

CORRESPONDENCE

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Dr. Cassidy's review of my book, *The Justice of the Queen's Government; The Cape's Administration of Basutoland, 1871-1884*, contains a number of errors of fact and peculiarly selected passages. I should therefore be grateful if you would publish this letter to set the record straight.

Dr. Cassidy has four main criticisms of the book. The first is that I give no indication of my rationale for the selection of documents and that "there is no clear focus to the documentation." However, in the first paragraph of my preface, which outlines the main features of the period, I conclude: "As a result, the brief period of Cape Colonial rule (1871-84) provides a vivid picture of how one tribal society encountered a policy of direct rule by paternal Victorian administrators and reacted to their attack on its basic structure." I then go on to say that in a limited selection of documents many complex issues can only be touched upon or must be omitted altogether, and that the selection aims--as Dr. Cassidy quoted out of context--to present an impressionistic picture of life in Basutoland under Cape Colonial rule as reflected in the archival material on the period. As can be seen, all the documents relate directly to the attempt to impose direct rule and to Sotho reaction to it--of relevance to current socio-legal debates on how far social change can be achieved by legislation, and on methods of enforcement of unpopular legal measures. The documents also provide a case study of direct, as compared with indirect, rule, of interest to undergraduate as well as postgraduate students of imperial history, and indicate to such students the range of documents available in similar subjects. The book, as I stated, does not attempt to be comprehensive: the Cambridge/Leiden series on African social research documents, in which it appeared as the ninth volume, placed limits on length that necessitated the adoption of a theme such as I have selected and only the briefest of comments if an adequate number and variety of documents were to be included. The much fuller book on the subject which Dr. Cassidy appears to have expected from me is currently (1979) in the press.

Her second criticism is that I make contradictory statements. The date on p. 42 which she cites is plainly a printing error. The other alleged contradictions will not bear examination. First, it is perfectly possible for an administration *to believe* that, if by manipulation it obtains compliance with foreign regulations, the society will adapt and soon be ready to adopt the

laws and even the values of those regulations. Second, the manipulation of factions in the population to obtain sufficient cooperation for enforcement of the regulations does not preclude complaints by members of that population. They may perfectly well claim that they were not properly consulted, even while they obey the law. It also does not preclude one chief, faced with a crisis and a subsequent series of blunders by the administration in handling it (as outlined on p. 81), leading his people in revolt. I wholeheartedly agree with Dr. Cassidy that Anthony Atmore's excellent essay on the Moorosi revolt considers the matter in greater depth, but the essay is well over 10,000 words in length, while I had less than half that space for both comment and documents on the subject.

Dr. Cassidy's third criticism is that "in view of the fact that the Quthing proposal was a major factor in the 1880 revolt, it is hard to explain Burman's omission of J. M. Orpen's discussion of the Basotho protest and of the right or lack of right of the Cape to alienate land in Lesotho." The revolt was in fact primarily a revolt over disarmament and Dr. Cassidy and I may disagree on how major a role the proposed confiscation of Quthing played. Given the limitations of space, I do not believe that J. M. Orpen's lengthy development of his arguments warranted inclusion: had I felt that the issue required a whole document, there are many others I should have chosen instead. As it is, my first document on the revolt, by the man responsible for administering Basutoland, does discuss the Quthing issue, together with the other causes for mounting dissatisfaction in the country, and in the accompanying note I summarize the two basic arguments used throughout the debates on the issue by the Sotho and their sympathisers, including Orpen.

Finally, in her concluding paragraph Dr. Cassidy states: "With the exception of two relatively innocuous personal letters, all the documents are easily available to students and scholars in other publications. Anyone with basic knowledge of Basotho history will be familiar with the materials. . . ." In fact, of the 30 documents reproduced, only 14 have been published before in whole or in any substantial part, and most of those only in parliamentary papers and newspapers of the period, not readily accessible to a non-specialist in the area. I hope those not published before, which include some of the longer documents, may be useful even to serious scholars of that period of Lesotho history, although it would of course be best if such people were able to see all the original archival material themselves. However, as I have indicated, those scholars form only a section--and a very small one--of the audience for whom this book was intended.

Yours,
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