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INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

JCB-24
Swaziland

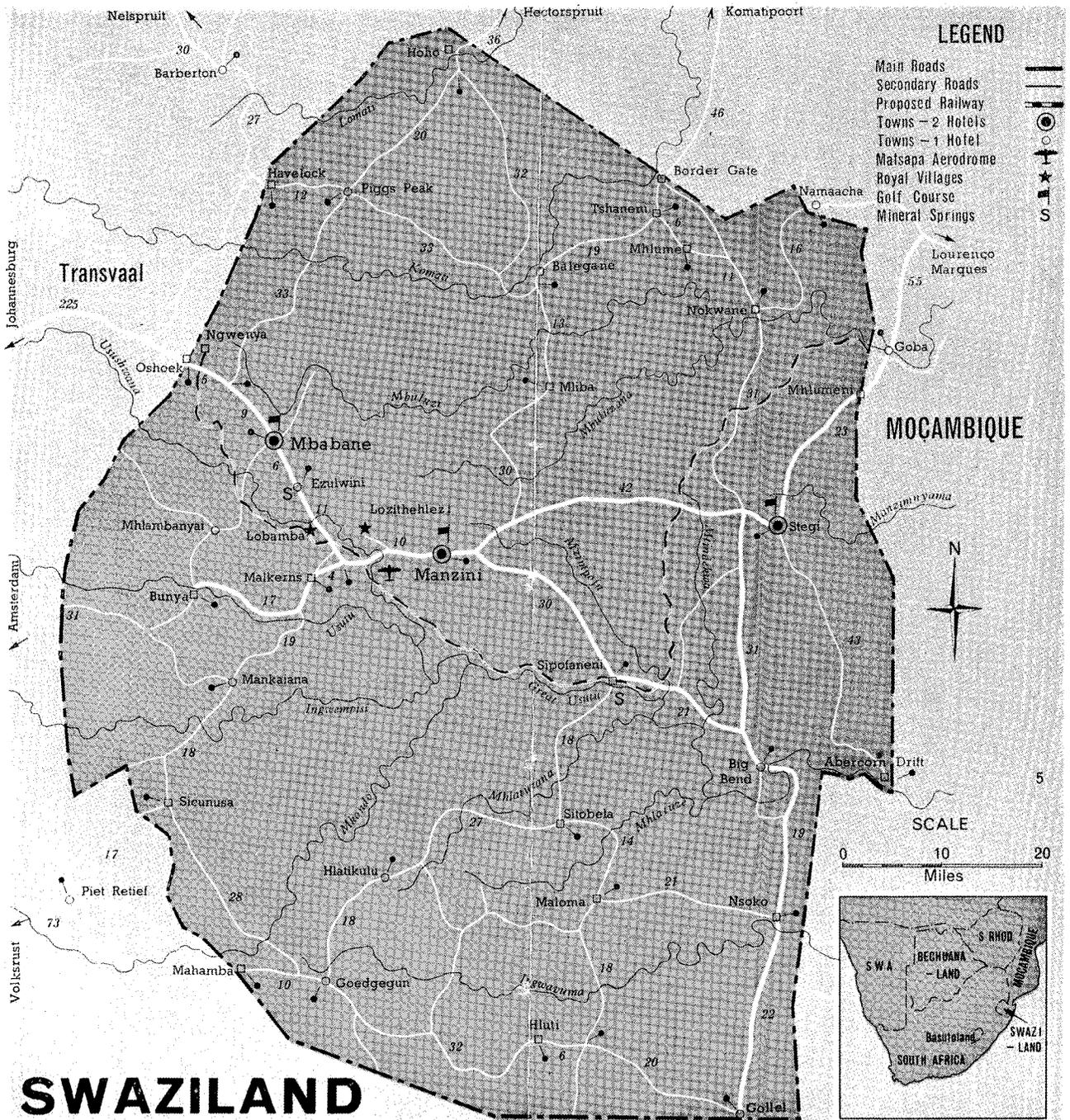
July 29, 1963
3 Richmond Close
Highlands, Salisbury
Southern Rhodesia

Mr. Richard Nolte
Institute of Current World Affairs
366 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Nolte:

Swaziland presented an ugly picture to the world recently when troops from East Africa were called in to quell strikers in an outburst of labour unrest. From the headlines it would not appear that this little country, tucked between Mozambique and the northeastern corner of the Republic of South Africa, has perhaps the best opportunity





of any country in Africa to become an economically-viable democratic multi-racial state.

Swaziland, 6700 square miles, is one of the smallest countries on the African continent. Its size presents no problem, however. Its population, less than 300,000, is not large enough to overcrowd the land yet is adequate for an ample labour supply. It has an abundance

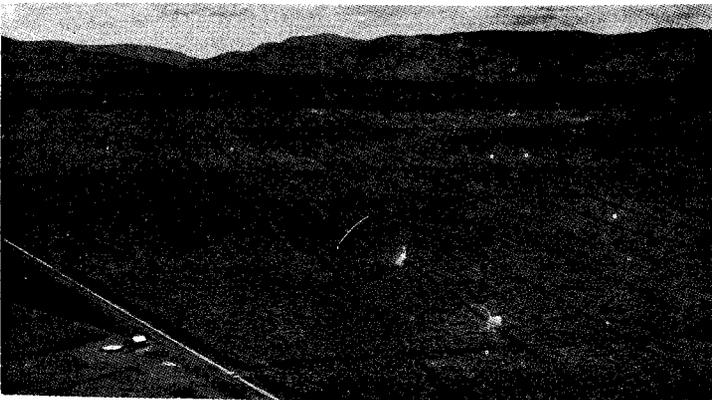


of minerals and, although tiny, within its boundaries are three distinct geographical regions which enable a rich variety of crops to be grown.

In the beautiful highveld mountainous region in the west (top photo) with an average elevation of 4000 feet, cattle and sheep graze in the winter and the Swazi staple crop of maize is grown in the summer. This area also has one of the world's largest asbestos mines, impressive wattle and timber plantations, an iron ore mine (on which Anglo-American has invested millions) as well as copper, nickel, gold tin and barytes in smaller quantities, giving the country a wealth which larger countries might envy.



To the east the land descends 1500 to 200 feet to the undulating grasslands of the middleveld (center photo). Cotton tobacco, pineapple, citrus fruits, avacados, bananas, rice and timber can be found here along with beef and dairy products. The lowveld is often hot and uncomfortable. Only 100 to 500 feet above sea level, it is mostly covered with unattractive patches of thorny thicket. But there is sufficient savanna grass to make certain areas excellent for cattle, and enough irrigation (bottom photo)



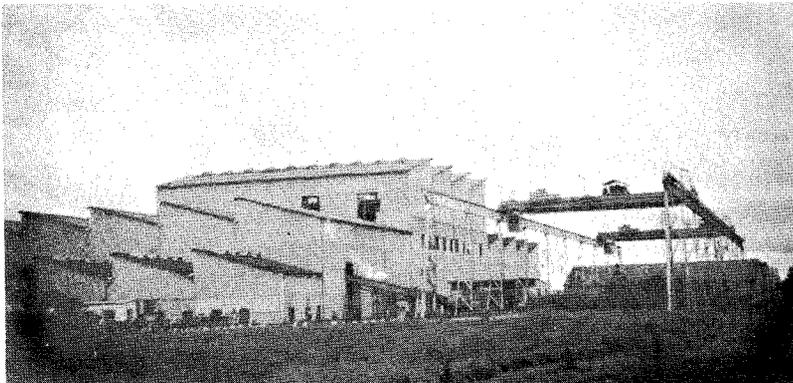
and agricultural development has taken place for cash crops of sugar cane and rice to be raised. Even on the volcanic rock plateau marking the border with Mozambique there is enough good land for cattle and crops.

There has been an impressive start in the development of dams, irrigation schemes and the production of new crops. More productive cultivation methods are slowly being accepted by the Swazis who farm mostly in the middleveld. There is still a lot to be done in improving the land and educating the farmers but there is a relatively sound foundation on which to build.

Transportation and communication have improved tremendously over the last few years. Swaziland has never had to face the problems of a larger country in linking its people together. Some of the remote parts of the mountains and the lowveld still present some difficulties during the rainy season but for the most part the interior has been opened and linked with markets on the outside. The country will soon be transversed by an east-west tarred road running through Mbabane, the administrative capital in the highveld, Manzini (formerly Bremersdorp), the commercial capital in the center of the country, and Stegi on to the Mozambique border. Plans are also under way to cross this with a tarred road from Gollel at the South African border, northward. A 25 million dollar railway, running east and west across the country will soon link the mining area in the highveld with the seaport of Lorenzo Marques in Mozambique. Swaziland will also have its own airstrip and both the South African Airways and Central African Airways have expressed interest in putting it on their schedules as soon as traffic warrants. Besides the obvious advantages of easier transportation, these facilities will enable Swaziland to be less reliant on South Africa for exports and imports.

The country already has considerable industry: mining companies, lumber processing companies (Peak Timbers which produces pressed board and the 14 million dollar Usutu Pulp Company), sugar mills, a

butter factory and a fruit and vegetable cannery. To encourage industrial expansion, a factory site close to the railroad with the necessary roads, water and power has



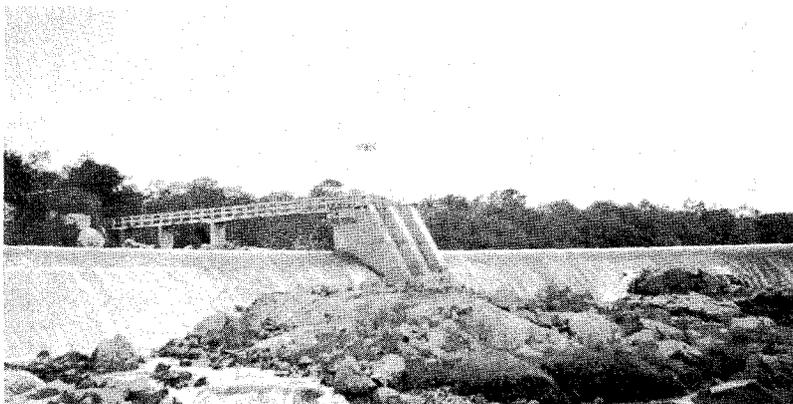
Sugar mill near Mhlume in the north

been opened near Manzini, and various economic reports on Swaziland have published suggestions for investors.

Government officials are very optimistic about the country's financial future. They estimate that within 10 or 15 years it should be able to take care of its own needs. Taxes from the now new industries will be coming in by then, duties from increased exports and imports will bring in more revenue and personal taxes will amount to much more as a result of more employment and higher wages.

It is hard to believe today that at the end of World War II Swaziland was the poorest of the three British Protectorates in Southern Africa. Since then the British Government has become more and more aware of its potential and has been willing to pump money into the economy. In addition, most significantly, the quasi-British Government-controlled Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) has invested almost 52 million dollars since 1948, compared to a total of about 6 million in the other two Protectorates together. (It planted the Usuto Forest, partnered a company to establish a kraft pulp mill, sponsored the Swaziland Irrigation Scheme, helped develop the Bomvu Ridge iron ore reserve, financed sugar cane plantations and sugar mills and has contributed to the cost of the new railway). The International Development Association's first investment in Africa is helping Swaziland build its major all-weather highway.

Of course not everyone shares the Government's optimism. Some of the country's South African-oriented European businessmen fear that an African government will make potential investors lose confidence. A few have gone so far as to advise interested investors to wait and look elsewhere, contending that present political changes make any investment risky. But it appears that these men have not taken their own advice; they have not attempted to liquidate their own financial interests but have expanded. One can only surmise why their actions don't follow their words.



Who are the Swazis
who will someday rule?

The Swazis have been a peaceful pastoral people. They are united by a Paramount

Part of the CDC's irrigation project on the Komati River



Chief, the Ngwenyama, Sobhuza II, who oversees their affairs and in whom all tribal land is traditionally vested. The Swazi National Council, composed of every adult male, must be consulted, however, before he can make any major decision. The day to day administration of the Swazi nation is handled by an executive committee of the Council which advises the Ngwenyama. While there are increasing differences between the traditional and the more educated Swazis, the power and prestige of the Ngwenyama is such that, like the British monarch, he holds their respect and unites the nation. Leaders of the National Council are criticized by Swazi political leaders but the Ngwenyama is never attacked. More than that, the political leaders try to gain his support by presenting their case directly or indirectly to him.

Relations between the 280,000 Swazis and the 9400 Europeans, who own 43% of the land, have been generally good, mainly because the Swazis have been content to stay within their traditional tribal ways and accept a lesser position in European society. The European Advisory Council and the Swazi National Council have each represented the conservative views of their respective groups and the leaders of each have feared the rise of Swazi political parties which would challenge their authority and disrupt the power structure which both have found agreeable.

Swazi political leaders think of Swaziland as a non-racial

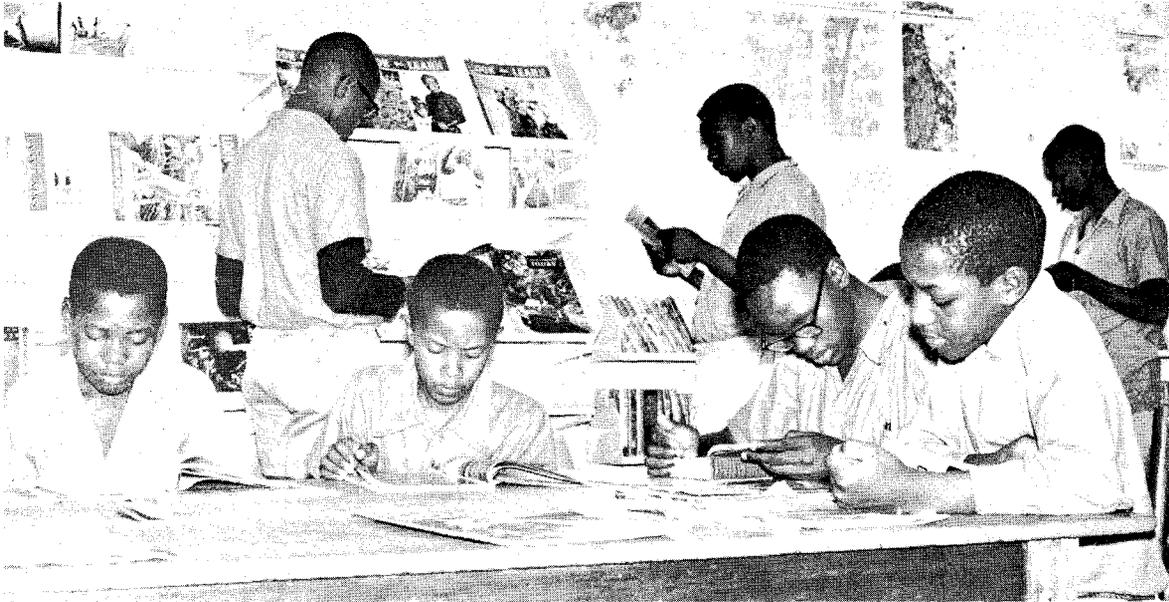
state. They claim they don't want to destroy whatever goodwill exists among the races. But they demand that the Europeans must do their part and give the Swazi full economic, political and social rights. And they demand that the Swazi traditionalists must not oppose the efforts of educated Swazis to have a full place in the developing commercial urban society of Swaziland. While differences have developed with the growth of Swazi political awareness, strained feelings have for the most part been held in check because both Swazi and European leaders realize they need each other if the country is to prosper.

Breakdown of racial barriers - slow but steady

Because of this, slow but steady progress has been made in human relations. As of March 1, 1962, racial discrimination in public places was outlawed (although some hotel owners are still reluctant to accept African guests). Other forms of social discrimination exist to varying degrees but the movement is away from these things. Even the South African Railways which operates most of the buses in the country has had to change its policy. While it still will not allow integration it now has provided first class facilities for Swazis as well as Europeans. (It was forced to do this much, not because of any basic belief in separate-but-equal facilities but because of a strike organized by the Swaziland Democratic Party).

There are now multi-racial clubs, restaurants and schools. The Government has taken the lead in housing by making the civil servant-centered "Old Residency" township in Mbabane non-racial. The rental cost is for most Swazis a restricting factor, however. Few of them are as yet in the better paying civil service positions. Officials in Government and in the Colonial Development Corporation say they want to speed up the movement of Swazis into senior posts but claim there are few who have the necessary education. The first African engineer employed by the Government (and incidentally the first African member of the previously all-White Mbabane Sports Club) and the most senior African employed by the CDC are both from South Africa. The Swazis are in this position because their country has lacked the necessary educational and technical training facilities. Today 75% of all Africans, young and old, are illiterate.

In the last few years educational opportunities have greatly improved. However, since officials of the Education Department can't possibly do all that needs to be done in a short time they have decided to concentrate their efforts on increasing the quality of schools. They will expand as fast as they can but only as quality requirements are met. (The number in schools has already increased from 30,800 in 1958 to 45,500 in 1962). There is agreement among European and African educators that this is a necessary policy if the schools are



to produce Swazis capable of competing successfully with Europeans and Africans from South Africa in business, industry and government.

The process of integrating the schools was begun this year with the first grade. Next January the first year of secondary school will be integrated and in a period of a few years, as each class advances, all grades will be non-racial. This will be done by raising the standard of education the African will receive. Thus, as of now, if an African wants to attend a previously all-European school he must meet the same entrance qualifications as any other student: he must be able to use English sufficiently and be within two years of the age range of the class. (Most African students have been two to four years older than European children in the same grade).

The 'English' qualification is the major problem for Africans and will slow the integration process for a while. Unless the Swazi child is raised in a home where the parents speak English he will encounter some difficulties since it has not, until recently, been introduced in Swazi schools until the fifth grade. Now it is being taught at a lower level and with improved teaching methods.

A Swaziland phenomenon - liberal colonial administration

Until recently political parties in Swaziland have been relatively moderate, perhaps because party leaders have not had to push hard for their demands. The Government has been with them, working toward the same goals.

Swaziland has been blessed with a liberal and enlightened administration. Unlike many officials in the other Protectorates who do their jobs in a disinterested fashion, Swaziland officialdom is deeply involved and dedicated to making the country a bright example of racial cooperation and democratic government. Many of them have bought homes and claim Swaziland as their country. The Resident Commissioner has spent much of his life there and is an authority on Swazi life and custom. In most respects, this group of public servants has been more liberal than any of the political parties.

They have advocated social and economic integration and an African majority in the country's first legislature. In this they have been opposed not only by the Europeans but also by the Paramount Chief and the traditional Swazi National Council. The Ngwenyama suggested in a speech three years ago that Europeans and Swazis should come together on an equal basis in a federal system; that each racial group should elect in their accustomed way an equal number of representatives to the legislature. This was speedily welcomed by members of the European Advisory Council, and since they and the Swazi traditionalists made up most of the Constitutional Committee in 1962, this became its proposal. Only the Government officials represented the minority view. (Three members of the Swaziland Progressive Party were initially on the Committee but withdrew after gaining no hearing).

The Government minority warned that a non-racial state could not be achieved when representatives were elected in different ways according to race. Such a system would leave out the increasing number of educated Africans who no longer felt themselves exclusively tied to the old tribal system. If they were not given full voting rights many of them would be driven to an extremism that would be dangerous to Swaziland's future. They finally advised that 96% of the population would not long be content with a 50% representation and the sooner the European population accepted this fact, the better. The choice, the officials contended, would be to give in gracefully now or "have it wrested from them with some bitterness and struggle at a later date." The British Colonial Office agreed with their reasoning and rejected the 50-50 proposal as not in the best interests of the country.

Further constitutional talks were held in London early this year. After an apparent deadlock, a new constitution was finally drafted by the British and announced on May 30th. It is patterned on the lines proposed by the Government officials. It gives the Swazis a majority in the legislature but the representation of Europeans, African traditionalists and African politicians will be about equal. In addition to a Speaker and four official and nominated members, the

Legislative Council will include 8 Swazis to be elected by traditional methods, 4 Europeans to be elected by European voters alone, 4 Europeans to be elected along with 8 of any race by a National roll made up of Africans, Europeans and Coloureds. The Paramount Chief does not become head of the nation but he does retain his former position as leader of the Swazi people in whom all African land rights are vested. The Resident Commissioner is raised in status and given wide executive powers. He will become in a sense a Governor, Her Majesty's Commissioner, and be responsible directly to the Secretary of State in London. This new arrangement removes a source of irritation for Protectorate Government officials who have disliked the policy of a man between them and London and for the Africans who have not liked their affairs dealt with through someone in South Africa. (Until now Swaziland and the other Protectorates have been overseen by a High Commissioner who was at the same time British Ambassador to South Africa).

Both European and African political leaders were keenly disappointed in the constitution. Mr. C.F. Todd, leader of the EAC, said it is unfair for South African Europeans (South African businessmen with interests in Swaziland) to be allowed to vote only on the European roll and not on the National one, and to be given only until 1965 to decide whether or not they want to be citizens of Swaziland. African political leaders dislike the maintenance of racial categories. They insist on a non-racial franchise. They believe a Government based on equal blocks of Europeans, traditionalists and educated Africans will be unworkable. And most of them would like to see the Ngwenyana raised to the Head of all Swaziland. But they will all have to accept the constitution, at least until it comes up for review in three years' time. If, as one European representative said, "the best constitution will be one that disappoints all of us, for different reasons," then this is the best one. At least it is a bridge to a future non-racial constitution.

With so much potential, who's rocking the boat?

With a developing economy, a liberal administration and a constitution which, if it pleases no-one, seems to be an adequate compromise between all shades of opinion; with everything pointing toward economic and political independence in the near future, why then the recent labour unrest? Much of the answer lies with the growing political consciousness of the people and the imminence of the country's first general election late this year or early next.

Until recently no party has had a strong national membership; the Swazis have been feeling their way toward political awareness and responsibility.

The first party to organize was the pro-Ghana, pan-African Swaziland Progressive Party (SPP), headed by Mr. J.J. Nquku, a former school inspector in Natal, and Dr. Ambrose Zwane, who has been in the Health Service. It proposed universal adult franchise, freedom of political organization, a court-protected Bill of Rights and the end of all racialism. Most of the Europeans considered this group extremist.

So did the Paramount Chief and the leaders of the Swazi National Council who considered it a divisive force, destroying Swazi unity and causing friction between the Swazis and Europeans.

At the time of the first Constitutional Committee official representation of the SPP was not allowed. Members of the party joined with those of the Eurafrikan (Coloured) Welfare Association and drafted their own proposals. While they didn't succeed in getting their draft adopted, neither did the official committee. And their action did show that the needs and demands of an increasing number of educated de-tribalized Swazis could no longer be disregarded safely.

Early in 1962 Nquku and Zwane split. Another split, led by K.T. Samketi, left Nquku with only a handful of followers although he has continued his travels to the United States, the UN and through Africa representing himself as the major political leader in Swaziland. The battle over which is the real SPP continues.

About the time of the first split, Dr. George Msibi, who had studied medicine in India and practiced in Japan, returned home. He was invited to join the SPP and tried to heal the splits within the party. Unsuccessful, he took over the leadership of a small group of Europeans and Africans called the Mbandzeni National Convention, with the hope that in time it could absorb or form a partnership with the other political groups.



Mr. Simon Nxumalo

Prior to this a number of moderate Africans and Europeans, mostly professional men, organized the Swaziland Democratic Party (SDP). Led by former school teacher, Simon Nxumalo, it initially espoused a qualified franchise but later its members voted to change the policy to one man-one vote. At one stage both Zwane and Msibi considered the possibility of joining forces with it and at the London talks they did form an Alliance with Simon Nxumalo as their major spokesman. (The Alliance also included

Samketi's SPP and the Eurafrikan Welfare Association).

At the end of the London talks, Nxumalo had revealed himself as a man of stature and his party seemed destined to triumph in the first general election, whenever held. He and members of his party, operating from what they believed to be a position of strength, started the demanding job of bringing the other groups permanently together under their leadership. Nxumalo, to further prepare himself, accepted a US Leadership Grant to learn about the functioning of politics in the States.

The continuing talks about a new constitution over the last three years, the increase in the number of political parties, the formation of labour unions, the reactionary talk of some of the Europeans and the extremist demands of some African politicians have not only awakened the Swazis to a much greater political consciousness but have tended to make them more restless and impatient about the opportunities they lack. This restlessness has provided the material for pro-Communist elements in the country to challenge the political leadership of the SDP.

Dr. Zwane's almost non-existent section of the SPP has become the spearhead of the effort to create and profit by discord. When Dr. Zwane was looking toward the Democratic Party for his political future, its leadership insisted that he disassociate himself from his right-hand man, avowedly anti-White Dumisa Dhlamini, a radical young tough who has been jailed for assaulting children. Dr. Zwane was indecisive. But when MacDonald Maseko, the Vice President, returned from South Africa where he had been placed under house arrest, he and Dhlamini, with outside financing, turned the party's attention to the field of labour, through which they hoped to carry out their political coup. Dr. Zwane, a rather weak man, has remained as the party's President but the name was changed to the Ngwane (Swazi) National Liberatory Congress.

The labour movement had grown out of the same striving that gave birth to the political parties. None of the parties interfered officially with the unions but each tried to gain members in the strongest positions within them.

The Liberatory Congress went one better. They placed agitators in the labour groups to stir up feelings for a strike out of which they, through their demands for better wages, etc., would appear as the real leaders of the Swazis against the tyrannical European business bosses (and, by implication, the Government). Leaders of the Democratic Party could see what was happening but found themselves helpless to prevent the build-up. A concerned Democratic Party executive told me, "It's a lot easier to agitate people to violence

and extremism than it is to moderation."

There were genuine grievances and a Commission of Inquiry was created to investigate wages and conditions of employment. In order to promote peaceful settlements of differences between labour and management the country's new Industrial Relations Law set up a 21 day grace period before a strike for complaints to be arbitrated. These were all disregarded.

The first strike was at the Havelock asbestos mine near Piggs Peak where 1350 men went off work on May 20th. On June 10th African domestic and business employees in Mbabane also struck. Congress leaders said the strikes would continue until the 12 alleged ring-leaders of the Havelock strike were released, a minimum wage of \$2.80 a day for all of Swaziland was enacted, and the new constitution was thrown out. On June 12th and 13th, strikes began again in the sugar mill and plantations at Big Bend in the South. Here many of the workers were driven out by a mob of about 60 men armed with picks and cane knives.

From the beginning gangs of toughs encouraged the strikers and threatened the lives of those who wanted to work. Swaziland has had little turbulence in recent history and the administration just didn't have the police necessary to control the agitators or to protect those who wanted to return to work. Finally, in desperation, they called in British troops. The First Battalion Gordon Highlanders, stationed in Kenya, arrived in Mbabane on June 13th and after a few hectic days order was restored and work resumed.

Europeans and Africans alike were upset by the strikes. They seemed utterly reckless and unreasonable. The Congress, in a few short weeks, managed to damage seriously the country's economic and political progress and self-government has been pushed further into the future. In the eyes of the Liberatory Congress, however, the disturbance has been all to the good. Calling



View of Mbabane,
Capital of Swaziland

in troops has demonstrated beautifully their view that Europeans would not hesitate to use force when the Swazis demanded equitable wages. They have received publicity for putting themselves more forcibly behind the workers' complaints than other parties who have worked through mediation and arbitration. And the leaders, Zwane, Dhlamini and Maseko, under trial for promoting public violence, initiating illegal strikes and holding illegal demonstrations, will emerge from jail as self-announced freedom fighters. In the coming elections their candidates may prove hard to beat.

The Democratic Party has tried to make clear that the demands of the Swazi worker for better conditions and wages were real and should have been heeded more promptly. But they found no excuse for the Liberatory Congress who "betrayed the poor and exploited people of Swaziland....deliberately failed to make use of machinery already available for settling disputes between workers and employers.. In efforts to outbid the Democratic Party, which earlier demanded a Wages Commission, the Congress called thousands of people out on strike and used the strike for political purposes.

"It used intimidation extensively to prevent people from going to work and it is responsible for the fact that many of them have lost their jobs. Above all, it endangered the security of Swaziland by attempting to throw the country into chaos when it knew that this is precisely the excuse Dr. Verwoerd needs to march into the Protectorate. The British have been given a first-class excuse for sending their army into Swaziland."

The Administration is in a most awkward position. They want to encourage investors and improve the Swazis' way of life. To do this they must now keep troops on hand to ensure law and order, and they must be careful not to strain relations with South Africa. The country now uses South African currency and banks, shares customs, imports and exports. They want to loosen the ties with South Africa but until such a time as the country is economically on its feet they must tread easily. Some Swazis find this hard to accept and condemn any softness toward South Africa.

The country's potential still remains. The Swazis still believe in a non-discriminatory state. Nxumalo has returned from the States and is a strong in-fighter. He was out of the country during most of the trouble and his influence may help to keep Swazis from moving toward the more extreme leaders. Already his party has come forward with positive steps to put things right. They point out that no life was lost as a result of strikers' actions and that practically no real damage to property was reported. They now appeal to all employers to resist the temptation to dismiss all strikers since dismissals will swell the ranks of embittered people.

"We ask employers in every area to improve working and living conditions and wherever this is possible not to wait for the Wages Commission to report..."

The future of the country may well depend on the fight between the Liberatory Congress Party and the Democratic Party and on the methods which they use. The country's first election will tell.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James C. Brewer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "James C. Brewer".

Map on page 2 and photos on pages 1, 6, 8 and the bottom one on page 3 are through the courtesy of the Swaziland Government Information Office.

Received New York August 12, 1963