

Press reactions to Swaziland's independence (30 September 1968)

Caption: Note dated 30 September 1968 on the reactions in the British, US and South African press to the proclamation of Swaziland's independence on 6 September 1968.

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Last updated: 01/03/2017



Reference.....JA 13/2.....

Mr. Hyde

Mr. Booth

PRESS REACTION TO SWAZILAND
INDEPENDENCE

Most of the British and American papers were content to give a factual description of events at Independence, coupled with extracts from the Secretary of State's speech and King Sobhuza's reply.

2. The few reports which added anything more than basic economic information on mines, asbestos, etc. referred to the land problem, stated from the British point of view. Reinier Lock, in a piece syndicated in several papers here and in America remarked that 46% of the land was owned by only 2% of the population and also drew attention to the dangers of "the nascent middle class" as represented by the N.N.L.C. being excluded from political power in a basically traditional society. He was the only correspondent to ponder on Swaziland's future when King Sobhuza dies.

3. Both the British and the South African press emphasised Swaziland's economic dependence on South Africa and the constraints that this would put on her foreign policy but while the South African press regarded the economic and political influence as both inevitable and desirable the British press expressed fears for Swaziland's future on account of the narrowness of her position for political manoeuvre. Only the Telegraph pointed the incompatibility between active membership of the O.A.U. and considerable dependence on the Republic.

4. The South African press was sharply divided in its comments on other aspects of Swaziland's Independence. The English language papers contrasted the Republic's racial policy unfavourably with Swaziland's racial harmony and defended the British record in Africa while the Afrikaans press dilated on the advantages of good neighbourliness and attacked the British rule in Africa. The Nationalist Vaderland was the most extreme "long ago we had given up all hopes of the British word and the breaking of contract with regard to its transfer of the three Protectorates. It expressed satisfaction at the departure of the British which it claimed to be "the prerequisite for healthy and positive relations between ourselves and the three Protectorates".

Registry.

Please copy

to S.A.D. 1/46.

Chris Pester
Mr. Webster
1968

maybe
interested to see

Mr. Webster

L.B. Smith

(L.B. Smith)
30 September, 1968.

There is, I think, a very representative