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The legal abolition of racial discrimination and its aftermath : The case of Swaziland, 1945-1973

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Chapter Two

Early Black and White Contacts: The Genesis of Racist Discourse in Swaziland, c. 1840s - 1902.

2. 0 Introduction

In the 1760s and 1770s the Swazi who were then known as the Ngwane moved from northern Zululand to inhabit the territory which later came to be known as Swaziland. The history of their earliest contacts with the whites dating back to the sixteenth century is fragmentary.[1] However, it is possible to trace these connections with a sense of continuity from the 1840s onwards. As G. M. E. Leistner and P. Smit observe that, "The Swazis first made contacts with whites in the 1840s when white hunters, traders, missionaries and farmers seeking grazing entered their territory".[2] Prior to the advent of white persons in Swaziland in this period the Swazi lived in a relatively traditional environment, not much affected by western influences.[3] Hilda Kuper notes that, "Whites, mainly Ducth - speaking and English - speaking, first entered the territory ruled by the Swazi king, Mswati, in the early nineteenth century".[4] The advent of whites in the country inevitably brought about certain significant changes upon the outlook of Swazi society. These included among other things, the racialisation of Swazi society. This process passed through various stages, turns and phases. The aim of this chapter is to trace the genesis of Swaziland's racialisation history from the 1840s when the process began to take shape, to 1902 when a distinct new phase began. It explores the nature of the frontier at different periods of interaction between blacks and whites, and then shows

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[1]For some sketch of this history, see, Killie Campbell Africana Library (hereafter, KCAL), M 577a, Miller Papers, File 18, Swaziland in the 80s: Oath of Mbandine and early concessions, pp. 1 - 2. All materials from this Library are from the Allister Collection unless otherwise stated.

[2]G. M. E. Leistner and P. Smit, *Swaziland: Resources and Development* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 1969), p .1.

[3]For a study that analyses the influence of Western Culture on Swazi Society, see, E. T. Sherwood, "Swazi Personality and the Assimilation of Western Culture", PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, 1961.

[4]H. 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. 289.

how important developments such as land alienation, white immigration, the establishment of Boer administration, the Anglo - Boer War and the establishment of British administration were crucial in the shaping of the nature of race relations which developed in the country. The racialisation process explored in this chapter took place against the advance of various kinds of interactions between blacks and whites. These interactions were largely egalitarian as they rested on interdependence and both societies were conscious of their mutually beneficial ties. Largely guiding the initiatives and reactions of the Swazi was the dream King Sobhuza I is alleged to have had. Along these frontiers, the chapter argues, though racial consciousness prevailed it did not necessarily translate to racism.

2. 1 Somhlolo's Dream in Historical Context

In 1836, just before he died, King Sobhuza I, popularly known as Somhlolo is alleged to have had a dream that carried certain implications for the black and white relations to be developed in Swaziland. According to J. S. M. Matsebula[5] the king dreamt that white-skinned people with hair like tails of cattle would come to his country. In response to the dream, he warned his advisors not to harm these people, because if they did it would be to the detriment of the Swazi nation. The *umculu* interpreted variously as the bible or book learning generally which the strangers would bring should be accepted but they were to avoid the *indilinga* round, disc - like object commonly interpreted to be money. However, the theologian, Joshua Mzizi has recently maintained that the the *indilinga* represented the bullet.[6] This is a relatively unusual interpretation which confirms the observation made by oral historians that in the process of reconstructing the past, oral history provides "extraordinary ways of interpreting the past".[7]

Martin Kaniki has observed that, "Whatever misgivings could be raised regarding the validity of Somhlolo's 'vision', the Swazi have believed and acted accordingly. The 'vision' has to be held as a social fact".[8] In this context he should be understood to be stressing that ideas can also have social weight in terms of their social effects. Of the dream Philip Bonner pointed out that, "It may give some idea of the importance that the approach of the colonial frontier came to hold for Sobhuza in the latter years of his life".[9] In this respect the dream may have served as the ideological basis on which the Swazi

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[5]J. S. M. Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland* 3rd ed. (Cape Town: Longmans, 1976), p. 27. See also, D. J. Kuby, "Elitism and Holiness in Swazi Conversion", PhD Thesis, University of California, 1979, pp. 30 - 31.

[6]Interview, Joshua Mzizi,Uniswa, Kwaluseni, 20 October, 2005. Mzizi was a Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies and Theology at the University of Swaziland. He sadly passed away at the beginning of December 2005.

[7]R. Perks and A. Thompson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (Introduction) (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. x.

[8]M. H. Y. Kaniki, "Christianity and the ideological Base of the Swazi Monarchy", in A. M. Kanduza and S. T. Mkhonza (eds.), *Issues in the Economy and Politics of Swaziland Since 1968* (Manzini: OSSREA, 2003), p. 70.

[9]P. L. Bonner, *Kings, commoners and concessionaires: The evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth-century Swazi state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 45.

would relate with the incoming whites who were well known for their ability to subjugate indigenous non - white races in the region. Through the dream not only a framework of co - operation across racial lines would be provided but an enduring legacy of harmonious race relations as well.

Jerry Perkins asserted that, "Consistent Swazi - European intercourse began with the coming of the Voortrekkers to the Transvaal during the decade of the 1830s".[10] Joshua Mzizi makes a similar point, observing that, "The king may have learnt of the activities of Voortrekers in South Africa and anticipated their arrival in his country".[11] For the purposes of this study the dream is seen to have set the tone for future black - white relations in the country. When interviewed on the dream, which he preferred to call a vision, the late Arthur Khoza, who was a diplomat and politician with wide knowledge of Swazi political history, boldly asserted that, "To me the vision was about non - racialism".[12] This dream or vision is not only significant for the historical role it is perceived to have played in black - white relations but also continues to inform the wider contemporary Swazi society in some respects.[13] As part of an ongoing reflection Joyce Nonhlanhla Vilakati has recently challenged scholars to reinterpret the dream in a manner that would be relevant for the contemporary times.[14]

Commenting on the advent of whites in Swaziland, Abednego Hlophe recalled that, "The Swazi king, Bhunu, was named so (the Swazi name for Afrikaner) because he was installed at the time when the Afrikaners were entering Swaziland. Their advent was a

[10]F. J. Perkins, "A History of Christian Missions in Swaziland to 1910", PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1974, p. 7.

[11]Interview, Joshua Mzizi, 20 October, 2005.

[12]Interview, Arthur Khoza, Selection Park, Mbabane, 4 January, 2005.

[13]Some songs have been composed by some musicians about the dream, and of late a religious ceremony known as the " Somhlolo Festival of Praise "was instituted in Swaziland in 1994 to commemorate the message of the dream annually. Some scholars have also explored the dream to explain the manner in which Christianity came to be an ideological base of the Swazi monarchy. For this case, see, for example, Kaniki, "Christianity ...", pp. 68 - 82.

[14]J. N. Vilakati, "Revisiting Divine Providence in a Monetary Economy" , in A. M. Kanduza and S. Dupont - Mkhonza (eds.), *Poverty in Swaziland: Historical and Contemporary Forms* (Kwaluseni: Ossrea, 2003), pp. 158 - 164.

threat to Swazi sovereignty".[15] When I asked Hlophe about how the dream had possibly influenced Swazi attitudes towards whites, his response was that, "Bhunu, who was king when the whites started coming in numbers, wanted to fight the whites. His Council, however, prevailed on him not to do so. This is an authentic account, which I got from the elders. I belong to the imiGadlela regiment and my regimental name is Ndukuzabafo".[16] According to Hlophe, this was largely because of the message conveyed in king Somhlolo's dream that, "there was to be no bloodshed as a result of the coming of the whites into Swaziland".[17] Joshua Mzizi concurs remarking that king Somhlolo had warned that upon coming to Swaziland white people were not to be harmed".[18] Pieter Esterhuysen has also observed that, "Possibly because they took heed of their king's words, the Swazi is one of the few strong Black nations in Southern Africa whose relations with Whites have never led to war".[19]

Kuby problematises these views, noting in the case of Swaziland, that

> Although colour was the mythical basis of domination, the material basis was the European's possession of the superior technology and economic organization which allowed for the subjection of the African. Reduced to its simplest terms, African spears were no match for guns and other sophisticated weaponry controlled by whites. Knowledge of European military conquests in other parts of Southern Africa led the Swazi kings to a policy of avoiding open warfare with white colonial powers.[20]

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[15]Interview, Abednego Kuseni Hlophe, Lozitha, Kalancabane, 16 November 2004. The bracketed statement is mine.

[16]*Ibid*. The imiGadlela regiment was already active during King Mswati II's reign in the 1860s. Hlophe was born in 1922.

[17]*Ibid.*

[18]Interview, Joshua Mzizi, 20 October 2005.

[19]Pieter Esterhuysen, "The legacy of Sobhuza II", *Africa Insight*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1984), p. 5, (Located at University of Swaziland Library, Swaziana section).

[20]Kuby, "Elitism and Holiness … ", p. 29.

Hamilton Simelane has likewise argued that the decision by the Swazi to avoid military confrontation with the incoming whites was largely informed by issues of power. He asserts that

> Mbandzeni used concessions as a strategy of resistance which most unfortunately back fired. The history of the acrimonies that befell African societies in their initial contacts with Europeans was well known to Mbandzeni and his councillors. The Swazi king was aware that the balance of power was tilted in favour of Europeans and as such much military confrontation would have meant disaster for the Swazi nation. Faced with increasing European demands for land and other concessions, Mbandzeni concluded that resistance by incorporating the Europeans was the best way of maintaining Swazi independence.[21]

Of the move by the Swazi king, Watts much earlier pointed out that

> He knew that the white civilisation in Natal and the Transvaal was pressing upon his borders, and that neither he nor his people could resist its force. Personally, he was well disposed to the white people, and he gave strict orders that they and theirs were to be strictly respected within the territory – a line of conduct which has been pursued by the Swazi native even to this day. He knew that he could not keep the European from his country, but he thought by diplomacy and gentle guile, and by setting one against the other, he could delay their advent.[22]

One part of the intruding white frontier was the advent of white missionaries in Swaziland. Of these Jerry Perkins has remarks that

> Sometime in the middle of the 1830s the Swazi king, Sobhuza, heard that many of the great chiefs had missionary teachers residing in their capitals. It is reported that, spurred by a dream in 1838 he sent a delegation of indvunas to Basutoland seeking a teacher who would come to live in his royal village and instruct his son, Mswati. In response to this invitation Allison and Giddy of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society called on the

[21]H. S. Simelane, "Swazi Resistance to Boer Penetration and Domination, 1881 - 1898", *TransAfrican Journal of History*, vol. 18, (1989), p. 126.

[22]C. C, Watts, *Dawn in Swaziland* (Westminster: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1922), pp. 26 - 27.

> Swazi rulers in 1844 who received them with enthusiasm. When they returned to their Basutoland mission stations they left two African teachers, Barnabas and Job, in the south of the country to begin the work of the mission while they made preparation to return a year later. Allison returned with his wife and a staff of workers in 1845 to establish a mission at Mahamba. The site was designated by Mswati, who had succeeded his father for the new mission venture.[23]

Describing the same development, Watts claimed that, "European civilisation pushed up nearer to the south - east border, and Rev. J. Allison, the pioneer Wesleyan missionary, pressed in and established himself at Mahamba, and the Christian attack upon heathenism began".[24] Due to succession rivalries to the throne mission work was brought to an abrupt end in 1846 when the head of the station, Rev. James Allison, his wife and hundreds of Swazis fled to Natal after an attack on the mission by King Mswati II's regiments. This attack was however, not targeted at the white presence in the country but rather sought to deal with what the king considered to be a rebellion against him. This can be seen in the regiments' avoidance of any kind of confrontation with the few whites at the station.

A newspaper article published about a hundred years later recalled of this incident that, "Only two or three girls whom Mrs Allison had protected by casting her arms around them and covering them with a portion of her clothes were saved from the fury of the Swazi warriors".[25] Nothing much is known about black and white relations at the Mahamba mission station. Mzizi claimed that, "It would be difficult to know exactly how the set up was at this mission station in racial terms; especially because it lasted for a

[23]Perkins, "A History of Christian Missions …", p. iii.

[24]Watts, *Dawn* , p. 95.

[25]Times of Swaziland (hereafter, TOS), "Swaziland's First Mission Station", 2 September, 1960, (Contributed article), p. 4.

short time".[26] This episode was followed by what Perkins has termed, "The Missionary Lacuna,"[27] meaning the conspicuous absence of missionary activity in the country. According to Perkins this period lasted up to 1880. Although missionary interest was revived in the country in the 1860s, it was not until the beginning of the 1880s that a permanent missionary station of the Anglican Church was established.[28] More missionary groups soon followed. In 1893 the South African General and Scandinavian Alliance Missions commenced work, the former at Bethany in Central District, the latter first at Bulunga but later moving to Bethal Mission Station on the Henwood concession, near Hluthi, in the south.

The arrival of the first missionaries in Swaziland in this fashion is markedly different from what took place in other parts of the world. In Latin America, for instance, the Catholic Church was a crucial agent in the colonisation process. In this respect, Josep Barnadas has observed that, "The church in America had a practical mission assigned to it: it was to hasten the Indian submission and Europeanization and to preach loyalty to the crown of Castile".[29] Of the earlier missionaries Jerry Perkins has observed that, "the missionaries labouring in Swaziland had very little if any interest in political issues".[30] However, while this may have been true of the early Wesleyans it is not entirely true thereafter.

In the mid - 1880s the Anglican Bishop for the Dioceses of Zululand upon his visit to the country was struck by the large number of Dutch families in the Southern part of the

[26]Interview, Joshua Mzizi, 20 October, 2005.

[27]Perkins, "A History of Christian Missions …", p. 111.

[28]*Ibid.*

[29]J. M. Barnadas,"The Catholic Church in Colonial Spanish America", in L. Bethel(ed.)*The Cambridge History of Latin America: Colonial Latin America* vol.1(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1984), p. 15.

[30]Perkins, "A History of Christian Missions …", p. 317.

country. These families formed the majority of the membership in two rapidly growing Anglican mission stations. Gauging the possible political outcome of this development, he stated that, "My own belief is that unless England annexes Swaziland, that too will fall into Dutch hands within a year or two, and I begin to see what my Free State Training was for".[31] The Bishop's personal wish and perhaps that of a majority of his church was that Swaziland would come under British rule.

As Jerry Perkins has observed that from around the 1840s onward, "the nation was in constant contact with their white neighbours".[32] The ideology of white supremacy as ingrained in the minds of white people during the period of their early contacts with the Swazi does not appear to have translated into daily racism. Apart from the reality that there were a few and marginal whites the ideology was not part and parcel of Swazi cosmology. Explaining the manner in which the Swazi conceptualised whiteness, Kuby observes that

> The Swazi found it difficult to understand why skin color was identified as the basis for inequality in power, prestige and privilege. During the early interaction between Swazi and Europeans, the Swazi was more impressed with the hair, shoes, guns, writing and money of the European (abelungu). When skin color was attributed to the European, the colors of red or grey were given rather than white. When the European's 'racial' stereotyping into black and white people was learned, the Swazi was still at a loss to appreciate the ethical associations of these colors. The Swazi cosmology did not polarize values through the contrast of black and white but conceived of both colours as having both negative and positive powers depending upon the ritual context.[33]

Similarly, Hilda Kuper has explained that when the Swazi first came into contact with whites, skin colour was not a decisive criterion for description. She explained that whites were perceived as "beings or creatures of a different order and were not classified as

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[31]*The Net* (TN), "Diocese of Zululand– Adventures By The way", 2 February 1885, p. 23.

[32]*Ibid.* , p. 42. The Berlin Missionary Society was the first to indicate an interest in Swaziland during the lacuna. The Permanent station was established at Mahamba by Rev. Joel Jackson of the Anglican Church.

[33]Kuby, "Elitism and Holiness ... ", p. 30.

bantfu. They were classified as *belumbi*".[34] While the term *bantfu* refers to human beings who are associated with certain personality traits the term *belumbi* derives from the verb *kulumba* which describes a particular technique of sorcery. Kuper has explained that

> The main instrument of the newcomers was the gun, the most powerful mode of communication. The psychological as well as physical effect of the guns on Africans who knew only sticks, spears and shields, is amply recorded in the records of white pioneers. To the Africans the technique of 'killing by pointing a stick from a distance' was a new technique of '*kulumba*' the practitioners were *belumbi*.[35]

It thus appears that the term *belumbi* which the Swazi used to refer to whites was not in reference to the skin colour but pointed more to those aspects of white culture and tradition the Swazi associated with magic, mystery and strangeness. This does not seem to have gone down well with missionaries who introduced the term *belungu*, from the root *kulunga* which has several meanings including to be morally good.[36] Other contemporary terms used by the Swazi to refer to whites include *labamhlophe* and *badzeshi*. *Labamhlophe* directly refers to skin colour and means 'the whites' while *badzeshi* is a sarcastic way of referring to whites as the "others"[37]. It is not very clear as to when the Swazi began to use these terms but they appear to have been a product of the anti-colonial struggles. It is also interesting that the terms, *belumbi, belungu labamhlophe* and *badzeshi* are used by the Swazi to refer to whites generally. However, a closer examination of the usage of these terms will show that not all who may be assumed to be white in terms of skin colour are so regarded by the Swazi. When I conducted my oral interviews I realised that Portuguese, Italians, Germans and other groups were not necessarily classified as *belumbi* by the Swazi. Similarly official records did not classify such groups as Europeans. As it appears the real whites, *labamhlophe* or

[34]Kuper, "Colour, Categories and Colonialism …" , pp. 297 - 299.

[35]*Ibid.*

[36]*Ibid.*

[37]I have been noticing the usage of these terms and associated meanings in Swaziland since the mid - 1970s.

belumbi were people of British descent. A term specifically used for persons in this category is *lingisi* (singular), *emangisi* (plural). The Boers were distinctly reffered to as *emabhunu*.

2. 2 Sheep Grazers, Hunters and Traders

Other contacts between blacks and whites in Swaziland can be traced back to mid-nineteenth century. Europeans appear to have first come as vistors to Swaziland around this time.[38] These were hunter-traders in search of game in the Lowveld and farmers who grazed their sheep on the Highveld during the winter months.[39] As Allister Miller explained, "The country was avoided in the summer season as it was believed to be a hotbed of malaria and it is only within the past 36 years that any confidence in summer residence has been established".[40] The relations that were forged during these early contacts were fundamentally guided by economic interests. Apart from the first Wesleyan missionaries, the early whites who entered the country were the periodic sheep grazers and hunter-traders who were later followed by concessionaires of all types. Hilda Kuper remarks, "Before the establishment of a stable European government or the arrival of the first missionary, trader - hunters travelled through Swaziland exchanging guns, knives and other merchandise for animal skins".[41] She however, did not explore the nature of the relations that were forged between the trader-hunters and the Swazi.

[38]Norman Herd, "This is Swaziland", *The Swaziland Recorder*, March, 1963, p. 7, (at KCAL).

[39]Great Britain, *Swaziland Annual Report* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1960), p. 114.

[40]KCAL, File 18, Swaziland in the 80s: Oath of Mbandine and early concessions, p. 2.

[41]H. Kuper, *The Uniform of Colour: A Study of White - Black Relationships in Swaziland* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1947), p. 129.

Jonathan Crush has noted that, "Before the mid - century there was a limited trade in iron goods and calico cloth with the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay. Thereafter, white hunters and traders from the Transvaal, bartering cattle, ivory, and skins for horses and guns, periodically traversed Swaziland".[42] From around the 1850s white hunters started coming into Swaziland from Natal. These hunters included men like, the Peacheys, David and James Forbes, James Hook, Peter Weldon and Conraad Vermaak. According to Allister Miller, one of Swaziland's early and prominent settlers, "winter expeditions were undertaken mainly to obtain skins which were taken back to Natal and exported".[43] Such hunters, "only entered the Low Country and departed as a matter of rule about the beginning of September".[44] Simanga Gerard Kunene has pointed out that, "From the 1870s the Highveld region of the country was progressively penetrated by increasing numbers of Boer ranchers from the Transvaal attracted by its rich winter pastures".[45] In the context of the imperial politics of the time, the shaping of ideologies about the "otherness" of different human groups was inevitable. Hilda Kuper claims that when such men

> entered Mswati's land, they already held the belief that black men were inferior to white men. The doctrine of racial superiority was drawn from the bible, and was confirmed and reinforced by the layman's interpretation of Darwin's theory of evolution.[46]

Kuby, Kuper's student, notes that

> The basic ideology of white superiority derived from mistaken ideas of 'social Darwinism' which tied cultural achievements with innate biological differences of 'racial' groups distinguished by skin color. Since the European 'races' were the most advanced technologically, they were

[42]J. Crush, *The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890 - 1920* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill - Queens, 1987), p. 33.

[43]KCAL, File 152 Swazi history, Memorandum by Allister Miller to an unidentified person, 10 April, 1937.

[44]*Ibid.*

[45]G. S. Kunene, "British Colonial Policy in Swaziland, 1920 - 1960", PhD thesis, University of York, 1992, p. 33.

[46]Kuper, *The Uniform of Colour,* p. 29.

> the most 'evolved', the furthest removed from their sub-human origin. Africans and other pre-industrial and non-white peoples were believed to recently evolved out of a savage pre-human condition. All members of the same race were thought to be at the general level of superiority or inferiority despite individual differences. The broad limits and capacities were considered innate and education could only make minor changes. All elements of European 'civilization' were considered to be superior to comparable elements of Africa 'culture'.[47]

However, neither of them back up their claims with empirical evidence. Moreover social Darwinism only came into vogue in Europe in the 1880s.[48] Concerning racist ideas and the expansion of European rule into Asia, Africa and Asia, Paul Gordon Lauren noted that, "Whatever intentions or purposes, the white Europeans did not confront indigenous peoples in these many lands with neutral opinions about race".[49] However, Lauren has qualified his statement adding that, "These beliefs, it must be emphasized, were not yet racist in the nineteenth century sense of the term because they did not entail an explicit doctrine of genetic or biological inequality".[50] Kuper's prime source, it appears were the tales she managed to collect from some Swazilanders during the period of her research.[51] These led her to two main conclusions of stereotypes whites held about black people, "firstly, their inherent inferiority and inability to acquire the white man's culture and, secondly, their uncontrolled emotional, or barbaric nature".[52] Kuper's tales may have been a reflection of contemporary perceptions, but they beg the question of the extent to which they are representative of nineteenth century realities. In the case of Southern Rhodesia, Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan have observed that

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[47]Kuby, "Elitism and Holiness …" p. 40.

[48]For a meaningful discussion of eugenics and other forms of Social Darwinist thought, see, for example, S. Dubow *Illicit Union: Scientific Racism In Modern South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press,1995), pp. 120 - 165.

[49]Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, p. 15.

[50]*Ibid.* , pp. 15 - 16.

[51] Kuper, *The Uniform of Colour*, pp. 30 - 31.

[52]*Ibid.* , p. 30.

> Hunters and traders alike, however, depended on the favour of indigeneous pontantes. No individual hunter was strong enough to compel obedience to his will from a powerful chief. No trader could oblige tribesmen to become his customers. White men had to deal with black as equals.[53]

Emphasising this point Gann and Duignan have further explained that

> The personal relations between white men and black– certainly those between white men and black leaders– implied at least equality of status. Black potentates usually commanded most or all of the means of coercion available on the spot. White travellers had to conform to African systems of governance.[54]

Referring to pre - colonial Africa in general Christopher Fyfe observed that. "Before the European partition of Africa, a white skin did not itself confer authority. Over most of the continent, white people had no authority. Their white skin gave them no protection".[55] Christopher C. Watts has portrayed the relatively egalitarian relationship between blacks and whites in the country, during this period as follows;

> Boer farmers in the Transvaal and in Natal, who were pushing up nearer and nearer to its borders, heard from the elephant hunters that the grass in Swaziland was green during the dry winter months, when there was no pasturage on their own farms, and they came to the king to ask for permission to graze their cattle and sheep in his fertile valleys. As these hunters brought guns, horses, and greyhounds, which are much valued for hunting, and as they made themselves as agreeable as possible, their requests were granted readily enough; and every winter many farmers and flocks and herds trekked down into Swaziland, returning to their own homes as soon as the rain and heat began. Mbandine valued the friendship of these men, and punished with death anyone who stole their goods, or interfered with them in any way. The Swazis also sold them native children whom they had captured in

[53]L. H. Gann and P. Duignan, "Changing Patterns of A White Elite", in L.H. Gann and P. Duignan (eds.) *Colonialism in Africa, Vol. 2* (London: CUP, 1970), p. 97.

[54]*Ibid*.

[55]C. Fyfe, "Race, Empire and Historians", *Race and Class* vol. 33 (1992), p. 15.

> their raids against neighbouring tribes, and who became serfs or slave-servants to the farmers.[56]

J. J. Nquku, likewise, pointed out that the first generation of hunter - traders gave allegiance and paid tribute to King Mswati II.[57] During this time the Swazi kingdom could still mobilise an impressive military force. Watts has pointed out that

> It is probable that Mswazi had a fighting force of at least 10, 000 men at his disposal. He organised raids in all directions, devastated the Kaap Valley near Barberton, on the one side, and laid siege to the Portuguese fort at Delagoa Bay on the other. Sending out his impis over the high table -land on his western border, he reached Carolina and even Machadodorp, and destroyed the entire native population.[58]

When the period of the hunter - traders passed, there was no particular racial hierarchy that had been forged between the Swazi and Europeans. Though the Europeans upheld racist notions and ideas about the indigenous Swazi, these did not necessarily form part of the interactive discourse between the two groups. Under the circumstances that prevailed at the time no group possessed the monopoly to define the terms of the relations. In essence, the relations between the whites and Swazi were guided and informed by a relatively egalitarian partnership. In this respect, Philip Bonner observed that

> The Transvaal Republics relied for their very economic survival on an infusion of resources from neighbouring African powers. To begin with these were seized by raiding and despoilment but this grew increasingly risky as power relations levelled out. To hunt or trade under the new dispensation required the active co-operation of African chiefdoms and a measure of mutual interdependence evolved. Even when hunting and trading began to give way to more agricultural and pastoral pursuits, similar contradictions arose. Labour services were required, but were not readily forthcoming, since adjacent chiefdoms offered sanctuary to those exposed to

[56]Watts, *Dawn,* p. 21.

[57]KCAL, KCM 2313, File 152, J. J. Nquku, The Advent of White Men into Swaziland, p. 2.

[58]*Ibid.* , pp. 17 - 18.

> such demands. The Republics were thus faced with the options of raiding or conquest or the trading of captives from neighbouring African powers. Since raiding and conquest were ruled out in many instances by military weakness, relations of dependence and interdependence were further entrenched.[59]

Bonner's observation indicates that at state level the surrounding white societies did not necessarily command a military advantage over Swaziland. Hence these societies and individuals coming from them could not simply relegate the Swazi to a subservient position. Seemingly, this period was characterised by what Paul Maylam has termed "racial consciousness".[60] As he explains that

> This refers to a set of beliefs about perceived differences between human groupings based on colour, physical type and culture. Such beliefs may be widely held, but they tend to be loosely articulated, expressed in popular attitudes and behaviour patterns, but not systematised in a body of theory or scientific discourse".[61]

This description fits in with the evidence that has been tabled above suggesting that early black and white contacts in Swaziland were relatively egalitarian on the hunter-trader, missionary and grazing frontiers.

2. 3 Concessionaires

In the case of Southern Rhodesia, Gann and Duignan have remarked that, "The passing of the hunter's and trader's frontier, for instance marked a stage in a major economic transformation".[62] The hunter - trader, farmer, and missionary frontiers in Swaziland were followed by the concessionaire period. The concessionaire period in Swaziland also marked a major economic transformation. Before this time King Mswati had signed a treaty with the Oghristad Boers in 1846 whereby large tracts of land were concessioned

[59]Bonner, *Kings, Commoners*, p. 218.

[60]P. Maylam, *South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation and Apartheid*(Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 7.

[61]*Ibid.* , pp. 7 - 8.

[62]Gann and Duignan, "Changing Patterns …", p. 97.

away. In 1855 the land along Phongola River was further ceded to the Boers of the Lydenburg Republic. However, as Bonner and Simelane have observed these concessions were of a diplomatic nature aimed at protecting the Swazi territory from the Zulu.[63] In 1860 Conraad Vermaark also obtained a concession from Mswati. He was the first white individual to be given a concession by a Swazi king as well as the first to settle in Swaziland. Peter Gosnell has described the layout of Vermaak's concession as follows;

> The written concession was made on 12 September 1860. It defined Vermaak's territory as being bounded to the west by the range of hills near Zombodze, to the south by the Transvaal border just north of the Pongola River, to the east by the Lebombo mountains up to the Usuthu poort, and to the north by the Usuthu and Mhlathuze rivers. About one third of the concession fell outside the borders of modern Swaziland, in the Ngwavuma District of Kwazulu / Natal.[64]

About the same concession, Miller commented that, "Conraad Vermaak … in September 1860 obtained a concession from Mswazi over a vast tract of land in the South".[65] Gosnell observed that Vermaak and his family "lived in considerable isolation".[66] This implies that this white family had very limited interactions with the white community. Mswati's main aim was to place Vermaak as a buffer against the Zulu who posed a serious threat to Swazi security and sovereignty around this time. As J. J. Nquku explained, "The reason prompting king Mswazi to grant Vermaark this right was that he wanted Vermaark to form a buffer state between Swaziland and Zululand so as to ward off any Zulu invasion".[67] Through one of its conference resolutions in 1959 the Swaziland Progressive Association (SPA) explained in retrospect that

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[63]See, Bonner, *Kings, Commoners*, pp. 49 - 64 and Simelane, "Swazi Resistance …", p. 119.

[64]P.J. Gosnell, *Big Bend: A history of the Swaziland Bushveld* (Durban: Peter Gosnell, 2001), p. 8. For more details on the concession, see, H. M. Jones, *Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902*, (PieterMaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), pp. 598 - 599.

[65]KCAL, M 577a, File 18, Swaziland in the 80s: Oath of Mbandine and early concessions, p. 2.

[66]Gosnell, *Big Bend*, p. 8.

[67]KCAL, KCM 2313, File 152, The Advent of White Men into Swaziland, p. 2

> Swazi kingship and custom does not differentiate Swazi subjects according to colour. In 1860, Vermaark, the first European settler became the subject of King Mswati. He paid obeisance– kukhonta and was appointed to a position of trust on the southern border of Swaziland with duties to guard intruders. Subsequently all early European settlers who followed up to the time of King Mbandzeni were subjects of the Swazi king because they had khontaed and were under his protection.[68]

As the 1880s progressed, the winter trekkers increased in numbers, pushed further eastwards into the Middleveld and Lowveld, and sought more formal sanction for their presence from the Swazi rulers through written letters.[69] It was during the reign of Mbandzeni that numerous concessions were given to whites in the country.[70] Gerard Kunene remarked that

> In the mid 1880s the Boer grazers were followed by a group of British and South African mining speculators and prospectors who had been led to believe that a second gold reef was to be found in Swaziland, and together with a number of white traders and farmers they obtained land concessions from the king.[71]

On the borders of the country independent white settlements like the Little Free State and New Scotland were founded during this period.[72] However, in this study we do not focus on those as our focus is on the development of racial patterns within the boundaries of Swaziland. Gold was a major motor of this concessionaire movement. Watts explained that

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[68]Swaziland National Archives (hereafter, SNA), File 3311, Swaziland Progressive Association, Resolutions of the Swazi Progressive Association Passed at its 30th Annual Conference Held at Kwaluseni, Bremersdorp, 1 to 2 August, 1959.

[69]Crush, *The Struggle*, p. 33.

[70]For a detailed discussion of the concessions, see for example, Bonner, *Kings Commoners* …

[71]Kunene, "British Colonial Policy…", pp. 33 - 34.

[72]For details, see, KCAL MS 585, File 152 Swazi History: A History of Settlement at New Scotland, Matsebula, *A History*, pp. 85 - 88 and E. Watson, "The History of the Little Free State and Swaziland Affairs Relating thereto" , MA Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1941.

> The news that gold was found in Barberton fired men's imaginations with the idea that Swaziland, just over the mountains was a veritable Eldorado. The finding of a few small reefs and some alluvial tin sufficed to send adventurers into the country in swarms, and there was a constant stream of concessionaires going and returning from the royal kraal– some wealthy and carrying large bags of gold, some poor and out at heel, but all fired with the one idea that a fortune beyond the dreams of avarice awaited them in Swaziland.[73]

The granting of different kinds of concessions to Europeans in the country soon led to the emergence of a burgeoning white community in Swaziland. Some kind of order and administration needed to be observed among this community. Hence King Mbandzeni's permission to allow the Europeans to elect a committee for their self - government and form a police force to maintain control. Alan Booth has noted that, "By around 1890 there were perhaps 750 white settlers, 60 per cent of whom were British".[74]

In an official colonial book produced in the 1960s it was acknowledged that, "The many concessions granted by Mbandzeni necessitated some form of European control".[75] Mbandzeni first asked Britain to provide a Resident Agent to look after white affairs in Swaziland. When Britain declined, citing cost and lack of jurisdiction in Swaziland, he turned to his father's old friend, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, and in 1887 his son also known as Theophilus or Offy, was officially installed as adviser to Swazi nation. Shepstone's first step was to call a meeting of the five hundred or so whites living in Swaziland at the time; about seventy attended. From these a committee to deal with white affairs– the "Swaziland Committee", the forerunner of the white government in Swaziland, was formed. Abednego Kuseni Hlophe, who has been influential in the Swaziland's politics since 1951, perceives this period as follows;

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[73]Watts, *Dawn*, p. 25.

[74]A. R. Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom* (Boulder, Colorado: West view Press, 1983), p. 15.

[75]SNA, File 3047 R, The Statesman's Year Book, Extract from the Colonial List, 1965.

> Following the advent of Whites in Swaziland two communities came to be formed, namely that of the blacks and that of whites. Because of the different ways of living there was limited social interaction between these groups and this became the seedbed of racial discrimination. The Africans were a separated entity living apart from the whites".[76]

Arthur Khoza also pointed out that, "Sheep owners and traders arrived and started settling within the kingdom of Swaziland during king Mbandzeni's reign. The king, with no intention to discriminate at all, urged that whites should form their own committee to be able to handle their own cultural affairs".[77] To further my understanding on this situation I requested Khoza to explain what he had meant, earlier during the interview, when he said that racial discrimination was, "perhaps a product of the lack of understanding of cultural differences between the blacks and whites who happened to inhabit Swaziland at that time"[78] Khoza explained that

> Whereas, the Swazi king approached the issue from the angle that one had to have the freedom to live according his cultural ways, on the part of the early white settlers and later the colonial regime the cultural differences were used to establish class notions *and racial categories* in the society.[79]

Shedding light on whether this development served as a seedbed for racial discrimination in Swaziland, Khoza pointed out that, "To some extent, I am afraid it did act as a breeding ground for racial practices. But, my point, however, is that king Mbandzeni's idea was to promote peaceful co - existence between blacks and whites in Swaziland".[80] The theme of racial harmony inaugurated by Somhlolo's dream seemed to have guided relations between the Swazi and whites throughout the century and beyond.

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[76]Interview, Abednego Kuseni Hlophe, Lozitha, Kalancabane, Swaziland, 16 November, 2004.

[77]Interview, Arthur Khoza, Mbabane, Selection Park, Swaziland, 4 January, 2005.

[78]*Ibid*.

[79]*Ibid*. The emphasis is mine.

[80]*Ibid*.

As more whites began to settle in the country, a charter of self - government was granted to Europeans in 1888. The charter empowered whites in Swaziland to elect a committee that would adjudicate on all matters relating to white affairs. A newspaper article, published ten years later, recorded that, "In 1888 Umbandine granted a Charter to the white interest holders in Swaziland, in which he empowered them to govern themselves".[81] John June Nquku noted that the decision of the committee was subject to the confirmation of the king.[82] The granting of the charter further signified the acknowledgement of "racial" and perhaps cultural distinctions between the Swazi and the whites. Giving his opinion on king Mbandzeni's decision to grant the charter to the whites, Arthur Khoza clarified that, "The king did not permit them to form a committee because they were whites. He only recognised that their culture was different".[83] Similarly, Hamilton Simelane has reasoned that, "He hoped to assimilate the Europeans into his nation, while he remained their authority like any of his subject".[84] In retrospect, the granting of the charter and the establishment of the white committee may be seen to have laid the basis for formal and institutionalised racialised relations between blacks and whites in Swaziland.

During his stay in Swaziland, Allister Mitchel Miller (Known to the Swazi as Mabhala or Mabhal'izincwadi[85]) engaged in various activities that were subsequently to influence race relations in the country. Towards the end of the 1880s, as a young man who had come to Swaziland, he played significant role in the black - white relations of the country which continued up to the mid - twentieth century when he died. From the onset he occupied strategic positions in the country's political and socio - economic organization.

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[81]TOS, "Sauce for the Goose", 4 June, 1898.

[82]KCAL, KCM 2313, File 152, The Advent of White Men into Swaziland, p. 11.

[83]Interview, Arthur Khoza, Selection Park, Mbabane, 4 January, 2005.

[84]Simelane, "Swazi Resistance …", p. 126.

[85]Mabhala means "the writer" whereas Mabhal'izincwadi means "writer of letters or books". Allister Miller's keenness about taking notes concerning what transpired around him probably earned him the reputation of "one who writes" among the Swazi.

He both acted as a representative of European interests in Swaziland and influencing public opinion through the media. Reflecting on his arrival in the country Miller later recalled that, "I first saw the territory at the age of 23 in August 1888. I was editing a paper in Barberton, and was offered by Captain Ewing the chairman of the newly formed Swaziland Government Committee the post of Secretary".[86] The paper for which he was sub-editor in Barberton was the *Goldfield Times*. Describing his response, Miller remarked that

> Swaziland was in everybody's mouth. Its frontiers encircled a Golconda and so fired with the romantic atmosphere which it spread. I joyfully accepted the appointment and hastened on horseback, with a long train of following bearers carrying my worldly possessions, over the mountains east of Barberton to take up my duties.[87]

Immediately upon arrival Miller was appointed by King Mbandzeni to the position of Resident justice for the district of Mbekelweni on 22 November 1888. He was further appointed the king's Permanent Secretary and Agent on 9 May 1889.[88] By virtue of being holder of the latter office, he would serve as the king's nominee in the Swaziland Government Committee. His duties involved the registration of documents, the transfer of grants and the transaction of business with white people on behalf of the king. He displaced Shepstone from the position of advisor to the Swazi nation, though not without some struggle.[89] Sheptone was, however, reinstated after the death of Mbandzeni.[90] Miller's membership of the Swaziland Committee was then cancelled. He thereafter was inactive in Swaziland politics.

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[86]KCAL, Miller Papers, File 18, Swaziland in the 80s: Oath of Mbandine and early concessions, p. 4.

[87]*Ibid*.

[88]For some details on the appointments, see, KCAL, Ms Mi1. 08. 44, Copies of Allister Miller's Letter of Appointment as Secretary and Agent of Mbandine.

[89]For details, see, File 1, KCM 154 A, Diary of Allister Miller. See, Also, See, also, Jones, *Biographical Register*, p. 415.

[90]Jones, *Biographical Register*, p. 417.

The arrival and settlement of concessionaries in Swaziland marked another phase in the racialisation history of the country characterised by certain initiatives from the black and white communities. In an attempt to describe how racial practice functions, Paul Maylam notes that

> It is rather implicit in the way that people interact, or limit their interaction, with those who are presumed to be racial others. It may be expressed through avoidance or maintaining social distance from those perceived to be physical different or culturally alien.[91]

In describing this process, however, Maylam does not explain who the initiator of this process is- the perpetrator or victim of racism? If we assume that the perpetrator initiates the process, the immediate problem we are confronted with in the case of Swaziland, is that it appears there was a mutual reciprocity in the establishment of the racial order. In addition Maylam's model fails to capture the reality that racial practice is a bargained terrain - it is not simply a matter of one party dictating the terms of interaction.

Maylam's model is thus inadequate in explaining why Swazi kingship co - operated fully with whites in establishing separate co - existence between the Swazi and white communities. Equally, it fails to account for the kingship's gesture of accommodating persons of a different culture (as in the case of Vermaark) as subjects of the king. It is my contention, in this case, that as much as Swazi kingship viewed whites as "the racial others", there is a sense in which the institution attempted to pose as a unifying factor. Under this arrangement, both blacks and whites, through paying allegiance to the king, could establish a common bond cutting across the cultural and racial boundaries.

In the early contacts between blacks and whites land soon became the centre of controversy. This controversy arose from the manner in which the Swazi king, Mbandzeni granted land concessions to white settlers. In the case of the land concessions, white settlers appear to have misunderstood the significance of Swazi customary practices with regard to land rights. Arthur Khoza has pointed out that

[91]Maylam, *South Africa's Racial Past,* p. 8.

> When the king gave the whites permission to settle on Swazi land, it was interpreted by them as buying land. They gave the king liquor, dogs and laughable amounts of money, which were considered by the king as gifts of appreciation.[92]

Khoza's view is strongly corroborated among others, by David Kuby who maintains that, "Swazi kings understood the European 'payment' for the various concessions as the customary tribute normally given to the kingship by loyal subjects and foreigners who wished to establish diplomatic ties".[93]

Khoza emphasized the importance of land with regard to racialisation when he commented that

> Land was alienated because of lack of understanding of cultural differences between blacks and whites. I have already indicated that according to Swazi Law and Custom if permission is given to use land, it does not imply ownership. After king Mbandzeni had allocated land to the whites it did not mean that it then became theirs. Whites got two thirds of the land while it was said one third would be reserved for Swazi use. You see discrimination manifesting itself in the land issue in obvious ways.[94]

Such views extend back into the early twentieth century. A series of articles written to the *Abantu Batho* newspaper in 1913, for example, bitterly complained about the way the Swazi had lost land to whites. These articles caught the eye of the colonial Administration in Swaziland as a result of which the Resident Commissioner forwarded copies of the articles to the High Commissioner. In one of these articles, it was argued,

> Why is it that Theophilus Shepstone when he came and found that the Boers were robbing these people because of the latter's ignorance, did not put things right for the Swazis? If that had been done, today there would be none of the troubles which now beset us and which have given rise to the partition which itself is a robbery because the

[92]Arthur Khoza, Interview, Mbabane, Selection Park, Swaziland, 4 January, 2005.

[93]Kuby, "Elitism and Holiness …" , p. 31.

[94]Arthur Khoza, Interview, Mbabane, Selection Park, Swaziland, 4 January, 2005.

> Swazis have never consented to it, and have not admitted that it is right for them to receive one - third and the white men two - thirds.[95]

The same view persists today. As Abednego Hlophe also forcefully maintains that

> The argument that Mbandzeni sold land is unfounded. He never sold an inch. The land was stolen by the whites who were militarily stronger than us, thus fulfilling the adage that 'Might is right'. This was really barbaric but this is the nature of this world. This was like when animals meet in the jungle. It is the survival of the fittest. This world is corrupt.[96]

On whether it was the division of land between blacks and whites that was responsible for the pattern of race relations that developed in Swaziland, Hlophe gave a different response from the one I obtained from Khoza to a similar question. While Khoza was convinced that the division of land between the blacks and whites did to a certain extent, inform the racial discourse that emerged in the country, Hlophe's own stand is that, "It was the failure of the two races to live together under one king that was responsible for the racial discourse that emerged. The whites did not want to come under the authority of the black man".[97]

Both Khoza and Hlophe have a similar history in that they both served as Cabinet Ministers in the Swaziland post - colonial government. They also share a common collective memory of Swazi history. Their perceptions, however, differ slightly over issues of interpretation. Khoza tends to engage Swazi history with some level of sophistication characterised by personal and intellectual interpretation while Hlophe's interpretation is largely representative of the conservative political camp. Khoza came into politics from a progressive background while Hlophe has a relatively long experience in traditional politics. These angles may be partly responsible for the

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[95]SNA, RCS 124 / 1913, To High Commissioner, The Translation of Articles Appearing in *Abantu Batho*, The Affairs of Swaziland, 12 February, 1913.

[96]Abednego Kuseni Hlophe, Interview, Lozitha, Swaziland, 16 November, 2004. Hlophe had prepared a monograph on the subject which disappeared at the desk of a publishing company in Swaziland.

[97]*Ibid.*

divergence in their views. With regard to land and racialisation, however, the responses of the two interviewees may be seen to be complementary since they both regard, "race" to have been central feature in the process of land alienation.

The explanations by Khoza and Hlophe are premised on the understanding that whites initiated the idea of living apart from the Swazi because they considered themselves as the "racial" other. However, Hilda Kuper presents a different angle on the question contending that, "From the initial period of contact, Swazi men conscious of what sex demands meant from a dominant group, condemned miscegenation. Mbandzeni asked the concessionaires to keep away from Swazi women".[98] This may be indicative of patriarchal attitudes in which women were viewed as the property of Swazi men and therefore not to be shared with men of other cultures[99]. For our purposes the positions articulated through both the written and oral sources at least suggest that the shaping of processes during this period was not a monopoly of either the Swazi or the Europeans.

It would appear that an egalitarian partnership underpinned the relations between the two groups. Kuper's perception that the idea of whites and blacks living apart was a realisation of the desire by Swazi men to prevent intimate relations between white men and Swazi women as well as Khoza and Hlophe's views that whites did not want mix with the Swazi confirm this egalitarian partnership. In the case of the former the underlying point is that the Swazi were not helpless in the forging of their relations with whites; they had a say. In the latter case a similar conclusion can be made particularly if we consider that the Swazi monarch had the power to veto decisions of the White Committee if he deemed it necessary. It should be noted that we are not here necessarily concerned with a "correct" interpretation of these processes. We rather, remain open to

[98]Kuper, *Uniform*, p. 44. Concerns about intimate relationships between white men and black women at the Cape were also prevalent during the period of the Ducth East Idian company, see, for example, Leornard Guelke, "Freehold farmers and frontier settlers, 1657 - 1780", in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds)*The Shaping of South African Society, 1652 - 1840*(CapeTown: Longman, 1989), pp. 93 - 102.

[99]For a discussion that explores relations between men and women pre - colonial Southern Africa, see, for example, J. Guy, "Gender Opression in Southern Africa's precapitalist societies" in C. Walker (ed)*Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*(Cape Town: David Philip and London: JamesCurrey, 1990), pp. 34 - 47.

divergent and alternative interpretations as they might offer us with a better understanding of our past. In such cases, the social historian, Paul Thompson has pointed out that, "Reality is complex and many - sided and it is a primary merit of oral history that to a much greater extent than most sources it allows the original multiplicity of standspoints to be created".[100] In exploring the extent to which one's memory can be linked with collective memory, Luisa Passerini observed that, "The actual perception must have been far more complex before the observer settled on one particular perspective, and established it in the niche of his memory".[101] It is within the framework of such understanding that we do not here seek to identify the "correct" interpretation (if there could be any) but instead strive to relate the multiple perceptions to our discussion.

By the time of his death, on 9 October 1889, Mbandzeni had signed numerous concessions that resulted in more than half of the country coming under white control. In justifying the granting of concessions, King Mbandzeni is said to have remarked that, "The white people are all around us. We have them in our country. Who is going to chase them? Why should we not eat before we die? ".[102] At the centre of the granting of concessions was Offy Shepstone. The king is also said to have observed that, "Well, soon all this country will be Shepstone's and I will have nothing of the ground of my father left".[103]

Up to the time of Mbandzeni's demise there is no evidence indicating that the Swazi and whites in the country interacted on an inferiority / superiority basis. This can partly be deduced from a conversation held between Allister Miller and the king a few days before he met his demise. When Miller realised that the king was seriously ill he sought his permission to send to Forbes Reef for a doctor. The king was examined and diagnosed with jaundice. According to Miller the doctor's decision was that, "Mbandine was

[100]P. Thompson, "The Voice of The Past" in R. Perks and A. Thompson(eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 24.

[101]L. Passerini (ed.) *Memory and Totalitarianism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 13.

[102]KCAL, File 18, Swaziland in the 80s: Oath of Mbandine and early concessions, p. 7.

[103]KCAL, File 1, KCM 154 A, Diary of Allister Miller.

suffering from an acute form of jaundice, that if he would undertake to put himself under the doctor's charge and eat only what was prescribed, and obey a white nurse, he would recover".[104] The king was unable to comply with these conditions because he was concerned about, "What would my people say?".[105]

My interest in this discourse is not necessarily about medical concerns. I am more intrigued by the relatively equal relations that seem to have guided the concerned parties before concluding their conversation. Negotiation, reasoning and thoughtfulness seem to have informed and guided the decision to agree to disagree. There is no evidence up to

this juncture to suggest that relations between the Swazi and the European in the country had been adapted to the superiority / inferiority discourse. There is a sense in which a relatively egalitarian partnership between the Swazi and European was observed even as highlighted by this conversation which occurred a few days before Mbandzeni died.

2. 4 White Popular Attitudes towards the Swazi

Allister Miller's ideas and actions in Swaziland give us some insight into the ways in which he thought about the white man's position in relation to that of the black. Notably, Miller held a number of distinct ideas about the Swazi and other black Africans in Southern Africa. He deemed groups such as the Swazi, Zulu, Ndebele and Pedi as belonging to kafir races.[106] Miller outlined certain features and considered them to be characteristic of the "kafir".[107] One such feature was autocratic rule. In this respect, Miller declared that, "There is no ruler in the world so autocratic and indivisible as a kafir king".[108] He went on to describe the rule of the king as follows;

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[104]KCAL, File 18, Swaziland in the 80s: Oath of Mbandine and early concessions, p. 8.

[105]*Ibid.*

[106]See, KCAL, File 18, Ms Mil 1. 08. 1, A. M. Miller, "The Kafir Races of South - East Africa" and KCAL, File 1, KCM 154 A, Diary of Allister Miller.

[107]For details, see, "The Kafir Races …".

[108]*Ibid,* p. 6.

> His slightest desire must be satisfied. His merest wish fulfilled. His word is law and decision indisputable. His people offer only one remonstrance, poison or the Assegai. Whilst king he must be obeyed, any revolt against his authority is effected through his death … 'Once a chief always a chief is a kafir maxim'. If one of their indunas so debases his trust and ill uses his privileges that he is unfitted to perform the duties of his position he must die. His successor steps over a corpse.[109]

The above description is reminiscent of the imperial notion which tended to view indigenous rule as backward, inefficient, despotic and corrupt, deserving only of being overthrown and reconstructed according to the more advanced model of western society and politics.[110] Kuby was probably reacting to such sentiments when he explained that, "Europeans tended to identify traditional kingship with despotism insofar as it differed from the constitutional monarchy of Britain and the Western concept of democracy, and did not see the checks and balances which were undermined by 'rule from far".[111] Miller's "kafir" was also a creature not prone to fear. In this regard he expressed that, "The kafirs know no fear and it takes a stout heart and steady nerve to listen unmoved to their blood curdling war cries and withstand the fury and persistency of their assaults".[112]

To Miller, the "kafir" was not just a member of another race but also an inferior, sub-human which was pitifully ignorant. Miller once stated that, "Even sane and ostensibly humane Boers maintain that he is without a soul".[113] He also considered the black to be savage and barbaric; a creature possessing an incredibly uncontrollable nature. When King Bhunu issued a death sentence against his *indvuna* Mbhabha Sibandze for a serious

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[109]*Ibid*.

[110]See, for example, D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*: *How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Penguin Press, 2001), p. 12.

[111]Kuby, "Elitism and Holiness … ", pp. 35 - 36.

[112]KCAL, File 18, Ms Mil 1.08.1, A. M. Miller, "The Kafir Races of South - East Africa", p. 14.

[113]KCAL, 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. 3.

crime according to tradition, the act was not looked upon as an aspect of the Swazi social system of justice administered in Swazi Law and Custom but, as an expression of uncontrolled emotions. Attempting to explain this to General Smuts some twenty years later Miller wrote that, "There is no real badness in the Swazi ruling family. Although Bhunu chopped up his Prime Minister it was more by way of playful ebullition, an overflowing of high spirits, than real vicious instinct".[114] The king's behaviour is explained within the framework of paternalistic overtones. Here of course, Miller infantilises the Swazi. Miller also referred to blacks as "niggers".[115]

As much as such labels were racist and derogatory there is no evidence to suggest that they were readily translated into day to day racist discourse. Richard Levin in his sociological analysis, for example, has not appreciated this distinction.[116] Neither does he capture the variation and sense of change in the usage of these slurs. Instead, he assumes that they were characteristic of colonial rule, yet evidence indicates that when the British assumed control of Swaziland the usage of the word "kafir" (as he describes it) had disappeared from official discourse.

The usage of the word "kafir" also varied in meaning and with individuals. It appears that in its early usage "kafir" was generally used by whites to refer to black people. David Forbes, for example was another prominent settler who referred to the Swazi as "kafir". In his case however, the "kafir" was an individual with rights deserving humane treatment. In one instance, where he felt his employee, Umkopolo was unfairly treated by a Transvaal magistrate, he complained that, "Why, it is only half an hour ago that I left the kafir, and in that time he is alleged to have committed an assault, to have been tried

[114]KCAL, File 167, MS MIL 1. 08. 38, Correspondence of Miller with Samuel Evans and the Secretary of General Smuts, Letter from Allister Miller to General Smuts, 26 August, 1922.

[115]See, for example, KCAL, File 16, Ms Mil 1. 08 .1, Cuttings from Diary of A. Miller 7 and 11 July, 1894.

[116]See, for example, R. Levin, *When The Sleeping Grass Awakens: Land and Power in Swaziland* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997), p. 43. Levin's observation appears to have been inspired by Hilda Kuper's. However, the difference is that when Kuper came to her conclusion on the usage of the word "kafir" she located it within a specific context and period while Levin generalised his observation and applied it to the whole of the colonial period without acknowledging variations in its usage.

for it, and is now flogged. I don't call that fair play".[117] To this the magistrate replied, "It is not necessary to give the kaffir a trial. I have found quite enough here to prove that he had assaulted Trent and has created a disturbance".[118] He further complained that, "And whilst I was talking, Mr. Coetser ordered the kafir to lie down and to receive his flogging".[119] The record of this case reflects that to the magistrate the "kafir" had no rights and deserved harsh treatment.

This matter did not end up being an issue of discussion only among the affected whites. It also raised certain concerns among the Swazi and their chiefs. Presenting the issue in writing to the Transvaal State Attorney, David Forbes expressed the view that

> Originally I had not intended to bring this complaint before you, but a recent business visit to the centre of Swaziland has led me to adopt this course. During my visit I learned with surprise that the story of the trial and flogging of Umkopolo by Mr. Coetser was well known at the various large kraals, in a correct form among the important chiefs, very much exaggerated among the people. I was questioned and cross questioned on the facts of the incident by many indunas who one and all indignantly suggested that, were the officials of the Transvaal Government to assume the direction of Swaziland affairs, they, the chiefs would be subjected to similar indignities.[120]

The beating of Umkopolo in this manner brings to the fore contemporary debates about the flogging of Africans by whites. While reflecting that Africans did not take kindly to such treatment the issue was equally contentious among the whites. Generally the usage of racist slurs and treatment of Africans by whites was not uniform. It appears the flogging of Africans was an arbitrary and individual choice among whites. Christopher Fyfe has reminded us that there were, "many kinds of white people in colonial Africa. Some were harsh and domineering, treating Africans with contempt and brutality, some

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[117]KCAL, File 176, Ms Mil 1. 08. 4, Letter from David Forbes to State Attorney, Transvaal about Alleged wrongful Arrest and flogging of Swazi employee, September, 1890.

[118]*Ibid.*

[119]*Ibid.*

[120]*Ibid.*

were gentle and caring, treating them with consideration.[121] The reactions of Forbes and Coetzer in the case of Umkopolo reflect these two major categories of whites. Generally flogging was a means to subject Africans to authority and fear by those who practised it. Stephen Pete and Annie Devenish, for example, have suggested that the white settler population in colonial Natal adopted flogging as a form of punishment for African subjects to fortify itself against surrounding African populations including that of Swaziland.[122] The intention of such practices, to instil fear into the Africans, spoke volumes about insecurity on their part. Whether the flogging of Africans achieved its intended aim remained a debatable issue among white settlers as suggested by the stance taken by Forbes on the issue.

Some Christian missionaries also referred to the Swazi as "kafirs". The Anglican Church magazine, *The Net* is full of such references directed at the Swazi and other Africans.[123] In a typical case, Mr. Carsen who ran a mission for the church at Komati on the northern part of Swaziland wrote a letter which appeared in the publication in January 1888. Through this letter he was expressing his joy that a former employee of his had become a Christian since they had parted ways eight years back. In his letter he stated that

> I am very glad to see the faces of my old working boys, even if they have gone back to their old heathen life, as the majority of them do. How much more thankful was I to see this boy, who left us a mere heathen kafir of the kraals now looking so respectable and a Christian.[124]

As reflected above early missionaries tended to equate "kafir" with non - Christian. However, the usage of the word did not remain static. The change in white perceptions of blacks can also be seen in Allister Miller's discourse. Though Miller had categorised the Swazi and other African peoples as "kaffirs" from his earliest days in the country,

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[121]Fyfe, "Race, Historians …", p. 21.

[122]S. Peté and A. Devenish, "Flogging, Fear and Food: Punishment and Race in Colonial Natal", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1 March 2005, p. 9.

[123]This was particularly the case in the 1880s and 1890s. See, for example, TN, "Diocese of Zululand", September, 1882, p. 131.

[124]TN, "Dioceses of Zululand", 1 January 1888.

evidence suggests that towards the end of the 1890s he had desisted from the habit. When Miller began publishing the *Times of Swazieland* in 1897 he began to refer to Swazi men as "boys".[125] The usage of this word may be viewed as a modulation of the initial reference though it still carried racist undertones which were coated in paternalistic ideology. In this respect therefore, the study observes that in the case of Swaziland the popular attitudes held by whites towards blacks did not necessarily mean that the latter were subjected to pragmatic racism. Largely these attitudes were imported from the home backgrounds and reflected an attempt by the whites to define the Swazi and how they were going to relate to them.

2. 5 White Settlement and Black Labour in Swaziland

Allister Miller's influence in Swaziland was not only felt through the ideas he expressed of Swaziland as a, "white man's country" but also through the plan of action he engaged in to realize that dream.[126] Gosnell has described Miller, "as an ardent colonialist, with a clear vision of a prosperous Swaziland based around the settlement of British farmers 'of the right stock".[127] Nomthetho Simelane also noted that, "In the view of Miller and his kindred spirits, Swaziland could not have been designed with the African in mind. It had to be saved for the white race since it was so precious".[128] Miller was entirely convinced that Swaziland was a, "White man's country".[129] As a result he resented, for example,

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[125]The change noted in Miller's discourse is not necessarily reflective of general settler attitude but may be viewed to have been influential in shaping public opinion to some extent. The wide use of racist slurs persisted up to the immediate post - colonial period and embraced by some whites across the different sectors of the country.

[126]Similarly, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa had been established between the mid - nineteenth century and mid - twentieth century as settler societies within the British Empire around the notion of a "white man's country". For some details, see, for example, Louis Harts, *The Founding of New Societies: Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada and Australia* (New York: Harcout, Brace and World, 1964).

[127]Gosnell, *Big Bend*, p. 58.

[128]N. Simelane, "A Historical Discussion of Migrant Labour in Swaziland", in Nomthetho Simelane (ed.) *Social Transformation: The Swaziland Case* (Senegal: Codesria: 1995), p. 17.

[129]See for example, KCAL, File 22, KCM 65470, Swazieland: "Its Agricultural and Pastoral Future", By Allister M. Miller (Manager of the Swazieland Corporation Limited), p. 7.

the cry by American Ethiopianism of "Africa for the Africans".[130] The notion of Swaziland being a "white man's country" is clearly articulated in a number of his writings. This seemingly, was a product of his admiration of the country's landscape and climate. This he voiced, during a lecture on "kafir races", in which he concluded that

> I should like to say a few words regarding the country in which kafirs have as their home. It is a beautiful land, favoured in every way by nature with a lovely climate, a rich and fertile soil and watered by streams of clearest mountain water. The land only wants the population to rescue it from its present uselessness and make it of value and use.[131]

In Miller's view, the only major role to be played by the Swazi in these white establishments was the provision of labour. In Miller's mind, the land could only be rescued from unproductive use on condition that the black population provided labour to white settler farmers, particularly those of British origin. Reflecting on the prospects of development in Swaziland after about ten years of his stay in the country, Miller wrote that

> At any rate the facilities for the development of the country are eminently more promising now than they ever have been before. Labour is more plentiful and infinitely cheaper, and peace, for some time at all events, is secured. With Natives returning from work, and bringing annually large sums with them the tradesman has greater prospects of a regular customer, with cheap labour many properties hitherto unworkable may be opened up, and with an energetic company with large capital to develop the general resources of Swazieland.[132]

Indeed the direct corollary of Millers's views of Swaziland as a "white man's country", was that of the relegation of the Swazi to the position of labourer for the white settler. As early as 1898 the *Times of Swazieland* of which Miller was a principal writer and editor carried a commentary on the issue of labour observing that

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[130]See, KCAL, File 113, MS MIL 1. 08. 16 Letter from Allister Miller to Private Secretary to The High Commissioner, 21December, 1906.

[131]KCAL, File 18, Ms Mil 1. 08 .1, A. M. Miller, "The Kafir Races of South-East Africa", p. 22.

[132]TOS, "The Old and the New", 31 December 1898.

> The necessity of black labour for the mining industry is a most vital one. The native in the mine is, to use a paradox, worth his weight in gold. The white man cannot replace him, machinery cannot replace him, and mining cannot be successfully operated without him. It is, therefore, plain that native labour is a *sine qua non* to the success of the mining industry. Again, as the white man continues the march of civilization the fact must never be lost sight of that the settlement of the black races to a useful and civilized life is a matter that must be reckoned with. One of the greatest civilizers in this world is work. If the blacks are to give up their aboriginal ways, which they are bound to do on account of these ways, being, to put it mildly, somewhat peculiar and altogether opposed to good citizenship, they must be trained to a better way of living. They must be taught– and taught quickly to– lay aside the knob-kerry, the spear, and scalping knife, for the pick and shovel– in other words, they must beat these war-like weapons into useful implements of husbandry. In the native settlements nearer to the white man's country– Zululand, Basutoland and Swaziland for example– the doctrine of industry has been eminently satisfactory and in these native centres the bulk of the blacks have become good and useful citizens.[133]

In Miller's view, the engagement of the Swazi in mine work was a basic necessity and a prerequisite for a civilized way of life. Miller was dissatisfied that since a white Administration had been present in Swaziland from 1890 little had been done to promote this ideal. Rhetorically he asked, "Have the natives of Swazieland altered their former habits?",[134] and to his question he answered, "No, they are living just as their fathers did, and will continue to do so, so long as life death control through the instrumentality of the witchdoctor, at the behest of the king and his council, is the recognised medium of their criminal administration".[135] Miller saw the authority of the Swazi king as the major hindrance to the engagement of the Swazi in labour. He grudgingly observed that,

[133]TOS, "Native Labour", 24 December, 1898.

[134]TOS, "Sauce For Goose" 4 June, 1898.

[135]*Ibid*.

"Simply because an autocrat decrees that large bodies of his men may not go out to work, as presumably, through that medium, his military resources are weakened".[136]

The thinking that work was a civilising experience for blacks was a common missionary / colonial theme in Southern Africa. Such attitudes formed the basis for the racial structure that would later ensure the domination of the large number of blacks by the minority white group. This was particularly the case in the mining industry that was developing in Swaziland. This served as a source of congratulation and complaint. In 1899 for example the *Times of Swaziland* claimed that, "To-day there are perhaps more swazie boys working on the mines than there have ever been before".[137] At the same time Miller felt that as long as the Swazi were allowed to live as a "nation" their usefulness in the country's development would be unrealised. He clearly expressed in this communication that he hoped for the "denationalisation of the Swazies".[138] He also put white interests in the forefront as a prerequisite for development and harmonious race relations.

By the time of Miller's arrival in Swaziland a nascent mining industry had already established itself in Swaziland. Referring in part to this period, Hamilton Simelane has observed that, "The development of modern mining in Swaziland is connected to the larger process of European expansion into Southern Africa during the second half of the nineteenth century".[139] Gold was being produced for example, at Forbes Reef, Piggs Peak Gold Mine, Horo and Wyldsdale. Simelane has pointed out that, "production yields were valued at £ 30 000 annually between 1886 and 1897".[140] Other minerals produced though at varying periods included tin, diaspore, asbestos and coal. In 1889 the Anglican Bishop of Zululand recorded that

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[136]*Ibid.*

[137]TOS, "Native Labour", 5 August, 1899.

[138]*Ibid.*

[139]H. S. Simelane, *Colonialism and Economic Change in Swaziland, 1940 - 1960* (Manzini: JanNyeko, 2003), p. 100.

[140]*Ibid.* , p. 1 03.

> I found sixty white men at Forbes Reef, and mining and crushing going on night and day. Afresh party of seven or eight had arrived the day before from Cornwall, and the manager expects that before long there will be 100. Some 200 black labourers from all parts of the country are also employed, and this will clearly be the best centre from which to work among the other gold concessions.[141]

This gold mine was worked by Cornish miners from Marazion.[142] In Swaziland's mining industry, Sir Alan Pim later noted that, "The average labour employed between 1909 and 1916 was 43 whites and 407 natives and the average wages paid to natives was £ 9 517".[143] Simelane concludes that working conditions for black workers in the mining industry "were unquestionably hard".[144] In his exploration of the imperial white working class in south Africa, Jon Hyslop has argued that, "From the 1880s, the themes of egalitarianism and racism were always intermixed in both the British and colonial labour movements".[145] He further observed that, "Labour leaders underwent immense ideological contortions in trying to reconcile universalist aspirations to human equality with a practical politics which defended white workers' privileged access to the labour market".[146] Hyslop concluded that,

[141]TN, "Diocese of Zululand", 1 July1889, p. 99.

[142]TN, "Diocese of Zululand The Bishop's Visit to Zulualand", 1 September, 1881, p. 131.

[143]Great Britain, Report on the Financial and Economic Situation of Swaziland: Report of the Commission Appointed by Secretary of State of Dominion Affairs, 1932, p. 15.

[144]Simelane, *Colonialism*, p. 116.

[145]J. Hyslop, "The White Imperial Working Class Makes Itself 'White': White Labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa Before the First World War", *Journal of Historical Sociology* vol. 12 no. 4 December 1999, p. 402

[146]*Ibid.*

> The imperial working class of the pre - First World War era was unable to separate its hostility to its own exploitation from its aspirations to incorporation in the dominant racial structure. The consequence was an egalitarian racism which sought to construct racially bounded 'democracy'. However incomprehensible this ambiguous universalism may be to the early twenty-first century observer, to those who participated in it, it made perfect sense.[147]

More importantly, he pointed out that the imperial white working class was racist because it feared Chinese / Indian / African competition and a loss of jobs as well as a dilution of its bargaining power. The Cornish miners exemplified this attitude. The imperial racism of the white working class explored by Hyslop is similar to that of the Swaziland's mining industry. A similar attitude appears to have prevailed among Cornish workers at Forbes Reef. Their attraction to the mining is an indication that they enjoyed favourable conditions. The hard working conditions experienced by black labour on the other hand, may have been a product of bargaining strategies by Cornish miners which enabled them to enjoy preferential treatment and better working conditions at the expense of African workers at the mine.

2. 6 Transvaal Administration of Swaziland, 1895 - 1899

The establishment of foreign rule in Swaziland has its background in the Swazi-Boer-British relations in the 1880s. Hamilton Simelane has shown that despite Swazi resistance to Boer encroachment the country was virtually subjugated to Boer rule.[148] This condition which was achieved through Boer imperialistic manoeuvres was however accompanied by continuous protests from the Swazi. This occurred in the context of competing Boer and British imperialism. After a major military confrontation between the British and Boers at Majuba Hill in 1881 the Pretoria Convention was signed. The Convention assured the Transvaal of its independence and left its boundaries intact. However, other African states including Swaziland became an object of Boer penetration

[147] *Ibid.* , p. 418.

[148] See, Simelane, "Swazi Resistance …".

after 1881. The Swazi responded to this threat by embarking on diplomatic manoeuvring. Simelane has pointed out that

> King Mbandzeni clearly understood the changing military balance within the region. He was aware that the Swazi were no longer able to withstand a full scale Boer military invasion. At the same time he was shrewdly aware of the enmity between the English and the Boers. It was this enmity which Mbandzeni began to exploit to resist Boer penetration. His aim was to play Boer imperialism against British imperialism.[149]

This was accomplished largely through the granting of concessions to the competing powers. Manelisi Genge has noted that, "Swazi leaders employed such a strategy during the concessionary era partly out of desperation and pressure for there was an intense competition between the Boers and the British for getting concessions from Swaziland".[150] When the Boers applied pressure for the revision of the 1881 Convention and breached the boundary provisions of the Convention a new Convention was signed in London in 1884. An article recognising the independence of the Swazis convention was included as in the previous convention. However, this did not stop the Boers from making attempts to penetrate Swaziland. From this time the Boers resorted to cajoling and at times coercing the Swazi to accept the protection of the South African Republic. Through diplomacy the Swazi were able successfully to resist Boer penetration into their country though the strategy did not ensure continued survival of Swaziland. This was the position at least up to 1887.

Thereafter the Boers began to penetrate Swaziland in more subtle and dangerous ways. At the height of the concession aggrandisement process the South African Republic surreptitiously entered the race for concessions. Genge has explored the conflicting interpretations which surrounded these conventions. He argues that while the Swazi literally interpreted the conventions as guaranteeing the preservation of their independence, the British mining and commercial capitalists in England maintained that

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[149] *Ibid.* , p. 121.

[150] Manelisi Genge, "Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli: Gender and Power ", PhD Thesis, Michigan State University, 2001, p. 171.

the underlying meaning was that Swaziland would never become part of the Transvaal.[151] In December 1889 the Anglo-Transvaal Commission which enquired into the state of affairs in Swaziland instituted a Provisional Government Committee to replace the defunct "White Committee" and to administer the affairs of the Europeans in the country until the Anglo-Transvaal governments resolved what they perceived as the "Swaziland Question". Leistner and Smit pointed out that

> The presence of considerable numbers of whites in Swaziland and the problems that arose over the concessions made it essential to have some control or other over White interests. In 1890 a provisional form of tripartite control (the Swazis, the British Government and the Government of the South African Republic) was instituted.[152]

Following the three Conventions of 1890, 1893 and 1894 the South African Republic was in 1895 granted administration rights over Swaziland.[153] This development occurred in spite of resistance from the Swazi. Finally the Transvaal government assumed the administration of Swaziland in February 1895. Genge noted that

> In December 1894 the governments of Britain and Transvaal signed another Convention which placed Swaziland under the Transvaal administration without annexation to the Transvaal and this to be done without a provision requiring the consent of Swazi rulers. Britain granted the Transvaal government a right to administer Swaziland, because of the predominance of the Transvaal Boer concessions in that country. This was so, in spite of the fact that the majority of European residents in Swaziland were British subjects.[154]

Genge further remarked that, "This was a new phenomenon to the Transvaal Boer Republic, which had so far expanded the size of its territory by either conquering the

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[151]*Ibid.* , pp. 201 - 202

[152]Leistner and Smit, *Swaziland*, p. 1.

[153]For a discussion on these conventions and Swazi reaction, see, for example, Simelane, "Swazi Resistance …", pp. 129 - 132.

[154]Genge, "Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli…", pp. 318 - 319.

neighbouring African states or incorporating territories through border adjustments".[155] Under this arrangement, Swaziland's "political and administrative institutions were not only left intact, but were also guaranteed to reproduce themselves as long as such a process was not in conflict with the British and Transvaal values".[156] Genge has pointed to this arrangement as one of the reasons for the absence of an open revolt or resistance by the Swazi monarchy against the emerging Transvaal Boer colonial state in Swaziland.[157]

It should be noted that the Transvaal government which was established in Swaziland at this time took the ideas that had been held by whites in the public arena a step further by entrenching them into the politics of Administration. It is in this respect that Genge has observed that, "the creation of the Provisional Government … marked … an introduction of colonial politics in which 'race' was an important factor".[158] Apparently, hut and poll tax, accompanied by flogging and cattle confiscation, was not imposed until August 1898. Hilda Kuper noted that during this time, "Swazi rulers and their subjects were finding white control to be oppressive; many were required as labourers and treated as 'kaffirs'".[159] Kuper's observation should not be necessarily understood as capturing the day to day relations between whites and blacks. Rather it should be construed as a description of Swazi attitudes towards the administration and the workplace. This administration lasted until the outbreak of the Anglo - Boer War in 1899.

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[155]*Ibid.* , p. 319.

[156]*Ibid.*

[157]*Ibid.*

[158]*Ibid.* , pp. 281 - 282. See, also C. Youe, *Robert Thorne Coryndon: Proconsular Imperialism in Southern and Eastern Africa* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), p. 45.

[159]H. Kuper, *Sobhuza II: Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland* (London: Duckworth, 1978), p. 28.

2. 7 The South African War (1899 - 1902)

Tensions and hostilities between the British and Afrikaner soon led to the outbreak of the South African War in 1899. When the war broke out Swaziland was temporarily relieved of her colonial status. The Commissioner of Native Affairs in Swaziland explained that

> When the hostilities between the British and Boers became imminent, General Joubert (on what authority I am unable to say) sent a message to king Ubunu, informing him that the Boers intended evacuating the country, leaving him as sole arbiter and that no other Government or person would have power over there.[160]

The Commissioner considered that Joubert's message had given a wrong impression to the Swazi who concluded that this meant they had now reverted to their independence. Manelisi Genge has observed that, "The war marked a temporary suspension of European colonialism in terms of Transvaal administration of Swaziland".[161] Before the war began, the Special Commissioner for Swaziland, Johannes Krogh, appointed four years earlier by the Transvaal Republic, ordered all whites (about 1400) out of Swaziland. Most settlers left, although a few remained, including some missionaries.

During the war there was a strong feeling among the whites that the Swazi and other South African blacks should not participate in the war as it was a "white affair".[162] However, the Swazi were ultimately involved and played a significant role in this war.[163] Huw M. Jones pointed out that, "Swaziland was officially regarded as a neutral country both by the British and Boers during the war, but neither side honoured the position".[164] Genge notes that, "The British and Boers in Swaziland, as the rest of Southern Africa,

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[160]SNA, File J 82 / 03, Report on Swaziland By the Commissioner for Native Affairs for 1902, p. 3.

[161]Manelisi Genge, "The Role of the Emaswati in the South African War", p. 141 in Greg Curthbertson et. al, *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899 - 1902* (Athens: Ohio University Press; Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2002).

[162]For such a concern, see, for example, Peter Warwick , *Black People and the South African War, 1899 - 1902* (London: Longman, 1980), pp. 6 - 27.

[163]For an examination of Swazi involvement in the war, see, *Ibid*. , pp. 103 - 109 and Genge, "Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli …", pp. 349 - 391.

[164]Huw M. Jones, *A Biographical Register of Swaziland to 1902*(PieterMaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), p. xxxv. See also, Warwick*, Black people*, pp. 104 - 105.

wanted an exclusively 'white man's war".[165] However, as Genge has pointed out, "When the South African War broke out the choice for the Emaswati rulers was not whether to be neutral but which side to join".[166] Jones further explained that

> In trying to maintain communications with the outside world through the Netherlands consulate in Lorenco Marques, the Boers made several crossings of the country and later in the war retreated into Swaziland to evade British forces, whilst the British irregular force known as Steinacker's Horse established camps along the Lubombo Range to stop these movements.[167]

The divided loyalty expressed by the Swazi was necessitated by the precarious position they found themselves in when the war broke out. The queen regent exemplified this pattern. In a separate report the same Commissioner noted that, "It was her policy to play off one side against the other and to remain friends with both".[168] In appreciation of this position the Commissioner for Native Affairs stated that

> I consider that every allowance should be made for their conduct in the compromising circumstances under which they were placed. It is not fair to condemn them for wavering unless we gave them permanent protection. They were left to stew in their juice and the law of self protection dictated that they should manifest outward friendship to those who from time to time could inflict upon them punishment or persecution if they displayed loyalty to either belligerent.[169]

Such a submission may largely be accurate with regard to the early stages of the war. As the war progressed further the Swazi were forced to define their alliance. Manelisi Genge has maintained that the involvement of the Swazi in the war was a contributory factor to the defeat of the Boers by the British in Swaziland. Perhaps more important was

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[165]Genge, "The Role of the Emaswati …", p. 138.

[166]*Ibid*.

[167]Jones, *A Biographical Register*, p. xxxv.

[168]SNA, File J 82 / 03, Report on Swaziland By the Commissioner For Native Affairs For 1902, 10 March, 1903, p. 12.

[169]*Ibid*.

their desire to restore lost lands to their possession particularly in the Boer dominated South. Here, they shared an aspiration as many other chiefdoms in South Africa, such as the Pilansberg Kgatla and the Zulu living in the annexed 'New Republic' in the South East of the South African Republic. As the Special Commissioner for Swaziland explained, "In common with the Transvaal Natives, the Swazis have held the opinion that the principal effect of the war was to deprive the Dutch of their lands and possession in favour of the Natives".[170] Similarly, Genge notes that the Swazi

> entered the war with a specific agenda: to expel the Boers from their country in order to regain their independence. They also hoped to benefit from the spoils of war by capturing livestock from the Boers and looked for rewards from the British, for whom they had gathered intelligence as scouts.[171]

As the guerrilla war intensified in 1901 and 1902, Swazi neutrality was further compromised in the south -west of the country on several occasions by both sides. The Swazi eventually fought alongside with the British, at times serving as scouts. This was especially the case in the southern part of Swaziland. One case was that of Chief Mavela Nkosi who organised scouts on the Amsterdam border to monitor Boer operations.[172] Genge has pointed out that, "Their actions were significant in the British defeat of the Boers. Apart from capturing Boer livestock, the scouts guarded and patrolled the Amsterdam borderpost and sent intelligence to the nearest British columns".[173] Chief Ndabazezwe in the southern part of the country also played a similar role.[174] Apparenlty, the roles played by these Chiefs were not directly influenced by the Swazi Queen Regent and the royal family.

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[170]SNA, File J67 / 03 Special Commissioner For Swaziland Forwards Report on the Condition of Swaziland, Report Upon the Condition of Swaziland By Special Commissioner of Swaziland, p. 3.

[171]Genge, "The Role of the Emaswati …", p. 136

[172]*Ibid.* , pp. 142 - 144.

[173]*Ibid.* , p. 144.

[174]See, *Ibid.* , pp. 144 - 145.

Genge notes that The Swazi Queen Regent, Labotsibeni Mdluli "became involved in the war only when the British gave her 'orders and permission to seize and appropriate Boer cattle' in Swaziland".[175] This was after some Boers from the eastern Transvaal had retired into Swaziland to evade attacks from British columns. Labotsibeni assigned regiments to check Boer incursions in the southern part of the country which had become frequent as the war shifted from the battlefield to guerrilla warfare. A prominent regiment in this regard was that of Chief Siquza (alias Thintitha) Dlamini. In March 1901, for example the regiment attacked and killed some Boer families at Hlathikulu who had refused, after warning, to leave the country.[176] Only Boer women, children, and the Africans who were looking after Boer cattle were spared. J. S. M. Matsebula explained that

> There were at this time several Boers at the Hlatikulu area, and the British persuaded the queen regent not to allow them to remain in the country. So the Swazi authorities sent a warning to them to leave. Some of the Boers heeded this warning but others did not. Those who remained were attacked and killed by a party of Swazis under the leadership of Thintitha Dlamini. Thintitha had been sent to the area to rid the area of Boers but not to kill. He thus exceeded his orders.[177]

Manelisi Genge has further explained that

> When Thintitha gave Labotsibeni's orders to these Boers to leave Swaziland, the latter refused "in an insolent manner (it is said)" to cooperate. They said "they recognised no Native Authorities and did not fear them." Moreover, a Boer poked Thintitha in the face and told him that "there was no Swazi King, he was dead," and therefore they would not leave the country. They were quickly forced to swallow their words, when on March 9, 1901 Thintitha's regiment attacked and killed some of them at Hlatikhulu battle. Several others, including Andries Breytenbach, Adriaan Pretorius and Gouws escaped to the eastern

[175] *Ibid.* , p. 145.

[176] For details, see, *Ibid.* , pp. 145 - 148.

[177] Matsebula, *A History* , p. 176.

> Transvaal near Bethal. Thintitha captured their stock and sent it to the Queen Regent.[178]

This was a major event and a massive exception to the prevailing pattern of race relations then and after. It closely parallels the Deerdeport 'massacre' of Boers by the Kgatla and the Holkrantz 'massacre' Boers by the Zulu. As with these instances the motive was the same and reflects a distinct and different pattern of race relations in the Boer dominated south of Swaziland, a pattern infused by racial claims over land.[179]

Peter Warwick explains that, "For most of the war the only British force to maintain a presence in Swaziland was Steinacker's Horse, the irregular unit of mercenaries and local whites led by a German soldier of fortune, Ludwig Steinacker".[180] In July 1901 Labotsibeni's scouts reported to her that Boer General Tobias Smuts who had been at Mhlambanyatsi was headed for Bremersdorp. A British garrison had been in Bremersdorp for about three months. Captain Major surrendered to the Boers but his act was despised by some British officers who soon got themselves involved in a fierce military confrontation with the Boers.[181] The Boers eventually burned down Bremersdorp after Smuts gave the command though without specific orders.[182] The war finally ended with the defeat of the Boers. Genge has observed that, "Emaswati were a significant factor in Bringing about a British victory in the eastern Transvaal and in Swaziland during the South African War".[183] Jones points out that, "In 1901 Steinaecker's Horse occupied Bremersdorp and was eventually forced out in July by the

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[178]Manelisi Genge, "Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli …", pp. 377 - 378.

[179]This event is similar to the Holkrans 'massacre' in Zululand / New Republic, see, P. la Hause de Lalouvière, *Restless Identities: Signatures of Nationalism, Zulu Ethnicity and History in the Lives of Petros Lamula (c. 1888 - 1948) and Lymon Mailing (1889 – c. 1936*), (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 182. Phil Bonner attests to have found anti - Boer memories stretching from this period still prevalent when he conducted his interviews for his major work on Swaziland in the 1970s.

[180]Warwick, *Black people*, p. 107.

[181]For some details, see, KCAL, MS 580 b, File 152, Swazi History: Steinacker's Horse at Bremersdorp.

[182]*Ibid.* , p. 4.

[183]Genge, "The Role of Emaswati …", p. 151.

Ermelo Commando which then razed the village".[184] In one newspaper article in which the writer blamed the British government for not having been firm with the Swazi just prior to the destruction of Bremersdorp, he registered his sentiments as follows;

> Is this last raid by the Boers into the heart of Swaziland sufficient to show the British Government after all the warning they have received that no reliance is to be placed in the Swazi nation– that they will not withstand Boers when they come in force, although Smuts was sent to tell the Swazi queen she must help keep her country clear. The only way to demonstrate to a kaffir in cases of this kind is to show you are backed by force: and had a strong garrison been placed at M'Dimba, with Steinaecker's Horse as scouts, I believe that Bremersdorp would never have been burnt down.[185]

The idea that force was necessary for controlling the Swazi was prevalent in white thinking since the late nineteenth century. Swazi participation in the war was widespread and Genge has suggested it could be further explored through compensation claims.[186] He mantained that more details could be uncovered by exploring these claims, and also observed that they manifested certain aspects of discrimination.

Thereafter the treaty of Vereeniging was signed on 31 May 1902 to seal a peace settlement between the English and Boer forces.[187] This treaty involved only the Boers and English. The Swazi and other Africans were excluded. The treaty is best known for denying the franchise to black South Africans outside the Cape. Equally important however, for many African populations, and certainly for the Swazi it protected prior property rights. The exclusion of blacks as partners in defining the terms of the treaty was discriminatory and pointing to the reality that they were not treated as equals by whites. This occurred despite that one of the expressed aims of the war was to improve the political position of blacks and that they had played a crucial role in the war. In

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[184]Jones, *A Biographical Register*, p. xxxv.

[185]*Ibid.*

[186]Genge,"Labotsibeni Gwamile Mdluli …".

[187]For the main terms of the treaty, see, for example, Warwick, *Black People* , p. 164.

effect, blacks continued to be marginalised in the political arena. The denial of political rights to blacks served to fuel discontent in the subsequent years.

2. 8 Conclusion

This chapter commenced by suggesting that Somhlolo's dream could be of assistance in interrogating the early history of black and white interactions in Swaziland. This enabled us to contextualise the historical developments around which the dream occurred. More importantly we noted the lasting legacy imprinted by the dream not only on the relations of black and whites in Swaziland but also on the country's collective memory. The dream, we also observed, not only prepared the Swazi warmly to welcome their white guests but also promoted harmonious race relations in the country. A brief criticism of the manner in which the dream was communicated was also made. Namely that, while the message of the dream was primarily targeted at the Swazi no corresponding communication was aimed at whites to achieve its intended aims on a mutual basis.

The different zones of interaction during the early contacts between blacks and whites in the country were then examined. These include the hunter-trader, missionary, Sheep grazer and concessionaire. The chapter argued that black and white relations during this period were relatively egalitarian. Such a situation, it noted, was largely a product of the power dynamics at play; the incoming individual whites were few and limited. They also did not represent any particular power block but largely arrived as individuals. Despite being drawn from various backgrounds and localities, the neighbouring states they came from also did not possess any military advantage over the Swazi. Hence the relations forged between the Swazi and incoming whites were largely guided by mutual interdependence.

Although it was shown that prevalent popular attitudes generally perceived the Swazi and other African people in negative terms there was no evidence suggesting these were inscribed in the black and what relations of the period. Again though some of these attitudes were introduced as official policy during the period of the Triumvirate Government there is no evidence suggesting that they were translated into day to day discrimination in the relations between blacks and whites. However, we did point out that in the mining industry which was developing in the country relations were indicating that blacks were generally employed in subordinate positions and under harsh working

conditions. These were however, a small fraction compared to the total population of blacks in the country. I could, therefore, not reach a generalised conclusion about racist practises in the country based on this single factor. As a result, I maintain that at least up to the beginning of the twentieth century, relations between blacks and whites were relatively egalitarian.

The outbreak of the South African War in 1899 did not fundamentally alter the pattern of relations between blacks and whites in the country. Though there was a concern at the beginning of the war about the participation of blacks but as the war progressed the Swazi among others joined. Swazi participation in the war including other Africans in South Africa was inspired by the hope to regain pieces of land they had lost to Boers before the outbreak if the war. Again there is no evidence indicating that the relations between the Swazi and whites during the war were translated into pragmatic racism though there was exceptional incident of a major similar to what had occurred in different battle theatres in South Africa. Based on such observations we maintain that it appears relations between blacks and whites in Swaziland remained relatively egalitarian at least up to the end of the South African War.