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1976-09-13
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A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

African Studies Seminar Paper
to be presented in RW
4.00pm SEPTEMBER 1976

Title: Classes, The Mode Of Production And The State In Pre-Colonial Swaziland.

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No. 046

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND - AFRICAN STUDIES INSTITUTE

AFRICAN STUDIES SEMINAR

Paper for Monday, 13th September Room CM 319 at 4.00 p.m.

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Classes, the Mode of Production and the State in pre-colonial Swaziland

In this paper I seek to do three related things; to identify the dominant mode of production in the Swazi social formation and other possible subsidiary modes; to establish the existence or otherwise of classes in Swazi society; and to elucidate the development of the Swazi state. Before I start however I should like to make two disclaimers. Firstly I make no pretence at theoretical rigour and have merely used the concepts employed in this paper to illuminate my material. Secondly the questions raised by such concepts are not easily answered by the data I have at my disposal. Swazi tradition I do not doubt will help to give answers to those questions, but first it will be necessary for those questions to be posed. This I did not do during my own fieldwork in Swaziland, and for that reason much of my paper will have a provisional ring. Nevertheless, despite these limitations I feel justified in venturing into this field. Swazi society does not as far as I can see fit into recent categorisations of pre-capitalist modes of production and its study may help in developing those categories further. At the same time the questions raised by this mode of analysis undoubtedly turn the spotlight on neglected areas of Swazi society and even if only partially or provisionally answered must help our understanding of how that society works. For that reason I make no apologies at undertaking such an analysis and merely ask that it be taken as much as a programme for research as the fruits of a completed project.

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The Tributary Mode of Production

Hindess and Hirst define a mode of production as "an articulated combination of relations and forces of production structured by the dominance of the relations of production. The relations of production", they go on, "define a specific mode of appropriation of surplus labour and the specific form of social distribution of the means of productions corresponding to that mode of appropriation of surplus labour". The implications of the notions of articulation and of dominance are of particular significance for the present study. Later Hindess and Hirst make the point that, "a distinct structure of relations of production supposes a set of forces of production which corresponds to the conditions of the labour process it establishes", and go on to reject the concept of an Asiatic mode of production on the grounds that, "the conditions of appropriation of surplus labour entailed by this mode do not transform the labour process or the relation of the labourer to it". As a result the relation of the relations of production and the forces of production are characterised by, "a certain arbitrariness", and the conditions of proving the existence of the mode of production are not met, i.e. forces cannot be deduced from the relations of production. (1)

This is no small matter, as the mode of production characteristic of most African social formations seems to correspond more closely to the Asiatic mode of production than to any other, and once this is rejected the bulk of African and indeed other social formations known to history are relegated to some kind of 'modeless' limbo. An alternative must therefore be found, or else in one guise or other the Asiatic mode must be revived. What in the first place are the possible alternatives? In Hindess and Hirst's classification the two most likely candidates are the feudal mode of production and what they term the second variant of the primitive communist mode. The second variant of the primitive communist mode of production

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corresponds to what Rey and others have called the lineage mode of production. (2) Its identifying characteristics are communal appropriation of the social product and its extended or 'complex' redistribution among the lineage members. Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether the lineage mode of production is characterised by classes or is classless, it is clear that it has been widely distributed across the continent of Africa. Whether or not that means that this has been the dominant mode of production is however an entirely different question, for almost wherever one looks one finds the lineage mode combined into other aggregates like the village or the kingdom which themselves require definition in terms of modes of production.

Can these larger aggregates be considered as variants of the feudal mode of production? In Hindess and Hirsts's terms they cannot, for whereas the feudal mode of production presupposes a ruling class which exists independently of the state machine, direct producers who are politically and legally bound to their exploiters through the right of eminent domain, and the absence of communal production, most if not all of the larger collectivities of which we have been speaking are characterised by the absence of an exploiting class independent of the states, the absence of private property in land, and communal production. (3) The differences implied by all this cannot be reduced simply to matters of scale. Amin for example suggests that the feudal mode of production is only a decentralised and regressive variant of the tributary mode of production (which he sees as the dominant mode of production for most of the world's history), in as much as the rights to tribute and to ownership previously vested in the state have reverted during periods of weakness to individual feudal lords. (4) In fact the difference between the two is far more fundamental than that. In the feudal mode of production the mechanism for the appropriation of surplus (feudal rent) and the property relations which go with that, involve extensive control over the labour process on the part of the feudal

lord and for this reason this excludes the possibility of communal production. (5) In other words the forces of production are structured by the relations of production and can be deduced from them. In the tributary mode of production on the other hand (which includes the Asiatic mode) no such intensive or continuous structuration of the labour process takes place. Production can be either independent peasant or communal (6) and the exploiter has a purely external relation to the process of production intervening to exact tribute (or tax/rent in Hindess and Hirst's terms) only once the production process is complete. (7) Consequently the forces of production are not in any meaningful way structured by the relations of production, they cannot be deduced from one another, and the existence of the tributary or Asiatic mode of production remains unproved.

Does this mean that there are no modes of production corresponding to the larger aggregates of kingdom or chiefdom, and that we are forced back on some kind of notion of hegemony which is rooted in but not comprehended by the lineage mode? I think not. As Taylor suggests in his review of Hindess and Hirst, the relations of production established in the Asiatic mode of production are only compatible with communal forces of production, and I am inclined to think that this is true of all tributary formations, since other quasi-feudal mechanisms for structuring and reproducing the labour process would be necessary if communal ones were abandoned. At the same time Taylor also suggests that the state in the Asiatic mode of production is in fact obliged to intervene in the process of production by building canals and the like so as to secure its reproduction. (8) This type of large-scale intervention has been relatively uncommon in Africa, a fact which has prompted Coquerry-Vidrovitch to describe the African mode of production as the Asiatic mode without large works. (9) Other kinds of intervention do nevertheless occur. Among the Pedi regiments of young men are

organised by the chief to build walls and agricultural terracing, while in the view of Guy, the Zulu state came into being at least partly because of the varied nature of Zulu ecology and the need to rationalise access to diverse kinds of pastures and soils.(10) More generally, the provision of security enables the reproduction of production, and prevents the indiscriminate plundering which is often the fate of acephalous groups.(11) In the Swazi state, one sees these interventions of several similar kinds: control of access to various zones of pasturage, control of the size and reproduction of individual homesteads through witchcraft accusations, and control over the cycle of agricultural production through the annual incwala ceremony, and through the withdrawal of young men from the agricultural cycle into centralised age regiments.(12) In sum then there seems to me to be sufficient articulation between the forces and relations of production for us to reconsider the possibility of tributary mode, although the task of actually specifying that in a way that is theoretically coherent I shall leave to those who are more theoretically sound.

Social classes, politics and the state

"No classes, no politics, no state" is a passage that recurs throughout the pages of pre-Capitalist modes of Production. What are its implications for tributary modes of production in general, and for that of the Swazi in particular? Following Engels, Hindess and Hirst see the existence of the state and of politics as an effect of the social division of labour, i.e. of the existence of social classes. In social formations such as these "the political level exists as the necessary space for the representation of the interests of the various classes, and the presence of a state apparatus is a necessary condition of the maintenance and functioning of the mechanism of appropriation of surplus labour by the ruling class".(13) Otherwise, where social classes are absent, the state and politics do not exist and the social formation is only constituted of economic and ideological levels. Given this definition it is obviously important to impart some precision to our notion of class, and to

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see whether classes can then be identified in tributary, and particularly the Swazi, social formation. In Marxian theory the separation of society into social classes arises from the social division of labour between a class of labourers who are separated from ownership of the means of production and a class of non-labourers who control the means of production, and use this as the means of appropriating surplus labour. On the basis of this definition Hindess and Hirst reject outright the possibility of social classes in the primitive communist mode of production. Since the mode of appropriation of surplus labour is communal, they insist, there are ipso facto no classes, and hence no possibility of politics and the state.(14) Both Rey and Terray take the opposite view, asserting that control by elders over women in the first case and over prestige goods in the other enabled the elders "to control the surplus product, the partial or total use of which is for the reproduction of relations of dependence between the direct producers and this group", and out of this process they consider class relations to emerge.(15) Without wishing to enter that debate there does seem to be one point that should be made, which is that if Hindess and Hirst see "the process of the formation of the state [as] identical to the process of transition from primitive communism to some other mode of production", and if they consider transitions from one mode of production to another to be the product of class struggle, some kind of embryonic class formation must be possible in that mode for the transition to ever occur.(16)

It is that kind of embryonic class formation that seems to me to characterise tributary formations in general and that of the Swazi in particular. Its origins may perhaps be traced to the process outlined by Meillassoux.

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> Through historical accidents, usually due to contacts with foreign formations, a group takes for all its members the quality of 'senior' in relation to other groups considered collectively as minor. All the economic and social prerogatives of the elder are transferred to the dominant class, usually an aristocratic lineage. Prestations due to the elder become tributes due to the lord who may also gain control over the matrimonial policy of the community, and eventually over the means of production-land. (17)

Meillassoux's conception suffers in some measure from the role it ascribes to historical accidents, which in themselves presumably ought to be explained. Thereafter however it is possible to see these embryonic classes taking firmer shape. To take the Swazi case as an example, participation in the trade to Delagoa Bay and the ruling groups' monopolisation of its profits helped further boost the latter's power, which in turn was consolidated still further by their move to the Shiselweni district in the south of modern Swaziland, and the opportunities this presented for enforcing unequal access to unevenly distributed means of production. Part of that process I have dealt with elsewhere, and I should like to turn instead to the second phase of Swazi expansion which took place at the beginning of the 1820s. (18)

At this point it is worth noting the comments of Hindess and Hirst on the conquest situation. "Conquest", they point out,

> does not of itself produce state domination. The conquering people are not phantoms, they existed prior to the conquest and they must have a social organisation and a mode of producing the means of subsistence. In the first instance, the conqueror's mode of production will be represented alongside that of the dominated people. The dominant people receive tribute which is redistributed according to their social institutions and relations of production. No state is formed by this relation, dominant people/subject people; the means of coercion to obtain tribute are provided by the Gentile constitution of the dominant people, and the subject people regulates its own affairs by its own institutions. The fact of conquest does

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> not produce either class society or the state. The conditions of transition to class society, of the conversion of the conquerors into a non-labouring ruling class, are not given in conquest as such. If such a transition does take place then it is on the basis of class society and irreconcilable class antagonism that the state is formed, not on the basis of conquest. Conquest only explains certain conditions under which the state may be formed, it does not explain the mechanisms of the formation of the state. (19)

Conditions in the Swazi conquest area almost exactly mirror those outlined above. For several years the Swazi resembled more closely an army of occupation camped out in hostile territory, than a settled administration. "In those early days", one oral history recalls, "there were no chiefs, only princes and leaders of regiments" (20), and the same picture can be derived from the evidence of Swazi messengers to Captain Gardener when they visited Mgungundlovu in 1835. The capital of Swaziland, they told him, was Elangeni, and a little to the south was another village of Lobamba, which between them housed the entire male population of the Swazi, numbering no more than a few hundred men.(21) The messengers were evidently exaggerating, no doubt for Zulu ears, as we know of much more extensive Swazi settlement in this period, especially in the South.(22) Yet in the area of conquest there was an element of truth in what they said. Few of Sobhuza's brothers or sons were assigned chiefdoms in the central areas until the closing years of Sobhuza's life, and the type of 'placing' to which Kuper refers did not occur on any extensive scale until the reign of his successor.(23) The history of Maphalaleni illustrates the trend. Maphalaleni was established for LaNdwandwe, one of Sobhuza's favourite wives, but so late in Sobhuza's reign that by the time she got there Sobhuza was already dead.(24) The same pattern repeats itself throughout central Swaziland. Neither Maloyi nor Malunge seem to have taken effective occupation of their chiefdoms in the Mbuluzane River area until the reign of Mswati, and on the north side of the Komati River none of the Hhohho district was even

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allocated until the 1840s and 1850s.(25) In the south things were somewhat different. At least five of Sobhuza's sons were given chiefdoms there, but if Mantintinti is anything to go by, they only took possession comparatively late in Sobhuza's reign.(26) After accompanying Sobhuza to Mdimba, Mantintinti "never set foot alive" in the chiefdom he had been given, and it was only "during the time of the return of the princes" to neighbouring Velezezweni that his successor Mtfonga "was instructed to return".(27) In sum, then, the story told to Gardiner is at least partially confirmed. In the area of conquest the Ngwane were, for most of Sobhuza's reign, a nation under arms. Little of the conquered territory was settled, and the bulk of the population clustered for security in military towns. Only in the final years of Sobhuza's reign did the situation begin to change. Men could now be spared to reinforce the south, and an administrative presence was gradually extended in the conquered zone. Imperceptibly a shift was taking place to a society less overtly parasitic, and less openly reliant on the naked use of force.

The same process of integration accellerated in the reign of Sobhuza's successor Mswati (1839-1865). Almost as soon as Mswati succeeded his father he was faced with a rebellion by his half-brother Fokoti, and once that had been put down Mswati's mother Tandile and his paternal uncle Malunge took it as the opportunity to set in motion a series of far reaching reforms. On the face of it these took mainly political and ritual forms. The ritual supremacy of the king as expressed in annual incwala (first fruits) ceremonies was bolstered by ritual importations from the Ndwandwe, and Swaziland's military and administrative structures were systematised by creating nation-wide age regiments as the framework of Swaziland's military organisation, and by establishing a far more extensive network of roval villages to serve both as rallying points for regiments and as centres for monitoring and supervising local political activity.(28) The rationale behind these changes was

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not however solely political or ritual. The withdrawal of young men from the agricultural cycle of their families homesteads involved the direct appropriation of surplus labour by the royal house since they were then set to work tilling the king's fields, while changes in the incwala ceremonies and the establishment of royal villages in the provinces were part of a wider process whereby members of the royal family were being dispersed into the regions, as a means of securing control over all aspects of their activities including the process of production.(29) Why this was needed now is less easy to judge, but the most likely explanation is Swaziland's declining ability to raid for booty and tribute in the regions to the north and the west in the troubled period following Sobhuza's death. Under Sobhuza such raiding had been widely undertaken. Thonga traditions collected by Nachtigal are full of references to Swazi attacks, and when Trichardt passed by the Pedi in 1836 he was warned that the entire area to the west of the Steenkampsberg was under Swazi control.(30) By the time the trekkers arrived in the area, however, in the mid 1840s Swazi raiding had all but ceased, and it may well have been the shortage of surplus from these 'traditional' sources in a period of stress that caused a tightening of the mechanisms of surplus extraction in Swaziland itself.(31)

The programme of reform evoked immediate opposition and before long the regents were forced to back down by a coalition of regional interests.(32) Further action in the matter had to await the mid 1850's as Mswati and his regents were now confronted in rapid succession by the rebellions of two of his elder brothers and by two massed Zulu attacks. (33) 1852 however marked the end of Zulu attacks, and Zulu energies were henceforth consumed by internal wranglings over the succession.(34) As a result Mswati was able to bring the country more systematically under his control as is evidenced by his attacks on the semi-autonomous Emakhandzambile

chiefs [meaning 'those found ahead' i.e. those chiefdoms which had occupied central and northern Swaziland prior to Sobhuza's arrival from the South.] Of the nineteen Emakhandzambile chiefdoms about which I have definite information, fourteen suffered in some way or other during this period, and in the cases of the others it required the intervention of special factors or unusual circumstances to save them from a similar fate. Thus the Mnisi, the Thabedze, the Gamedze, the Mngometfulo, the Sifundza, the Masilela, and the Mavimbela were all attacked by Mswati's forces and it is also reported that the chiefdoms of the Mahlalela and Moveni's Magagula would also have experienced similar treatment had it not been for the intercession of chance on the one hand and a trusted royal relative on the other. (35) As for the others their autonomies were no less completely circumscribed, with the Ngwenya, the Dladla, the Mncina and the Moyeni's Magagula being demoted and placed under trusted officers of Mswati.(36)

It would of course be absurd to assume that all this was undertaken in the immediate interests of surplus appropriation. In the case of the Mnisi, e.g., their chiefdom was attacked because of the extensive rain-making powers their chief deployed, and ritual factors may have entered into Mswati's attack on others as well.(37) Nevertheless underlying most of these assaults one can see attempts to extend politico/economic control. In many instances it is difficult to separate these two levels. The Mavimbela, e.g., were attacked because they refused a royal wife from Mswati, and on the face of it were reacting against the extension of political control. Yet for them there was another dimension to the problem, since marrying a princess involved the payment of inflated sums of bridewealth and so meant a heavy drain of cattle as well.(38) In other cases economic issues are more clearly defined. Thus when Mswati tried to extort tribute from the Sifundza and Masilela peoples during a period of drought for example, his party was

intercepted as it returned and stripped of all that it had taken. Mswati did not react immediately but, according to tradition, bided his time until the offenders fears had been lulled. A more serious consideration was probably fear of the Zulu, since it is likely that these events took place in the drought of 1848. Once the Zulu threat had begun to recede however the Masilela were made to pay dearly for their crimes. A hunting party was arranged to which the Masilela were summoned, and they were then surrounded and annihilated by the rest of the assembled host (39).

The process whereby Mswati extended and rationalised his political and economic control over subject groups I would see as marking the beginning of class society and the emergence of the state. In the place of random and indiscriminate plundering one now finds the development of more institutionalised mechanisms for the appropriation of surplus, whose volume was at the same time kept within reasonable limits by the need to retain the loyalty and cooperation of subject groups against external enemies like the Zulu. Side by side one also discerns the developing institutions of the state; the age regiments, which socialised the youth of subject peoples into a sense of national identity, and whose labour and booty raiding enriched the dominant class; the expanded libandla or national council which represented all interests in the country and whose participation was required for all major political decisions [though here Hindess and Hirst's comments on the means of representation should also be remembered] (40); the annual incwala ceremony in which the king and his people are symbolically renewed each year, and so on. Whether at this embryonic stage they should be considered as existing entirely independently of the ruling groups is obviously open to question. Yet the same question remains open in the case of the feudal state. The extent to which or manner in which this operates

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" as the necessary space for the representation of the various classes " in the feudal mode of production is never properly elaborated by Hindess and Hirst, leaving one with the sneaking suspicion that even here it only partially fulfills that role.

The last question that I wish to consider in this section is the precise configuration of class interests represented in the early Swazi state. Terray in his recent article on "Classes and Class Consciousness in the Abron Kingdom of Gyaman", ultimately ducks that very question. He begins by defining classes in terms of relations to the means of production, but then goes on to characterise them as a relation of exploitation (41). This will not do, for as Hindess and Hirst among others have shown, there may be exploitation without classes ever arising, as in the case of "banditry and extortion by political 'bosses'" (42). Can we therefore say we have classes in pre-colonial Swaziland? I believe we can, if only in embryonic form. Firstly, land, the basis of the economic system and the principle means of production , is controlled by the rulers and can be redistributed by them in a variety of ways. Chiefdoms can have part of their territory taken away from them and allocated to other groups; they can be removed en masse to other parts of the country or they can have their local rulers replaced by relatives and functionaries of the king.(43) Thus, while each individual subject has access to the means of production, he can have his access restricted to means of greatly inferior worth. Much the same goes for cattle and for wives. By a variety of mechanisms such as witchcraft accusations, control over the appropriate combinations of pasturage, variable bridewealth payments, and preferential marriage patterns, the accumulation of

cattle/.....

cattle can be restricted for the commoners and largely confined to the ruling class. If one adds to this an appropriation of surplus on the basis of these divisions which goes to maintain a non-labouring ruling class, then one must concede the emergence of class society if only in attenuated form.

But the question remains who precisely constitute these classes ? In his study of the Abron kingdom of Gyaman Terray sees a three-class division between a non-labouring group of aristocrats and a class of working slaves on the one hand, and tribute producing peasants on the other, but it seems questionable to me how clear cut this distinction was(44). Are we to believe for example, that the Abron aristocracy was an entirely non-labouring class and that neither its women or cadets engaged in productive work? Certainly among the Swazi this was not the case, for there a large section of the ruling group took part in such pursuits. Instead what we find there is a more complicated situation, with tribute being extracted from subordinate groups in the various forms that we have mentioned, and then being partly concentrated in the upper echelons of the ruling class and partly filtering down. The important thing to remember here however is the barrier that existed to surplus dribbling down to the groups from which it had been drawn. Essentially this was constituted out of Swazi marriage practices. Unlike their Nguni counterparts the Swazi practised a system of preferential in-kin marriages, which tended to restrict cattle and other wealth to within the ruling class. These restrictions, it is true, were neither permanent nor impermeable. The marriage of matrilateral cross cousins is much more flexible than its patrilateral parallel variant which fixes genealogical relationships in a virtually unchanging rhythm , and it was this the Swazi

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practised rather than the more inflexible kind (45). The Swazi moreover marry their classificatory cross cousins and not their actual mother's brother's daughters, and have preferential marriages with a variety of other kin (46). Finally, a more general political expediency could involve an entirely different order of preference, and led Mswati to exchange wives with both Magagula chiefs (47). From the broader structural point of view however the relationships which developed with the conquered were decisively different from those of other Nguni groups. Although offering a more flexible range of marriage options than parallel and true cross cousin marriage, the various Swazi marriage preferences still concentrated them within a restricted group of kin (48). The broad effect of this was that while a degree of social and political mobility was permitted, differences of political and social status were perpetuated, which persist to this day. In Sobhuza's time these were at their most intense. Marriages were confined politically within the dominant Ngwane, and spatially to their military encampments, while wealth tended to circulate in the same restricted group. Under Mswati there was a blurring at the edges of these categories, but otherwise they remained essentially intact, leaving marriage practices to continue as a crucial determinant of class.

Captives and Booty Raiding in the Tributary Mode of Production

Jack Goody in his essays on Tradition, Technology and the State in Africa sees captives and tributary raiding as an integral part of the tributary mode of production(although he does not use that term). The low fertility of African soils, the relatively low level of technology in most African societies (which make human muscle power virtually the only means of power available), and low

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population densities, together make it impossible to extract surplus from peasant communities on a scale similar to much of Asia and Europe, and ensure that it is labour rather than land that is the factor of production which is scarce. Out of this arises booty raiding as an important means of acquiring surplus, and particularly the raiding of human booty as a source of labour power. (49) Terray in his Gyaman study refines these ideas further. The low level of surplus appropriation from peasant communities he suggests is a consequence of the need of ruling aristocracies to enlist the support of peasant communities in the face of threats from outside. At the same time the fear of creating a permanently dispossessed and disaffected slave population, as well as perhaps other factors, ensures the gradual absorption of the captive and his family into Gyaman society, and created the need to secure further supplies of captives as a means of making good that loss.(50) A number of the same points apply to Swazi society.

The part played by captives in the Swazi economy has been considerably larger than is generally imagined.(51) Whether this was always the case is difficult to say. When the Swazi was centred on Shiselweni in the south of Swaziland between circa 1770 - 1820 e.g. their highly pastural economy may have meant that their needs for labour power were correspondingly reduced. The situation changed once they moved from Shiselweni to Ezulwini. Here the pastorage was less rich and agricultural production more necessary, and henceforth captives were raided far and wide.(52) According to Ndambi Mkhonta the Ezulwini village once boasted large numbers of captives, and the same is likely to be true of all royal capitals.(53) Other examples which I have come across without directly questioning on the subject are those of the Dube who were attacked and enslaved in the reign of Mswati, and of the Thabede who suffered a similar fate at much the same time.(54) Sources of slaves fell in two

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categories, although the distinction was probably blurred in the early days of the state. The first group comprised non-Swazi who were raided outside their kingdom's boundaries (the Titfunjwa).(55) In Sobhuza's early conflicts with the chiefdoms of Magoboyi and Mkise, for example, captives were taken and their presence in Swazi society was used in later years to justify Mswati's right to cede the eastern Transvaal. (56) Later it was the Thonga who bore the brunt of these attacks and in was they who in this case were most usually traded as slaves. The other major source of supply were children seized from households within the Swazi kingdom (the Tigcili). (57) As Tikuba told Stuart in 1898

> It often happened that when a person was killed for some crime or other and his cattle and children seized, those children were taken by the Swazi and sold to the Boers in the Transvaal. (58)

The Berlin missionary, Merensky, reported on similar practices after his visit to Swaziland in March 1860. "Even now" he wrote in his diary,

> if a man of his (Mswati's) people has many daughters or good cattle his soldiers come, surround the Kraal, murder the old, and take the goung people and cattle as booty. Children are being sold or given to the 'great of the realm'.(59)

What were the implications of these developments for the emergence of the state and for the development of classes? Terray would have us believe that they signal the emergence of slave classes and of a slave mode of production, but as Hindess and Hirst show a slave mode of production presupposes private property in land and slaves, and a form of commodity exchange corresponding to both.(60) Moreover, given the rights and protection made available to captives in Swazi society, it seems more appropriate to regard them as a group of perpetual minors rather than as a clearly defined class.(61)

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The seizure of captives however did have other implications for class formation, particularly when considered against the trade in captives to the Transvaal. Without going into any details this seems to have grown to substantial proportions by the middle of the 1850's and then to have boomed to new levels for the first half of the next decade.(62) The question that is inevitably raised by these developments is to what extent the seizure of captives for trade become an object in itself in the attacks that were made on offending subject groups, and to what extent, in Rodney's terms, this led to the social degeneration of Swazi society.(63) In other words to what extent do we see a robber relation rather than a class relation coming to characterise Swazi society? I would argue that for the most part the seizure of captives did not become the objects of these attacks; that they were a by-product of rationalising economic and political contro, and that once this rationalisation was completed internal captive-taking largely ceased. In its place however one finds a shift of emphasis to Mozambique, the devastation and impoverishment of that area in the pursuit of captives, and perhaps some of the earliest origins of the underdevelopment of Southern Mozambique.

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