

Chapter Three

A Pyramid of Inequality: Discrimination under British Rule, 1903 - 1944.

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter maintained that racism which was characterised by negative descriptions of the Swazi and an elevated position of whites occurred largely at the ideological level while pragmatic discrimination remained limited to certain spaces. This chapter traces the development of discriminatory policies and practices that were exhibited towards blacks after the establishment of British rule in Swaziland. By focussing on different spheres of Swazi society the chapter examines the extension of pragmatic racism in the country and the effects of the discriminatory programmes which were put in place by the Swaziland colonial administration in the various spheres.

This chapter will show how the perceptions of earlier colonial officials in the country influenced their relations with the Swazi and the policies that were put in place by the administration. It will explore the manner in which administrative measures such as taxation, legislation, general policies and development schemes were shaped by racist views towards the Swazi. The contribution of white settlers in perpetuating discriminatory policies and practices and policies will also be examined. This will largely be undertaken against the backdrop of the activities of the European Advisory Council which was their mouthpiece from 1921 onwards. Equally the initiatives taken by the Swazi to challenge processes that they envisaged as discriminatory will also be considered. These will be traced through the efforts of Sobhuza II, Paramount Chief of the Swazi who emerged as the main spokesperson for the Swazi soon after his installation in 1921. By the mid - 1940s Swazis were feeling sharply the effects of the discriminatory policies executed by the colonial administration. Such policies tended to promote the interests of white settlers.

3. 1 The Setting up of a British Administration in Colonial Swaziland

At the end of the South African War interest was evinced by some colonial officials in establishing a British Administration over Swaziland. This interest sprang from the notion that Swaziland had to come under the British by virtue of conquest.

As Hamilton Sipho Simelane explains,

The conclusion of the Anglo - Boer War in 1902 ushered in a new era in Swazi history. With the fall of Kruger's government, British supremacy in Southern Africa appeared unchallenged, and Britain assumed authority over all territories previously under the jurisdiction of the South African Republic. Britain based her jurisdiction over Swaziland on the fact that the South African Republic had formerly exercised powers of jurisdiction, protection and administration, and all rights and powers of the Republic in respect to Swaziland had passed to the British Crown by virtue of conquest.¹

Godfrey Y. Lagden, the Commissioner for Native Affairs in the Transvaal, for example, justified this view by arguing that soon after the war Swaziland was plunged into confusion. He claimed that, "the people were lapsing into the most barbarous habits and the state of the country was such as to be a menace to the surrounding States".² The states he believed Swaziland would be an embarrassment to must have included Natal, the Transvaal and possibly even Mozambique. In turn, Lagden was authorised by the Executive Council to send a Special Commissioner to the country with orders to administer the laws of the Transvaal in so far as they were applicable. F. Enraght - Moony³ was selected for the position of Special Commissioner and sent to Swaziland

¹H. S. Simelane, *Colonialism and Economic Change in Swaziland, 1940 - 1960*(Manzini: Janyeko, 2003), p. 13.

²Swaziland National Archives (hereafter, SNA), File J 67 / 03, Special Commissioner for Swaziland Forwards Report On The Condition of Swaziland, Confidential Report Of Swaziland 1902 By Commissioner of Native Affairs, 25 March 1903, p. 5.

³Moony's name is spelt differently by different writers the version I have adopted is informed by archives in which Mooney personally signed his name, see, for example, SNA, File J 38 / 04, The Special Commissioner for Swaziland Requested to Furnish a Short Monthly Report for the Information of His Excellency the Governor, Letter from Special Commissioner for Swaziland to Acting Secretary for Swaziland, 11 March 1904, 3 June 1904, and 30 September 1904.

with a small police force in August 1902. Enraght - Moony was answerable to the Governor of the Transvaal. He was temporarily to establish his headquarters in Mbabane as Bremersdorp had been burnt down during the South African War. Since Mbabane is located in the high veld of the country the shift of the headquarters from Bremersdorp to that area was considered an added advantage. Lagden claimed that it was desirable to establish the headquarters of the Government on higher ground, “in view of the unhealthiness of the climate *of the country* for men and horses”.⁴

Upon arrival in the country Enraght - Moony held a meeting with the Queen Regent Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli and the Swazi National Council. King Bhunu had died just before the outbreak of the war, leaving behind, his young heir Nkhotfotjeni, Mona who would later be installed as Sobhuza II. The Special Commissioner observed that Labotsibeni and the Council were happy to come under British protection. However, he noted that

The Queen Regent, Nobatsabeni[sic], is an extremely ambitious woman, and, notwithstanding her profession of loyalty and satisfaction at the advent of the British, she is very jealous for her power, a fact which is betrayed by her efforts to check the people coming freely to the Government Officers rather than to herself. The true desire of these Chiefs appears to be, and has no doubt always been, to have British protection from outside interference with the enjoyment of complete and uncontrolled internal independence in the exercise of their own barbarous regime.⁵

The Special Commissioner had received instructions from Lagden to bring law and order into Swaziland. Specifically he was commanded to “put to a stop the barbarous practices of ‘killing off’ and ‘Eating up’ which were traditional punitive methods including capital punishment meted against people who were identified through divination or ‘smelling out’”. Manelisi Genge has explained that

⁴SNA, File J 82 / 03 Report on Swaziland By the Commissioner of Native Affairs for 1902, 10 March 1904, p. 8. The emphasis is mine.

⁵SNA File J 67 / 03, Special Commissioner For Swaziland Forwards Report On The Condition of Swaziland, Report By The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane Swaziland, 1903, pp. 2 - 3. Nobatsabeni is incorrect spelling for Labotsibeni.

These strategies of dealing with wrong - doers had been bones of contention between Swazi rulers, on the one hand and the Anglo - Transvaal alliance on the other, since the colonization of Swaziland by the British and Transvaal governments. For the Swazi rulers, these were time - honored elements of their statecraft in running the internal affairs of their country.⁶

The sentiments articulated by Lagden about the practices of “killing off” and “eating up” indicate that leading officials of the British Administration considered the Swazi to be a barbaric entity. Apparently, it was within the framework of this perception that the immediate setting up of a British Administration in the country was justified. As soon as the Special Commissioner arrived in Swaziland he ensured that these practices were immediately put to an end. For this achievement he received unreserved praises. Lagden remarked that

During the short time of his disposal he has been able to moderate certain evil tendencies and to get into sympathetic touch with the Natives who for the first time in their history are being brought into communion with Government Officers specifically to look after them.⁷

The paternalistic tone in Lagden’s communication underlines the source of the white supremacist ideology. It appears that the negative images which were ascribed to the Swazi and black people generally were guided by paternalistic notions. The assumption underlying such paternalism was that because blacks were ‘inferior’, ‘backward’, ‘uncivilized’ and so on, they could only be brought out of this ‘chaos’ through the guidance and redeeming intervention of a British administration.

This intervention, as viewed by the agents of colonialism, was to the best interests of the colonial subjects. Christopher Fyfe observes that within the context of colonial Africa, the paternal authority of whites “was deemed to be inherent in the racial authority of their

⁶Manelisi Genge, “Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli: Gender and Power”, PhD Thesis, Michigan State University, 2001, p. 411. For more details on this explanation, see, Manelisi Genge, “Land and the Imposition of Colonial rule in Swaziland, 1890-1898”, M. A. Thesis York University, Ontario, 1992, chapter 4.

⁷*Ibid.*

white skin”.⁸ He also asserts that, “Whites in colonial Africa were not ashamed of what they were doing. Many of them were well educated, rational and enlightened. They saw no need to apologise for a system that kept them in power”.⁹ In an attempt to rationalize practices such as ‘killing off’ and ‘Eating Up’ among the Swazi, the Special Commissioner expressed the view that

though extremely repugnant to our civilized ideals, these practices are the immemorial methods of ensuring obedience among people of the temperament and character of the Swazis, who only yield obedience through fear. And when determining the culpability of the Chiefs for these deeds, it must be remembered that they lack the means of civilized communities for enforcing law and order, and that without resorting to these methods, a condition of anarchy would arise in their clans infinitely worse than the evil we so strongly, and rightly condemn.¹⁰

In summarizing his achievement in this regard, and the reaction of the Swazi, the Special Commissioner observed that

As far as I can ascertain the greater proportion of the common people desire to be under the direct government of white officers, for they naturally see in their rule greater security for life and property and a better administration of justice. In all our dealings I have found the Natives perfectly peaceful, respectful and obedient, though somewhat inclined to be dilatory in carrying out orders. This trait is no doubt one of the effects of reaction to be expected in a people hitherto used to be ruled by fear of the ‘Assegai’; it is noticeable in their dealings with their Native Chiefs.¹¹

Finally on 25 June 1903, Britain issued an order - in - council whereby the administration of Swaziland was formally taken over and brought under white rule. Through this instrument the High Commissioner for South Africa was empowered to legislate for

⁸C. Fyfe, “Race, Empire and Historians”, *Race and Class* vol. 3, (1992), p. 22.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁰S .N.A. File J 67 / 03, Special Commissioner For Swaziland Forwards Report On The Condition of Swaziland, Report By The Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Mbabane Swaziland, 1903, p. 1.

¹¹*Ibid.*

Swaziland. According to the provisions of the order - in-council in exercising his power he was to,

Respect any native laws by which the civil relations of any native chiefs, tribes or populations under His Majesty's protection are now regulated, except in so far as the same may be incompatible with the due exercise of His Majesty's power and jurisdiction, or clearly injurious to the welfare of the said Natives.¹²

Subsequently according to Proclamation no. 3 of 1904 Swaziland was to be administered as a province of the Transvaal, thus putting into force *mutatis mutandis* all the laws of the Transvaal. Despite protest by Swazi leaders against this arrangement Swaziland proceeded to be governed as a province of the Transvaal. The 1903 Proclamation had also made provision for the establishment of a Court of Resident Magistrate and a Circuit Court for Swaziland to be presided over by one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the Transvaal.¹³

By an order - in - council, December 1, 1906 Swaziland was removed from the control of the Governor of the Transvaal and placed under the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner for Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. Hamilton Sipho Simelane explains that this change occurred "following the accession in Britain of Sir Henry Campbell - Bannerman's Liberal Party that moved towards giving the Transvaal self - government".¹⁴ Under this arrangement Swaziland did not fall under the supervision of the Secretary of State for Colonies but was instead administered concurrently with Basutoland and Bechuanaland by a High Commissioner resident in South Africa. In March 1907 the Swaziland Administration Proclamation provided for the appointment of a Resident Commissioner who was in charge of the day to day administration of the country. In turn, he was responsible to the High Commissioner. Simelane notes that, "This was the birth of the expression, High Commission Territories, used throughout the

¹²SNA, File RCS 775 / 20, Mr Henri Rolin Asks for Information on Natives Laws, Enclosure to Resident Commissioner's Despatch Swaziland No. 14 of 8 January 1921, p. 1.

¹³Genge, "Gwamile Labotsibeni...", p. 415.

¹⁴Simelane, *Colonialism*, p. 15

colonial period to refer to the three countries”.¹⁵ Communication with the imperial Government was not through the Colonial Office which dealt with almost every other part of the colonial empire but through the Dominions Office.¹⁶ Enraght - Moony was appointed the first Resident Commissioner of Swaziland in April 1907, but was succeeded in October by R. T. Coryndon.

At the time of establishing a British administration in Swaziland Lord Milner was High Commissioner and he was succeeded by Lord Selbourne in April 1905. Acting under the powers conferred and limitations imposed by the order - in - council the High Commissioner promulgated the Swaziland Administration Proclamation. The proclamation preserved “to the Paramount Chief and other native chiefs the jurisdiction they possessed according to native law and custom in civil disputes in which Natives only were concerned, but with a right of appeal to the Resident Commissioner”.¹⁷ The proclamation also declared that the law of Swaziland should be the Roman Dutch Law as modified by Statute, together with such other Statute law which was then, or might be thereafter applied. Richard Levin has explained that, “These laws were amended or elaborated through orders - in - council and proclamations of the High Commissioner and government and High Commissioner’s notices”.¹⁸

The two main aims of the proclamation was to “make all criminal cases, and all civil cases between Europeans and Natives triable only by Courts administering, in such cases, European and not native law”,¹⁹ and “strictly to limit the operation of native law only to

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶For a general structure of the colonial administration in Swaziland, see, Genge, “Gwamile Labotsibeni...”, pp. 30 - 64.

¹⁷SNA, File RCS 775 / 20, Mr Henri Rolin Asks for Information on Natives Laws, Enclosure to Resident Commissioner’s Despatch Swaziland No. 14 of 8 January 1921, pp. 1 - 2.

¹⁸Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p. 40.

¹⁹SNA, File RCS 775 / 20, Mr Henri Rolin Asks for Information on Natives Laws, Enclosure to Resident Commissioner’s Despatch Swaziland No. 14 of 8 January 1921, p. 2.

civil matters between native and native”.²⁰ In this regard Kunene observes that, “Under British rule Swazi ‘Customary Law’ was recognised and the Swazi were administered through the monarchy and local authorities”.²¹ However, as he noted “what was perceived to be ‘Customary Law’ by colonial officials did not necessarily reflect the original law and institutions of the society. Instead these institutions were reshaped in the context of a changing society”.²²

These policies arose out of and generated a cluster of racialised stereotypes held of the Swazi by their colonial masters. The prime stereotype of the Swazi held and propagated by whites was that they were backward and lazy. This stereotype was not only held by white settlers but was equally shared by officials of the early colonial government. As noted earlier, the Special Commissioner, Enraght - Moony reported in 1903 that the main desire of Swazi rulers had been, “the enjoyment of complete and uncontrolled internal independence in the exercise of their barbarous regime”.²³ In the same report he described the Swazi as being characterised by “innate laziness”.²⁴ Hilda Kuper explains that, “‘Natives’ were conceptualized as inherently ‘primitive’ and ‘backward’ by whites drawing from a wide storehouse of notions- popular philosophic, religious, scientific”.²⁵ Implied through these descriptions was the idea that whites were the harbingers of a civilisation from which the Swazi were totally alienated. Kuper further observes,

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Kunene, “British Colonial Policy ...”, p. 34.

²²For a discussion of these issues in different African Societies, See, M. Channock, *Law, Custom and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London : James Currey, 1989).

²³SNA, File J 67 / 03, Special Commissioner for Swaziland Forwards Report on the Condition of Swaziland, 1903.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵H. Kuper, “Colour, Categories and Colonialism: The Swazi Case” in V. Turner (ed.), *Colonialism in Africa 1870 - 1960: Volume 3 Profiles of Change: African Society and Colonial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 291.

‘Western civilization’ was a somewhat vague culture complex, or syndrome, arbitrarily bounded in the minds of the colonizers to embrace monogamy, a monotheistic religion, written languages, a capitalist economy and a wide assortment of material accessories. It was conceptualized not as Western civilization, but ‘civilization’ unqualified and sole. The bearers of this ‘civilization’ identified themselves by the symbol of colour. A ‘civilized’ man was a ‘white man’.²⁶

While most whites possessed this kind of idea about the Swazi it does not, however, tell us much about how these ideas came to be translated into everyday life. As Kuper observes, “Ideology and action operate at different levels, and the assumption of white superiority, or simply innate difference, can be expressed in a wide range of policies and actions”.²⁷ In the case of Swaziland, she adds that, “These depended only partly on the formal distribution of power between white settlers, black subjects and the metropole”.²⁸

3. 2 Taxation

Crawford Young identifies the two key imperatives of the colonial state as the revenue imperative and the hegemony imperative.²⁹ The first demanded tax from the indigenous inhabitants. The second required that the colonial state gain some measure of acquiescence and support from the colony’s African subjects and not be compelled to resort to the repeated exercise of force. Both meant that the colonial state had to exercise its authority through African intermediaries. Variations in the character of colonial states thus centred on the manner and extent of taxation as much as on the space occupied by indigenous intermediaries. In Swaziland, as already, noted a distinct form of “parallel rule” was devised which accorded traditional authorities considerable power. The Swaziland administration also developed its own form of poll tax, described by Young as

²⁶*Ibid.* , p. 290.

²⁷*Ibid.* , p. 292.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹C. Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*(New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

“the mortar with which, block by block, the colonial state was built”.³⁰ Both features of colonial rule in Swaziland helped define its particular brand of race relations.

Soon after the establishment of the administration in Swaziland the need for taxation was considered. Jonathan Crush points out that, “When the British colonial state assumed control of Swaziland in 1902 the imposition of taxation was little more than a formality”.³¹ As he explained “In the British blue print, Swaziland was to be administered as far as possible as a district of the Transvaal; hence there was little question that heavy taxation rates would be applied to the country”.³² Submitting his proposal on the administration of the country the Commissioner for Native Affairs declared that, “I would recommend Taxation on the lines laid down for this Colony, not only to spur the natives to work, but also to help in providing funds to meet the cost of Administration”.³³ In response, a hut tax to be paid by Africans was introduced in Swaziland with the intention of generating a revenue base and driving the Swazi out to seek for work. Jonathan Crush has noted that the, “Swazi were taxed more heavily than any other colonized people in the region”³⁴ adding that, “the accrued tax went primarily on colonial administration and support services for white agriculture”.³⁵ Martin Kaniki also identifies taxation as one key feature that was introduced by the colonial administration in Africa to promote settler interests at the expense of the local population”.³⁶

³⁰*Ibid.* , p. 127.

³¹J. Crush, “Colonial Coercion and the Swazi Tax Revolt of 1903 – 1907”, *Political Geography Quarterly*, vol. 11. (1985), p. 181.

³²*Ibid.*

³³SNA , File J 82 / 03, Report on Swaziland by the Commissioner For Native Affairs, 10 March, 1904, p. 9.

³⁴J. Crush, “The Colour of Civilization: White Farming in Colonial Swaziland, 1910-1940” in A.H. Jeeves and J. Crush (eds.), *White Farms, Black Labour: The State and Agrarian Change in Southern Africa, 1910 - 1950* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997), p. 214.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶M. Kaniki, “The Colonial Economy: The Former British Zones” in A. Boahen (ed.), *General History of Africa vol. II: Africa Under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1985), p. 395.

The general European stereotype was that the Swazi men were too lazy to work.³⁷ Taxation was largely seen as a measure to force the Swazi to work. Gerard Kunene has observed that, “By means of the ‘native tax’ the administration was expected to balance its budget, consisting almost entirely of its own administrative costs”.³⁸ Initially a £2 tax was imposed by the Administration on all Swazi males from the age of eighteen upwards. This was reduced in 1906, as a result of the loss of cattle from East Coast Fever, to £1 only to be raised again in 1916 to £1 15 a head, with a further tax of £1 10 for each additional wife up to a maximum of £4 10 for any one tax payer. Furthermore a dog tax of 5 shillings was imposed from 1910 onwards, and in 1917 each Swazi tax payer had to pay an additional “War Levy” of ten shillings³⁹. In the case of white settlers, Kunene, remarked that, “it was not until 1921 that a poll tax of only £2 per annum was introduced for European settlers from the age of 21(not 18 like the Swazi) upwards”.⁴⁰

Concerns about the application of exorbitant taxation to the Swazi were raised in Swaziland from different quarters. A white man who identified himself as Comet in the *Times of Swaziland* considered the tax imposed on the Swazi as a recipe for revolt. Apart from ongoing rumours of a possible unrest among the Swazi Comet perceived the high taxation as providing ammunition to the Ethiopian Church which was known for harbouring anti-white sentiments. As he pointed out, “What an excellent weapon of offence this Tax gives them”.⁴¹ About two and a half months later a Swazi who identified himself a Matya[sic] Inyoni reasoned through the country’s newspaper that

³⁷See for example, Times of Swaziland (hereafter TOS), “Sauce for the Goose”, 4 June 1898 and SNA, File J 67 / 03, Special Commissioner for Swaziland Forwards Report on the Condition of Swaziland, 10 March, 1903.

³⁸Kunene, “British Colonial Policy ...”, p. 47.

³⁹On these taxes, see, Crush, “Colonial Coercion...”, p. 183 and Kunene, “British Colonial Policy...”, pp. 47 - 48.

⁴⁰Kunene, “British Colonial Policy ...”, p. 54.

⁴¹TOS, “Native Taxes”, 29 July, 1904.

I know it is the custom of white amakosi to make all the Abantu races that come under their rule pay taxes, and now that we have come under the rule of the king of the English I expected that we should have to pay this tax and was quite willing to pay it but I thought like that like Zululand which is under the rule of the British who conquered that country by force of arm; they have been made to pay ten shillings per hut as indemnity and therefore I did not think Amaswazie would be made to pay more than ten shillings having always sought to come under British rule.⁴²

The concerns raised above point to the general dissatisfaction about the manner in which taxation was introduced within Swaziland.⁴³ The forerunner of the colonial Administration, Special Commissioner, Enraght - Moony upon receiving reports of dissatisfaction at the prospects of regular taxation in Swaziland, concluded that, "This is only natural on the part of natives like the Swazis, who have not hitherto been under any established European control, and may continue for a year or two".⁴⁴ In the same report of 1904 the Commissioner mentioned that, "Rumours have been afloat lately of great dissatisfaction among the Natives, generally coupled with the idea that they were being oppressed and harshly treated".⁴⁵ The previous year the Assistant Commissioner of Hlathikhulu had reported to the Special Commissioner that he had gathered information from some African informants that, two messages had passed from Dinizulu to the Queen Regent to ask her to combine with him not to pay tax".⁴⁶ These rumours underlined the administration's fear of possible revolt against taxation by the Swazi.

⁴²TOS, "Chats With a Swazie Chief", 14 October, 1904.

⁴³For a study of Swazi reaction to colonial taxation in the early colonial period, see, Crush, "Colonial Coercion...", pp. 179 - 190.

⁴⁴SNA File J 38 / 04, The Special Commissioner For Swaziland Requested to Furnish a Short Monthly Report For the Information o His Excellency the Governor, Confidential Memorandum from Special Commissioner to Acting Secretary, 30th September, 1904.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, Letter from Special Commissioner to Acting Secretary, 30th June, 1904.

⁴⁶SNA, File J 181 / 03, Special Commissioner of Swaziland: Report from the Sub Commissioner re: Political Position, Letter from Assistant Commissioner Hlathikhulu to Special Commissioner, 5 July, 1903. For a discussion of Dinizulu's confrontations with the authorities of British Natal colonial state, see Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), chapter 1. Dinizulu is at times spelt Dinuzulu and since I am uncertain about what the correct spelling should be I have embraced the version used in the archive.

Further investigations by the Commissioner on this issue led him to believe that the rumours were unfounded. However, whether the rumours were false or true, they communicate something about discontent among the Swazi and the possibility of an uprising whether real or imagined. The fear of an uprising by the Swazi pervaded black and white relations in Swaziland. Writing to the Acting Secretary of the Swaziland Administration, the Special Commissioner explained that he had ordered a black educated man, identified as Cleopas Kunene to leave the country because, “He has had private interviews with the Queen Regent and has been endeavouring to cause dissatisfaction politically”.⁴⁷ Kunene had probably arrived from South Africa as the same report described him as “an agent of a solicitor named Parnasonson[sic] of PieterMaritzburg”. Though the mission behind Kunene’s visit remains unknown the fact that it coincided with a moment when there was widespread discontent about taxation in the country may suggest a possible link between the two.

⁴⁷*Ibid.* , Letter from Special Commissioner to Acting Secretary, 6th May 1904. For descriptions of Cleopas Kunene’s involvement in Swaziland’s affairs since 1894, see, *A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902* (PieterMaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1992), p. 332 and Christopher Coventry Lowe, “Swaziland's Colonial Politics: The Decline of Progressivist South African Nationalism and the Emergence of Swazi Political Traditionalism, 1910 - 1939”, PhD Thesis, Yale University, 1998, p. 239.

3. 3 Colonial Land Policy and Swazi Reaction

Settler colonial states also generated their own particular brand of race relations, much of which was informed by the large scale alienation of land. Martin Kaniki remarks that, “The basic and almost only means of production in the British dependencies in the period up to 1935 was land”.⁴⁸ Christopher Fyfe makes the point that

In British settler Africa, racial hierarchy was more than a basis for authority. It was a charter for land. Whites claimed that they alone were able, and therefore entitled, to make proper use of the potential wealth on and under the soil. Hence they were justified in taking whatever they needed and leaving Africans the rest.⁴⁹

When Robert Thorne Coryndon arrived as the Resident Commissioner in Swaziland in 1907 the most important issue was that of concessions of land. By this time two - thirds of the entire country had already been brought under white ownership. Coryndon immediately set out to settle the disputes surrounding the concessions which led to the Sir George Grey Commission which completed the demarcation of the land in 1909. During the demarcation land was divided among the Swazi, the British Crown and private European land owners. Kunene remarks that

The partition can be seen as part of larger scheme of ‘reconstruction’ and the promotion of British settlement before the eventual incorporation of Swaziland into South Africa, but the effort failed because there were not enough British settlers and much of the land earmarked for such settlement remained vacant or in the hands of absentee landlords.⁵⁰

The Commission which set aside one third of each concession for Swazi occupation did not do much to improve relations between black and whites in Swaziland. At a meeting the Queen Regent had with Lord Selborne over the land issue, Prince Malunge insisted that the Swazi “did not consider for a moment that the white man has got any land in

⁴⁸Kaniki, “The Colonial Economy...”, p. 384.

⁴⁹C. Fyfe, “Race, Empire ...”, p. 17.

⁵⁰Kunene, “British Colonial Policy...”, p. 127.

Swaziland ... the land is ours and the white people were only lent rights here”.⁵¹ Ronald Hyam remarks that, “After 1907 a general distrust of Europeans was engendered long to remain influential in Swazi policy”⁵². Jonathan Crush has described the partition as, “providing land for settler enterprise and subdividing the Swazi labour force in order to secure a cheap and stable supply of workers for settler estate production”.⁵³ As a result of this process the Swazi peasantry was divided into two groups. The first group comprised Swazi families who were resident in the reserves and in the second were those who found themselves unable to move into the reserves and were thus forced to become tenant labourers or squatters on European farms. A grace period of five years (lapsing in 1914) was given to Swazi families living on white farms to vacate to Native Areas. Crush observed that, “the 1907 land partition was never the cut - and dried - solution to the farm labour problem that the colonial engineers once hoped it might be”.⁵⁴

After 1914 about 20 000 Swazi peasants remained on private land as squatters.⁵⁵ Kunene notes that

As a general rule most white settlers, anxious to procure adequate supplies of labour, were willing to allow Swazis to remain on the farms even after the termination of the period of concurrent occupation. On the other hand a number of families were, for various reasons, including the shortage of suitable land in neighbouring reserves, unwilling to move. Many of those with access to land in the neighbouring reserves left on their own accord, while those who had no access remained and entered into tenancy agreements with their landlords.⁵⁶

⁵¹Crush, *The Struggle*, p. 159.

⁵²R. Hyam, *The Failure of South African Expansion, 1908 – 1948* (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 9.

⁵³Crush, *The Struggle*, p. 7.

⁵⁴J. Crush “Landlords, Tenants and Colonial Social Engineers: The Farm Labour Question in Early Colonial Swaziland”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, (1985), p. 257.

⁵⁵For more details, see, J. S. Crush, “Landlords, Tenants and Social Engineers: The Farm Labour Question in Early Colonial Swaziland”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 2 (1985), pp. 237 - 257.

⁵⁶Kunene, “British Colonial Policy...”, p. 92.

This transformation of leasehold rights into inalienable property rights in 1907, set the stage for white settlement and farming on a larger scale.⁵⁷ Bonginkosi Sikhondze argues that while around this time concerted efforts were made to turn the Swazi into a labour force to provide services on settler and company farms, the cultivation of cash crops remained, at least in its initial stages, exclusively a European settler preserve.⁵⁸ He further pointed out though that Swazi cash crop cultivation began to receive encouragement after the First World War, it was seriously affected by discrimination with regard to credit facilities, markets and settler interests.⁵⁹ It is in relation to this discrimination he notes, for example, that, “Most prominent among the cotton growing areas in the early 1910s was Hlathikhulu which became the pillar of settler racist feelings towards Swazi cotton growers”.⁶⁰ Similarly, Crush points out that, “For the next three decades, the British actively promoted white settlement, pampering white agriculture with discriminatory taxation, financial support programmes, and the sale of crown land at firesale prices to incoming whites”.⁶¹ Largely influenced by Booth, Kunene pointed out that

In concrete terms this involved state intervention which was in large measure a function of the small but effectively organised and determined cadre of white concessionaires, mainly English speaking and backed by British capital, who seized upon the opportunity of a new and sympathetic British presence to legitimise concessions of highly questionable origin and propriety.⁶²

Such conditions implied that the question of land alienation would continue to be a source of tension between blacks and whites in Swaziland. In 1921 the same year Mona was installed as Sobhuza II *Ingwenyama* of the Swazi. Friction became so serious that

⁵⁷Crush, *The Struggle*, p. 34.

⁵⁸B. A. B. , Sikhondze, *Beyond Subsistence: Aspects of the Political Economy of Swaziland*(Matsapha: Mandu Printers, 2004), p. 25.

⁵⁹Ibid. , pp. 25 - 80.

⁶⁰Ibid. , p. 52.

⁶¹Crush, “The Colour of Civilization...”, p. 215.

⁶²Kunene, “British Colonial Policy...”, pp. 68-69. Also see, A. R. Booth, *Historical Dictionary of Swaziland* 2nd ed. , (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2000), p. 21.

soon after his installation King Sobhuza II took up the issue with the British government. After leading a delegation to London in 1922, two years later Sobhuza launched a lawsuit against Allister Miller and other prominent white settlers. Sobhuza's action was partly influenced by Miller's decision, "to expel (Chief Maloyi) Kunene's followers from Dalriach, in an imperious manner, for refusal to perform farm labour".⁶³ The case was heard at the Special Court of Swaziland and ruled in favour of Miller on the grounds that Sobhuza was only a Paramount Chief and that Miller had the right to eject any tenant for refusing to carry out his work obligation. Sobhuza appealed the verdict to the Privy Council through his lawyer Pixley Ka I Seme. The Privy Council rejected the appeal in April 1926.

Consequently, Sobhuza named his royal residence situated on the Lancabane ridge, "Lozithehlezi" which means, "sitting surrounded by my enemies". The naming of the residence can be seen as Sobhuza's metaphorical expression of the threat that whites posed to his position as leader of the Swazi. Kunene observed that, "The dismissal of the case increased Swazi resentment and largely reinforced their distrust of the European settlers, the Administration and the British government".⁶⁴ Similarly, Cazziol remarks that

When the verdict reached Mbabane, king Sobhuza II publicly denounced the British as deceitful and untrustworthy before the assembly of chiefs and elders of the nation (Libandla). This strong indictment against the people that the Swazi had regarded as their friends and protectors did not go unnoticed and was felt by the whole nation.⁶⁵

⁶³Booth, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 270. The insert is mine.

⁶⁴Kunene, "British Colonial Policy...", p. 124.

⁶⁵R. J. Cazziol, *The Swazi Zionists: An Indigenous Religious Movement in Southern Africa* (Manzini: s.n., 1987), p. 50. Cazziol has erroneously dated the Privy Council Judgement. It was not in 1924 as he claims. The correct year is 1926.

Cazziol further notes that in the subsequent years there was “gradual alienation of the Swazi from anything that was associated with European customs and values”.⁶⁶ Alan Booth likewise points out that the naming of the residence, “reflected his extreme bitterness and frustration over the injustice of the Privy Council’s denial of his appeal in the Sobhuza II vs. Allister case in 1926”.⁶⁷

The land holding settler community adopted a predictably diametrically opposite attitude. Its foremost spokesman Allister Miller greeted the decision with the following comment

The happy conclusion of this unfortunate litigation has relieved us, but by no means sees us out of the wood. Mercifully it has temporarily saved territorial recriminations which are repugnant to any right thinking person living as we do *en famille* and depended for peace and amity on each other’s society and personal relationships.⁶⁸

He proceeded to reveal that

Had the verdict been unfavourable to the Crown we would have immediately taken the plunge, in fact so grave would the consequences have been that the Europeans had secretly organized a mass meeting to be called within a few days of the announcement, to appeal to His Excellency to personally come to Swaziland and deal with an inevitably grave situation.⁶⁹

Miller also noted that, “Europeans in the country are of the opinion that had the appeal been upheld the greater portion of the natives would immediately have rushed to white farms in the firm belief that a decision favourable to the People would justify them in doing so”.⁷⁰ He added that, “During the past twelve months there have been considerable movements of the natives in certain parts of the country on to European land, and I am

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ibid.* , p. 158.

⁶⁸KCAL, File 116, Ms 472 a, Confidential letters to B. E. H. Clifford, Imperial Secretary, Cape Town, on reaction of Swazis to Privy Council Judgement, 1926.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

aware personally that the natives who are still on Native area have discussed the areas which they intend to occupy when the judgement was given”.⁷¹ These developments illustrate the manner in which black and white relations had soured over the land issue. When the news of the judgement arrived in Swaziland it is said that a certain Swazi man, identified as Raymond Vilakati travelled from Mbabane to Zombodze to tell Mills, the white garage man that, “It is not the end of it”.⁷² Raymond Vilakati had by 1924 succeeded Benjamin Nxumalo and Josiah Vilakati as Sobhuza’s private secretary.⁷³ His statement underlines not only current but also the subsequent tension that would surround the land question in Swaziland.

Miller attempted to capture the feelings and attitudes from each side as follows;

We therefore have on the one side a great number of natives, who relying on a return for their sacrifices showed in their attitudes towards Europeans, or in ordinary conversation with them, or by anticipatory migration from Native to European land that they believed in an ultimately favourable result. On the other hand we have some Europeans, who have been waiting for the result which has been announced to evict natives who are guilty of real or imaginary obstruction or insolence.⁷⁴

Miller also reflected upon the impact that the judgement had had on Sobhuza. Still writing to the imperial Secretary, he asked him to, “Consider the future of the Paramount Chief”.⁷⁵ Contemplating how Sobhuza would respond to the issue, he observed that, “He has now to justify himself. How is he going to do it? Most probably he will assert that courts formed of Europeans will favour Europeans”.⁷⁶ Miller believed that, “the white

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷²*Ibid.* This is a distance of about thirty kilometres.

⁷³On Raymond Vilakati, see, Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, pp. 342 - 343 and C. Lowe, “Swaziland’s Colonial Politics ...”, pp. 36 - 37.

⁷⁴KCAL, File 116, Ms 472 a, Confidential letters to B. E. H. Clifford, Imperial Secretary, Cape Town, on reaction of Swazis to Privy Council Judgement, 1926.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

man is so inextricably mixed up in the business that we must be made the scapegoat”.⁷⁷ Miller’s prediction was that Sobhuza from this time on, would have the choice between taking a pro-government stance and continuing in his “progressive” tactics of challenging it. As he remarked,

I have never had anything to do with the youngster since he was a child. But one thing is quite certain he is now going to act and develop either under the influence of the Government, or with a grievance, under the influence of the semi-educated natives with whom he is surrounded, and we all feel that now is the crucial moment for the Government to assert its ascendancy over him to decide as a matter of fact on the line of his development.⁷⁸

Miller had always subscribed to the view that Government had to assert firm authority over the Swazi. He was thus critical of Swazi development outside the guidance of the Government and their British masters. These sentiments were clearly captured when he communicated with the Secretary of the Swaziland Corporation Company on the judgement of the Privy Council on the land issue as follows;

The Swazi are extremely law-abiding and easily governed people if they have a strong hand to control them. They are quick to recognise strength of character and purpose. In common with other native races in South Africa they are beginning to be inflicted with what writers call ‘a developing race consciousness’, but this has so far only reached the youthful Paramount Chief who has surrounded himself with a number of semi-educated natives of the 4th standard, of the Swazi and other tribes who flatter him into the belief of undue proportion.⁷⁹

Alan Booth has noted that after losing the lawsuit case, “Sobhuza changed his tactics and at the same time altered his persona, refashioning himself into an arch-traditionalist.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

⁷⁹KCAL, File 177, Ms Mil 1. 08. 44, Privy Council Judgement, Letter from Managing Director of Swaziland Corporation Company to Secretary of Swaziland Corporation Company, 18 May 1926.

Thenceforth, “traditionalism”, authentic or manufactured, became both the essence and basis of his political legitimacy”.⁸⁰ Similarly Hugh Macmillan observes that;

The mid - 1920s marked a watershed between conservative resistance and the conscious revival and use of ‘tradition’ as weapon of mobilisation. The realisation of the need for a change in tactics came with the failure not only of Sobhuza’s deputation to London in 1922 - 3, but also with the subsequent test case on the land partition brought against Allister Miller and finally rejected by the Privy Council in 1926.⁸¹

Christopher Lowe saw this stage as marking what he describes as “The crisis of the progressivist strategy”,⁸² by which he means a strategy used by the Swazi traditional rulers to confront the colonial administration in its own terms. As he observes, that subsequent period was characterised by closer co-operation of the Swazi aristocracy with the British administration, a position which was, “compatible with British desires about developing a system of indirect rule in Swaziland that would coopt the royalty and chiefs as willing subordinates in governance”.⁸³ However, the issue of land alienation continued to haunt the Swazi for more than a decade before Sobhuza emerged with another strategy to deal with it.⁸⁴ By the 1930s land shortage among the Swazi had become acute. In November 1941 Sobhuza II addressed a petition to the British king-in-parliament addressing among other issues British colonial policy with regard to land.⁸⁵ Ackson Kanduza observes that, “The immediate cause of the petition was the 1937 proposal to introduce indirect rule in Swaziland to harmonize it with the other High

⁸⁰Booth, *Historical Dictionary...*, p. 93. For an extended discussion of how Swaziland’s colonial politics changed from being progressivist to traditionalists, see, Lowe, “Swaziland’s Colonial Politics...”.

⁸¹H. Macmillan, “Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of ‘Tradition’ ”, *Journal of Modern African Studies* vol. 23, no. 4 (1985), p. 647.

⁸²For a discussion of this period which he also perceives as marking the beginning of “traditionalist innovation in Swazi politics, see, Lowe, “Swaziland’s Colonial Politics...”, pp. 385 - 394 and 400 - 407.

⁸³*Ibid.* , p. 405.

⁸⁴On the Land Partition, Labour Tenancy and Swazi Reaction, see for example, J. S. Crush, “Landlords, Tenants and Social Engineers...” and Kunene, “British Colonial Policy”, pp. 65 - 140.

⁸⁵See, UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR AD 843, File 18. 4. 1, The Petition of Sobhuza II O. B. E. , Paramount Chief of Swaziland and the Swazi National Council to the British King-in Parliament, November 1941.

Commission Territories”.⁸⁶ Kunene further explains that, “In 1941 the Administration, in line with the policy of indirect rule which had been applied in most British colonies but not in Swaziland, proposed to introduce legislation aimed at controlling the appointment and power of chiefs”.⁸⁷ He further points out that, “Since the power of the Chiefs and the ruling Swazi leadership were based on the control and distribution of land, the proposed legislation was bound not only to reduce their political powers but also to restrict their control over land its distribution”.⁸⁸ Hilda Kuper mentioned to The Anti - Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society that in the light of these proposals Sobhuza was seriously contemplating to abdicate, “since he considers that under the new Proclamation ‘Kingship’ would be meaningless”.⁸⁹ Against this background Sobhuza submitted that

The history of Swaziland from the time of the Order - in - Council of June, 1903, shows that there has been a progressively increasing tendency on the part of those responsible for the Administration of the country to whittle away step by step the rights of the Paramount Chief and his Nation. Instead of the British rule being entirely in the interests of the Swazi Nation, foreign elements have been allowed to establish a firm foothold in the country of the Swazis, contrary to the undertakings and guarantees given from the beginning.⁹⁰

In reviewing the history of the Swazi nation from the late nineteenth century Sobhuza showed in detail how the British had betrayed the Swazi by breaking promises made with regard to protecting Swazi law and institutions, land rights and the internal independence of the Swazi nation. Through the petition Sobhuza was able to make suggestions concerning the proposed administrative measures including the promulgation of the Native Proclamation of 1944 which as Richard Levin notes, “was to vest the power of

⁸⁶A. M. Kanduza, “Evolving Significance of Sobhuza’s 1941 Petition”, *TransAfrican Journal of History*, vol. 25, (1996) , p. 110.

⁸⁷Kunene, “British Colonial Policy...”, p. 326.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

⁸⁹UWL / William Cullen Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843, 18. 1, Protectorates: Swaziland: Petition of the Paramount Chief and Council, Letter from The Anti - Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society to Senator Rheinallt Jones, 23 December, 1942, p. 2.

⁹⁰*Ibid.* , p. 45.

appointing and deposing chiefs, including the Paramount Chief, with the British High Commissioner”.⁹¹ Sobhuza’s petition led to the revision of the Proclamation.⁹² British land policy was also revised and some land was returned to the Swazi.

It was within the framework of these changes that the Swaziland Native Land Settlement Scheme which sought to provide land to over 4000 Swazi families was formulated. Simelane remarks that, “By the end of 1943, a total of 229, 160 acres of land had been bought from European landholders, particularly from absentee landlords residing in South Africa. At the end of 1944 approximately 134, 922 acres of Crown Land were added to the 1943 total”.⁹³ These changes ultimately entrenched the power and influence of the aristocracy over the Swazi peasants.⁹⁴ While the British government considered that the provision of land to the Swazi was crucial to solving the problem of land shortage among the Swazi, local settlers interpreted it as an anti - settler attitude as they were convinced that Swazi interests would be better served with land ownership in European hands. They also feared that the reversal of a land policy on which their prosperity was based would preclude European settlement in Swaziland.⁹⁵ The Swazi on the other hand were suspicious about settling and engaging in production on land that under the control of the state. Kanduza has warned that, “it would be a serious error to view land and agricultural reforms initiated in the 1940s as a resounding success”.⁹⁶ His warning considers that though the Swazi had regained some of the land the proposed settlement and production schemes did not take off since the co - operation of the Swazi commoners

⁹¹For a discussion of these proclamations, see, for example, J. S. M. Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland* 3rd ed. (Cape Town: Longman, 1988), pp.221 – 222, Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp. 51 - 54 and M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy Of Late Colonialism* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers,1996), pp. 88 - 89.

⁹²For the revised version, see, SNA Special Library, Swaziland Native Proclamation, 1950.

⁹³Simelane, *Colonialism*, p. 50.

⁹⁴In historiographical terms, the petition served to provide a collective national memory on Swazi law and custom, land alienation, Swazi sovereignty and general attitude towards colonial rule.

⁹⁵Simelane, *Colonialism*, p. 43.

⁹⁶Kanduza, “Evolving Significance...”, p. 114.

and the monarchy was crucial, and the schemes lacked the support of both since they remained under the control of the colonial state.⁹⁷

3.4 Education

Education was one critical sector through which the racist policies of the British Administration in Swaziland were manifest. Ongoing public debate among white settlers in the country reflected prevailing contemporary views on the matter. Such views reflected the manner in which blacks were perceived by different whites. At least three views appear to have influenced public thinking on education. The views appeared in Swaziland's only published paper at the time towards the end of 1904. The first view was that blacks were not to be exposed to western life including education. Blacks as this view was propagated, were to be left on their own to continue living as their ancestors lived. According to this view, exposing blacks to education and western living was tantamount to imposing on them a foreign value system as well as depriving them of the right to enjoy what they had been historically and culturally accustomed to. As this argument went, "Preserve him in pristine innocence. Why rob him of rights and privileges enjoyed by his fore fathers through generations? Leave him his land and laws"⁹⁸. In effect blacks were to be confined to a world of their own and prevented from coming into encounter with experiences outside their culture and traditions.

The second view was that while blacks were to be incorporated into the development of a modern economy they were to be kept in a state of ignorance to avoid competition with whites. According to the proponents of this view a black person was better off left ignorant since, "he is fairly honest when a savage, but a rogue when civilized".⁹⁹ At the centre of this idea was the notion that blacks were to be incorporated into the modern economy as long as that brought tangible benefits to whites. Such a notion stood in opposition of any moves to expose blacks to systems that might lead them to progress and development. The third view considered that blacks should be incorporated into the

⁹⁷For further discussion on how the schemes were frustrated, see, Simelane, *Colonialism*, pp. 55 - 88.

⁹⁸TOS, "The Natives and the Future", 30 October, 1903.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*

modern economy as productive agents. A representative of this view submitted the opinion that, “Education is the medium by which the native is to be made useful”.¹⁰⁰ It would appear that generally influential stake holders in the field of education such as missionaries, prominent white settlers and the administration subscribed to this last view. Differences only arose over the manner of how this was to be carried out and nature of education to be provided to blacks.

A respondent who was of the opinion that the provision of education did not present any threat to white settlers articulated the opinion that the blacks had to be offered education to participate meaningfully in economic development. He remarked that, “We must admit of a certain impatience towards the white man who expresses fear that the native-the Bantu- in competition with industrious European will be able to hold his own. It would be a grave reflection on our race if such a state of affairs were possible”.¹⁰¹ The author of the article went on to quote Gilmer Speed who in 1900 observed, “The Negro has lived in New York for two centuries. Twenty five years ago they were employed as waiters, coachmen, barbers and caterers. They failed because of their inability to compete with whites”.¹⁰² The writer further claimed about the Negro that,

He once lived in New York and flourished there because it was not worth the white man’s while to compete with him but once the Caucasian put his shoulder to the wheel the African had to go. And history will repeat itself in South Africa, where the native should become a useful unit in those small posts that are always open to the semi-qualified tradesman and mechanic in a young pioneering community.¹⁰³

The article went on to draw a political conclusion,

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹TOS, “The Native Question”, 6 November, 1903.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*

¹⁰³*Ibid.*

We carry the argument further and maintain that if the native were capable of holding his side by side with the educated and skilled European then he would be entitled to a voice in the affairs of the state. It is because he cannot do so, mentally he is and must for generations remain inferior, that the question of his political enfranchisement is an affront to the community, and we earnestly hope, is not likely to enter into the field of practical politics.¹⁰⁴

This submission missed the point that the exclusion of black people from political participation was not a sign of their inability to compete with whites but a product of their frustration and marginalisation by whites. The reluctance to fully expose blacks to western forms of knowledge such as education was closely associated with the intention to marginalise them in the political and economic spheres. This thinking, for example, was articulated when one writer who was opposed to the idea of providing education to the Swazi on the basis that it would bring them to the same level as the Europeans, argued that

How much of a white man's country would be Swaziland, or any other part of South Africa if the colonial governments entered on a wholesale crusade of literary and technical education of the native. Your capitalist might manage to make his money, and perhaps your storekeeper but where would be your artisan, your white labourer be, - the small man who is the backbone and sinew of the community.¹⁰⁵

While education was provided to the blacks during the course of the British administration in Swaziland it was not at par with that provided to whites. This was particularly the case with regard to the allocation of resources to the main racial groups in the country. The policy followed by the British administration in its provision for education in Swaziland reflected certain racist principles. Generally better and more resources were allocated to white schools, followed by Coloured and then black. Because of the racial divisions in the country the education system was also racialised.

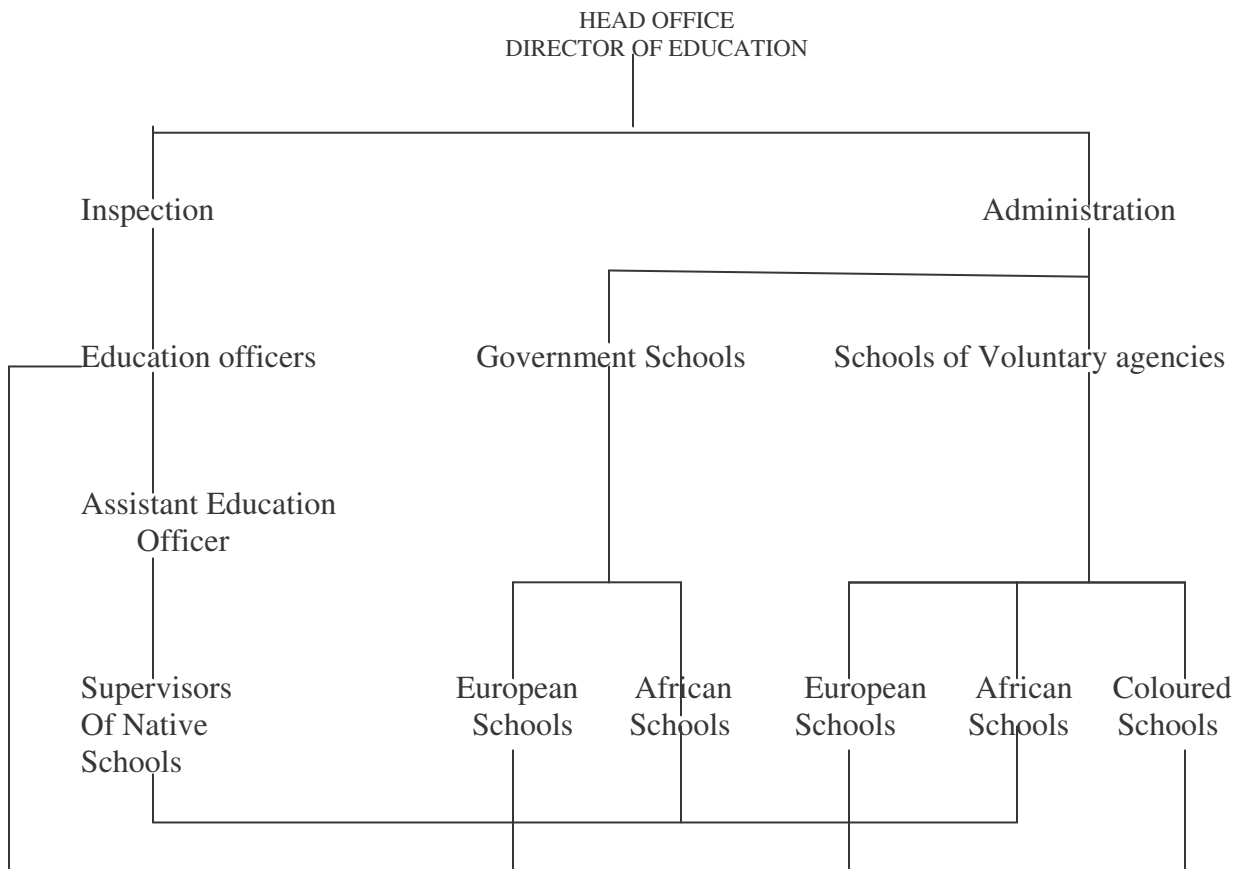
¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

The diagram below shows the racialised structure of the educational system as it developed since 1902.

Diagram 1.

Swaziland Educational System



Source: UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, The Annual Report: Director Of Education, 1949, p. 8.

From 1902 onwards the number of Christian missions involved in educational work in Swaziland increased rapidly.¹⁰⁶ Numerous schools were established in the country largely by missionaries. The schools established in the country were mainly classified as tribal schools, national schools, mission schools and government aided schools. These schools catered for white, Coloured and black children separately. By 1924 out of a total of about 22 000 Swazi children of school going age not more than 3 000 were attending school in over one hundred mission schools.¹⁰⁷ The Director of Education's Annual Report in the same year noted that, "The provision of education for European children dated from 1902 and followed closely, so far as funds permitted, the system adopted in the Transvaal"¹⁰⁸. In the 1920s three government aided schools for European children were operated at Goedgegun, Bremersdorp and Siteki. In Mbabane, Christopher Watts had started a school for white children known as St. Marks European School.¹⁰⁹

It would appear that the legacy of providing education along racial lines in Swaziland was spearheaded by the Anglican Church. In Mbabane the church established a school for Europeans, at Mpolonjeni, a Coloured school and an African school for Africans at Usuthu Mission. Christopher Watts played a major role in this development. J. S. M. Matsebula mentioned that Watts drew criticism for introducing a system that was not even practised in his home country. Perhaps motivated by loyalty to his church Matsebula was quick to point out that, "However, it must be appreciated that he could not singly go against the policy of the government no matter how enthusiastic he might have been to have a mixed school."¹¹⁰ At its best, Matsebula's defence is an acknowledgement

¹⁰⁶UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, *Swaziland: The Annual Report of the Director of Education*, 1949, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.* , p. 4.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.* , p. 5.

¹¹⁰UWL / William Cullen Africana Library Pamphlet, J. S. M. Matsebula, *The Church of the Province of South Africa(The Anglican Church) in Swaziland* Mbabane: Anglican Church, 1976), p. 21. Such a defence

of the historical forces that were at play in introducing racialised education in the country but at its worst, it is a failure to analyse critically the racialised nature of Swaziland's education system and its implications for the general development of the Swazi.

The character of African education was also influenced by the lurch towards the neo-traditionalism undertaken by Sobhuza after the loss of the Privy Council appeal in 1926 over the land partition issue. In 1933 he proposed the introduction of the *Libutfo*(singular) / *emabutfo* (plural) system in schools.¹¹¹ J. S. M. Matsebula explains that, "Sobhuza II considered the Boy Scout Movement a good example, but not suited to Swazi youth. He therefore conceived and initiated a special organisation which he named the Libutfo system".¹¹² The *Libutfo* system referred to the classification of Swazi children according age-groups from the age of about ten years to fifteen years old. Boys and girls continued to be members of their age-groups even when they were grown up, until death. In these groups members were taught Swazi traditional values at a tender age and socialised to pay their allegiance and loyalty to the monarchy. Hilda Kuper remarked that:

He observed a breakdown in traditional courtesy, respect and obedience and an increase in immorality and illegitimacy. This he associated with a growing rift between Christians and non-Christians, educated and uneducated. As a remedy, he suggested the adaptation of the regimental system (*emabutfo*) to the modern western school system. The regiments, which automatically included every Swazi male on the basis of age, were also the main educational institutions of the past, imposing and enforcing a national code of discipline, morality and unity.¹¹³

is unusual for Matsebula who is well known for his stinging criticism against actions and attitudes by whites which tend to undermine certain Swazi values. Perhaps he felt the racialisation of the education system in the country did not necessarily pose that threat. Matsebula's critical flare may have been further blunted by the fact that, as he mentions in the preface, the writing of the booklet was motivated by the "good work of a British Christian woman who sponsored both my primary and high school education".

¹¹¹See, UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, AD 843, 84. 2, Notes of a meeting held Held between the Paramount Chief, Swazi National Council and the Resident Commissioner at Mbabane on Wednesday, 3 May, 1933.

¹¹²J. S. M. Matsebula, *The King's Eye* (Cape Town: Longman, 1983), p. 15.

¹¹³Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p. 105.

In his memorandum on Native Education, Sobhuza pleaded with the concerned stakeholders for the incorporation of this system into the Swaziland education system. In introducing his plea Sobhuza acknowledged the efforts made by the Department of Education, missionaries and other stakeholders in providing education to the Swazi. Despite the benefits which had been realised under the western type of education, he pointed out, certain disadvantages to the Swazi, namely that

(a)It causes the Swazi scholar to despise Swazi institutions, and his indigeneous[sic] culture; (b)It causes him to become ill-fitted to his environment; (c)It releases him from the wholesome restraints which the Swazi indigenous method of education inculcated, and does not set up any effective substitutes for them.¹¹⁴

Sobhuza concluded by pleading for a sympathetic consideration of his proposal from the Administration, Europeans and other Swazi people. After a series of deliberations the Matsapha National School was chosen as a site for experiment for Sobhuza's idea. Though the experiment opened on a positive note, it later turned out that it was not sustainable. Anderson Nxumalo has blamed the failure on the lack of appreciation of Swazi values by whites. He explained that, "Because the Headmaster was a white man he failed it since he viewed it as incompatible with the education system".¹¹⁵ Nxumalo observed that this proposal marked the importance of integrating the modern system of education with Swazi cultural practices.¹¹⁶ He further lamented that, "It is regrettable that whites, particularly missionaries condemned our culture wholesale without taking into consideration that there were some positive aspects, compatible with Christian principles to a certain degree; for example, we did condone lies in our culture, with Christianity it was the same".¹¹⁷ The move to introduce the *Libutfo* system in schools

¹¹⁴UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD 843, File B 84. 2., Protectorate Incidents, Ibutho Papers.

¹¹⁵Interview, Anderson Nxumalo, Manzini, Coates Valley, 14 November, 2005.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

should be understood as part of Sobhuza's programme of the 1930s / 1940s to revive traditional practices and institutions in the country.¹¹⁸

During the period between the two world wars conditions in the management and delivery of educational services in Swaziland remained more or less unchanged.¹¹⁹ There had however, come to the fore, largely under the influence of the new educational policies being explored and adopted in the Union, a local movement to review and improve the system of education for European children. In Swaziland the centralisation of the schooling which was accompanied by the closing down of small farm schools was realised. With the passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts it became possible to carry out this policy. The large - scale mining and afforestation projects in the Piggs Peak area also necessitated the opening of primary schools at the Havelock Mine and Piggs Peak, as without these local facilities the companies concerned would have been unable to recruit and retain European staff which they required.¹²⁰

Because of the racial divisions of the Territory, the work of the education Department fell into three clear - cut divisions, European, African and Coloured.¹²¹ By the mid - 1940s each section of the population had developed its own schools, which, in the case of the African and Coloured communities, had their origin in and have developed on the foundation provided by in the first instance by Voluntary Agencies.¹²² In the case of the Europeans, no doubt because of the fact that the population of the Europeans was small and scattered, facilities were, more or less from the start provided in the form of Government maintained schools.¹²³ African education was largely the responsibility of

¹¹⁸See, for example, H. Macmillan, "Administrators, anthropologists and traditionalists in colonial Swaziland: the case of the amabhaca fines" *Africa*, Vol. 65, no. 4 (1995), pp. 545 - 564.

¹¹⁹UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Government Publications, Swaziland: The Annual Report of the Director of Education, 1949, p. 5.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 5 - 6.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, p.7.

¹²²*Ibid.*

¹²³*Ibid.*

Christian missions which were in receipt of generous grants - in - aid of salaries and in addition received considerable assistance in the way of essential books and school equipment and building grants. Education for European children had long been compulsory from the age of seven to sixteen years or the successful completion of Standard VIII. Proclamation 31 of 1943 centralised control in the Education Department and provided generally in regard to compulsory attendance, the establishment of Government schools, the payment of grants to private aided schools, the placing of children in special schools, the payment of bursaries and the establishment of school boards and school committees.

This study argues that the provision of education and other facilities along racial lines was a direct product of discriminatory policies and practices exhibited largely towards Africans in the country. Such discrimination was covered up in official policy by such explanations as that it was difficult to provide adequate facilities for the larger black population. This position was also supported by emphasizing that the colonial elite was transient and had therefore, to be prepared for the next place of service. The Pim report revealed that the little development that had taken place in the country since the British assumed administration of Swaziland was characterised by the provision of European social services. Government was doing very little to make any contribution in the field African so that the burden to establish schools for African children fell on Christian missions. The Table below illustrates the impact of government policy on the education Africans.

Table 1**Total number of African Schools and Enrolment, 1930-1945.**

Year	No. of Government Aided Schools	No. of Non - Aided Schools	Total no. of Schools	Enrolment in Government Aided Schools	Enrolment in Non - Aided Schools	Total Enrolment in All Schools
1930	79	126	205	-	-	5499
1931	86	119	205	-	-	6434
1932	85	120	205	4314	2555	6869
1933	88	146	234	3834	3417	7251
1934	104	147	251	4444	3289	7733
1935	107	195	302	4265	3903	8168
1936	104	183	287	4673	4646	9319
1937-1938	105	171	276	4710	3577	8287
1939 – 1942	No	Official	Reports	Available		
1943	103	120	223	5663	2343	8008
1944	100	90	190	6355	2308	8663
1945	104	84	188	7598	2330	9928

Source: UWL / Historical Papers, SAIRR, File AD 843, File 18. 4. 1. Swaziland, Criticism of Education Proclamation No. 6 of 1940 Submitted to Government By the Swaziland Progressive Association– 1947.

The above table shows that up to 1945 the Swaziland colonial Administration had done very little to improve African education. This negligence was a product of the discriminatory attitudes and practices exhibited towards the Africans by the government. This discrimination was closely supported by the European Advisory Council. The white dominated Education Department also ensured that white settler interests were always placed ahead of those of Africans. This policy extended to African professionals. As J. S. M. Matsebula who had a relatively long working experience in Swaziland and South Africa as a teacher and headmaster and was in possession of a Bachelor of Arts (B. A.) degree by this time mentioned that, “Ever since the middle of the 1940s I had been trying to return to Swaziland to work. I applied for posts in the Education Department, but posts were always given to expatriates”.¹²⁴ As he saw it, “That was no wonder, as the top administration officials were all expatriates. Locals were unacceptable so I was unacceptable”.¹²⁵ Mavela Shongwe argues that teachers’ organizations in colonial Swaziland were racially divided.¹²⁶ Working and living conditions for white, black and Coloured teachers were different thus entrenching further racial divisions within the education system. Under this arrangement the norm was for white schools to be allocated more resources and better facilities.

¹²⁴Matsebula, *The King’s Eye*, p. 57

¹²⁵*Ibid.*

¹²⁶M. Shongwe, “Evolution of a Teachers’ Organization in Swaziland, 1928 - 1999”, M. A. Thesis, University of Swaziland, 2002.

3. 5 Boer Settlement

After the South African War, the resettlement of Swaziland by whites took place gradually. Boers were the first to re-enter the country after the war. Jonathan Crush has noted that, “The first white settlers to enter Swaziland in any numbers were welcomed neither by the Swazi nor by the new British administration”.¹²⁷ These settlers were described as “generally indigent Boer ‘bywoners’ – poor whites – who had been squatting in Swaziland after the war”.¹²⁸ According to Crush, British colonial officials “regarded the *bywoner* presence as highly undesirable ... As early as 1904, disputes between Boer and Swazi over land had become commonplace. Such incidents were usually provoked by the *bywoners* who colonial officials found to be very intolerant and showing little regard for native rights”.¹²⁹

Reporting on the situation in Swaziland just after the Anglo - Boer War, the Commissioner for Native Affairs noted that, “The attitude of the Swazis to the Boers is not conciliatory, though no overt hostility has been shown to those Boers who have re-entered the territory”.¹³⁰ The Commissioner reported that, “For this attitude the principal reason may be found to be the large number of winter grazing Concessions obtained by Boers from the late King Mbandine and in a great many cases the unscrupulous converting of such winter grazing Concessions into residential farms”.¹³¹ Another factor was that the Swazi had seized a large numbers of cattle driven by the Boers into Swaziland during the South African War.¹³² The Swazi had by now considered that the cattle belonged to them. However, the return of Boers into the country after the war posed the possibility of the Swazi having to return the cattle. Since the Swazi had seized

¹²⁷Crush, *The Struggle*, p. 132.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

¹²⁹*Ibid.*

¹³⁰SNA, File J 82 / 03, Report on Swaziland by the Commissioner for Native Affairs for 1902, 10 March, 1904, p. 11.

¹³¹*Ibid.*

¹³²*Ibid.*

the cattle with British approval it became difficult for the newly established British Administration to compel the Swazi to return the cattle to the returning Boers.

Before the war, the European population in Swaziland was estimated between 1000 and 1400.¹³³ After the war, Special Commissioner, Enraught-Mooney, supported by a force of the South African Constabulary, crossed the border from the Transvaal to establish a British colonial administration. Around this time, about 500 Europeans were estimated to be living in Swaziland, of whom 366 were described as Dutch agriculturalists occupying the southern part of Swaziland under poor economic conditions. They made an effort to establish themselves as tobacco and cotton as well as maize farmers. According to Crush, “The *bywoner* households scraped a living out of the soil by planting a few acres of maize and vegetables each season for their own consumption”.¹³⁴ He ascribed the low productivity in their agriculture to backward farming methods and to lack of resources.

In another instance, Miller informed the Secretary of the Swaziland Corporation that, “The Dutch in the south are always highly susceptible to anything in the form of native unrest, and on the least pretext rush into the laager”.¹³⁵ Between the 6th and 10th March 1928, for example, rumours widely circulated among the Europeans at Hluthi that there would be an uprising by the Swazi against whites.¹³⁶ Again, investigations by the Assistant Commissioner confirmed no such uprising. By the beginning of the 1930s a racial order characterised by strong anti-Swazi feeling had already been established in Swaziland especially the south. This was founded on the twin issues of land and labour. When M. L. Hodgson and W. G. Ballinger in Swaziland undertook a countrywide tour in

¹³³See, SNA, File J 67 / 03, Special Commissioner for Swaziland Forwards Report on the Condition of Swaziland, 1903 and S. N. A, File J 5 / 1904, Report on Swaziland, by Special Commissioner, 1904. The immediate subsequent details are contained in the same source unless otherwise acknowledged.

¹³⁴Crush, *The Struggle*, p. 132.

¹³⁵KCAL, File 167, Ms Mil 1. 08. 38, Swaziland: Proposed incorporation in correspondence, reports of meetings, addresses, Letter from Allister Miller to the Secretary of the Swaziland Corporation Company, 11 August, 1925.

¹³⁶For details, see, Pretoria State Archives(hereafter, PSA), File 42 / 332, Swaziland– Native Unrest, Confidential letter from A. G. Marwick, Assistant Commissioner, Hlatikhulu to Government Secretary, Swaziland, 10th March 1928.

Swaziland in 1931 they found, contrary to colonial reports, less cordial race relations in the country. They observed that, “Indeed it can scarcely be regarded as a native reserve in any real sense, for two-thirds of the land are European owned, and the third which belongs to the natives, is in scattered blocks all over the territory; that is European and Swazi are intermixed”.¹³⁷

The report drew an interesting distinction between the north and the south of the country. In the north in particular it showed new land was not easily accessible to white settlers because land which regarded to be white owned was acquired by absentee landlords.

There is still some Crown land for disposal, but little of it is of any value. For the rest, the small farmer has not a chance of procuring land. A few small sales take place but large blocks of land are held by absentee landlords, either companies like the Central Mining Corporation of Johannesburg, or individuals like Samuel Evans of Johannesburg and Mr. Stephens of Maseru, Basutoland. Of these blocks, of which there are five in the North of very considerable acreage some pay a nominal quit rent, others nothing at all, while all lie entirely unused except for some herds of cattle, and numbers of native squatters, who give services to their landlords or pay £ 1 per annum in lieu thereof (what used to be known in the Cape as ‘Kaffir Farming’). These lands are among the finest in the country for citrus and maize as well as cattle.¹³⁸

In the south the situation was quite different. The report noted that, “The bulk of the population, both black and white, lies in the south of the territory, but nowhere is there congestion or anything remotely approaching that state”.¹³⁹ This was particularly so in the Southern part of the country. Their impression on race relations was captured as follows;

¹³⁷UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, AD 1433 / A 410 / A 3.3 Balinger Papers, Matters Joint Concern: Protectorates: Swaziland, A Report on Swaziland by M. L. Hodgson and W.G. Ballinger 7 March, 1931, p.1.

¹³⁸*Ibid.* ,p. 4.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*

Wherever we went among Europeans and wherever we enquired (with one exception), we were informed that race relations in Swaziland were very good, and that travesty of an annual review of territory affairs, the yearly report issued by the Colonial Office, has kept repeating this for years. Our observations, however, gave us no confirmation of this statement, nor did we derive any from the natives themselves. Indeed our impression was that, in the South at least, anti-native feeling is, if anything, stronger than in the Union of South Africa.¹⁴⁰

As already indicated earlier in this chapter, southern Swaziland was largely inhabited by white persons of Dutch origin. The strong anti - Swazi feeling witnessed in South Swaziland by Hodgson and Ballinger might have been indicative of the general attitudes of this group of whites towards blacks. One European co-operative group in Southern Swaziland known as the Swaziland Tobacco Co-operative Society clearly engaged in discriminatory practises towards the Swazi. In one meeting of the European Advisory Council in 1931 the issue of membership of black persons in this society became the subject of a hot debate. Some members of the Council contended that blacks were to be excluded from membership of the society while the Resident Commissioner and some other members felt it was unfair to control their produce especially if they were denied the right to membership.

At Hlathikhulu, Goedgegun (present day Nhlangano) and Mankayane the issue had also been discussed with some Europeans coming out strongly against the idea of granting membership to blacks. A member of the Council, Mr, L. J. Haasbroek Esq., was getting at the root of the issue when he pointed out that, "Amongst Afrikaans people there is a strong prejudice against having to associate with natives and that is the underlying reason of the whole thing".¹⁴¹ During the course of the same session Haasbroek was strongly supported by Mr. T. M. Mc Seveney Esq. , who said, "I agree with Mr. Haasbroek. In case of elections could coloured people come in the hall and vote e.t.c.? These people in this country are prejudiced. The native is a minor and he has to be guided by the

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.* , p. 18.

¹⁴¹KCAL, File 22, Ms Mil 1. 08, Minutes of the Fifth Session of the Fourth Advisory Council of the Territory of Swaziland, 14 January, 1931, p. 4.

Government and the Government could guide him without his mingling with the Europeans”.¹⁴²

The session dragged on without any decisive conclusion on the matter. However, the proposal proposition to bring black and white persons together in one meeting place, was assessed by Haasbroek and McSeveney to be entirely unworkable. Haasbroek warned that, “If there is any meeting in Hlathikhulu and a native came in there will be trouble”.¹⁴³ Similarly, McSeveney claimed that, “If you held a meeting at Goedgegun and invited natives you would have a row”.¹⁴⁴

It appears that the presence of Boers in Swaziland bred a particular kind of racism that was informed not only by historical stereotypes which depicted Boers as harsh and repressive, but also ill - feelings between them and the Swazi who harboured bitter memories about pieces of land lost to the former during the concessionaire period. Evidence as shown in the discourse above suggests that Boers were also uncompromising about their perception of blacks as belonging to an inferior species. These negative feelings between the two were intensified after the land partition in Swaziland as many Swazi found themselves living and working on Boer farms on squatter / tenant basis. The proximity and constant interaction between the Boer and the Swazi had by the 1940s produced a distinct variant of racism which was different from what the Swazi experienced in their interactions for example, with the missionary, colonial administrator and urban whites. Under these circumstances the Swazi experienced pragmatic racism.

¹⁴²*Ibid.* The word “Coloured” in this context was used in reference to black persons.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*

3. 6 British Settlement

The promotion of British settlement in Swaziland was largely a product of colonial policy. Underpinning this policy was a variety of considerations. First, as Britain had acquired the country by virtue of military victory she did not consider it her responsibility economically to develop the country. This attitude was further supported by the argument that since Swaziland would eventually be incorporated into South Africa developing her would be a waste of British resources. This approach was partly borne out of the reality that, “Initially British colonial rule proceeded on the assumption that Swaziland would be incorporated into the Union of South Africa”.¹⁴⁵ According to Fair, Murdock and Jones, Swaziland’s, “eventual incorporation within the Union of South Africa was never in doubt by the Europeans in Swaziland during this time”.¹⁴⁶ However, these scholars are aware that the Swazi had never viewed with enthusiasm the projected incorporation of their country into South Africa and further note that, “The British felt very little responsibility for the development of a country they had unwillingly acquired through the fortunes of war and might sooner or later be handed over to another government.”¹⁴⁷

This attitude led to the neglect of the country’s economic development except in those cases where it was deemed to be serving white settler interests. As a result, Fair Murdoch and Jones remark that, “During the first phase of British Colonial Administration until 1940 the uncertain political future of the country inhibited development, resulting in economic stagnation”.¹⁴⁸ Hyam explains that, “The key to the whole policy was making Swaziland ‘effectively British before it goes to the Union’. Transfer before a prosperous and contented British community was established there was held to be undesirable and even dangerous”.¹⁴⁹ The idea that a contented British community was to be established

¹⁴⁵Levin, *When The Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p. 42.

¹⁴⁶T. D. J. Fair, G. Murdock and H. W. Jones, *Development: A Regional Analysis* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1969), p. 25.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹Hyam, *The Failure*, p. 120.

before considering transfer meant, in effect that the Swazi and other Africans were to be marginalised in the country's socio-economic development schemes. As Kunene observes that

Also central to the making of colonial policy was the assumption that Swaziland would soon be politically incorporated into South Africa; hence it was argued that there was no need to spend British taxpayers' money on a colony that would soon be merged with South Africa. The only outcome of this assumption was for British politicians like Amery to promote a scheme of British settlement before incorporation was effected.¹⁵⁰

In his capacity as the local manager of the Swazieland Corporation Ltd. Allister Miller indicated during an interview with a reporter of the *Times of Swaziland* in 1903 that his aim was to promote land settlements to take advantage of an anticipated Railway line.¹⁵¹ Justifying this plan he submitted that

We now know what the ground is capable of producing. We know where to plant fruits, where to grow sugar, and where to raise cattle, and as soon as our surveys are completed we will commence settling the land with a class of men who, given the opportunities which Swazieland pre-eminently offers to any industrious and intelligent farmer will, there is little doubt rapidly develop a permanent agricultural industry.¹⁵²

Miller was optimistic that once a law was promulgated and other administrative structures were set up these settlements would take off without any problems. The settlers of whom Miller was concerned about were mostly English who were mainly distributed in the Mbabane and Piggs Peak districts. This group was mainly comprised of civil servants, traders and farmers. Crush has however pointed out that, "A number of British settlers who managed to produce small surpluses of maize for local sale were interspersed with the *bywoners*. Some also cultivated a few fields of tobacco and

¹⁵⁰Kunene, "British Colonial Policy...", p. 414.

¹⁵¹TOS, "The Swazieland Corporation LTD.", 23 October, 1903, p. 5.

¹⁵²*Ibid.*

cotton”.¹⁵³ Allister Miller believed that in order for the Swazi to adapt to the demands of an industrial economy they had to abandon their traditional ways of living. As he observed,

National life means to them an existence quite apart from the industrial life of today, it means more, it means racial antagonism of the marked character. Wherever black people retain or attain the semblance of a nationality we trace the same developments, in Hayti[sic], in Liberia, in the negro control of the nine slave states between 1868 and 1874, and nearer home in the stories of Kreli, Makoma, Sandile, Slokwe and the other Xhosa, Gaeka[sic] and Galeka[sic] chiefs and tribes, and again in Zululand since 1879. Even last year in Swaziland open rebellion was only a question of opportunity.¹⁵⁴

Soon after the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 a keen interest to incorporate Swaziland into it was registered from that quarter. In 1911, for example, the Prime Minister’s Office submitted the opinion that

In view of the constant trekking of farmers to and fro between the Transvaal and Swaziland this aspect of the question alone is of the greatest importance and warrants the immediate incorporation of this territory, which is, by its relation, placed in a very different position to other territories adjoining the Union. Swaziland, too, has a fairly large white population which promises to increase rapidly, and differs considerably from the other native protectorates.¹⁵⁵

To support its position the Prime Minister’s Office emphasised in an attached despatch that

¹⁵³Crush, *The Struggle*., p. 132 - 133.

¹⁵⁴KCAL, File 113, MS MIL 1. 08. 16, Letter from Miller to the Private Secretary to the High Commissioner, 21st December, 1906.

¹⁵⁵PSA, File 48 Swaziland, Letter from the Prime Minister of the Union to Lord Gladstone, 21 April, 1911.

Upon every ground Swazieland ought to be incorporated with and to form part and parcel of the Transvaal. To regard it as a huge kaffir location in the middle of that country is simply a fatal mistake, and judging from the experience of South Africa should certainly not be repeated. There is no greater menace to South Africa than Basutoland and everyone familiar with that country recognises the fact that sooner or later grave trouble is bound to arise in that quarter.¹⁵⁶

Articulating his disappointment about the lack of support in official policy for such a project, Miller observed that

I gave expression to the views of Europeans, but since then the final decision of His Majesty's Government has been made known and we learn definitely that under Lord Selbourne's[sic] advice it has been decided that Swazieland is to be administered by him as High Commissioner and not as Governor of the Transvaal. Our hope was that as Governor of the Transvaal he would have instituted a policy tending towards detribalization, built on the pattern of the Transvaal's administration which aimed at bringing the native as a unit as closely in touch with the European as possible.¹⁵⁷

Six years later he was more jaundiced. Upon learning of the intentions of cabinet of the Union in 1914 to apply to the British government for its sanction to the incorporation of Swaziland in the Union, Miller had made a strong appeal to Lord Selborne and other British official to stand in the way of the intended incorporation. In his appeal, Miller argued that the incorporation was unwelcome on two grounds. First, it undermined British interests in the country and carried serious implications for African land rights in the Native areas. To express his depression at the prospects of Swaziland's incorporation into the Union of South Africa, Miller lamented that, "the planting of a strong British colony now full of promise which a

¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*, Incorporation of Swaziland in the Transvaal. , p. 5.

¹⁵⁷KCAL, File 113, MS MIL 1. 08. 16, Letter from Miller to the Private Secretary to the High Commissioner, 21st December, 1906.

few of us on this side have been fertilizing and cultivating with some success would end”.¹⁵⁸

At the centre of these developments were the competing interests between the Boer and British settlers in Swaziland. As Kunene observed, “To colonial visionaries of British supremacy in South Africa, Swaziland still had an important role to play in balancing the white population with loyal British settlers”.¹⁵⁹ The issue of Swaziland’s incorporation into the Union of South Africa lingered on up early 1960s. It was mainly characterised by conflict between those whites whose loyalty was tilted towards South Africa and those whose loyalty was in Britain. Levin notes that, “White - English speaking settlements were placed high on the agenda as a means of counterbalancing the dominance of Afrikaners in southern Swaziland”.¹⁶⁰ This led to the placing of a substantial number of whites in different settlements. Levin also remarks that, “The Mushroom Land Settlement Company established in 1909 as the brainchild of Allister Miller, and the post - World War I Returned Soldiers Scheme, saw the white population double between 1911 and 1921 to 2 200”.¹⁶¹

In 1921, the year in which poll Tax and Income Tax were introduced, the European Advisory Council (EAC) was instituted. The EAC was established to advise Government on matters purely concerned with Europeans in Swaziland. In that year there were 2, 205 Europeans resident in the country. Hilda Kuper noted in the 1940s that EAC was a forum, “where the settlers loudly voiced their opinions on any issue touching their

¹⁵⁸KCAL, File 167, MS MIL 1.08.38, Swaziland: Proposed Incorporation in correspondence, reports of meetings, addresses, Letter from Allister Miller to Lord Selborne[sic], 14 March, 1914.

¹⁵⁹Kunene, “British Colonial Policy ...”, p. 215.

¹⁶⁰Levin, *When The Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p. 42.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*

position in the country”.¹⁶² Similarly, Simelane has remarked that, “The formation of the European Advisory Council in 1921 improved the lobbying ability of the settlers”.¹⁶³ A moment came when L. S. Amery, the Colonial Secretary was visiting Southern Africa in the mid -1920s. As Simelane has noted in Swaziland, “the settlers were threatening to throw their support to the Union government”.¹⁶⁴ This threat was based on the claim that the British government was failing to subsidise Swaziland and hence the consideration for incorporation into the Union of South Africa. Whilst in Swaziland the European Advisory Council took the opportunity to impress on him the urgency of developing the country to a level that would be suitable for white settlers. At the close of his presentation, a member of the Council, I. Pierce spoke as follows:

We stated at the outset how hope had risen to its zenith today, and appealing to you on behalf of Swaziland for your help in the development and settlement of the territory, it is with the Council’s full conviction that as with His Excellency the High Commissioner, what lies within your power to this end will be afforded.¹⁶⁵

As part of his response to Council’s plea, which was overwhelmingly positive, Amery mentioned that:

I can only say that I do sincerely hope we may be able to make real progress within the next few years. I know you yourselves want to make the country go ahead, and I shall certainly consider carefully if there are any ways and means by which we can afford some financial assistance to enable the right type of man with brains and energy and a little capital of his own to come down here. I know he would be welcomed with open arms, and if he has got the right stuff in him, he will make good.¹⁶⁶

Following the visit by Amery, Miller’s dream, “to establish on Crown lands and on such other areas as may be acquired, a type of settler capable of assisting in the general

¹⁶²Kuper, *Uniform*, p. 62.

¹⁶³H. S. Simelane, *Colonialism*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵SNA, File 312 / 27, European Advisory Council Meeting with Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 5 September, 1927.

¹⁶⁶*Ibid.*

scheme of establishing British traditions in this country”,¹⁶⁷ was rekindled. Crush also noted that, “London renewed its vision for large - scale white settlement in Swaziland”.¹⁶⁸ Kunene remarked that, “For their part members of the EAC were in full support of Amery’s plan for British settlement in the Territory. They felt that it would secure them British aid and a stronger bargaining position against South Africa’s discriminatory markets”.¹⁶⁹ As he observed, “Economic development meant the settlement of the country with loyal British citizens”.¹⁷⁰ At the heart of Miller’s model European interests had to enjoy preferential treatment. Five years after the Amery’s visit, Sir Alan Pim noted that

The main developments have, however, taken place since Mr. Amery’s visit, partly as the result of the spirit of greater confidence engendered by his visit, but largely stimulated by the establishment of the motor bus service in 1928 and the consequent reduction of the cost of transport by about 50 per cent.¹⁷¹

Allister Miller persistently put pressure on the government to have white interests placed ahead of those of the Swazi. Expressing this position in 1930, he stated that

We have definitely advised the Government in this Territory that the first symptom on its part of undue preference on native interests[sic at the expense of Europeans will signal an outbreak of protest on the part of all sections of the community and I do not think that is likely. I think Kenya and North West Rhodesia can take care of themselves. Our position is much better than theirs. Kenya has one European to 280 natives, Northern Rhodesia

¹⁶⁷KCAL, File 167, MS MIL 1. 08. 38, Swaziland: Proposed Incorporation in correspondence, reports of meetings, addresses, Letter from Allister Miller to Secretary of Swaziland Corporation Ltd., 19 September 1927.

¹⁶⁸Crush, “The Colour of Civilization ...”, p. 216.

¹⁶⁹Kunene, “British Colonial Policy ...”, p. 216. While Kunene is of the impression that the British settlement scheme in Swaziland was Amery’s, I show in this study that the scheme was part of a broader vision for enhancing British supremacy in Southern Africa which in the case of Swaziland was initially spearheaded and promoted by Allister Miller. Miller was not a mere supporter of the scheme as Kunene suggests.

¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 215.

¹⁷¹A. W. Pim, *Financial and Economic Situation of Swaziland: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State For Dominions*(London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1932), p. 13.

one European to 200 natives, whilst Swaziland has one European to 40 natives.¹⁷²

Miller also ensured that certain incentives were made available for British settlement. Such settlements were being established, for example, at Mhlambanyatsi, Malkerns and Mbuluzi. Communicating with Samuel Scott, his colleague in the mid - 1930s, he stated that, “We have five, possibly ten years in which to crowd groups of Britishers”.¹⁷³ Miller believed that, “Where you plant Britishers they stick”.¹⁷⁴ Pointing not very far, he supported his claim, saying, “Look at Natal, at the Eastern Province of the Cape”.¹⁷⁵ Some prospective white settlers, including those who had already been settled in the country, still believed by the mid-1930s that, “Swaziland presented the best opportunity for the successful settlement of Europeans”.¹⁷⁶ Miller’s passion for settling whites in Swaziland persisted to the late 1930s. Writing to the Honourable H. A. Wyndham in 1938, whom he regarded as the main London supporter behind the settlement schemes in Swaziland, he articulated the view that, “I have real hopes of a few more settlers this year”.¹⁷⁷ Of Amery, Kunene remarked that, “As a strong advocate of British supremacy he was opposed to small scale Boer farmers. According to his scheme settlement was to be provided to prosperous British citizens”.¹⁷⁸

Miller’s commitment to the vision of British settlement in Swaziland was part of a package of ideas. British settlers were good for the political future of the country; they

¹⁷²KCAL, File 167, MS MIL 1.08.3, Correspondence of Miller with Samuel Evans and the Secretary of General Smuts, Letter from Miller to Samuel Evans, 15 December, 1930, p. 5.

¹⁷³KCAL, File 193, Ms Mil 1.08.59, Scott, (Sir) Samuel, Correspondence with Allister Miller about White Settlers in Swaziland and Other Affairs Relating to Mushroom Land Settlement Company, 1934 - 1938.

¹⁷⁴KCAL, File 167, MS MIL 1.08.38, Swaziland: Proposed Incorporation in correspondence, reports of meetings, addresses, Letter from Allister Miller to Sir Howard D’Egville, 20 August, 1925.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶KCAL, File 193, Ms Mil 1.08.59, Scott, (Sir) Samuel, Correspondence with Allister Miller about White Settlers in Swaziland and Other Affairs Relating to Mushroom Land Settlement Company, 1934 - 1938, Letter from Allister Miller to Sir Samuel Scott, 21 March, 1936.

¹⁷⁷KCAL, File 168, MS, 726 E, Wyndham, H. A. Correspondence with Allister Miller on Swaziland matters, 1929 - 1938, Letter from Allister Miller to The Hon. H. A. Wyndham, 25 May, 1938.

¹⁷⁸Kunene, “British Colonial Policy ...”, p. 216.

were good because they subjected the Swazi to the discipline of labour, and they were good for the economic development of the country. In the end the best place for the Swazi in Swaziland was as labourer for whites. This both reflected racial attitudes and had a negative impact on race relations in Swaziland. In 1936, commenting on the Swazi on the Mbuluzi block, for example, he declared that, "I hope next year to be able to make a reduction in the number of Natives on the Mbuluzi block ... we will get rid of unnecessary Natives by degree. The ones who are best behaved and conform to orders

will be retained at Mhlambanyati, for service with future settlers".¹⁷⁹ In this respect he considered the chief to be an obstacle to acquiring Swazi labour. As he claimed, "These people relieved from the dominance of a Native Chief make very useful and faithful servants".¹⁸⁰ Miller was convinced that, "Continuity of labour is assured on farms, and even on mines in the territory, when one has Natives attached to the establishment".¹⁸¹ The British settlement scheme never bore the expected results. Kunene explained that, "The reason for its failure was to a large extent related to the poor economic prospects in the absence of an adequate infrastructure within the country".¹⁸²

Despite government's efforts to promote British settlement schemes the idea to turn Swaziland into a "white man's country" finally proved fruitless. As Crush has noted, for the first forty years of colonial, "successive administrations remained faithful to the idea of a white Swaziland despite overwhelming evidence that the idea would never work".¹⁸³ As prominent English settlers such as Miller vigorously promoted schemes for British settlement they spared no effort in fighting the idea of incorporating Swaziland into the Union of South Africa. When, for example, Miller went on articulating his objection to

¹⁷⁹KCAL, File 193, Ms Mil 1.08.59, Scott, (Sir) Samuel, Correspondence with Allister Miller about White Settlers in Swaziland and Other Affairs Relating to Mushroom Land Settlement Company, 1934 - 1938, Letter from Allister Miller to Sir Samuel Scott, 20 June 1936.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁸¹*Ibid.*

¹⁸²Kunene, "British Colonial Policy ...", p. 218.

¹⁸³Crush, "The Colour of Civilization...", p. 221.

Swaziland's incorporation into the Union of South Africa in 1935 he speculated that a minority of the whites plus a majority of blacks in Swaziland would be opposed to the idea of incorporation. Miller placed his argument with regard to race relations in the Union. Stating his case, he claimed that, "Like those thinking Europeans who feel uncertainty as to the Union's future the Native desire to have evidence of a changed attitude in that Dominion towards his race, to see that change in operation and tested before he can even discuss the question of a change of masters".¹⁸⁴

Miller's claim rested on his belief that the policies of the Union were generally repressive towards the blacks and on that basis they would resist becoming subjects of the Union. His guess was informed by political changes that had taken place among black people in Africa. Writing to Lord Selbourne, Miller portrayed the changes and their effects on Africans as follows;

Africa is not the Africa I knew nearly 50 years ago, nor is it the Africa your Lordship knew when you formulated the schedule to the South Africa Act. The changes are inconceivable. The only immutable incidences are the unchanged aspirations and ideals of Africanderdom. ... But the Native has changed. He has developed a National consciousness. The teachings of the missionaries have made him a thinker. His newspapers have enlightened him on subjects that were once obscure in his daily routine. To-day I can address a letter to a post office nearest to the home of an unlettered Native anywhere in this Protectorate and some lettered friend will see it, translate it and in due course I get an answer. Their newspapers are digested with avidity by those who can read them and the news is spread from kraal to kraal, not at times without distortion. And amongst not only the one million Black men who may be immediately affected, but Natives in Tanganyika and Northern and Southern Rhodesia, and it may be still further afield. They do not concern themselves with details, all they know is that the Union demands the Territories and that the King's Government is hesitating. If the 8 million Black men, subjects of the King, know anything of the

¹⁸⁴KCAL, File 167, Ms Mil 1.08.38, Correspondence of Miller with Samuel Evans and the Secretary of General Smuts, A letter from Allister Miller to Lord Selborne, 8 June, 1935, p. 5.

question they know that the Native peoples of the Protectorates are definitely opposed to any surrender.¹⁸⁵

The general stereotypes about the British in Swaziland which depict them as kind and benevolent compared to the harsh and repressive Boer persist up to this day.¹⁸⁶ Such stereotypes however, do not absolve the British from being viewed as racist. As the Swazi interacted with the British largely as missionary, colonial official, urban settler, and industrial managers there was a difference from what they experienced in Boer farms. In these capacities racism promoted by the British came largely through policies and programmes which tended to promote white interests ahead of those of the blacks. This took place in various spheres and can be largely defined as institutional racism.

3. 7 Christian Missionaries

One common attitude which the missionaries in Swaziland shared with the British settlers was the de-nationalisation of the Swazi. This attitude manifested itself through their attempt to describe black and white relations in terms of the barbarian / civilian as well as heathen / Christian paradigms. In this context, the black culture and associated traditions were an expression of barbarism and heathenism while white stood for Christianity and civilisation. This view played a crucial part defining what settlers and missionaries saw as the role of the black population in their world. While settlers promoted the notion that blacks were to be attached to their establishments if meaningful development was to take place in the country. Missionaries promoted the idea of black settlements around mission stations. Under both models blacks were to abandon their traditional settlements as they were considered backward by the settlers, and incapable of promoting Christian living by the missionaries.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶This view recurred throughout the period of my fieldwork among almost all the interviewees. The British are described as subtle and cunning practicing covert racism while Boers are depicted as frank and forthright practicing overt racism. I had been aware of these stereotypes before undertaking fieldwork.

¹⁸⁷An outstanding exception in this regard was Malla Moe, the lady missionary of the Scandinavian Missionary Alliance. Moe's strategy was to build her own hut among Swazi homesteads and establish a mission station within the community. For details, see, M. Nilsen, *Malla Moe* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), pp. 50 - 126.

At the end of the South African War many of the missionaries who had left the country returned. Upon arrival the immediate focus of the missionaries was to attend to their properties which had been destroyed during the war.¹⁸⁸ These included missionaries of the South African General Mission and the Anglican Church. Soon after the establishment of the colonial Administration the Anglican Church in Mbabane also focused its ministry on the British colonial officials and the white population. Basil H. Warner who was one of the British Administration staff that arrived in 1902 with Special Commissioner Enraught Moony played a key role in the establishment of this ministry. J. S. M. Matsebula remarked that, “The man who kindled the fire for the Anglican Church in Mbabane was Warner whom the Swazi named Mahaha”.¹⁸⁹ He further noted that, “Besides his activities in church Warner promoted education in Swaziland. He was an inspector of education”.¹⁹⁰ Warner looked after the church until 1907 when Rev. Charles Watts arrived to assume his duties as a full - time pastor of the church and archdeacon of the Anglican Church in Swaziland.

Other missions came from different parts of the world. These comprised of Wesleyans, Lutherans, the Scandinavian Missionary Alliance and South African General Mission. Hilda Kuper points out that, “Missionaries came to Swaziland from many countries- England, America, Italy, Scandinavia, Austria, Germany and the Union of South Africa”.¹⁹¹ Roger John Cazziol remarks that:

It was unfortunate for the image of the Church and the credibility of the Gospel that the expansion of missionary work throughout the world coincided with a period of imperialistic conquest by the colonial powers of Europe. The correlation between the two events inevitably fostered the concept of white supremacy over the darker races.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸For some details, see, Perkins, “A History...”, pp. 396 - 397.

¹⁸⁹Matsebula, *The Church of the Province*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁹¹Kuper, *The Uniform of Colour*, p. 107.

¹⁹²R. J. Cazziol, “A Comparative Study of Christian Missions in Swaziland: 1845 - 1968”, PhD Thesis, University of Natal, 1989, p. 3.

In the case of Swaziland the correlation can be immediately identified through the connections that existed between missionaries of the Anglican Church and officials of the administration. The roles played by Warner and Watts reflect that a close link existed between missionaries of the Anglican Church and officials of the colonial administration. Upon his arrival Watts kept close contacts with members of the administration and they in turn also embraced the church as their place of worship and an agency for extending the virtues of the British Empire. This may partly explain why the Anglicans in Swaziland were at the vanguard in offering worship and educational facilities along racial lines. This attitude was later articulated through the words of the Anglican Archdeacon C. C. Watts when he painted a negative view of blacks in a book that was published in 1922.¹⁹³ Peter Kasenene has observed that, “all missionaries, despite their various denominations, had a lot in common particularly their desire to win souls for Christ and the fact that they were white in a black society”.¹⁹⁴ However, it would be misleading to maintain that missionary activities were solely focussed on the “desire to win souls for Christ”.

There is a sense in which Christian missionaries in the country, like white settlers and colonial officials, understood themselves as harbingers of western civilisation and enlightenment. In the words of, the Anglican Archdeacon, C. C. Watts, the missionaries were,

Europeans of the highest character and education, just, honourable, and brave— those who are the real builders of the British Empire at its best; men who think of life as trust from God not to be selfishly or foolishly expended, and who give freely of themselves to guide and teach the degraded heathen by whom they are surrounded.¹⁹⁵

In this context the Swazi was perceived as primitive, savage and barbaric. In this respect, for instance, Watts remarked that:

¹⁹³C. C. Watts, *Dawn In Swaziland* (Westminster: Society For the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign parts, 1922).

¹⁹⁴P. Kasenene, *Institutional Ecumenicity: The Conference, League and Council of Swaziland Churches* (Mbabane: Websters, 1992), p .6

¹⁹⁵Watts, *Dawn*, pp. 5 - 6.

The traveller from England will be struck by the extraordinary contrasts which the place presents. A high civilisation and a most primitive form of barbarism are to be seen here side by side. The traveller has hardly had time to notice that the streets and houses are lighted by electric light, and that the post and Government offices are good and substantial buildings, when some native wedding party, or a group of raw savages come dancing and singing down the street. The men are naked, save for a wild cat or other skin worn as a loin - cloth, and bunches twisted, brightly coloured wools about their persons.¹⁹⁶

Further highlighting the co - existence of what he considered a “civilised” European life and uncivilised Swazi way of living Watts noted that, “a high standard of European life and comfort maintained in the midst of a native people who are still living in primitive ways, and in a country for the most part quite undeveloped”.¹⁹⁷ Perhaps the worst manifestation of Swazi “barbarism” according Watts, were the country’s structures of governance. In describing these structures Watts said,

But we can also see how utterly useless to their people is the royal kraal of Swaziland. It is the centre of moral and physical filth - the dirtiest place in Swaziland, says every visitor. Instead of leading the people forward, these royal kraals are the backbone of reaction. Native adventurers, loafers, and hangers on are here engaged in deluding an old woman, who is ignorant and greedy. The forces of civilisation will soon sweep away the last remnant of their power, and there is no doubt that their failure has proved both to the Government and to every European in the country, who is well disposed to the true interests of the native, how great a failure the rule of the native chiefs really is, and has hastened its downfall. In the sweeping away of this barbaric idea of self-indulgent and selfish royalty a breath of better, sweeter air will come to the whole Swazi people.¹⁹⁸

It is the contention of this study that such negative notions of the Swazi and their way of life were not only as a result of previously held notions about indigenous non - white

¹⁹⁶*Ibid.* , pp. 3 - 4.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.* , p. 5.

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.* , pp. 122 - 123.

racism but were also a product of the failure by the colonising agents to appreciate cultural practices which were not informed by Western values and political systems. David Kuby observes that, "Missionaries who believed that they were only converting Africans to Christ were in fact converting them to a whole range of Western attitudes and values while instilling in them a sense of inferiority about their own culture".¹⁹⁹ On a similar note J. S. M. Matsebula notes that

Missionaries were outspoken in their opposition to Swazi national institutions, but I cannot blame them for this attitude. In their very own words they often proclaimed, they, poor things should be forgiven for they 'knew not what they did'. They were quite aware that Christianity ought to be based on tradition, but they knew no other culture other than their own, which they took to be the best on earth.²⁰⁰

Although settlers upheld different beliefs and attitudes towards the blacks, it would appear that pragmatically those of the missionaries had similar effects in as far as racist practices were concerned. Watts, for example, observed that at the beginning of the 1920s, Boers and British upheld divergent religious outlooks. In his view, the Boers were deeply religious while the British were casual. The religious outlooks of these two groups of whites also extended to the way in which they perceived the Swazi. Of the Boer, Watts, remarked that though he observed church rules and regulations,

His theology is hopelessly out of date, and no longer holds the younger Boers who are better educated. For, instance, it is often taught and believed by the older generation that Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japhet. Shem was white in colour, Ham black, and Japhet a coloured man. Hence by direct decree the black and coloured sons were forever accursed and doomed to be in bondage to the white.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹D. Kuby, "Elitism and Holiness in Swazi Conversion" PhD Dissertation, University of California, 1979, pp. 80 - 81. For a discussion on how this was carried out in different parts of Africa, see, K. Asare Opuku, "Religion in Africa During the Colonial Period", in A. Boahen (ed.), *General History of Africa vol. VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination, 1880 - 1935*, pp. 513 - 519.

²⁰⁰Matsebula, *King's Eye*, pp. 18 - 19.

²⁰¹*Ibid*, p. 63.

Paul Lauren has explained that such a belief had its roots in some seventeenth century European thinking which held that, “black Africans were descended from Noah’s son Ham whose curse from God, as interpreted from the Old Testament account, supposedly made him not only black but destined to be a ‘servant of servants’”.²⁰² About the British, Watts observed that

The case of the Englishmen is different. He is, on the whole well disposed to missionaries and their work, and having some knowledge of history, he is not inclined to despise primitive races, and has no objection to the rise of natives so long as it does not conflict with his own interests.²⁰³

The English attitude captured above largely guided British policy in Swaziland throughout the colonial period.²⁰⁴

Up to the mid - 1940s negative perceptions of blacks by missionaries had not changed. The establishment of the Swaziland Missionary Conference, a body of Protestant missions, in the late 1920s consolidated the notion of an uncivilised Swazi society.²⁰⁵ During a conference of this body on 23 November 1932 Dr. David Hynd, the Vice President remarked, for example, that, “The nation is rousing herself from her long sleep and is looking to European civilisation for intellectual enlightenment”.²⁰⁶ There is a sense in which such perceptions complemented those of settlers and colonial officials in the country.

²⁰²Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, p. 18.

²⁰³Watts, *Dawn* p. 65.

²⁰⁴For a study that explores British colonial policy in Swaziland, see, G. S. Kunene, “British Colonial Policy... ”.

²⁰⁵Peter Kasenene has suggested that the earlier ecumenical movement excluded Africans as white missionaries regarded themselves as the architects of the church in Swaziland, See, Kasenene, , *Institutional Ecumenicity*, p. 8.

²⁰⁶UWL / William Cullen Africana Library, Historical Papers, Swaziland Missionary Conference. AD 843, File B 18. 4. 1, SAIRR: Protectorates, Conference of the Swaziland Missionary Conference, Bremersdorp, Swaziland, 23 - 24 November, 1932, p. 1.

Part of the stereotyping of blacks by whites in colonial Africa involved the description of blacks as perpetual infants. Christopher Fyfe observes, “whites could without compunction, treat Africans as children– but Peter Pan children who can never grow up, a child race”.²⁰⁷ The “infantilisation” of Africans by the missionaries in Swaziland mainly reflected itself through the reluctance of Christian missions to indigenise the leadership of their institutions. In the case of Swaziland, Roger John Cazziol observed that, “As in other parts of Africa, the spread of Christianity was followed by the growth of indigenous churches outside the control of the missionaries”.²⁰⁸ In his study of African Independent Churches, Bengt Sundkler has classified them into two main categories, namely, Ethiopian churches and Zionist churches. Concerning reasons behind the secession of the Ethiopian churches from the mission churches, Cazziol remarks that:

Although Sundkler designates as “Ethiopian” the independent churches that seceded from the mission churches largely because of the colour issue, in Swaziland colour did not play an important role in the development of the Ethiopian[sic] type churches. A more important reason for the development of Ethiopian type churches was Swazi nationalism following the land dispute and the reluctance of missionaries to indigenise[sic] the leadership of their churches.²⁰⁹

My immediate reservation with Cazziol’s argument is its failure to acknowledge that the issues surrounding the reasons he gives for the emergence of the Ethiopian type churches were primarily hinged on race / colour. The land issue, Swazi nationalism and the non-admission of Swazi into church leadership, I argue, were charged with race consciousness as was bred by white presence in the country as well as experiences of some Swazi (Sobhuza included) in South Africa.

²⁰⁷Fyfe, “Race ...”, p. 22.

²⁰⁸Cazziol, *The Swazi Zionists*, p. 45.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*, p. 54.

3. 8 The British Administration and Discrimination

Besides maintaining its autonomy and intervening in disputes the British administration's major challenge was how it would go about mediating the affairs of different interest groups overtime. Levin notes that, "The state intervened on two fronts: outwardly, through the imposition of taxation and the settlement of the land question, and inwardly through mediating the conflicting interests of different groups".²¹⁰ In a broad sense race relations in Swaziland were conditioned and shaped by two interrelated power and ideological considerations. As Kunene has noted,

The colonial state in Swaziland straddled not two, but three levels of mediation: Within the country it mediated between settler demands on Swazi land and labour on the one hand and Swazi resistance to these demands on the other; at the second level it acted as an intermediary between South African interests and those of local settlers while at the third level it had to synchronise the colony's needs with the demands of the metropole.²¹¹

British administration in colonial Swaziland exhibited features that were unique and relevant to the country's historical circumstances. Martin Kaniki points out that, "The British, like other colonizers, did not develop a universal theory of colonialism which could embrace all aspects of life in all colonies".²¹² He further notes that, "This was impossible as colonialism was imposed on peoples with diverse cultures and backgrounds, and living in widely differing environments".²¹³ While to most British colonies the system of indirect rule operated, in Swaziland "parallel rule" was applied. Hailey described this type of rule as a system of "remote control".²¹⁴

²¹⁰Levin, *When The Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p. 40.

²¹¹Kunene, "British Colonial Policy...", pp. 41 - 42.

²¹²Kaniki, "The Colonial Economy...", p. 382.

²¹³*Ibid.*

²¹⁴W. M. Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories: Part V; The High Commission Territories: Basutoland, the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland* (London: Her Majesty's Government, 1953), p. 397.

Under this system the colonial administration maintained minimal interaction with Swazi traditional institutions. F. Betts observes that, “European colonial administrators sought and employed ‘native authorities’ as allies or agents through whom the demands of alien rule might effectively be made on the African population at large”.²¹⁵ In the case of Swaziland Kunene notes that, “The colonial administration preserved Swazi indigenous institutions for furthering its own interests such as the easy collection of taxes and labour control. Minimal state intervention was therefore to a large extent dictated by the economics of colonialism”.²¹⁶ Relations between the administration and traditional leaders were left informal for a larger part of the colonial period. As Paul - Henri Bischoff maintains, for example, that:

In the period from 1903, when Britain first came to administer Swaziland, until 1928, no formal relations existed between the colonial regime and the Swazi state except for a guarantee given by Britain that its High Commissioners, in making proclamations in the territory, would not encroach on the Swazi state and would continue to respect it as long as it did not challenge imperial rule or act against the interests of its Swazi citizens.²¹⁷

Minimal spending on the country and the utilisation of the traditional institutions were adopted as the pragmatic politics for governing the country. Kunene remarks that:

The early settlers were economically weak and relatively few and therefore unable to transform the Swazis into a wage-earning proletariat. This partly explains why the colonial state was compelled to rule through the traditional chiefs; in the prevailing circumstances both the settlers and the colonial state had to come to terms with the strength of the Swazi pre - capitalist social formation and to try and use it for their own purpose of surplus extraction in the form of labour and taxes as well as for control.²¹⁸

²¹⁵R. F. Betts, “Methods and Institutions of European Domination”, in A. Boahen (ed.), *General History of Africa vol. II: Africa Under Colonial Domination, 1880 - 1935* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1985), p. 317.

²¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 35 - 36.

²¹⁷P. Bischoff, *Swaziland's International Relations and Policy: A Study of a Small African State in International Relations* (Bern: P. Lang, 1990), p. 78.

²¹⁸Kunene, “British Colonial Policy ...”, pp. 56 - 57.

An underlying paternalism and philanthropist attitude also influenced the policy. As Kunene further notes that

This deliberate restraint of state intervention in Swazi socio - economic and political affairs, which was euphemistically dubbed as “parallel rule” or “dual rule” as opposed to “indirect rule”, was interpreted in Britain as a benevolent policy which preserved for the Swazi their traditional way of life; and in this procedure the Colonial Office had the strong support of British philanthropists who were against any sudden dislocation of “native cultures” through contact with white colonists. Under this type of parallel rule the aim of the British government was to rule the Swazi through their own local authorities. This policy was interpreted by colonial officials as an expression of respect for the political autonomy of the Swazi as a ‘protected people’. The economic implication, however, was that behind this paternalistic protectionism of “doing as little as possible” and minimal state intervention in Swazi affairs was the intention of spending as little money as possible on administrative expenditure and social services which in turn led to the economic underdevelopment of the Swazi reserves.²¹⁹

The administration was reluctant to act in circumstances that it did not consider beneficial to its interests. Benefit in this context was seen in terms of enterprises that brought rewards to the white government and settler community. This implied that blacks under this political economy were useful only in as far as providing labour and state revenue. As Kunene put it:

The colonial administration was simply never willing to intervene in Swazi affairs in matters which did not involve the maintenance of ‘law’ and ‘order’ or taxation, while its energies were to a larger extent bent on improving the socio-economic position of the white settler community. In the Native Areas indigenous Swazi socio - political, cultural and economic institutions such as homestead production, “customary law” and adherence to chiefly authority were in large measure unperturbed. This is not to deny the process of social transformation resulting from capitalist accumulation through taxation and labour

²¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 35.

migration, but rather to emphasise the magnitude of neglect in the Native Areas.²²⁰

The Swazi and their traditional leaders were not passive actors in the implementation of colonial policy. They played a crucial role in determining the direction of policy development to a considerable extent. Simelane remarks that

It is important to note that any form of change in Swaziland was affected by the nature of colonial policy, the manner in which the indigenous ruling class reacted to such policy, the interests of the settler population and those of the colonised underclass. The colonial state was, therefore, not in a position to completely neglect the interests of the Swazi. The relationship between the above interest categories was characterised by both conflict and collaboration.²²¹

The policy followed by the Swaziland colonial administration was informed by various interests. Broadly, the administration had to mediate in the interest of various stakeholders and satisfy conditions that were in line with the general British policy. The different stakeholders including the Swazi, British, Boers and missionaries equally sought to influence colonial policy in relation to their interests while the British government played the role of an arbiter. In this way each stakeholder was able to obtain certain concessions depending on the issue at stake as well as prevailing historical circumstances. Balam Nyeko, for example, argues that in the period between 1910 and 1930 the African voice in Swaziland was decisive in influencing colonial policy with regard to the incorporation of the country into the Union of South Africa. He maintains that, “on the transfer issue was a concern to ensure that the Swazi, like their counterparts in the other two territories, were not unnecessarily provoked into rebellion”.²²² However, the policies that were followed in the country as the transfer issue lingered on stalled socio-economic developments in the country. The effects of this approach weighed more

²²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 56.

²²¹Simelane, *Colonialism*, p. 18.

²²²B. H. L. Nyeko, “The African Voice in Colonial Swaziland: The question of Transfer, 1910 - 1939”, *Mohlomi, Journal of Southern African Historical Studies*, vol. III / IV / V (1981), p. 13.

on the Swazi who came last with regard to accessing resources and social services. Generally, it turned out that the policies followed under British rule were discriminatory against the Swazi who tended to be marginalised in the country's socio - economic structures.

3. 9 Conclusion

The establishment of British rule in Swaziland created conditions that produced a variety of practices and policies. Initially the colonial state was concerned about asserting its hegemony over the Swazi. Therefore, in addition to putting in place colonial legislation to assert hegemonic control the state also introduced measures to service the country's administration. Through these mechanisms which were viewed by the state as "civilising" instruments for blacks, the Swazi were marginalised politically, socially and economically.

The policies developed in the country were not guided only by the administration's vision but equally influenced by the interests of white settlers who had been attracted to the country. In addition, there were Christian missionaries from different parts of the world. The presence of these groups generated competition among them as they sought to influence the administration in different directions depending on their interests and prevailing circumstances. These interests led to developments which not only produced cleavages among the whites but also created racist attitudes and practices which took different forms including institutional racism, pragmatic racism and cultural racism. At the centre of Swaziland's race relations was the notion of white supremacy which was informed by western ideas brought by whites from their home background. This notion was used in justifying the provision of resources and facilities skewed in favour of whites.

Though the administration was at times sympathetic to Swazi concerns and initiatives such as Sobhuza's proposal to introduce the *Libutfo* system in schools, it generally placed the interests of whites ahead of those of the blacks. Consequently, by the mid - 1940s a distinct racial hierarchy with whites at the apex and blacks at the base had been produced. Sobhuza, who was regarded as a spokesperson for the Swazi, had by 1944 engaged in various strategies to protest against what he considered to have been developments that had undermined the sovereignty of the Swazi nation and indigenous cultural practices in

the country. The issues he raised during these protests largely pointed to the effects of discrimination against the Swazi in many spheres of their lives.

Reflecting on what had transpired during the colonial era, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Swaziland noted that, “Like most countries under colonial rule, Swaziland was governed for many years on racist principles”.²²³ Commenting further on the issue, the Committee stated that “The racism in Swaziland was self - perpetuating. Members of the privileged races grew accustomed to their “superior” status, while those who were racially “inferior” could not but accept the ample evidence of their inferiority— poverty, ignorance and abject servility”.²²⁴ About this racial order, the Committee also observed that, “Indeed, every aspect of economic and social life was stratified into three levels for the European on top, the Eurafrican in the middle, and the African in the bottom. No one in the country, whatever the colour of his skin, could avoid the rigid racial structure”.²²⁵ By the mid - 1940s these processes which had led to a distinct racial hierarchy were being challenged through an emerging Swazi nationalism which was articulated and guided by the Swazi monarchy.

²²³Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the Measures which give Effect to the Provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the Kingdom of Swaziland, stamped 13 August, 1970 by Department of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Swaziland, (Located at the Swaziana section of the University of Swaziland Library), p. 2.

²²⁴*Ibid.* , p. 3.

²²⁵*Ibid.* , p. 2.