

## Chapter Four

### The Emergence of a 'third nation': The Growth and Development of the Coloured Community in Swaziland, 1913 - 1959.

#### 4. 0 Introduction

The previous chapter showed that the racial hierarchy that began to develop in Swaziland towards the end of the nineteenth century placed whites on top of the social pyramid and relegated blacks to the bottom. As time went on another intermediary category or group emerged– Coloureds. Julia Seirlis points out that, “In Rhodesia, as much as in South Africa, colonial discourses of ‘race’, particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, produced taxonomy predicated on presumptions of racial purity and fears of transgressed racial boundaries”.<sup>1</sup> According to Seirlis,

This taxonomy justified a racially graded hierarchy of among other things, political participation. At the top of this hierarchy were those classified as “European” or ‘White’, while at the bottom were those who were labelled ‘Natives’, ‘Africans’ or ‘Black’. Most significantly, an intermediate category of ‘Coloured’ was created for those who, within the colonial framework did not fit easily into the principal ‘races’.<sup>2</sup>

The situation was similar in colonial Swaziland. In Swaziland this group was officially referred to as Eurafricans to highlight and emphasize their European and African parentage. However, the usage of the word went beyond the early colonial period and extended into the 1960s. The term ‘Coloured’ is used in this sense almost only in southern Africa.<sup>3</sup> Seirlis has noted that, “At the broadest level, in Southern Africa ‘Coloured’ denoted persons of ‘mixed race’<sup>4</sup> James Muzondidya further explained that

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<sup>1</sup>J. K. Seirlis, “Undoing the United Front?: Coloured Soldiers in Rhodesia, 1939 - 1980”, *African Studies*, 63, 1 July, 2004, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>In many other parts of the world the term ‘Coloured’ has been used in reference to people who in southern Africa would be generally regarded as black.

<sup>4</sup>Seirlis, “Undoing the United Front?...”, p. 73.

The term 'Coloured in the southern African context, does not refer to black people in general as it does in other parts of the world such as Europe and North America. It specifically denotes a phenotypically diverse group of people, descended from historically and culturally diverse backgrounds, who hold an intermediate status in the Southern African racial hierarchy, distinct from the white and African populations of the region. Coloureds, though not products of 'race mixture', are popularly regarded as being of 'mixed race', mainly because a significant proportion of the Coloured community is descended from unions between whites and Africans.<sup>5</sup>

The Coloured community of colonial Swaziland more or less fitted into the above definition. The history and development of the Coloured community has been largely neglected in Swazi scholarship. Hilda Kuper, who was the first to undertake a major study on race relations in Swaziland regrettably gave Coloured history only peripheral attention.<sup>6</sup> This chapter examines the emergence, growth and development of the Coloured community in Swaziland during the colonial period and its experience of discrimination. The major argument advanced here is that Christian missionaries played a pivotal role in promoting the development of a distinct Coloured community in the country.<sup>7</sup> The colonial administration and white settler community conversely played supportive but cautious roles. When different missionary groups brought Coloured children together in schools to provide them with school education and expose them to Christianity, a class of Coloureds or Eurafricans, as they were officially called, emerged. When Sir Alam Pim came to Swaziland to conduct the Financial and Economic Survey in 1932, he noted that Coloured children in these schools, "are not of the type usually now

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<sup>5</sup>J. Muzondidya, *Walking A Tightrope: Towards A Social History of the Coloured People of Zimbabwe* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2005), p. xi.

<sup>6</sup>See, Hilda Kuper, *The Uniform of Colour: A Study of White-Black Relationships in Swaziland* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1947), pp. 43 - 46.

<sup>7</sup>For a similar argument in the case of Southern Rhodesia, see, I. Mandaza, *Race, Colour and Class in Southern Africa: A Study of the Coloured Question in Context of An Analysis of White and Settler ideology and African Nationalism in the Twentieth Century in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi*(Harare: Sapes, 1997), pp. 228 - 238, 76 - 79; and Muzondidya, *Walking A Tightrope*, p. 25.

found in the Union but are for the most part the offspring, regular or irregular, of Europeans and native women”.<sup>8</sup> The missionaries carried out their activities in this regard with the understanding that they were carrying the burden of raising the children of white men who had absconded in their duties. What is striking here is that they did not attempt to trace the fathers with a view to have them look after their children. Instead they felt morally obliged to raise these children. In seeing this process through there is no evidence indicating that the feelings of their mothers were not considered. The silence of the colonial administration about the extraction of the children from their homesteads suggests consent. This may have been as a result of the fact that the colonial government together with missionaries largely tended to intervene on the side of men more than women<sup>9</sup>.

The chapter also explores the decisive role played by Coloureds themselves in the shaping of their identity. Ultimately, it was through these external and internal processes that a class of Coloureds emerged as a distinct, though heterogeneous category of persons in Swaziland. Despite the significance of Coloured identity in the social history of Swaziland, it has received no serious attention in Swazi scholarship. This chapter contends that the development of the Coloured community has been an integral part of race relations in Swaziland since the early twentieth century. To ignore the role played by this community in Swazi society is to ignore a very crucial aspect of the social history of Swaziland. This chapter traces the development and growth of the Coloured community in Swaziland from the 1910s and takes this beyond the 1940s when Kuper published her study on race relations.

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<sup>8</sup>A. W. Pim, *Financial and Economic Situation in Swaziland: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State For Dominions*(London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1932), p. 62.

<sup>9</sup>I was particularly struck during my research period by the non - coverage by the *Times of Swaziland* of the extraction of Coloured children from Swazi homesteads. Effectively this also meant the voices of the mothers these children were marginalised.

#### 4. 1 The emergence of the Coloured Community in Swaziland

Swaziland's leading missionaries during the colonial period tended to explain the emergence of the Coloured population in the country as a product of irresponsible sexual encounters between African women and European men.<sup>10</sup> Reflecting on the nature of these encounters, Archdeacon Watts of the Anglican Church and the pioneer of the first Coloured school in the country, for example, claimed that, "Human nature being what it is, the problem of the Coloured or half - caste child is bound to arise in every tropical country in which the white men begin to settle".<sup>11</sup> Rev. Liddon, who arrived in Swaziland in the 1930s to be Pastor of the Anglican Church in Bremersdorp, made much the same point in relation to Swaziland, specifically asserting that, "The history of Swaziland in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century being what it was, a coloured or euroafrican section was almost inevitable. The many early "Pioneers" left their legacy, a situation much to be regretted, but which has to be met".<sup>12</sup>

Rev. Ewart William Dawson, a missionary of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission who had arrived in Swaziland in 1892, made the observation that at the turn of the twentieth century almost all Swaziland - born Coloureds were the off spring of Swazi mothers and European fathers.<sup>13</sup> He also remarked that contacts between Africans and Europeans in the late nineteenth century made the emergence of the Coloured people inevitable.<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup>For this view, see, for example, University of the Witwatersrand Library (hereafter, UWL) / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, South African Institute of Race Relations Collection (hereafter, SAIRR), AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled 'Problems of the "Coloured" or "Eurafrican" people in Swaziland' from Rev. W. E. Dawson to Mrs Reinhardt Jones, 17 October, 1941.

<sup>11</sup>Watts, *Dawn in Swaziland*(Westminster: Society For The Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1922), p. 86.

<sup>12</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 31), notes by Rev. Liddon entitled "The Coloured People of Swaziland ", Forwarded by The Resident Commissioner, C. L. Bruton to Mrs Rheinalt Jones of the SAIRR, 18 December, 1941.

<sup>13</sup>See, for example, UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), A communication entitled 'Problems of the "Coloured" or "Eurafrican" people in Swaziland', from Rev. W. E. Dawson to Mrs Reinhardt Jones, 17 October, 1941.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

Coloured children born around this time were seen as very special by some missionaries such as Archdeacon Christopher Watts since they were the first generation and by implication close to whites. It would appear that this aspect is what, for example, partly motivated him to establish a boarding school for Coloured children at Mpolonjeni in 1913. Referring to children of Europeans who had died in the battlefield during the First World War, Watts wrote, “Should these white men’s children be left to be brought up in a native kraal, with the possibility of starvation?”.<sup>15</sup> To illustrate his point Watts cited the following case;

A white man died of fever at the Front, leaving behind a family of seven. The native woman, hearing that the man was dead, deserted them. Seven children, the eldest, twelve years of age, were left alone to fend for themselves as best they could in a native hut, and under the doubtful care of one old native uncle, himself unmarried.<sup>16</sup>

He then posed the question, “Has the church no heart for such cases as these?”.<sup>17</sup> More generally Watts observed that

The majority of these coloured children have long ago been deserted by their fathers. They have gone to pastures new, and have perhaps little thought of the brood of bastards they have left behind. And yet, strange to say the children seem to have kindly thoughts of them, and are proud of their European parentage.<sup>18</sup>

Despite social pressures however, some whites did not desert their children. One European man who had children with an African woman, described on his death – bed,

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<sup>15</sup>Watts, *Dawn*, p. 88.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.* , p. 89.

how he ended up having an intimate relationship with her, and its repercussions – both for himself and his children. As he explained

Many men had native women to cook and wash for them, and without help of this sort, life would have been almost unbearable. I had one and found her good and not unattractive. After a time I married her, and children came. She was a good wife to me, nursed me in fever, and helped me to make a fortune in the native store. The children were my children, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. As the country grew more settled, some of the men said to me, ‘why do you not put away this woman and marry respectably? Give her and the children some cattle and send her away’. I answered that I was not that sort of man, if I had made a mistake I would stick to it, even if it ruined my life. But if I had known what it would have meant for my children, I would have hanged myself before I did this thing.<sup>19</sup>

The presence of Coloured persons in Swaziland led to what some leading missionaries dubbed, ‘the Coloured problem’. This problem centred on how Coloured persons would relate to, and be distinguished from, whites and blacks. Convinced that leaving Coloured children to live among blacks was not the best option, some of the leading missionaries in the country initiated a move to collect them to live together as a distinct community of people.

In part to justify their concern about Coloureds, missionaries developed an interesting variation of the doctrine of original sin. They were convinced that the coming into existence of Coloureds was a grave mistake committed by white men, many of whom were aware they had made “un faux pas”.<sup>20</sup> As Watts put it, “In the first place, it has to be

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<sup>19</sup>See, *Ibid.* , pp. 87 - 88. By contrast in contexts where domestic service was a man’s domain such as in Northern Rhodesia cases of intimate relationships between black women and white men were rare. See for example, K. Hansen, *Distant Companions: Servants and Employers in Zambia, 1900 - 1985*(Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>20</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ /Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled ‘Problems of the “Coloured” or “Eurafrican” people in Swaziland ’, p. 1.

remembered that by the mere fact of their birth they have become the innocent victims of a great wrong, a wrong that only the love and mercy of God can set right”.<sup>21</sup> To underscore his point he declared that, “In this world they must ever bear the mark of their shame, and proclaim to all men by their features and their colour the stain of their birth. They enter life terribly handicapped, and however excellent may be their disposition and character, this handicap cannot be overcome”.<sup>22</sup> This attitude tended to depict Coloured children as the victims of their parents’ sexual encounters.

These missionaries believed that ‘racial impurity’ left Coloureds vulnerable both to ill-treatment and to sin. The missionaries who themselves were white claimed that most Coloured children living among blacks were being badly treated and were living under very difficult conditions. Dawson, for example, recalled that:

We found them despised by the white people and disliked by the black. The native girl who came home with or to have a coloured child is looked upon as a disgrace to the family. The child is often ill-treated and made to serve the rest of the family in the kraal. I know of one child several years ago, who was too young for our school, being only a little over a year old, was so ill-fed that it died. Another, a boy of about 10 to 12 years was made to look after the cattle of the kraal. None of the native boys would do it. One of our missionaries managed to get him to our school where he stayed several years. A girl of about 11 years, whom we tried to get into the school some years ago, was refused by the grandmother and grandfather. When the mother died no one would have her. Finally she was sent to our school. She turned out to be a fine character, and is now

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<sup>21</sup>Watts, *Dawn*, p. 86.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled “Problems of the ‘Coloured’ or ‘Eurafrican’ people in Swaziland”, p. 1.

in a hospital learning to be a nurse for her fellow creatures.<sup>23</sup>

A major motivation for taking Coloured children to live together in missionary schools seems to have been the desire to improve their standard of living, an objective which the missionaries believed would be unattainable if they continued to live in African homesteads. The missionaries also presented a moral case, although this was laced with ambiguity. From their point of view, though these children were not at par with Europeans, they were better than Africans and had to be rescued from living at the standards of the latter. As Dawson put it, “Shall they be allowed to degenerate and become as heathen natives?”<sup>24</sup> The notion that the coloured children might descend into an even lower moral void reflected paternalistic attitudes on the part of their missionaries. Their involvement with coloured children could be partly seen as mission to fulfil what they considered to be their moral obligation. To a large extent this notion was informed by their adherence to white supremacist ideology.

According to this line of reasoning, by engaging in sexual relations with black women, white men had committed an act of gross immorality. By extension the products of this immorality were a sign of shame. The ‘civilizing’ crusade towards Coloured children, therefore, was an attempt to rescue a society which was at the brink of moral chaos. Similarly, in the case of Southern Rhodesia, James Muzondidya notes that, in addition to being influenced by the belief that the government was bound to offer Coloureds a sense of economic and social security, “Christian Missionaries also saw themselves as duty bound to protect Coloureds from both government neglect and moral corruption by the vices of colonial society, such as sex and drink”.<sup>25</sup> Broadly, therefore, the basis for the

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Muzondidya, *Walking A Tightrope*, p. 25.



founding of distinct Coloured communities in both Southern Rhodesia and colonial Swaziland was the ‘morality’ argument.

From this viewpoint, early missionaries in Swaziland maintained that Coloured children needed to embrace Christianity urgently to avoid sinking into the depths of immorality and degradation. Being Christian would not necessarily guarantee equality with the superior, European race; it would, however, help them avoid living at a level lower to that of the “heathens”, blacks in this context. Rev. Liddon credited Rev. Watts for having been at the forefront of the mission to rescue Coloured children from the miserable lives they were living in black homesteads.<sup>26</sup> Rev. Watts explained that

The morality of kraal life is of such an appallingly degraded character, that no boy or girl reaches the age of puberty with a shred of decency. But these are the children of white men, some of whom have been brought up in a rough way. The girls are very attractive in appearance, and the boys vigorous and often handsome. It is impossible to think of them living the debauched and filthy life of the kraal.<sup>27</sup>

In short then, the desire of the missionaries was to have Coloured children extracted from their respective homesteads, brought up to live together as a distinct community of their own, and to be provided with school education while exposing them to missionary Christianity. This initiative by some missionaries such as Rev. Watts to bring the children into a community of their own brought about a new social order, hitherto unknown in Swazi society. As the Resident Commissioner, B. A. Marwick explained in a 1958 meeting of the Swazi National Council: “differentiation between the Swazi and coloureds had occurred some 30 or 40 years ago when some missionaries, in particular Bishop Watts went about collecting all coloured children they could find and sending them to school”.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>See, UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 31), notes by Rev. Liddon entitled “The Coloured People of Swaziland”.

<sup>27</sup>Watts, *Dawn*, pp. 90 - 91.

<sup>28</sup>SNA, File 3012 D, Meetings between Administrative Officers and Paramount Chief, General Meeting of the Swazi National Council with the Resident commissioner held at Lobamba Offices on 5 August, 1958.

The claim by the missionaries that these children were living miserable lives in African homesteads and were disliked is questionable. This claim is likely to have emanated from the missionaries' negative view of the African way of living.<sup>29</sup> Missionaries generally tended to disapprove of social interaction between Coloureds and persons of either the black or white race. The preferred norm was for Coloureds to occupy a middle position in relation to blacks and whites, and live in a community of their own. Under this arrangement, they were regarded by the colonizing race to have been above the blacks and below the whites. In the words of Watts, "Even the feeblest coloured child knows that he has sprung from a superior race, and feels that he cannot accept a position beneath the native in the social scale".<sup>30</sup>

Such an attitude should be understood as part of the teaching package received by the children from their European teachers who used the plight of the children to reinforce the white supremacy ideology. This can be seen from the unwillingness of whites, including missionaries, to be identified with Coloureds. This was partly achieved by defining and retaining Coloured persons as a distinct category; in Swaziland's social pyramid they were neither to be identified with their black nor white parents. Concerning the possibility of absorption of Coloureds by the European race, Watts categorically declared that

The answer ... is, No. Some of them are wonderfully European in appearance, with blue eyes, straight and even fair hair. But they still retain traces of their African origin, and they could not be allowed to marry with the dominant race. They have been too much in contact with the natives, and have absorbed too much from them. They cannot be allowed free social intercourse with Europeans.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>For a text that explores this subject, see, V. S. Leibbrandt, *Notes on tradition and religion in Swaziland* (Nhlanguano: V. S. Leibbrandt, 1972).

<sup>30</sup>Watts, *Dawn*, p. 90.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 91.

Missionary schools were established by different Christian denominations in Swaziland with the intention of bringing together Coloured children into a community of their own. Dr. V. S. Leibbrandt recalled that, “Coloured schools in Swaziland were started because Coloured children were staying in their homes and not attending schools”.<sup>32</sup> The manner in which Coloured children were brought to centres of learning, as will be shown below, varied from one locality to the other. At the mission centres the children were exposed to formal education as well as the teachings of the bible.<sup>33</sup>

When analysing the development of the Coloured community it is important to note that Coloureds are not to be treated as a monolithic entity. Depending on their socio-economic statuses and personal perceptions, various Coloured persons tended to identify themselves differently. These variations persist to the present day. Highlighting this point Arthur Khoza remarked that, “I think we should not generalize about coloureds. There are those coloureds who consider themselves close to whites, but, there are those who see themselves as Swazi. There are also those who consider themselves just, coloured”.<sup>34</sup> These distinctions played themselves out in various ways, as we shall later see, in the development of the Coloured community in Swaziland. Similarly, Noor Nieftagodien has observed in the case of the East Rand that, “The idea of ‘colouredness’ was far from uniform and was certainly subject to considerable contestation”.<sup>35</sup>

One major ambiguity which tended to complicate the issue of identity among the coloured community was differentiation. While first generation coloureds were often the

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<sup>32</sup>Conversation with Dr. V. S. Leibbrandt at Lusushwana Caravan Park-Kagcogca, 3 April, 2004.

<sup>33</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, Wits University Library, Ernest Wentzel Collection, A 1931 / FB 3 (File 2), A report entitled “EuroAfricans in Swaziland” 1 March 1962, pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>34</sup>Arthur Khoza, Interview, Mbabane, Selection Park, 4 January 2005.

<sup>35</sup>M. N. Nieftagodien, “The Implementation of Urban Apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: The Role of Local Government and Local Resistance”, PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2001, p. 338.

off spring of European fathers and African mothers, those of following generations were a product of various parental combinations. Confronting the problem of categorizing Coloured persons, Rev. Dawson of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission pointed out that

There is a problem within a problem here. There are four sub-classes. How to arrange and classify them is also a problem. 1. Children of the white man who marries a coloured woman. 2. Children of the white man who “marries” a native woman. 3. Children whose parents are both coloured. 4. Children whose parents one is coloured and the other is native.<sup>36</sup>

On further categorization of Coloureds, Dawson stated that, “One could arbitrarily reckon the first three classes as coloured, and the last as ‘native’”.<sup>37</sup> Commenting on the manifest differentiation between these categories of persons, one report observed that, “There have been signs that a social distinction exists between first-cross coloured people and those who are the off-spring of two Coloured people”.<sup>38</sup> To emphasize the existence of internal differentiation among Coloured persons the report further stated that, “There is also the normal social distinction between the cultured and well-to-do and the poorer illiterates or semi-literates”.<sup>39</sup> On differentiation within the community, it was noted that

The Coloured population is not homogeneous politically, socially or economically, and this factor has proved to be a difficulty in considering means for improving the lot of that community. Individuals vary from wealthy, cultured land owners and traders to poor illiterates of no substance.<sup>40</sup>

This scenario was partly a product of the land situation in Swaziland. The availability of land for Coloured use had long been an issue in the country. This problem especially

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<sup>36</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled ‘Problems of the “Coloured” or “Eurafrican” people in Swaziland’ 1941, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Paper, Ernest Wentzel Collection, A 1931 / FB 3 (File 2), a report entitled “EurAfricans in Swaziland”, 1941, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

affected those Coloureds who were non - property owners. The development of a distinct Coloured consciousness in Swaziland was accompanied by the tendency of the members of this community to reside in areas distinctly allocated for them. As early as the late 1910s certain places were designated as Coloured areas. As a result, Coloured persons in Swaziland tended to be concentrated in certain places. These included Swartfontein, Croydon, Bremersdorp, Hlatikhulu, Hluthi, Piggs Peak and Siteki. An initial and partial response to the problem had led to the opening up of Fontein in 1918 and Croydon in 1922 for Coloured settlement. In 1951 the District Commissioner of Hlatikhulu observed that, “non-property holders are far less economically sound and would be put to hardship in many cases if denied the right to use Native Areas”.<sup>41</sup> The sympathetic Commissioner expressed that, “if in anyway possible, a settlement area, run on exactly the same lines as the Native Land Settlement, should be established with a goal of a total of one hundred families”.<sup>42</sup>

#### **4. 2 Socialization of Coloureds**

The major goal for founding schools for coloured children was to provide them with education and bring them together in a community of their own. In the process of educating these children, certain values, beliefs, attitudes and modes of living were inculcated. The bringing together of coloured children to live in the mission schools from the 1910s, marked the beginning of the process of coloured identity formation. Prior to this time coloured Children were scattered all over the country in their different homesteads.

In these mission centres the children were socialized to perceive themselves as people of a particular race, one that was neither black nor white. Responding to what they viewed to be the “Coloured Problem” in Swaziland, the missionaries encouraged Coloured persons to form a class of their own. Thus, the formation and establishment of the Coloured community did not occur naturally but, was fundamentally a socially-

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<sup>41</sup>SNA, File 3206, Coloured Welfare Association, Letter from P. Purcell, District Commissioner of Hlatikhulu to the Government Secretary, 30 August, 1951.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

engineered process driven by the missionaries. It was instilled in the minds of the Coloured children that they were a separate entity and a unique species of people, different from their mothers and fathers. Among other things, they were encouraged to perpetuate their community through marrying among themselves. Realizing some success in this respect, Rev. Dawson boasted that

All the girls who have been married from our school, have married colour - boys[sic]. Only one girl has gone to live with a white man (unmarried). Of the boys married, two have married native girls. We now have a definite group increasing rapidly among themselves, just as in other provinces of South Africa, and also in Rhodesia, of a mixed race, who have their own life and standard.<sup>43</sup>

Thus by the 1950s a significant number of persons in Swaziland had been exposed to processes that socialized them to embrace a distinct Coloured identity. This process had occurred overtime since the 1910s. However, some late arrivals in Swaziland believed that a Coloured group identity had developed naturally. In 1941, for example, Rev. Liddon who only became involved with Coloured children in the country in 1938 remarked that:

It may be wondered why, considering that they were a few, compared with the numbers of the natives, they were not absorbed immediately in the native population. Some of course had been, but the majority, quite naturally have formed a definite section of the population on their own, tending more and more to marry among themselves and also living as far as they can, on a higher standard than the natives.<sup>44</sup>

However, Dawson, a more experienced missionary in the area of working with Coloured children revealed how he had contributed to the process of bringing about a Coloured identity in Swaziland when he suggested that, “Looking at the ‘Coloured Problem’ as a

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<sup>43</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ /Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled ‘Problems of the “Coloured” or “Eurafrican” people in Swaziland’, 1941, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup>See, UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR AD 843 / RJ /Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 31), Notes by Rev. Liddon entitled “ The Coloured People of Swaziland ”, Forwarded by The Resident Commissioner, C. L. Bruton to Mrs Rheinalt Jones of the South African Institute of Race Relations, 18 December, 1941.

whole, I believe the only way to solve it satisfactorily is to encourage the coloured people to form a class by themselves. I have been encouraging the young people from the first only to marry one of their colour”.<sup>45</sup>

The manner in which Coloured persons in Swaziland were being socialized indicated some movement towards the Cape Town model. As early as 1924 a report of school inspection by the Assistant Commissioner of Mbabane, for example, celebrated that at Mpolonjeni Coloured School, “a step forward has been made by 3 of the elder boys proceeding to Zonnenbloem College at Cape Town”.<sup>46</sup> This trend continued with other future Coloured schools. The belief of the missionaries involved in Coloured education as well as that of government was that better opportunities would be available to Coloured persons in the Cape where facilities for their kind were much developed.

The role of the Coloured population itself was crucial in this identity formation process; ultimately Coloureds themselves decided whether or not to engage in certain lifestyles and practices. From the 1950s onwards Coloured persons began to vigorously present their grievances, concerns and aspirations to the Swaziland colonial administration. Such presentations revolved around Coloured status, identity and political representation. While the different sections of Swaziland’s population held various views on the issue, the administration had no clear-cut policy concerning Coloureds. As a result, it offered minimal concessions to the members of the coloured community. During the constitutional developments of the 1960s Coloureds also attempted to have their status and rights enshrined in the constitution. However, they lost the battle and their hopes were shattered.<sup>47</sup> The remainder of this chapter describes the sites on which the Coloured

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<sup>45</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled ‘Problems of the “Coloured” or “Eurafrican” people in Swaziland’, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.* By 1941 Rev. Dawson and the Scandinavian Mission Alliance had accumulated an experience of twenty years of work with Coloured children.

<sup>47</sup>For a discussion that focuses on this period, see Chapter 6 of this thesis.

community was bred, and how it contested the recognition of its identity as a distinct category up to the late 1950s.

#### **4.3 St. Mark's Mpolonjeni Coloured School and St. Michael's Coloured School**

The first school to be established for Coloured children in Swaziland was St. Mark's Mpolonjeni Coloured School. Archdeacon Christopher, C. Watts<sup>48</sup> (who was later to be Bishop) of the Anglican Church started the school for Coloured children at Mpolonjeni, about ten kilometers west of Mbabane in 1913. As earlier mentioned, Watts went about collecting Coloured children from their homesteads. More than a decade later, Pim's socio-economic survey pointed out that, "In carrying out the crusade he visited kraals where most of these children were living and practically swept them into his school".<sup>49</sup> Watts was an Anglican missionary from the United Kingdom who had arrived in Swaziland in 1907 to serve as Pastor of the All Saints Church in Mbabane. From the onset the school relied on Watts for finances.<sup>50</sup> In addition the school received some subsidies from government. Reporting on how the school began one writer recalled that, "By December, 1913, a site had been granted by the Government and a grant of £ 200 a year guaranteed, some £ 300 had been collected, the dioceses contributed another £ 200, and a building was erected and the school opened".<sup>51</sup> The school was to be known as St. Mark's Mpolonjeni Coloured School.<sup>52</sup>

Three years after the school had been established a report from the Inspector of schools indicated that progress was being made in the education of Coloured children. The

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<sup>48</sup>For his account of the Coloured school at Mpolonjeni school, see, C. Watts, *Dawn*, pp. 86 - 94.

<sup>49</sup>Pim, *Financial*, p. 62.

<sup>50</sup>See, UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, *The Net* (a quarterly publication of the South African Anglican church hereafter, *TN*), "The Bishop's Letter: Archdeacon of Swaziland", June 1918.

<sup>51</sup>*TN*, "Empolonjeni Coloured School", September, 1919.

<sup>52</sup>This school should not be confused with St. Mark's European School which was also started by C. C. Watts in 1908. For some confusion over these schools, for example see, A. R. Booth, *Historical Dictionary of Swaziland* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow, 2000), p. 307.



school had 43 pupils, 28 of whom were boys and the remaining 15 were girls. About these children the report stated that, “They write well and keep their exercise books neatly and carefully and reading was fluent”.<sup>53</sup> Though the place was physically rough and uncomfortable, the pupils were said to be disciplined. In addition, to ordinary school work the girls learnt sewing, ironing, cooking and other skills related to domestic work while the boys learnt brick-making, gardening, and work necessary for the general upkeep of the school.

The following year a report from an eyewitness reflected the continuing progress at the school. Referring to himself and Archdeacon Watts, Reverend Challis who was visiting Swaziland reported that, “The following day we rode out to Mpolonjeni and saw the progress there under Mr. and Mrs. Cox among the Coloured children, the numbers having increased considerably since last I saw the school, as well as the buildings”.<sup>54</sup> Alluding to some of its earlier difficulties and current progress the Reverend observed that, “This institution of St. Mark’s Coloured School has passed through the various stages of criticism and abuse, and can now stand alone four square to all the winds and attract by its inherent worth and efficiency”.<sup>55</sup>

In 1918 the Anglican Bishop of Zululand and Swaziland expressed appreciation for the progress made at the school. He also remarked that, “This school for *coloured* children is so important, and the Swaziland government supports the work so well that it is necessary for us to put it ... into an efficient condition”.<sup>56</sup> In 1919 Miss Mercer joined the school to augment the services of Mr. and Mrs. Cox. Writing a short while after the Bishop, a visitor who had been to the school observed that, “The Inspector (Mr. Dutton) has just been there, and has reported in terms of much praise of the school; and certainly I

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<sup>53</sup>TN, “Report of H. M. Inspector of Schools”, 9 June, 1916.

<sup>54</sup>TN, “The Opening Door in Swaziland”, December, 1917.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup>TN, “News from Empolynjeni[sic]”, March , 1918. Italics are mine.

was much more pleased to see the progress being made and the good tone prevailing there”.<sup>57</sup> It was also more habitable.

Two years later again, the Anglican publication could observe that, “the work of the school has raised a *spirit de corps*[sic] amongst the coloured people of the country and has led them to feel that they have rights and a status, and are no longer a fatherless folk driven from the pale of either race”.<sup>58</sup> Thenceforth the school became a regular and important feature of the Bishop’s report. In his letter published in September 1921 about the school he said, “It is a happy place— a home”.<sup>59</sup> By this stage it housed 60 Coloured Children.

Boasting of what his school stood for, Watts claimed that, “A school such as Mpolonjeni does more to stop the spread of illegitimate unions between whites and natives than a thousand sermons on immorality”.<sup>60</sup> He was particularly delighted that through the establishment of the school, “The children of shame can no longer be hidden at the kraals. They come to light again as educated and decent folk”.<sup>61</sup> He went on to boast that, “The children at Mpolonjeni are of first generation, and in most cases though they have no father to look to, are affectionate and responsive”.<sup>62</sup> In the year that followed a government report of the previous year’s school inspection read, “The work of the pupils has always been neat and careful. This year some exceptionally good work was to be

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<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>*TN*, “Empolonjeni Coloured School”, September, 1919.

<sup>59</sup>*TN*, “The Bishop’s Letter: Prize - Giving at Mpolonjeni”, September, 1921.

<sup>60</sup>Watts, *Dawn*, p. 91.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 91 - 92.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.* p. 92.

seen”.<sup>63</sup> Acknowledging the role played by the children in making the school what it became, the founder, Watts, observed that, “They have made a name and place for themselves and their school in the country”.<sup>64</sup>

The Resident Commissioner also heaped praises on the Mpolonjeni school for what it had done for Coloured people. Pointing out what he perceived to be the role played by Europeans in the lives of Coloured children, he declared that, “These children being the first generation of the Coloured folk, have not become a people of their own as at the Cape and other places. They look to the European in all things, for the native can never satisfy the aching of their heart”.<sup>65</sup> This claim by the Commissioner indicated the paternalistic ideology propagated by Europeans in colonial spheres with regard to non-Europeans, particularly Coloureds in this case. By the early 1920s the school was celebrated by white Anglicans as having gone a long way towards fulfilling the purpose for which it existed. About the Coloured children, the founder of the school expressed the view that, “Eventually we hope they will marry among themselves”.<sup>66</sup> The hope expressed by Watts formed part of the socialization encouraged by other leading missionaries in future Coloured schools.

As the school grew in reputation among Anglicans, not only did important officials of the church begin to visit but some prominent white settlers as well. Early in 1922, for example, some members of the European Advisory Council came to Mpolonjeni Coloured School to seek advice from Watts concerning the educational problem as it affected poor whites in the southern part of Swaziland. When the members of the

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<sup>63</sup>TN, “St. Mark’s Coloured School, Empolonjeni, Swaziland”, March, 1922.

<sup>64</sup>TN, “Impressions on Swaziland”, December, 1921.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup>TN, “Empolonjeni Coloured School”, June 1921.

Council witnessed the progress at the coloured school they indicated a wish that some institution of a similar sort be started for poor whites of the Hlatikhulu District.<sup>67</sup>

In 1924, an inspection at the school was carried out by the Assistant Commissioner of Mbabane, Mr. B. H. Warner. At the time of the inspection, 62 children were enrolled at the school and were under the care of seven teachers including the principal. The school provided education up to Standard Five. Warner gave a favourable report on the school. He opened by stating that, "There is a general air as of a large family in the school and the interest that the teachers take in the children and general happy and friendly attitude of the pupils strike one most favourably".<sup>68</sup> The report went on to report positively on the general learning of the Coloured children at the school. Warner commented that

In my inspection I found that the written work in all the classes was painstaking and neat and the arithmetic was correctly done. I saw some essays done by the upper classes which were intelligent and showed an amount of general knowledge which was surprising. In the lower classes exercises in the construction of sentences were accurately done. The spelling and writing were quite good and the reading satisfactory.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to the good academic performance achieved at the school, the school premises were said to be clean, and pupils disciplined and active in extra-curricular activities such as football, swimming and music. The pupils were generally reported to be in a healthy state with the exception of an epidemic of gastric influenza among the girls and the usual few cases of sore eyes.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>*TN*, "The Poor Whites of South Africa", December, 1922.

<sup>68</sup>SNA, File RCS 96/24, Report on Mpolonjeni School, attached to a communication from the High Commissioner to the Resident Commissioner of Swaziland, 14 February, 1924.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

During another inspection three years later the same inspector remained impressed by the progress of the school. This time the enrolment of pupils at the school numbered 69, of which 63 were boarders. However, for unspecified reasons, the number of teachers including the principal had decreased to five. The opening lines of Warner's report ran, "The premises were neat and tidy and the children impressed me as being healthy, happy and orderly. Their manners were good and the whole tone of the school is excellent".<sup>71</sup> A new classroom, which was to be opened shortly, had been built by some of the senior boys at the school.

The curriculum at the school catered for girls and boys differently. The report observed that, "The bigger girls are taught cooking, house work, and sewing and the boys look after the cattle and horses and the kitchen garden and do all the odd jobs about the place that may be required".<sup>72</sup> The favourable reporting indicated that the school was fast gaining its reputation as a centre for the socialisation of Coloured children in the country. Evaluating the school against the objective for which it was formed, Warner commented that, "The school is evidently being carried on in an excellent manner and serving the great purpose of giving these children a chance of rising above their kraal surroundings of which they are not slow to take advantage".<sup>73</sup>

Warner attributed the excellent performance at the school both to the seriousness with which learners undertook their work and the commitment of teachers. Watts, however, remained central to the survival of the school until he finally left for England in 1927. Thereafter, the school was closed and the children were transferred to Endhlozana where Rev. Osborn of the same church ran a similar school. Endhlozana was situated near Piet Retief on the South African - Swaziland border. At this new site the children continued with their learning. The education provided at this school was aimed at imparting

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<sup>71</sup>SNA, File RCS 374 / 27, Inspection of St. Mark's Coloured School– Mpolonjeni, attached to a memorandum from the Assistant Commissioner of Mbabane to Acting Government Secretary, 11 June, 1927.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*

different specialized skills depending on the gender of the pupils.<sup>74</sup> It was also not exclusively 'Coloured', teaching black Swazi children as well. Alan W. Pim's reporting on the school in 1932 was not flattering. When Pim made his observation Osborn had left the school and a woman was now in charge. Pim observed that:

The work appears to be rather disorganised as the lady in charge is a trained nurse and though most efficient, has no industrial training. The coloured children are taught with native and are all boarders; they are fed separately from the natives and more on European lines.<sup>75</sup>

Pim felt that the teaching of coloured pupils together with Africans marked a departure from Watts' fundamental purpose of establishing a separate institution for Coloureds with the intention of exposing a social evil. On another note he also observed that the aim of teaching the children along industrial lines and on European standards was no longer being adhered to.<sup>76</sup>

About ten years after Watts had left for England a need was expressed for the establishment of a coloured school in a centrally located place within Swaziland. Endhlozana School was relocated and rebuilt at Bremersdorp in 1938 by the recently arrived Rev. A. J. Liddon at St. Michael's Coloured School. In a meeting that looked at the issue of centralized Coloured education in Swaziland, Mr. H. H. Steward stated that, "St. Michael's was the successor to the St. Mark's which Bishop Watts founded in 1913".<sup>77</sup> One writer to the Anglican Church magazine recalled that

When the Rev. A. R. J. Liddon commenced his ministry in Swaziland at the end of 1934, appeals to restart the work were made to him by the coloured people, backed up by Bishop Watts, and the government indicated that they would like to see the work revived.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>For details see, *TN*, "Mpolonjeni School: Report for year ending September 30th", March 1928.

<sup>75</sup>Pim, *Financial*, p. 62.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup>SNA, File 2019, Committee on Eurafrian Education and Welfare, Meeting of Consultative Committee on Eurafrian Education and Welfare, held at Bremersdorp on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1945.

<sup>78</sup>TN, "St. Michael's Eurasian School", Summer, 1947, p. 6.

During a session of the European Advisory Council in 1941 George Wallis noted of the children at St. Michael's that, "In the majority of cases they are the children of Eurafrikan parents on both sides who are very poor but for the most part are doing their best to live respectable lives and to do the best they can for their children".<sup>79</sup> Wallis was a British-born farmer who had immigrated to Swaziland in 1919. He was very active in Swaziland politics and in the EAC up to the mid - 1960s. Appealing for government financial assistance on behalf of the school during a session of the EAC he said to the Resident Commissioner that

It seems to me, your Honour, that in the public interest these children should be given a chance in life. They are not Natives: they have a large part of the white man's restlessness, and ambition and desire to get on. They will not remain just kraal Natives, and if they are not given an opportunity to get on as decent citizens, they are very apt to turn to crime, and having more active brains than the Natives, they become the more dangerous criminals. Therefore I think that it is public policy to see to it that they have opportunities for getting education under good influences. They have no votes, your Honour, and they are hardly spoken of in polite society. But they exist, and they are human beings, the same as you and I, even if they are a shade darker; and I think it is public policy, and that it would be in the spirit of Lord Moyne's dispatch, to do more for them than you are doing here.<sup>80</sup>

Lord Moyne had become the third British Secretary of State for Colonies during the war period after Malcom Macdonald and Lord Lloyd, who had died on 5 February 1941. Lord Moyne provided the first wartime economic policy statement in which he argued for increased colonial development as a means for the colonies to contribute to the war effort. It was in the spirit of this policy that George Wallis made an appeal on behalf of the Coloured children at St. Michael's. Wallis' campaign was rewarded when the school's grant for the following year was increased by £ 50. He was quite satisfied with this outcome.

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<sup>79</sup>KCAL, File 48, KCM 2454, Minutes of the Fourth Session of the Seventh Advisory Council of the Swaziland Territory, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1941.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

#### 4.4 Florence Mission Coloured School

In 1916 Reverend Dawson had been granted permission by government to establish a Native Mission Station on the Hlatikulu Reserve.<sup>81</sup> This site was located on Crown Land of which Dawson was permitted to use four acres for mission purposes until further notice.<sup>82</sup> Here he established a mission station. The idea of starting a school for coloured children was first raised by Mr. T. Middleton when he approached a missionary (probably Dawson) of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission.<sup>83</sup> In 1920 the mission was also approached by the fathers of three coloured families and requested it to operate a school for their children.<sup>84</sup>

After some consideration the mission agreed to the request on condition that the school would be government - subsidized, parents would shoulder the costs of their children's learning and would recognize the mission's right to communicate bible teachings. It would also be the responsibility of the school to provide a suitable teacher and a matron. After some careful preparation the school was finally opened on the mission site on 16 November, 1921. In addition to general furniture, it was equipped with hostel facilities and a matron. On the first day of school, Dawson recalled that only 6 children came, 4 boys and 2 girls. A dedication service was held to mark the beginning of the operations of the school. In that very first year the number of children in the school increased to 24 and in the following year to 31.

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<sup>80</sup>SNA, File 489 / 16, Rev. W. E. Dawson Applies to Establish A Mission Station on the Hlatikhulu Reserve, letter from Assistant Commissioner of Hlatikulu to Acting Government Secretary, 15 February, 1917.

<sup>81</sup>SNA, File RCS 593 / 22, Minutes of Meeting– Florence Coloured School, Hlatikhulu, Review of the Florence Coloured School: Its Founding and Progress Up to 31 May, 1922, p. 1.

<sup>82</sup>SNA, File, RCS 593 / 22, Minutes of Meeting– Florence Coloured School, Hlatikhulu, Review of the Florence Coloured School: Its Founding and Progress Up to 31 May, 1922, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled 'Problems of the "Coloured" or "Eurafrican" people in Swaziland ', 1941, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*



Dawson also recalled that among these children, “no one could speak English at first. We began from the very bottom. We had not even the first and second year course”.<sup>85</sup> He further remarked that, “as the fathers were all English - speaking, they naturally wished their children to learn that language. We did the best we could”.<sup>86</sup>

After a year of the school’s operation Dawson reported that he was “more than well pleased with their progress and attention to their studies”.<sup>87</sup> A grant of £ 250 per year was to be received from the Administration to meet some of the costs for the general running of the school. This grant went a long way towards sustaining the operations of the school. Assistance from the Administration increased periodically according to the needs of the school. In 1922 a letter of appreciation from the school committee to the government read as follows;

We ... on behalf of the parents of coloured children of Hlatikhulu District ... express our appreciation and sincere thanks for the practical sympathy which the Swaziland Administration has shown towards this movement for providing education for our children. We pray you, Sir, to convey our thanks to the Administration for the good buildings erected, and for the furnishing of the school. We also thank the Administration for the grant of £ 250 for current expenses, which we believe will be the means of equipping our children with knowledge and ability needed to make them good and useful citizens of the Empire.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to the basic school curriculum, scholars were taught practical subjects, in preparation for the world of work. Boys were taught building construction and carpentry

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<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup>SNA, File RCS 593 / 22, Minutes of Meeting– Florence Coloured School, Hlatikulu, Review of the Florence Coloured School: Its Founding and Progress Up to 31 May, 1922, p. 3.

<sup>87</sup>SNA, File RCS 412 / 22, Resolution from Committee– Florence Mission School, Hlatikulu, letter from Florence Mission School Committee to the Assistant Commissioner of Hlatikhulu District, 3 June, 1922.

<sup>88</sup> UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ /Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled ‘Problems of the “Coloured” or “Eurafrican” people in Swaziland ’, 1941, p. 2.

while the girls learned laundry work, baking, sewing, and making clothes.<sup>89</sup> The art of gardening, however, was taught to both boys and girls. End of year and Inspector's reports recorded positive progress at the school. Despite various challenges facing the school, development was realized in many aspects throughout the mid - 1920s. Some children were said to have been converted to Christianity at this school, while some remained indifferent to the missionary gospel of conversion.

However, calamity befell the school when it was burnt together with the hostel building on 30 August, 1927. Since the school and the furniture were partly insured, insurance money was received to which the Administration added funds for the purpose of rebuilding and purchasing furniture timber. A few boys used their acquired carpentry skills to assist in making new desks, tables, benches, and other furniture. The task of rebuilding did not begin until 9 July, 1928. The following year the Great Depression struck, which led to serious economic difficulties worldwide. The school was also affected. Many parents could no longer afford to pay the boarding fee for their children. Children were taken out of school one after another, until only 17 were left, most of whom, were on bursaries. In 1932 Alan Pim observed that, "The school at Florence is in an area with various families of coloured landowners and the pupils are partly their children and partly children of Europeans".<sup>90</sup> He suggested that parents who could afford to pay fees for their children should be encouraged to do so while he recommended that government expenditure on the school should be reduced.

In 1933 discussions on moving the school to a new area were entered into between the school, government and parents. In that year Rev. T. J. Back, the Director of the Alliance Mission, came to Swaziland to visit the mission field. After deliberations with the concerned authorities it was decided the school should be moved to a more convenient

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<sup>89</sup>See, for example, SNA, File RCS 504 / 23, Minutes of Meeting– Re: Florence Mission School, Review of the Year's Work for Year Ending May 1923; SNA, File RCS 528 / 24, Minutes of Meeting – Florence Coloured School, Review of Work For Year For Year Ending 31 May, 1924; and, For a description of gender - based education by missionaries in Swaziland, see, S. R. Ndwandwe, "Christian Missionary Activities and the Transformation of the Status of Swazi Women, 1920 - 1947", M. A. Thesis, University of Swaziland, 2000.

<sup>90</sup>Pim, *Financial*, p. 62.

site. Fortunately, a much more convenient site for the school was donated by a Coloured man known as J. C. Henwood. A member of the Henwood family recently recalled that, “The Henwoods donated a piece of land for the Coloured school to be built. No one cared for the welfare of Coloured people. We have long been the soccer ball of whites and blacks in this country”.<sup>91</sup> Also, Rev. Dawson who had managed the school since its inception now had his services redirected to the headship of the Franson Memorial Bible School station. In his place Rev. B. Pagard was appointed in charge of the Coloured School and work connected with it.

In June 1935, the school was opened on the new site and it attracted up to 48 scholars. In 1941 the number of scholars was 42, 11 of whom were day scholars. During this phase of the school’s development, Afrikaans was added into the curriculum since parents wanted their children taught that language as well. A Coloured man from the Cape Province was employed to teach Afrikaans.

#### **4.5 Our Lady of Sorrows School**

Another Coloured School was founded by the Roman Catholic missionaries at Hluthi. The school was named Our Lady of Sorrows. Mother Claudia, a catholic missionary of the Servite Order started the school when she arrived at Hluthi from Italy in 1934. She gathered Coloured children from all parts of southern Swaziland to the school and personally undertook their education.<sup>92</sup> The school did not receive any assistance from government for more than a decade. It was only from 1948 that Our Lady of Sorrows was awarded an annual government grant of £ 1 000.<sup>93</sup> The school’s infrastructure was described by the Resident Commissioner in 1952 as a, “building which ranks as one of the finest school buildings in the whole of Swaziland”.<sup>94</sup> During the occasion of the

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<sup>91</sup>Conversation with a member of the Henwood family who preferred anonymity, Manzini, 2 November, 2005.

<sup>92</sup>SNA, File 3055, Resident Commissioner, Notes For His Honour’s Speech – Official Opening of Our Lady of Sorrows School, 22 September, 1951.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*

official opening of the school the Resident Commissioner also recognized the school as being, “destined to play an increasingly important part in Eurafrican education”.<sup>95</sup> In addition to receiving grants from government, the school initiated its own projects aimed at development. In 1952 the Resident Commissioner commended the school as follows

I would like to congratulate the Lady of Sorrows School on the establishment of a House Craft for girls. This has been almost entirely a mission sponsored project, Government having given very little material assistance. I think we all agree that the teaching of handicrafts forms an essential part of any sound scheme of general education and I hope that at the other schools too it will be possible to find place in the curriculum for such subjects as carpentry and agriculture.<sup>96</sup>

On a similar note the Judicial Commissioner also expressed his appreciation of this aspect at the school when he mentioned that, “The home craft course which had been put into operation at Our Lady of Sorrows Mission at Hluthi was stated by the Principal Education Officer to be giving training of a very high standard indeed but, it was noted with regret that only very few girls were availing themselves of this training”<sup>97</sup>.

#### **4. 6 Concerns About Coloured Education**

In addition to the institutions which had been established for coloured children a desire was expressed by the Coloured Welfare Association which had by the 1950s been established, demanded that certain improvements be made regarding Coloured education. By 1951 only one Coloured school went as far as the Junior Certificate level, and the Coloured Welfare Association indicated that there was a need for at least one Coloured

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<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup>SNA, File 442 II, Development of Eurafrican Education, Notes For His Honour’s Address To The Central Advisory Committee On Coloured Education, Delivered in Mbabane on 9 July, 1952.

<sup>97</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Association, Minutes of the Judicial Commissioner with the Executive Committee of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on 9 June, 1953.

school to go as far as the Matriculation standard.<sup>98</sup> Government responded positively and indicated that a matriculation class was soon to be set up at St. Michael's school.

The Association also impressed on Government that the Coloured community, "is in favour of compulsory education for all Coloured children".<sup>99</sup> To this the Government Secretary replied, "It is agreed that compulsory education should be the aim of policy for the community but at present it is regretted that the Government could not afford to subsidise the hostel establishments at the three principal schools to the extent that would be necessary".<sup>100</sup> The Association also pressed for, "the setting up of a Coloured Hostel at the Trades School in Mbabane and the development of the training given there to cover the requirements of the Coloured Community".<sup>101</sup> The Government Secretary replied to this concern saying,

Government has examined the possibility of building of a separate hostel and has found that for the moment this is impracticable; the cost would be £ 5 000: the dormitory quarters are, however, very good and as far as it is known the present Coloured pupil has raised no objection to using the same dormitory and dining hall as African pupils; moreover it is clear that whatever dormitory arrangements could be made, the Coloured and African pupils would have to mix in the classrooms and workshops.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations by the Swaziland Coloured (Eurafrican) Welfare Association, 20 February, 1951.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Letter from Government Secretary to Secretary of Coloured Association, 2 October, 1951.

<sup>101</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations by the Swaziland Coloured (Eurafrican) Welfare Association, 20 February, 1951.

<sup>102</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Letter from Government Secretary to Secretary of Coloured Association, 2 October, 1951.

Concerning the award of bursaries to Coloured children, the Government Secretary observed that

One of the difficulties which Government has been faced with in endeavouring to help the community has been the fact that the Coloured people in Swaziland are dispersed very widely and it has never been possible to ascertain their needs in the form of bursaries. If the new Association can make a detailed study of these needs, Government for its part will make every possible endeavour to meet them.<sup>103</sup>

In the 1960s seventy-one Coloured children were said to be receiving government bursaries.

At Siteki a Nazarene school had been opened at the beginning of 1948 to cater for Coloured children. However, it appears that the existence of the school did not come to attention of many people in Swaziland. The school's existence appears to have escaped even the attention of the son of Dr. David Hynd, a prominent missionary of the Nazarene

Church. Dr. Samuel Hynd believed that, "The Nazarene Church had no policy of providing separate education for Coloured children. If ever there was a Coloured school it probably was a result of the fact that there were many Coloured persons at Siteki".<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, the educational report in 1948 noted that, "The establishment by the Nazarene Mission of a Coloured school at Sitegi at the beginning of the year will obviate the necessity for the younger Coloured children from this area to attend boarding school in other parts of the Territory".<sup>105</sup> At the end of the year a total enrolment of 10 pupils in the school was recorded.<sup>106</sup> During this time the school went up to Standard Two. The enrolment at the school did not enjoy any dramatic increase. By 1951 the school had 11

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<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup>Interview, Dr. Samuel Hynd, Manzini, 13 August, 2005.

<sup>105</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, *Swaziland: The Annual Report of the Director of Education*, 1948, p. 459.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*

Coloured children.<sup>107</sup> The school might have been overshadowed by the older Coloured schools. The provision of separate learning institutions for Coloured children since the early 1910s contributed to the shaping of a distinct Coloured consciousness.

#### **4.7 Coloured Consciousness up to 1945**

In 1929 several Coloured associations were established in different Coloured communities through the assistance of the Resident Commissioner, T. A. Dickson. This initiative gave birth to the Sitegi, Hlatikulu and Bremersdorp Coloured Associations. These Associations made representations on behalf of the local Coloured communities to the District Commissioners. However, they appear to have made little impression. By the mid - 1930s there were also some concerns which were being raised by some whites in the EAC about the provision of facilities for coloured persons. By 1935, for example, the question of “facilities for the improvement of the coloured people” had become a concern among some government officials and prominent white settlers.<sup>108</sup> Such concerns were, however, only able to raise awareness of the general plight of the community and did not lead to any substantial benefits.

Thus at the beginning of 1945 some officers of the colonial government observed that, “the Eurafrican societies which were formed some years ago have achieved little in the past and have now virtually ceased to exist”.<sup>109</sup> This created a vacuum with regard to coloured representation to the Administration. Meanwhile some coloureds took up their cases individually and struggled for a better position on the social ladder of colonial Swaziland. The vacuum left by the defunct Eurafrican societies led to the emergence of a new consciousness among some educated and wealthy coloureds. One case was that of a coloured man identified as Mr. H. Nunn, who considered himself well to do, educated

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<sup>107</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Memorandum Submitted by the Eurafrican Community to Secretary of State – Ref. 3206/28 of 11 April, 1951.

<sup>108</sup>See, KCAL, File 193, MS MIL 1. 08. 59, Correspondence with Allister Miller about White Settlers in Swaziland and other Affairs relating to Mushroom Land Settlement Company, 1934-1938 (Miller Papers).

<sup>109</sup>SNA, File 2019, Committee on EurAfrican Education and Welfare, Memorandum from Director of Native Land Settlement, Superintendent of Education and District Commissioner of Native Land Settlement to Government Secretary, 12 January, 1945.

and with a clean record. In 1945 he took up the issue of his social position with the Resident Commissioner through his lawyer.<sup>110</sup> Nunn protested that in spite of his education and income he was being placed on the same level as a common, ignorant uneducated native.<sup>111</sup> His lawyer provided the following illustration;

A coloured, person of means, highly educated has a by-wooner on his farm. He comes to town with him, and in town the by - wooner can enter a bar for a glass of beer while his employer has to stand outside. Take the case where a rich coloured person gives a tramp a lift to town. At the hotel he gives the tramp 5/-. The tramp is entitled to put up at the hotel for the night while the coloured person has to go to the location. He suggests that the case of each Coloured person should be considered separately, and in all deserving cases the Coloured person should be exempted from all laws affecting natives and should be allowed to take European liquor. In the Union where a Coloured person has a light skin he can apply to parliament to have himself declared a white person.<sup>112</sup>

Nunn's case further highlights the issue of differentiation among Coloured people. It would appear that he belonged to that category of Coloureds that wished to be accorded a European status. As part of the response an unidentified official of the colonial Administration submitted that:

The policy that the individuals should be penalized because he belongs to a certain class does not appear to be in keeping with the ideals for which the Allied Nations had been fighting for six years. The German Policy in regard to the Jews, has aroused the sympathies of the civilized persons of the world. However I presume that the European element in the Territory would be so outraged if anything were done to alter the position that it would not be in Government's best interests to take any radical action.<sup>113</sup>

More formally, the Government Secretary replied Nunn's lawyer saying:

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<sup>110</sup>SNA, File 1088, Status of Coloured Persons, A letter from Lawyer, Her Olmedahl to the Resident Commissioner, 15 November, 1945.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.* See comment on the backside of the communication.



I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> November concerning the social position of H. Nunn of Swaziland and to say that this Administration cannot in anyway influence the attitude adopted in the Union towards Mr. Nunn. Apart from the liquor laws there are no laws in Swaziland which discriminate a Coloured person. There is nothing to prevent Mr. Nunn applying to his District Commissioner for a special permit to purchase liquor. I am to add that there is no legal provision for declaring a Coloured person who has a light skin to be a European and that so far there has been no demand in Swaziland for such a law.<sup>114</sup>

Nunn's lawyer replied by noting that his client was not satisfied with the response since applying for a permit would be admitting that he was at the same level with a native. He would rather live as a native, a status that would bring him other benefits including trading in Native Areas. Nunn explained through his lawyer that, "for twelve years he has been served with liquor and has taken drink with some of the leading Europeans in Swaziland".<sup>115</sup> But to his surprise, "At Goedgegun he was notified that he would be charged if he was found in possession of liquor".<sup>116</sup> He looked at the act as discriminatory, the more so because, "The Native is allowed to have Kaffir Beer but not the Coloured persons".<sup>117</sup> His suggestion was that, "The only solution to the situation would be to alter the law to read Native instead of Coloured person".<sup>118</sup> This suggestion was being made with regard to Proclamation number 42 of 1936, a law which contained certain provisions about the drinking of liquor and kaffir beer.

In response an unidentified colonial official submitted the opinion on the same issue that, "So far as I interpret Proclamation 42 of 1936 a 'Coloured' person is a 'Prohibited'

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<sup>114</sup>SNA, File 1088, Status of Coloured Persons, Letter from G. J. Armstrong, Government Secretary to Her Olmesdahl, Mr. H. Nunn's lawyer, 28 November 1945.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, Letter from, Mr. Her Olmesdahl, Mr. H. Nunn's lawyer to the Government Secretary, 10 January 1946.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*

person. A prohibited person is allowed to have Kaffir beer. See sub (3) of section 21”.<sup>119</sup>  
The Acting Government Secretary finally responded to Nunn’s concerns about the exclusion of Coloured persons from having Kaffir beer as well by stating that

Your attention is drawn to section 8 (a) of Proclamation no. 42 of 1936 which reads:

The Resident Commissioner may, by writing under his hand, permit the sale of intoxicating liquor to any prohibited person, other than a native ”.

and also to section 21 (3) of that proclamation which reads

Nothing in this proclamation shall be construed as forbidding a prohibited person from having native or kaffir beer, e. t. c.

The proclamation defines a prohibited person as:-

- (a) Any person other than a European.
- (b) Any person declared under section Nineteen (4) a prohibited person.<sup>120</sup>

Overall, this case demonstrates that while individual Coloured persons could secure certain concession by taking up their cases with the Administration these were limited since they did not alter the position of the majority. However, the situation for the majority had least begun to receive some renewed attention during the Second World War.

When the Second World War broke out a relatively considerable number of coloured persons were recruited. However, despite the wide attention that has been given to Swaziland’s participation in the Second World War no scholarly attention has focused on the manner in which the war affected the Coloured Community.<sup>121</sup> The tendency has been to concentrate on the experiences of the black Swazi, and to some degree their

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<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.* See hand written notes below the cited document.

<sup>120</sup>SNA, File 1088, Status of Coloured Persons, Letter from B. A. Marwick, Acting Government Secretary to Her Omesdahl, Mr. H. Nunn’s lawyer, 19<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>121</sup>For this deficiency, See, H. S. Simelane, “War, Society and Economy in Colonial Swaziland, 1939 - 1945”, PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 1991.

European supervisors. As a result, the war experiences of Coloured persons have been marginalized in the historical record. Equally, official reports failed to appreciate the role played by Coloured persons during the war.<sup>122</sup> This has been the tendency despite evidence pointing to Coloured participation in the war. In the case of Southern Rhodesia / Zimbabwe Seirlis observes a similar pattern. She notes that, “Coloureds are conspicuously absent from accounts of armies and wars, whether the armies are of the Rhodesian state or Zimbabwean nationalist movements or the wars are international or civil”.<sup>123</sup> She further maintained that their rare appearance is restricted to playing minor characters. Uncovering the logic behind this construction, Seirlis explains that, “This relegation of Coloureds to bit parts in armed conflict is enormously telling. It exposes the role of the military in constructing an exclusionary and essentialist nation and national identity in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe”.<sup>124</sup> In colonial Swaziland where Colouredness was underpinned by notions of hybridity and ambiguity, the marginalisation and exclusion of this intermediary category from some major public spheres was inevitable. The shifting of their war experiences to obscurity highlights one of such sphere.

In a communication to the South African Institute of Race Relations in 1941, the Resident Commissioner, C. L. Bruton acknowledged that over fifty Coloured young men from Swaziland had joined the allied forces.<sup>125</sup> Rev. Dawson also pointed out that a substantial number of these were recruited from his institution, Florence Coloured School. In his notes on the “Coloured Problems in Swaziland”, he pointed out that, “The Government has been asking for recruits for the present war. Seventeen have joined up. Two have been promoted to the rank of Corporal, and two to that of Sergeant”.<sup>126</sup> Giving

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<sup>122</sup>See, for example, UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, *Swaziland Annual Report* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1946), pp. 3 - 4.

<sup>123</sup>Seirlis, “Undoing the United Front?...”, p. 73.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8. File 31, SARRI Head Office: Publications: Correspondence, November 1941.

<sup>126</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), A communication entitled ‘ Problems of the “Coloured ” or “ Eurafrican ” people in Swaziland ’, from Rev. W. E. Dawson to Mrs Reinhallt Jones, dated 17 October, 1941, p. 4.

a summary of the role played by Coloured persons from Swaziland in the war, George Wallis reminded the Resident Commissioner that

Now the Coloured people of this country, although they are very poor have raised a War Fund to do what they can to assist the Empire in its hour of need. A very high proportion of the young Coloured men of this country are serving with the Fighting Forces as drivers and in other capacities; they have been all through the Abyssinian campaign and are now doing excellent service in the battle in Lybia[sic].<sup>127</sup>

The recruitment and use of Coloured labour during the war was used by some members of the EAC such as Wallis to lobby for better and improved facilities for the community. This served as a wake up call for government to consider the plight of the Coloured community which was being left out of war time development programmes. Further, the community itself was prompted to organize itself and form the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association (SCWA) that would articulate its aspirations throughout the next decade. Though the campaign only won minimal concessions it served to inform other stake holders in the country about the situation and aspirations of the coloured community.

#### **4. 8 Coloured Consciousness and the Post - Second World War**

Coloured political representation was fundamentally transformed in the post-Second World War period. Instead of various local associations presenting their demands at district level, there now emerged a united national body that was to articulate the aspirations of the Coloured community at national government level. Similarly, James Muzondidya observes in the case of Southern Rhodesia that Coloured political activities, “only intensified and became more organised in the post - Second World War period”.<sup>128</sup> In making this observation, Muzondidya acknowledged that the development of political consciousness in the Coloured community began long before the Second World War. While locating the formative stages of Coloured political activities in the pre - war era,

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<sup>127</sup>KCAL, File 48, KCM 2454, Minutes of the Fourth Session of the Seventh Advisory Council of the Swaziland Territory, 8 and 9 December, 1941.

<sup>128</sup>Muzondidya, *Walking A Tightrope*, p. 21.

Muzondidya argues that post - war socio - economic developments prompted the Coloured community to mobilise in order to promote and protect their social and economic interests.<sup>129</sup>

In the case of Swaziland there also has to be some explanation for the changes that took place with regard to the representation of the Coloured community at this time. The post-Second World War era brought many economic developments that increased employment opportunities in the country.<sup>130</sup> During this period the expenditure on social services increased tremendously. Despite these developments it appears that not much in terms of benefits trickled down to the Coloured community. Due to certain stereotypes and prejudices Government and leading employers in the country, were reluctant to offer employment opportunities to Coloured people. In 1947 an coloured ex - serviceman wrote in *Times of Swaziland* complaining that Coloured persons were being socially and economically marginalized despite their contribution in the war.<sup>131</sup> The marginalisation of the Coloured community was worsened by the reality that while at government level whites had their interests represented by the EAC, and the black Swazi by the SNC; the Coloured community enjoyed no such representation.

In effect, the coloured community was excluded, marginalized and to some degree neglected in many spheres of life in the country. Hilda Kuper observed that, “On Public occasions Europeans and Africans are recognised in Swaziland, but the Coloureds are always in the shadow”.<sup>132</sup> The frustration faced by Coloured people with regard to employment was expressed with considerable desperation by Reverend Dawson in 1941. Dawson who had by this time been involved with Coloured children in the country for about twenty years remarked that when he started working with the children, “There were

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<sup>129</sup>For details, see, *Ibid.* ,pp. 21 - 66.

<sup>130</sup>See, for example, H. S. Simelane, *Colonialism and Economic Change in Swaziland, 1940 - 1960* (Kampala: JanNyeko, 2003), p. 117 - 164.

<sup>131</sup>TOS, “The Forgotten Coloured Man”, A Letter to the editor from a Coloured ex-serviceman, 12 June, 1947.

<sup>132</sup>Kuper, *The Uniform of Colour*, p. 46.

many odd jobs we were able to do in the workshop. It was a boom to the boys from the start”.<sup>133</sup> After offering industrial training to the pupils, Dawson hoped that they would at least be able to secure employment in the Union. However, developments in that country soon dashed his hopes. Explaining the situation Dawson pointed out that, “Now came another problem. We thought it would be easy for the boys to get employment. As they could write and speak English we expected they would soon get work in some workshop, and learn a trade. The ‘Colour Bar’ was adopted in the Union. No one could take a coloured boy on as apprentice”.<sup>134</sup> Since employment opportunities in the Union had now been closed to Coloureds, and the attitudes of major employers in Swaziland were generally negative towards them, they were bound to experience serious socio-economic hardships. Summarising the problems confronting the Coloured persons, Hilda Kuper, observed that

In certain respects the law of the Europeans is applied to them: they pay the same poll tax, they are allowed to buy liquor, and they may move from the country without a pass, but they suffer many various economic, educational and social disabilities. Thus they have difficulties in obtaining licences and land in the townships, and do not receive the same scale of pay as Europeans even when they do the same work.<sup>135</sup>

In the light of the post-Second World War economic boom in the country these hardships were seen by Coloureds as discrimination targeted against members of their community. Hence the concerted effort to re - organise themselves and establish a vehicle for articulating their aspirations up to the early 1960s. Immediately after the war Coloured representation in Swaziland began to take new forms. An official report in 1946 noted that

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<sup>133</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843 / RJ / Aa 4. 1. 8 (File 30), a communication entitled ‘ Problems of the “Coloured” or “Eurafrican ” people in Swaziland ’, from Rev. W. E. Dawson to Mrs Reinhallt Jones, 17 October, 1941, p4.

<sup>134</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup>H. Kuper, *The Uniform of Colour*, pp. 45 - 46.

The Coloured Community in Swaziland is not formally represented to Government although some of them make use of elected members of the European Advisory Council. Others tend towards the Swazis in sympathy and outlook. There is now evidence, however, a marked class consciousness amongst the Coloured people of the Territory and an increasing demand for equal treatment with the European population. There is a Eurafrican Welfare Society whose popularity among the Coloured community and effectiveness waxes and wanes and which represents to Government the views of some at least of the Coloured people.<sup>136</sup>

This appears to have been the state of affairs as regards the representation of the Coloured community at least up to 1948. At the end of 1949 an official report remarked that, “There have in the past been various Eurafrican Associations which had a fluctuating following, and there was evidence towards the end of the year that a new and more effective Association might be formed”.<sup>137</sup>

Accordingly, the predicted Eurafrican Association was established in 1950. The move to establish the Association was sparked by a clash that involved the police and the Carmichael Brothers at Sitegi. Carmichael Brothers was a business organization owned by the Carmichael family who resided on freehold property in Steki. It dealt with building and contracting. The police wanted to prosecute this Coloured family because they were grazing their cattle on a Native Area. But since it was generally known that the Carmichaels had contributed to the Lifa Fund, Government felt it was necessary to obtain the reaction of the Native Authority before taking any action. The Lifa Fund was a national fund that had been launched by the Swazi Queen Regent, Gwamile Labotsibeni Mdluli in 1911 to buy land that had been lost to white settlers.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, *Swaziland Annual Report* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946), p. 51.

<sup>137</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, *Swaziland Annual Report*(London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1949), p. 61.

<sup>138</sup>Leroy Vail and L. White, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History*(London: James Curry, 1991), p. 160.

The contribution to the Fund by the Carmichael Brothers reflected the situation of many other Coloured people whose identity remained largely fluid. As a result, the Paramount Chief and the Swazi National Council summoned all Coloured people in Swaziland to meet at the Lozitha palace in October 1950. The discussion revolved mainly around Native Courts and the grazing of cattle in Native Areas. These were the major sites on which Swazi identity was displayed during this period. During the discussions the Paramount Chief asked Coloured people to decide as to whether they wished to be regarded as black, white or coloured.<sup>139</sup> It was under such conditions that people of the Coloured community resolved that they neither wished to be considered as black nor white. This marked the expression of a new consciousness and distinct identity among the Coloured people of Swaziland. This consciousness was mainly expressed in the form of demands for Coloured facilities and political representation. Essentially, this consciousness and identity was not a biologically determined, inherent quality derived from miscegenation, but a product of historical processes stretching as far back as the 1910s.

After the meeting with the Paramount Chief at Lozitha, a meeting of coloured people was held in Bremersdorp on Saturday, 21 October 1950. During the meeting a resolution was unanimously passed that

The Coloured or EurAfrican community have no desire to be regarded as either Black or White but insists on retaining its present legal status of Coloured or EurAfrican. Further that as full tax paying citizens the Community asks for opportunities for development as such and that all matters concerning their welfare should be dealt with in such a way as not to affect their legal status or dignity.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>See, TOS, "Coloured Welfare Association General Meeting: Memorandum Submitted to Mr. Gordon Walker", 17 March, 1951.

<sup>140</sup>See, SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Letter from the Secretary of the association to the Paramount Chief of Swaziland, 23 October, 1950.



In this meeting one hundred and thirty five persons were present belonging to the coloured community.<sup>141</sup> A letter from the Government Secretary to the Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association stated that, “the Resident Commissioner cordially welcomes the formation of your Association and the Government will give you the very closest consideration to any proposals which it puts forward”.<sup>142</sup> Despite the opposition that the association faced at its formation it went ahead to address concerns and issues that it considered to have been affecting its members. Some two years after having submitted the memorandum, which stated that Coloured did not wish to be considered as either black or white, the Association presented the position of its constituency with more vigour.

The objective of the Association was to, “represent the Coloured community and to provide a means whereby the community can officially approach such bodies as the Administration, and the Native Council on matters of communal concern”.<sup>143</sup> The Chairman of the Association when it began was Mr. A. Adams; its Secretary was Rev. A. E. Bennet. Bennet was not a coloured person but a European missionary of the Anglican Church stationed at St. Michael’s School in Bremersdorp. Not only was he the first Secretary of the Association but also its inaugurator.<sup>144</sup> The intricate involvement of Bennet in the affairs of the Coloured Association may reflect the legacy left by earlier missionaries such as Rev. C. L. Watts and Rev. E. W. Dawson. Even when Bennet declined nomination in the following year he assured the Association of his support. He stated his position as follows;

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<sup>141</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup>See, SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Association, attached copy of T. O. S., “The Swaziland Coloured (Eurafrican) Association: Annual General Meeting”, 20 October, 1951 and Rev. Bennet’s letter to an unspecified government official, 18 October, 1951.

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup>*Ibid.*

I declined re nomination this year as I felt the time had come for the community to officer its own Association and I fear that until responsibility is thrown upon their shoulders they will not readily bear such burdens. However, having inaugurated the Association a year ago I am still intensely interested in its work and shall continue to help, wherever, possible.<sup>145</sup>

Bennet's willingness to continue supporting the Association was immediately shown when he agreed to the chairman's request to write a letter on behalf of the Association when he had just ceased to function as the Association's secretary.<sup>146</sup> This gesture may have been reflective of white patronage over Coloured identity. Bennet continued to play the role of a patron in this Association and Coloured people came to him for advice and guidance on many issues.<sup>147</sup> Because of this position he was keen to gain some insight into government's thinking and policies on issues involving Coloureds so that he could advise them accordingly.

This body which had been established at the beginning of 1950, known as the Swaziland Coloured or Eurafican Welfare Association sought to articulate and present the aspirations of the Coloured community to the government. At the end of that year, it was reported that

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<sup>145</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Association, Rev. Bennet's letter to an unspecified government official,, 18 October, 1951.

<sup>146</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Association, Letter from Rev. A. E. Bennet to the Government Secretary, 7 March, 1951.

<sup>147</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, *Swaziland Annual Report* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1950), p. 63.

There is, however, now evident a marked class consciousness among the Coloured people of the Territory, and an increasing demand for treatment as part of the European population. There is a new Eurafican Association which shows signs of being more effective and permanent than its predecessors.<sup>148</sup>

The resolution by some Coloureds to stand out as a separate group at national level was partly motivated by the desire to confront the numerous problems encountered by persons of their group. These problems ranged from unemployment, social dislocation, discrimination, to landlessness and lack of political representation. Summarizing the problems facing the Coloured community the Secretary of the Coloured Association wrote that, “The Association’s main anxieties are (1) the status of the Coloured Community and (2) the position of the Coloured people who have been working and living on Native Area for many years”.<sup>149</sup> Responding to the latter problem, coloureds in Swaziland resorted to establishing a representative organization which they called the Coloured (EurAfrican) Welfare Association.

Since not all people of European and African parentage in Swaziland considered themselves Coloureds some hostile reactions were inevitable. Soon after the news of the resolution were circulated a delegation of EurAfricans who lived on Swazi Nation Land appeared before the Swazi National Council and indicated that they had no desire to be associated with the resolution of the EurAfrican Welfare Association but wished to go on living as Swazis.<sup>150</sup> The desire by some EurAfricans to be considered Swazi was manifested in different ways. In another instance, the Resident Commissioner revealed

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<sup>148</sup>SNA, File 3206 Swaziland Coloured Association, Letter from Secretary of Coloured Association to the Government Secretariat, 26 September, 1951.

<sup>149</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup>See, SN A, File 3012 D, Meetings between Administrative Officers and Paramount chief. A report of the Swazi National Council meeting of 5 August, 1958, p. 9.

that when one EuroAfrican was called upon to pay poll tax instead of Swazi tax, he went weeping to the District Commissioner to protest that, “My ears have been pierced like a Swazi, why should I pay poll tax”.<sup>151</sup> The Government Secretary was equally concerned about the stance taken by the Association and responded as follows;

We were wondering whether, when the resolution was formulated, the Association considered its implications in the light of the Native Areas Proclamation no. 39 of 1910. Section 2 (i) of the proclamation lays down, inter alia, that ‘no other person other than a native person of Swaziland shall without the written permission of the Resident Commissioner, use or occupy any portion of the Native Area’. A native is defined in the interpretation of Laws Proclamation no. 14 of 1942 as ‘meaning and including any aboriginal native belonging to any of the tribes of Africa and all persons of mixed race living as members of any native community, tribe kraal, village or location in the Territory’.<sup>152</sup>

After passing the resolution the Association however insisted that it was to receive formal recognition from the government and the Swazi National Council. The Association wished to be treated as an institution that represented the Coloured community on the same basis that the Swazi National Council represented the Swazi, and the European Advisory Council, Europeans. Government was generally supportive of the direction taken by Coloureds to be regarded as a community of their own as long as it did not clash with European interests. After obtaining clarification on issues that seemed to jeopardize chances of the Association being recognized by government, the Government Secretary wrote to the Swaziland Coloured Association stating that

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<sup>151</sup>See, SNA, File 3206 Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, A letter from the Secretariat by J. R. Stebbing to Rev. A. E. Bennet, the Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, 24 February, 1951.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*

I am to say that in view of the latest information supplied by you, His Honour, the Resident Commissioner is prepared to recognize the Association as being representative of the majority of Eurafricans in the Territory. I am to add that His Honour desires that an expression of his good wishes for its success should be conveyed to the Association.<sup>153</sup>

To lend weight to its resolution, the Coloured Association had requested government to submit a memorandum to the Secretary of State early in 1951 which contained the resolution, grievances and aspirations of Coloured people.<sup>154</sup> In presenting its issues and as a means of attracting attention the Association used “race” to a very large extent. As early as 1951, when the Association addressed the memorandum to the Secretary of State on behalf of Coloureds, it claimed that, “They fear as things are, that excessive emphasis is being laid on Native Affairs, with European interests a poor second and Coloured much in the rear”.<sup>155</sup> In this case the representatives of the Association attempted to draw attention to their case by identifying their sympathies with the whites whom they considered to come after in the social ladder.

An immediate and core issue with regard to Coloured identity was that of citizenship. In one meeting with officials of the colonial Administration, Affleck Sellstroom, a leading member of the Coloured Association complained, for example, those Coloureds who applied for passports encountered considerable difficulty. The main problem under the colonial arrangement was that persons born in Swaziland were classified as protected

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<sup>153</sup>SNA, File 3206, A Letter from the Acting Government Secretary, J. R. Stebbing to the Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Association, 24 February, 1951.

<sup>154</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Copy of memorandum submitted to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations by the chairman of the association, 20 February, 1951.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*

persons and as such they were not entitled to registration as citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies. Rather they had to apply for Naturalization. Sellstroom complained that, “If, after difficulties, they were issued with a passport, that passport was made out as for a British Protected Person and the holder was made to feel that it was a document of lesser value than normally issued to British subjects”.<sup>156</sup> The Legal Secretary who was present during this meeting was tasked with examining some of the cases in which Coloured persons had encountered difficulty in securing passports. He was further challenged to define the rights of protected persons, who were registered as citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies as opposed to those who were naturalised.

Among the first issues raised by the representatives of the Coloured community concerned the Marriage Law in Swaziland. In a meeting with the Acting First Assistant Secretary in 1952, the Executive of the Coloured Association pointed out that, “There existed no machinery for intermarriage of Europeans and Coloured persons while machinery existed for intermarriage of Coloured and Africans”.<sup>157</sup> This was regarded by the Executive as a “stigma”.<sup>158</sup> Again, this was a case where European “superiority” was being played against African “inferiority” to articulate a Coloured grievance.

Another issue raised by the Coloured Association concerned the definition of Coloured. The Association desired that, “A Coloured person should be defined as a person who had not less 25% of European blood”.<sup>159</sup> How this 25% of European blood would be

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<sup>156</sup>*Ibid.*, Letter from Government Secretary to Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, 2 October, 1951.

<sup>157</sup>SNA, File 3206 II, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Minutes of His Honour The Resident Commissioner with representatives of the Swaziland Eurafican (Coloured) Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1959.

<sup>158</sup>SNA, File 699, Coloured Persons: Sale of Township stands to, Extract from Minutes of Meeting of the Acting First Assistant Secretary with the Executive Committee of the Swaziland Coloured (Eurafican) Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on Tuesday, 19 February, 1952.

<sup>159</sup>*Ibid*

measured, was not elaborated. During this session the Committee expressed the view that the Coloureds were proud of their race and did not wish to become neither European nor Black. Equally the Association also registered its disappointment with recent instances where black children had been allowed to attend coloured schools and indicated that, “It was largely for that reason it is desired to press for a formal definition of what constituted a Coloured person”.<sup>160</sup> What mainly weakened the case of the Association was that owing to differences it did not enjoy full support from the Coloured community. A report on Coloureds in Swaziland, for example, mentioned that, “It was found in 1957 that the Swartfontein Coloured community near Mbabane owed no allegiance to the EurAfrican Welfare Association”.<sup>161</sup> The Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association itself, the same report went on to observe, “is representative of small groups of the more well-to-do and politically conscious Coloured people at Stegi, Bremersdorp and Hluthi”.<sup>162</sup>

In 1951 the Coloured Association also submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations intimating

The Community are conscious of the fact that they should be playing a greater part in the economic life of the country, but their efforts in this direction are largely frustrated by lack of opportunities to obtain employment under Government Departments: the Coloured people can usefully meet a need for skilled craftsmen, i.e. carpenters, builders and mechanics and also ably fill such posts as clerical assistants and stock inspectors. At the moment, however, the manpower for these jobs is largely recruited from the Union and Portuguese East Africa, resulting in a loss of revenue in the form of taxation, by Government, and a steady flow of money earned in the Territory into foreign countries. The objection that few Coloured people could

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<sup>160</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, Ernest Wentzel Collection, A 1931 / FB 3 (File 2), a report entitled “EuroAfricans in Swaziland”, Probably compiled in March, 1962, p. 1.

<sup>161</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Association, Report on the Coloured People of Swaziland.

compete with European standard of workmanship is met by: (a) that where the Coloured people have had the opportunity of doing skilled work the 'few' have produced work of necessary standard; (b) that it is useless for young people to spend time and money on training for non-existent jobs; (c) that educational and training facilities are not available in the country; and (d) that those young people who have the initiative to go over the border to complete their education and training and become skilled, seek work in the Union where conditions of service and wages are higher. It is respectfully asked that Coloured men and women should be allowed more opportunities to work in Government Departments and that the posts open to them should be made known and that full opportunities should be provided in the state aided schools so that the young people might qualify for these posts.<sup>163</sup>

In a meeting held with the Resident Commissioner, Mr. Sellstroom, a prominent representative of the Coloured Association complained that

It appeared that the Portuguese had the monopoly of the skilled building trade in Swaziland. Many of these people had come into Swaziland on temporary permits but had stayed here for a long time. Some of them had been here for eight years. Portuguese were unwilling to employ local people and if a building boom did come they would only seek to import more Portuguese to work for them. It was felt that the Portuguese were doing work which should be done by Swaziland people. Experience had shown that Union contractors were willing to employ local Eurafricans but not so the Portuguese. The Public Works Department had been encouraging Coloured employment but Portuguese working in the Department had undermined many of these Coloured artisans and secured their dismissal. It was the feeling of the Association that the Government should enforce the employment of local labour

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<sup>163</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations by the Swaziland Coloured (Eurafrican) Welfare Association, 20 February, 1951.



and that no more Portuguese should be allowed into the Territory for the building trade.<sup>164</sup>

In another communication the Secretary of the Stegi Coloured Welfare Association appealed to government to consider the issue of lack of employment for Coloured persons. He wrote that

We wish to make it clear that we take a very serious view of this matter, and wish to remind Government of its responsibility, first towards its own people. The Portuguese over the border demands that any foreign industry established in their Territory must employ four fifths Portuguese. That being the case, we see no reason why Portuguese should come here and get all the work while our people are begging for work.<sup>165</sup>

The first reaction by government to these representations was to adopt an “open door policy” towards the Association as well as giving it the assurance that it would be treated on the same basis as the European Advisory Council and the Swazi National Council. In an attempt to address the grievance put forward by the Association that Coloureds were being discriminated against in employment, the Secretariat sent a memorandum to all heads of government and district commissioners soliciting ideas on the issue. While most government officials preferred not to offer any comments, those who did indicated that some difficulty was experienced with regard to the employment of Coloureds. The Government Engineer, for example, observed at the end of a lengthy memorandum that

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<sup>164</sup>SNA, File 3206 II Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Minutes of Meeting His Honour The Resident Commissioner with Representatives of the Swaziland Eurafican (Coloured) Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1959.

<sup>165</sup>*Ibid.* , A Letter from the Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association (Steki), H. D. Steward, undated, but probably written in the 1950s.

If we are to cater for the natural aspirations of this class, Government is faced with encouraging the employment of Eurafricans although I am at a loss to suggest what would be the most suitable posts for them to fill. I think, however, that the posts would have to be those which are directly under the almost direct and constant supervision of responsible Europeans, and certain safeguards should be stipulated so that the Eurafrican is not given too much uncontrolled responsibility.<sup>166</sup>

It would appear that one of the problems faced by Coloureds in areas of employment was the allegation of incompetence. The same Government Engineer articulated this sentiment when he observed that

At present posts of Europeans and Africans are fairly rigidly scheduled because of the great difference in the educational standards of the two communities. The Eurafrican, however, is like his blood, neither European nor African. Some may live at a standard approximating that of a European, while others prefer to forget their European background and marry into African stock. The latter class will, I imagine, prove to be no problem as he regards himself as and lives like an African.<sup>167</sup>

Government's thinking seemed to have been bent on treating Eurafricans on the same scale as Africans. Replying to the Association's concern about the lack of employment for Coloureds, the Government Secretary promised that suitable opportunities would be sought from principal companies. He also intimated that it was of benefit for coloureds in government to be at the same salary scale with Africans since their salaries had recently been increased with some extra benefits added.<sup>168</sup> A few months later, the

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<sup>166</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, A memorandum from the Government Engineer to the Government Secretary, 28 June, 1951.

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, A Letter from the Government Secretary. J. R. Stebbing to the Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Rev. S. E. Bennet, 2 October, 1951.

executive committee of the Coloured Association met the Assistant Secretary to government and contended that suitably qualified persons should receive the same wages as Europeans. In effect, not only did the Coloured Association advance a case for the employment of Coloureds but it also canvassed for the employment of Coloureds on the same standards as whites.<sup>169</sup> The position supported by most white government officials concerning the employment of Coloured persons was generally negative except that of the Government Secretary.

The position in private companies varied from one employer to another. At Havelock Asbestos Mine, for example, the sympathetic Mine manager stated that

The Coloured community presents a problem so far as their employment by a Mine such as ours is concerned who employ over 2 000 Africans and have on the property an overall African population of 4 000. If Coloureds were employed in any appreciable numbers, considerable difficulties would be experienced in providing separate housing and feeding as well as recreational facilities. They are not suitable for underground work and the only employment for which they could be considered would be as Painters or Lorry Drivers but the difficulties we have referred to preclude them for being employed for this work. Finally there is the question of rising production costs, and as this aspect calls for closest scrutiny, we cannot envisage being able to offer employment to the Coloured community except in a few isolated cases.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, A Letter from the Government Secretary. J. R. Stebbing to the Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Rev. S. E. Bennet, 2 October, 1951.

<sup>170</sup>SNA, File 1088, Status of Coloured Persons, Extract from minutes of meeting of the acting First Assistant Secretary with the Executive Committee of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on Tuesday, 19 February, 1952.

The Managing Director of United Plantations offered a few posts to Coloured persons. In his reply to the Government Secretary, he stated

My company would be glad to assist in creating employment for Coloured people, and have the following comments to offer: (1) We can employ immediately one Coloured family as house caretakers at Ngonini. The husband must be willing to do house and garden work, and the wife should be willing to do cooking and house work. Suitable housing is available. Wages will be offered in accordance with qualifications. (2) We are anxious to build up a team of mechanics at our workshop. Some prior qualifications are desirable, coupled with the wish to receive training. Suitable housing would have to be provided. (3) A person with clerical training and of sufficient standing to assist in office work.<sup>171</sup>

Throwing some light on to Coloured employment problems in Swaziland, a letter to the editor of a South African newspaper cautioned Coloured families migrating from there to Swaziland, pointing out that, “Recently private enterprises have blossomed in the territory and employ many Coloured artisans at low wages”.<sup>172</sup>

The Government Secretary’s position was that the employment of Coloureds in government posts had to be implemented with caution. In one memorandum, he frankly admitted that, “The position of the Eurafrican is difficult and their employment in spheres other than that of the artisan will raise complications and may even do more harm than

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<sup>171</sup>SNA, File 3206 A, Employment of Coloured Persons, Letter from Managing Director of United Plantations to Government Secretary, 22 February, 1955

<sup>172</sup>SNA, File 3206 A, Employment of Coloured Persons, Letter from Managing Director of Havelock Mine to Government Secretary, 23 February, 1955.

good eventually because of the effect it will have on public opinion”.<sup>173</sup> To clarify the issue he added that, “I am thinking of such posts as clerks, stock inspectors, assistant general agricultural officers and sub-inspectors in the police”.<sup>174</sup> In this respect, it appears that the Government Secretary had the support of SCWA which also felt that Coloured people could easily fill clerical jobs and be appointed as Stock Inspectors and Road Overseers. The common ground on this matter seems to have been hinged on the attitude that Coloured persons had to take jobs where they would not be directly involved in manual labour.

While some government departments maintained their negative attitude towards employing Coloured persons, some private companies offered some employment opportunities. The Commissioner of Police, for example, declared that it was not practical to employ Coloureds in the Police Force as the living conditions were bad enough even for African members of the Force.<sup>175</sup> Mr. D. H. Leibbrandt of Swaziland Timbers also offered employment positions at Mankaina district, Mahlangatsha and Gege.<sup>176</sup> Another related grievance was the payment of low wages to Coloureds. This

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<sup>173</sup>SNA, File 3206A, Employment of Coloured Persons, *The Star*, “Coloured families are migrating from the Union to Swaziland”, 30 September, 1957.

<sup>174</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, A memorandum to an unspecified government official, undated, but probably around February, 1951.

<sup>175</sup>See, SNA, File 3206A, Employment of Coloured Persons, Letter from Commissioner of Police to Government Secretary, 15 April, 1955.

<sup>176</sup>See, S NA, File 3206A, Employment of Coloured Persons, Letter from Managing Director of United Plantations to Government Secretary, 22 February, 1955.

was raised in the same memorandum submitted to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. Here the Coloured Association recalled that

In the past there would appear to have been a policy of salaries paid according to whether a person is European or non - European. This has worked unjustly against the Coloured people who are expected, and endeavour, to have a higher standard of living than the Native African. It is contended that the pay should be according to the work done and not according to 'colour'.<sup>177</sup>

It was in the same communication that Association also complained about low wages for Coloured teachers. It noted that

The rates of pay, as laid down by the Department of Education, for teachers in Coloured schools is such that teachers prefer to work in the Union where pay is higher and consequently the Swaziland schools have to a large extent to depend on European teachers with a vocation to work for the Coloured people on pay which is not acceptable to qualified Coloured teachers.<sup>178</sup>

Coloureds also felt that it was discriminatory and unfair on their part to be left in the same medical wards with Africans when they were admitted in private wards in certain mission hospitals. Raising the issue in 1953, with the Judicial Commissioner, the Executive Committee of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association recalled that, "In those old days separate accommodation was reserved for Eurafricans".<sup>179</sup> In a 1955

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<sup>177</sup>See, SNA, File 3206A, Employment of Coloured Persons, Letter from J. F. B. Purcell to Mr. Leibraindt, 1 October, 1953 and Letter from J. F. B. Purcell to Mr. P. Sellstroom, 1 October, 1953.

<sup>178</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations by the Swaziland Coloured (Eurafrican) Welfare Association, 20 February, 1951.

<sup>179</sup>SNA. File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Association, Minutes of Meeting Judicial Commissioner with the Executive Committee of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on the 9 June, 1953.

meeting held between some government officials and the executive committee of the Coloured Association this issue was again raised. The committee complained bitterly that coloured persons admitted to government hospitals were not allowed to occupy private or small wards even when they were willing and able to pay for the daily charges.

The District Commissioner of Bremersdorp replied that wards for Coloured people were available at Hlatikhulu Hospital and that at Mbabane attempts were being made to accommodate them away from other occupants of general wards. To this the committee replied that, “the wards at Hlatikulu Hospital were very gloomy and unpleasant rooms and that the coloureds did not wish to occupy general wards together with natives: they wished to raise their status: if they could not pay, they would have to use the general wards, but if they could pay, they should have access to private wards”.<sup>180</sup> In a letter to the Secretary of the Association the Acting Government Secretary also revealed that, “The construction of a new Eurafican Block at Hlatikulu has been given priority over all other items in the programme of extensions to the Hlatikulu Hospital; building is expected to begin in the very near future”.<sup>181</sup> The Committee also pointed out that, “The Mission Hospitals at Bremersdorp and Mahamba allowed coloured persons to use private wards if they could pay for the privilege”<sup>182</sup> and it urged that, “Government Hospitals should follow the same procedure”.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup>SNA, File 3206 B, Accommodation of Coloured People in Hospital, Extract of Minutes Held with Executive of the Swaziland Eurafican (Coloured) Welfare Association at Bremersdorp on 7 September, 1955.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*

The Coloured Association also protested against the discrimination of Coloured people in public places and in the transport industry. In one of such protests about discrimination in public places the Association noted that

It was stated that facilities had been provided at the Hotel at Geodzeugun for Eurafricans to drink in a bar lounge but that, under Police Orders, a partition had been put up and Eurafricans could only be served with drinks through a pigeonhole in the partition. It was claimed that the management of the Gollel Hotel was most unsympathetic to Eurafricans and in fact refused to sell liquor for off the premises consumption.<sup>184</sup>

A. E. Sellstroom pointed out that, “community centres for the Coloured people in the different Townships were very necessary. There was discrimination at public entertainment such as cinema shows”.<sup>185</sup> He pointed out for instance, that in Bremersdorp Coloured persons were admitted to cinema shows provided by the Catholic Mission but were not allowed to attend those brought by Mr. Classens at the Agricultural Hall.

The Committee of the Association requested that Coloured persons should be allowed to attend public entertainments such as cinema shows. It further asked that in each Township a free grant should be given of land on which community halls of Eurafricans could be erected. The Judicial Commissioner, who was present in this meeting pointed out that, “While there was no official colour discrimination in the Territory, in most places the buildings used for these purposes were extremely small and difficulty would be experienced if Africans, Coloured persons and Europeans wished to attend

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<sup>184</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup>SNA, File 3206 II, Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association, Minutes of Meeting His Honour the Resident Commissioner with the Representatives of the Swaziland Eurafrican (Coloured) Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on the 17 November, 1959.



entertainments together”.<sup>186</sup> The Commissioner also argued that it was impossible to lay down any conditions for cinema operators since they were not under any regulation. He however, promised to make known to cinema operators the feelings of the Coloured community about cinema shows.

Separate accommodation was also sought by Coloureds when travelling by Railway buses. This concern was raised by the Coloured Association in some of their meetings with officials of the colonial Administration. In one meeting E. Sellstroom condemned the practice of accommodating Coloureds and Blacks together in the Railway buses, arguing that, “Even the most respectable of Coloured men and women were obliged to travel in the section of the bus occupied by Africans of all types”.<sup>187</sup>

Though the Government was generally sympathetic to Coloured concerns in Swaziland it was unable to lay down a clear-cut policy with regard to persons of this group. In a District Commissioners’ conference, held in Mbabane in 1955, for instance, the District Commissioner of Manzini submitted the opinion that, “the special category of classification as a Coloured person should be abolished and that the sole criterion should be whether a man paid Poll Tax or Native Tax. If a person lived on Native Area and paid Native Tax he should be classed as a Swazi and if he paid Poll Tax he should be classed as a European”.<sup>188</sup> Other issues discussed during the conference concerned the payment of low wages to Coloured persons as well as the implications of this for their standard of their living. The request by Coloureds to be granted the right of inclusion and registration in the European Voter’s Roll as well as their desire to assume a European status if they so wished were also discussed.

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<sup>186</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup>SNA, File 3206, Swaziland Coloured Association, Minutes of Meeting Judicial Commissioner with the Executive Committee of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on the 9 June, 1953.

The District Commissioner of Mbabane submitted the view that he, “agreed wholeheartedly but it appeared impossible to put it into practical effect. The political implications and repercussions across the border should be also carefully considered”.<sup>189</sup> His position was that, “A start might be made by suitably amending the present Marriage Law”.<sup>190</sup> Summarily, all District Commissioners agreed that, “It was a sensible idea to avoid the creation and perpetuation of a ‘Third Estate’ ”.<sup>191</sup> The position taken by these officials of the colonial Administration in this instance indicates that at times drew from South African experiences to regulate issues that affected Coloured persons in the country.

On the other hand, there was an indication that Coloured consciousness and identity was not confined within the borders of Swaziland. Coloured identity had been taking a distinct shape in Swaziland since the 1910s, and by the 1950s this identity had been extended to include Coloured persons in other parts of Southern Africa such as South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. This was manifested in the manner in which Coloureds in the country were throwing their sympathies behind other Coloured persons in parts of the sub - continent where they felt persons of their “race” were being subjected to repressive laws and unfair treatment. There was also a sense in which Coloured persons in Swaziland expressed solidarity with other Coloured persons of Southern Africa. In one meeting Sellstroom mentioned that

Members of the Association had received the impression that Coloured people were not wanted as immigrants in Swaziland and a number of cases had occurred of people of excellent character who had not been allowed to settle in Swaziland. The Association was anxious to see Coloured

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<sup>189</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup>SNA, File 1088, Status of Coloured Persons, Extract from Minutes of DC’s Conference held at Mbabane on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1955.

people from the Union allowed to settle here. Conditions in Swaziland were attractive and many *Coloured* people were disappointed at not being allowed to enter a British Territory.<sup>192</sup>

A letter to the editor of a South African newspaper towards the end of the 1950s warned Coloured families who had hopes to migrate to Swaziland that:

It is not through any intention to frustrate their hopes but merely to make them think twice that I present the facts about Swaziland to them. There are about 3 000 Coloureds in Swaziland. Though apparently 'well-off' they have virtually no say in the running of the country whatsoever. In spite of being like the Europeans, a tax-paying community, no jobs are reserved in the public service for them and where one or two do manage to get in they have to be content with a wage less than a quarter of that of their fellow white workers.<sup>193</sup>

In 1959, the Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association wrote to the Government Secretary, strongly protesting about what his constituency considered discrimination against Coloured persons who wanted to settle in Swaziland. Articulating the feelings of the Coloured community, the Secretary of the Association wrote:

We are concerned by what appears to be a policy of discrimination against Coloured people who wished to settle in this country, as we never anticipated that Swaziland falling under British rule as it does would ever contemplate such a step. Whatever the reason may be for such an attitude, we can not help feeling a sense of frustration. The reasons for people wanting to settle in this country and build their homes are plain and simple. It is their faith in British justice, and their hopes to live happy lives. With so many repressive laws being enacted by the Union parliament, many people living there no longer feel free, and their desire is to get out of it all. Swaziland, a young and progressive country with a liberal policy of

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<sup>192</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup>SNA, File 3206A, Employment of Coloured Persons, *The Star*, "Coloured families are migrating from the Union to Swaziland", 30 September, 1957.

Government is catching on the imagination of many. Is the future policy of this Government to refute and break that faith which people of various colours have in the British people? Is the Rhodesian policy of restricting Coloured immigrants to be a policy of our Government too? We raise this question because of information we have from an influential member of the advisory council, that a law has been passed to stop Coloured people settling in Swaziland. If it is true we can only regard such a law as shameful and unjust, since it takes into account people of a certain colour and not the character of the individual. The Coloured people are an integral part of the South African society, and throughout the years have always identified themselves with British ideals, and rendered service in many wars ... Why should the freedom of movement be restricted to Coloured people in South Africa if they feel they can live happily in another country that is scantily inhabited.<sup>194</sup>

The immediate background behind such protests by the Coloured community in Swaziland, were the intensified apartheid policies in South Africa which subjected Coloured persons in that country to hardships of all sorts. For several decades, the practices and policies in South Africa generally marginalized Coloured people in the political and socio - economic spheres. The launching of apartheid and its associated policies in the 1950s exacerbated the situation for Coloureds. This was the case for instance, when legislation such as the Prohibition of the Mixed Marriages Act of 1950 was promulgated.

Meanwhile the struggle in Swaziland also continued. The SCWA made demands that the administration should put in place a clear-cut policy regarding the allocation of resources and provision of facilities to Coloured persons. It was against this background that in 1955 the Coloured Association requested from the colonial administration in Swaziland that a commission be set up by the Colonial Office to investigate the conditions under which Coloured people lived. The mandate of the commission would be to look into the

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<sup>194</sup>SNA, File 3206 II, Swaziland Coloured Welfare, Letter from the Secretary of the Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association to the Government Secretariat, 5 June, 1959.

possibility of putting in place a policy with regard to the social welfare of Coloured persons. This went along with a protest by the SCWA that Coloured persons no longer wished to share public facilities with the Swazi such as schools and transport. The District Commissioner of Bremersdorp declined the request and replied that, “there was difficulty in adopting a particular policy for a section of the population that numbered, at the 1946 Census only 745 persons”.<sup>195</sup> It is my contention that the numerical factor raised in this meeting was raised for the sake of argument; it was probably the lack of socio-economic and political muscle on the part of the Association that led to the refusal of the request. The numerical consideration is further weakened when we consider that for most of the colonial era the white population was made up of a smaller fraction compared to that of the blacks. However, evidence suggests that the tendency in the country was to allocate more resources to whites on the basis of other considerations other than the numerical factor.

On the other hand the Swazi National Council deeply resented the move by members of the EuroAfrican Association to demand being viewed as a separate entity and remained critical of government’s stance, as it appeared to encourage the formation of a “third nation”.<sup>196</sup> Swazi traditional leaders were of the view that Coloured persons were to pay allegiance to the monarchy as well as identify themselves with the black Swazi. The attitude that was adopted by these leaders as it would serve to legitimise than challenge pose their political power base. During a session of the SNC Councillors Jacob Manana and Sifunti Matsebula communicated their disappointment as well as shock that, “The Coloureds no longer wished to have Swazis in their schools or to occupy the same

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<sup>195</sup>SNA, File 3009 F, Coloured Welfare Association, Extract from Minutes of Meeting Held with the Executive of the Swaziland Eurafican (Coloured) Welfare Association at Bremersdorp on the 7 September, 1955.

<sup>196</sup>See, SNA, File 3012 D, Meetings between Administrative Officers and Paramount chief, A report on the Swazi National Council meeting of 5 August, 1958, p. 8.

sections of buses or hotel rooms with Swazi”.<sup>197</sup> The Councillors indicated that they did not expect such a move, “Because Coloureds have grown up in Swazi kraals and many of them live on Native Area”.<sup>198</sup> They felt that, “if Coloureds wanted a colour bar so do the Swazi and if this is so the Coloureds should leave the Native Area”.<sup>199</sup>

In view of extensions of self - government which had been attained in other parts of the Empire, a representative of the Coloured community urged that the Coloured peoples should be allowed to elect representatives to the Advisory Council. In a meeting with the Judicial Commissioner, E. Sellstroom, bitterly complained that Coloured people, “felt very strong that they were called upon to pay taxes but had no voice in the running of the country’s affairs and no body to represent their point of view”.<sup>200</sup> The Judicial Commissioner was, however, uncertain on how the issue of Coloured representation was to be tackled; hence his response that he “doubted whether the time was yet ripe for Coloured representation on the Advisory Council”.<sup>201</sup> Typical of the administration’s tendency, he based his stand on the point that the numbers of Coloured people were not large enough to justify separate representation.

Instead, the Judicial Commissioner suggested that as a first step Coloured people’s organizations should be set up at district level. He also proposed that meetings between

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<sup>197</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup>SNA, File 3058C II European Advisory Council, Extract From File of Meeting of Judicial Commissioner with Swaziland Coloured Welfare Association Held at Mbabane on 9 June, 1953.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.*

Coloured peoples of individual districts and their District Commissioner could be held, perhaps twice a year. Such meetings, besides discussing purely local affairs, could then appoint delegates to attend general meetings with the Government Secretary. From beginnings such as these, the Judicial Commissioner thought, it might be possible to work out a more formal system of representation. The Coloured Association did not give up, but continued in the subsequent years to present their case for the representation of Coloured persons on the EAC. As a result, in June 1955 the EAC decided that Coloured people should be represented in its meetings. The Acting Government Secretary ascribed this development to growing consciousness among the Coloured people. He noted that, "The younger generation, who now largely managed the Association, were more politically minded than their parents".<sup>202</sup> This compliment was an indication of the reality that the consciousness and identity which had emerged from the Coloured community was progressing.

The Coloured Association steadily continued to make some progress with regard to representing Coloured persons. By 1958 the Association further raised with government the question of Eurafrican representation on the European Advisory Council.<sup>203</sup> In a 1961 paper presented to the Working Committee of the Swaziland Constitutional Committee, Dr. Ambrose Zwane observed that, "The Coloured Population have no formal representation but for six or seven years Government has consulted through the Eurafrican Welfare Association on matters concerning them".<sup>204</sup> Zwane further noted that, "Since 1958 Government has called meetings representative of the European Advisory Council, the Swazi National Council and the Eurafrican Welfare Association has representation on such subjects as the preliminary consideration of the Territorial

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<sup>202</sup>SNA, File 3058C II, Minutes of the Standing Committee of the European Advisory Council Held at the Secretariat, Mbabane on the 8 June, 1955.

<sup>203</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, *Swaziland Annual Report* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958), p. 72.

<sup>204</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, A1931 / FB3, File 2, Ernest Wentzel Papers, Paper For Consideration By Working Committee of the Constitutional Committee: Racial Discrimination in Swaziland, Submitted by Dr. Ambrose Zwane, 21 April 1961, p.4.

budget and other matters of common concern”.<sup>205</sup> By the end of 1959 the Association had begun to hold meetings with government. This development was officially described as follows;

Recently, a Eurafrican Welfare Association has exhibited some energy in seeking to represent Eurafrican interests, and the Administration meets with representatives of this body twice a year to discuss matters of Territorial importance as well as those more directly affecting the Eurafrican community.<sup>206</sup>

Since the Association was established, it represented the concerns and demands of the coloured community in a manner that had not been witnessed before. The Association was able to win certain concessions despite the opposition it faced from the major stakeholders regarding recognising the coloured community as a distinct category of persons. The lack of a clear - cut policy from government meant that the concessions won were not guaranteed by policy but rather were the results of negotiation and compromise. It appears that the meetings between the representatives of the Coloured community and government lasted up to 1962. Subsequently, issues of Coloured representation were reconfigured in the light of constitutional developments of the time.

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<sup>205</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup>UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, Great Britain, *Swaziland Annual Report*( London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1959), pp. 128 - 129.



#### **4.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that Coloured identity and consciousness in Swaziland emerged over time. The identity of this community began to take shape in the early twentieth century when certain missionaries started providing separate educational facilities for Coloured children. The main motivation for the provision of the facilities for these children was the sense of moral obligation the missionaries felt for children with part European parentage. In response to this development the colonial government played a supportive role. Consequently, the Coloured children who were socialized to see themselves as neither white nor black, adopted certain habits and lifestyles that characterized them as a distinct category of people.

By the 1950s this process of identity formation had produced a group of persons who not only embraced Colouredness but also pursued distinct and specific aspirations in the socio-economic and political structures of colonial Swaziland. In their fight for space and recognition in different arenas Coloured persons used “race” to claim a position equal to that of whites. Such efforts indicated that Coloured identity had developed enough to claim recognition in the race relations of Swaziland. The total number of Coloured people remained small for the rest of the colonial period when compared to blacks and whites. The number of Coloured persons was further reduced when some persons who could be officially identified as Coloured opted to live as Swazi. The numerical factor and white / black parentage of Coloured persons were used by some influential figures to undermine their efforts for separate identity and representation.

In articulating their grievances Coloureds appealed to the virtues of British justice in which they had confidence that when fully embraced had the capacity to shield people of their group consciousness from unfair and discriminatory treatment. Affinities of the Coloured community in Swaziland with that of Cape Coloureds had been in existence in certain forms but the launching of apartheid policies in South Africa and the consolidation of the settler colony in Southern Rhodesia with increased prejudice against non-white people led to the identification of the Swaziland Coloured community with Coloured peoples in these places to the fore. What became ironical to some degree were

the stances adopted by the Swazi traditional leaders, the Swazi educated elite and the colonial Administration towards Coloured identity, at a time when it seemed to be gathering strength among persons who embraced it.

The stance taken by these sections of Swazi society towards Coloured identity reflect that it was a contested phenomenon from all sides. In its Annual Conference held at Kwaluseni the SPA claimed that, “The Mullatoes among us are Swazis”,<sup>207</sup> while the Swazi National Council felt that by recognizing the Coloureds as possessing a distinct legal status and identity, the government was creating a “third nation”. Though generally sympathetic to Coloured needs, the white government was cautious in acceding to the demands of the Coloured community. The Administration was only prepared to give concessions in cases which were interpreted as preventing the emergence of a “Third Estate”. At times the government used the numerical argument that the Coloureds were a smaller number compared to blacks and whites while the same principle did not hold when it came to the allocation of resources to the white smaller population compared to that of the majority of black people.

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<sup>207</sup>SNA, File 3311, Swaziland Progressive Association, Resolutions of the Swazi Progressive Association Passed at its 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference Held at Kwaluseni, Bremersdorp, 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1959.