

cative because I came here after the death of five students at the University of Zululand last year. Again the terrible slander and lies, again the false accusations because they are political no-

bodies with no support and they know that I am free among the people in Soweto. They know that I hold rallies here which no other Black leader in the country can hold, and they know that I have

done so for years and will continue to do so. Theirs is a pitiful petty jealousy of success, and they will destroy the very struggle itself rather than to admit their own political poverty.

CHIEF BUTHELEZI IS AN 'INTELLIGENT MAN' SAYS DR ALAN PATON

Dr Alan Paton is now an Octogenarian. When he granted me an opportunity to see him at Lintrose — his house, at Botha's Hill, I couldn't believe my ears. My appointment with him was at 3 p.m., and I made it a point that I arrived there 10 minutes before 3. The old man was indeed courteous and hospitable. He led me to his study room where I interviewed him. A strange thing is that he is still energetic and very mentally alert. His sense of hearing is very sharp.

The moment you enter his study room, you quickly realize what type of a man Dr Paton is. An interview then followed:

The Editor:-

Question: Dr, I thought perhaps, it might be of interest not only to me, but also to the readers of our Magazine - to hear your views on the current political set-up in South Africa. But Dr, I would like to start from the days of the Liberal Party.

Sir, history tells us that you were once the President of the then Liberal Party . . .

Dr Paton:-

Yes, that's right.

Editor:-

Now, Dr, what type of South Africa did you envisage, should your Party have taken over the reigns of the Government during that time?

Dr Paton:-

Well, in our Party we had many African, Indian and Coloured members, I see here you have one South Africa, one people (referring to Inhlabamkhosi), that was certainly the kind of South Africa we wanted too. There is one question we really never considered, why. I don't know. You talk about Universal Suffrage. As you know there is great deal of opposition to Universal Suffrage in the Unitary State. We never really considered

the Federal State, and I think we should have considered that, you see, but it is lastly a moral question, because we were brought up in a Unitary State, but we suddenly changed. It was because we were afraid of Black question that arose. We really did not discuss the structure of the constitution — we never did that. I may tell you that my opinion today, is that if we are going to have anything like the evolutionary solution, we have to go to some kind of Federal/Confederal constitution.

The Editor:-

Now that, Dr, you said in your Party there were Blacks, Indians and Coloureds, was there any ideological unity?

Dr Paton:-

Absolutely! Absolutely! It was a miracle, it was a miracle. There hasn't been anything like it. When you come to think of it that most of our Black members had bigger income, better houses, better cars, it is inevitable.

In our conferences, we were all equally addressed. Most of our Black members came from the country — from places like Roosboom which doesn't exist anymore. But you ask whether there was an ideological unity?

The Editor:-

Yes.

Dr Paton:-

Absolutely. It was really extraordinary.

The Editor:-

Sir, how true is it that Blacks who joined the Liberal Party, joined because they thought the Party would provide them with legal assistance in their daily struggle, with things such as pass laws, location regulations, etc, not because they were convinced Liberals?

Dr Paton:-

There may have been some, but it was not by any means general. And you even get some who joined the Party hoping that they would borrow some money, but that was very small. But in any case if you say they joined hoping that they would find legal help, well, all of us joined because we wanted to see the legal solution to our problems, we wanted to see just laws, and that was the common ideology.

The Editor:-

Some people equate the Liberals with Communists in that the Libe-

als were not completely in favour of complete and authentic equality between Blacks and Whites, and that Communists were not seriously in the struggle for true emancipation of the oppressed Blacks. Would you, Dr, think there is truth in that?

Dr Paton:-

I wouldn't say there is any truth in it. You asked me about the Communists? Well, I was never a Communist, but what I can say is that the Communists have some goal which is above any kind of equality between people and people. This goal is the nationalisation of the means of production, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which means the dictatorship of Mr Andropov or rather the present one. So, certainly our opponents, certainly the Government said that we were Communists or neo-Communists.

The Editor:-

Sir, we also learn from history that, that prominent member of the Liberal Party by the name of Patrick Duncan left the Liberal Party because he had abandoned his belief in non-violence and supported the PAC (Pan Africanist Congress). How do you view his abandonment of the Party, since he was such a prominent member?

Dr Paton:-

He was a very strange man, Patrick Duncan, and you must not judge him by the same standards you use for other people. Because he was impetuous, enthusiastic, model-headed; I had very great affection for him, but I wouldn't be led by him. The reason why he went over to the PAC ... Do you know the reason?

The Editor:-

No.

Dr Paton:-

It was because he heard that the ANC was becoming Communist dominant. He was very fanatically anti-Communist, that's why he went to PAC. That's why he gave up the belief in non-violence. One of the reasons why he gave up the belief in peaceful struggle, was because the Government banned him. That he didn't like, and he

then went to live in what was then called Basutoland. When he found he couldn't do anything in Basutoland, he went off to Algiers as a representative of the PAC. About two years later, the PAC took away his representation. So, really, that was the end of his life. This has happened to many people, you know, some are Whites and some are Blacks. The moment they leave this country, they die, because their roots are pulled up and planted in some other countries.

The Editor:-

Now, Sir, how far true that there were members of the Liberal Party that were expelled from the Party after 1964 because they were becoming too radical?

Dr Paton:-

It was the ARM — Afrikaans Resistance Movement. They were expelled from the Party because in 1964 they were all arrested for promoting violence, but very petty — not like bomb explosions. They were expelled because when they joined the Party, they had signed an agreement that there would be no violence.

The Editor:-

Now that the Liberal Party didn't manage to secure a seat in the Parliament, can you, perhaps, Sir, tell us why did it fail?

Dr Paton:-

Well, because the electorate was all White, if we had places like Roosboom, where Black people could vote, we would have got it. But the highest we ever got in a White city was 17 000.

The Editor:-

Now that Sir, most unfortunately, your Party came to an end, can you perhaps, Sir, tell us what was the major cause that led to that?

Dr Paton:-

In 1968 the Prohibition of Improper Interference Act. Do you remember that? That was the cause. It was the Government that put an end to it. They would not allow a white person to join a Black person in any political organisation. Now of course, Mr P.W. Botha is trying to go back to where we were 16 years ago.

The Editor:-

Now, I would Dr, like to ask just one question on books. Sir, as a prolific writer of international repute, your book "Cry the Beloveth Country", is indeed a touching and absorbing book. I wonder Sir what did you have in mind when you wrote it?

Dr Paton:-

When I wrote it, I was in Norway. I was very home-sick, staying in a hotel. I met a young woman at the desk — she couldn't understand English. Another man came to me and said "Can I help you", and I said "Can I have a room for tonight" and then he spoke to the girl — a Norwegian. Then he said to me "I'm an Engineer, my name is Janson. Would you like to go and see the Cathedral? Therefore we went around the Cathedral. It was indeed a beautiful building. I was very home-sick. He said to me "I will take you back to the hotel, and I will come and fetch you at 7.00 o'clock for dinner". And so I wrote the first chapter in my room. So it was lastly homesickness, it was lastly the desire for love for justice, and it was, of course, my memory for those olden days when I was in the Reformatory. Now, you ask why, — almost some kind of motive?

The Editor:-

Yes.

Dr Paton:-

That may be. But that was the second motive. But the first motive was that I wanted to sit down and write about my home country. The second motive would be, that I wanted the White people to read this book to open their eyes. It took them a long time to open their eyes a bit, that was probably, in 1948. And in 1983 was the first year in my whole life that an Afrikaans newspaper came to this room to interview me.

CONSTITUTIONAL DISPENSATION

The Editor:-

Now the new constitutional dispensation has received a worldwide criticism, more especially because Blacks are excluded, who constitute ± 72% of

our population. I wonder, Sir, in your political wisdom how do you view the constitution?

Dr Paton:-

Well, would you like some tea? (laughter, then the old man offered me some tea — a wonderful cup of tea.) You ask about the new dispensation?

The Editor:-

Yes Sir.

Dr Paton:-

This is a very complicated question. But I will try to answer it as clearly as I can. You have already said that one of the defects of the constitution is that it makes no provision for representation of the African people. That is quite true. But I think a worse defect than that is that it helps the Afrikaner Nationalists to show up this idea that the Homelands are going to be beautiful. Because the Homelands are going to be so beautiful, so they (Afrikaners) won't put Blacks into the Parliament because they (Afrikaners) are going to have their own beautiful country, beautiful crops, their own language, their literature. The Afrikaner Nationalist just will not face the fact that the Homelands will never, never never be economically viable. I was at a Conference in Durban the other day, organized by the Urban Foundation. In one paper after another, they said the only way to cure the poverty of KwaZulu, the rural poverty of KwaZulu, is when the people go and work in the cities. Half of them must go to the cities. You know, that's true over the whole world. The number of people in the United States who live on the land as farmers, is very small — a very small percentage, and they can feed many other countries in the world. So that is why the Afrikaner Nationalist will have to give up his idea that the Homelands are going to be economically viable.

cally viable.

The next point I would like to make is this: the people who expect from the Nationalist Government a wonderful constitution that would please them, will never get it. They will only get it piece by piece. I think the future of this country

will be evolutionary, and I expect it to be very painful any how, you see, but the opposite of the painful evolution is a very tragic revolution, which I think will destroy the whole country. The thing that I worry most, is that it will destroy agriculture, and the last is that the country will ask for food. Why? Is it strange to you?

The Editor:-

I'm just contemplating about that day, Sir, because an Afrikaner never thinks of that.

Dr Paton:-

Well, no, no, you are thinking of it purely in a racial way. But you see, he has got very strong compassions, emotions and certainly Dr Verwoerd was driven by his emotion. He was a man of intellectual gift, but his emotions drove him. On the other hand of the scale, you have got people who try to live up to reason and control their emotions. I think the proper way to live life is when your reason and your emotions are put together like two horses drawing a cart. If one cannot expect from the Afrikaner Nationalists anything better at the moment, that it is insufficient and inadequate, I absolutely agree, but I have a kind of understanding of people who say I am going to try it. Now, I will tell you a very good story: There is a shop I go to, not far from here, which is run by a Muslim family. There is a woman there and I said to her one day, jokingly: How are you going to vote in the referendum? And she said "You know well that I couldn't vote 'NO' but my heart will vote 'NO' and my head will vote 'YES'". That is the position — many people in this country did that. There are many White people who voted 'YES' in the referendum although actually they did not believe in the constitution. But they said that rather than reject it, and rather than vote for Treunichgt. Does that answer your question?

The Editor:-

I think it does, Sir.

Dr Paton:-

It is a very difficult question. You see, many Indians and Coloureds say that they won't go into this

constitution because what will the Black people think about it.

The Editor:-

We have recently witnessed the signing of the Nkomati Accord non-aggression Pact between South Africa and Mozambique and many leaders of various countries have greeted this move. But the Black South Africans viewed it with some reservations. I wonder Dr, how would you comment on that?

Dr Paton:-

Yes, of course, one has to view it with reservations. It doesn't mean to say that I condemn it. You know when you are young, everything is either there or over there, now I'm not like that any more, and I have got very strong reservations, and there is no doubt whatever that we put Mozambique in such a position. But it could hardly carry on anymore. I don't know why the Russians didn't pour in aid, but as you probably know that the Russians usually pour in arms, but they are not so good when it comes to other aid. On the other hand it must have suited Mozambique also to stop this continual plight, and from that point of view, if it is going to bring peace in Southern Africa, then I will accept it. But I don't believe in one moment that the real motive is peace, I think the real motive is that one wants security, you see.

The Editor:-

Now that some people think that, South Africa is dominating the Border African States, do you think, Sir, that is true? Because personally, I think what brought Mozambique to table with South Africa is economic reality.

Dr Paton:-

That's true. There are probably some Afrikaners who are pleased if they can dominate, you see. But I can assure you that there are a lot of Afrikaners who just want to have peace and security. And you know, when a bomb went off in Pretoria, about 18 people were killed. That is terrifying, and if you can put a stop to that, that is something to be thankful for. I am afraid Mr Bhengu there are no easy ans-



Dr Alan Paton.

wer to these questions, they are very complicated.

The Editor:-

What effect Sir, do you think this will have on the ANC?

Dr Paton:-

I don't think that there is any doubt that the ANC will have to rethink its whole programme. It is now being ejected from Swaziland, and I think in the end they will be ejected from Lesotho. So, I think the whole position is very very difficult. But in any case Mr Bhengu, to go into exile and be away from your country 20-25 years, in the end I think the answer to the problems of this country have to be found here, no one is going to tell us from outside what to do. I think the Chief has said this (referring to Chief Buthelezi).

The Editor:-

He has said it more often than not.

Dr Paton:-

Yes.

The Editor:-

Sir, do you think the guerilla tactics that are used by ANC will ever be able to topple the Pretoria Regime.

Dr Paton:-

One doesn't know whether this guerilla tactic will continue to be as strong as before. For one thing, in the olden days they would bring arms into Mozambique, into Angola, but now it will be much more difficult for the ANC to do that. And to get arms into this country can be a very difficult thing indeed. So I think one cannot a very difficult thing indeed. So I think one cannot answer your question until one sees whether the guerilla tactics continue as strongly as before.

INKATHA

The Editor:-

Now Sir, what would you say about INKATHA, the Black Liberation Movement that is led by Dr M.G. Buthelezi?

Dr Paton:-

Well if you mean do I think it will ever be the sole force in bringing about the liberation, then I must say NO. But it will be one of the forces, certainly.

The Editor:-

Do you think Sir, White South Africa takes Chief Buthelezi seriously when he warns?

Dr Paton:-

The Chief?

The Editor:-

Yes.

Dr Paton:-

Well, many of them don't like what he says, that must be understood. I doubt if anyone cannot take him seriously, because after all, he is the political head of 5 million people, you see. So, I don't think how you can say, Oh! it doesn't matter he has no account. You have got to take him seriously. Another thing too, he is a very intelligent man. It is a pity that he is easily offended.

The Editor:-

Lastly, Sir, I see that on your wall you have a picture of Chief A.J. Luthuli, and this makes me believe that you can say something on our Black politics, from the emergence of the ANC up to the present stage.

Dr Paton:-

Well, I think that one of the most tragic things that has happened in South Africa, is that people like Luthuli, Z.K. Mathews, Mandela and Biko all ended up either dead or in prison or in exile or banned. We White people have done this to Black leaders for about 40 years. But there is no doubt that whatever happened, Chief Luthuli was a man of great stature. Now what was your question?

The Editor:-

I was asking Sir, that how did you take him when he was still leading his people and his organization and his vision for South Africa?

Dr Paton:-

How did I take him?

The Editor:-

Yes, but I think Dr you put it so aptly when you said he was a man of stature.

Dr Paton:-

No doubt about that. He and Z.K. were men of great stature. Luthuli was the speaker and dynamic. Z.K. was a statesman, quiet. They went well together those two.

The Editor:-

Sir, thank you very much, be sure of my respect.