust of the magazine's avowed policy: to be "independent, unfettered and unbiased."

The trouble, of course, is that a magazine, like a person who claims to be "independent, unfettered and unbiased" about, say, politics, ends up having no policy at all. But, for all its supposed lack of bias, *Contrast* has so far shown that it has a sort of policy—and it is with this policy that this review is concerned.

There are two ways to judge editorial policy—first and obviously, by editorials, secondly, by comparing what is published with what is rejected. The second

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