

SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN

Focus on Swaziland

Alan Booth

**The Development of the Swazi
Labour Market 1900–1968**

Martin Fransman

**Labour, Capital and the State
in Swaziland, 1962–1977**

John Daniel

**The Political Economy of Colonial
and Post-Colonial Swaziland**

Fion de Vletter

**Labour Migration in Swaziland:
Recent Trends and Implications**

Patricia McFadden

**Women in Wage-Labour in Swaziland:
A Focus on Agriculture**

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Comment on Swaziland:

Along with Lesotho and Botswana, Swaziland is conventionally grouped among the B.L.S. states. Considering their common political heritage this makes a good deal of sense. All were British Protectorates, sitting uneasily on South Africa's flanks. All were to some extent 'hostage' to that power, and experienced periodic attempts to swallow them up.

Viewed economically this conventional classification is not nearly as neat. Although it is true that Swaziland's economy shares the common legacy of having been distorted and undermined to service South Africa's labour demands, the principal difference is that it has furnished relatively fewer migrant labourers to the mines than did Lesotho or Botswana, and it has thus attracted correspondingly less interest and concern.

This similarly has been both the cause and the consequence of scholarly neglect but it is thoroughly misleading. A key feature distinguishing Swaziland from the other B.L.S. states, is the growth of settler and metropolitan agricultural capital from a relatively early stage. Once this is accorded its proper weight, as Booth argues, in his contribution to this volume, our whole perspective on Swaziland's political and economic development is changed. Rather than boasting a common pedigree with Lesotho and Botswana, Booth shows that Swaziland in fact resembles more closely the settler Rhodesian state. Patterns of labour mobilisation and exploitation, of worker resistance and organisation all bear this stamp, making Swaziland an important object of analysis, particularly in view of its present 'front-line' position.

The really dramatic growth of metropolitan capital in Swaziland, Booth tells us, followed the second world war, when Swaziland experienced a massive infusion of foreign investment directed mainly towards timber and agriculture. As a result, Swaziland was able to boast, some two decades later, the highest domestic rate of labour force employment in 'developing Africa'. Side by side with these transformations, competition for labour grew sharper, Swazi workers played the labour market with considerable

success, employers resorted increasingly to the labour of women and children, and a spiral of wage increases began. The cycle only ended in the early 1960's, when the first signs of structural unemployment began to make themselves apparent. (At the same time in South Africa structural unemployment became particularly acute). Companies seized the opportunity to institute tougher labour regimes, prompting workers to unionise and stage a series of strikes between 1963-1965.

The strikes of 1963-65, and the surge of worker opposition a decade later are the subject of Fransman's article in this volume. As Fransman shows the Swazi working class has been a key political force since the early sixties. Partly because of its size, partly because pre-capitalist relations of production have been preserved in the countryside perpetuating the political and ideological hegemony of the king, petty bourgeois opponents of the colonial post-colonial regimes have sought to mobilise this constituency to attain their political goals. As a result strikes in Swaziland tended to be quickly politicised, threatening foreign capital, and prompting it to strike up an alliance with the king. Both the form of decolonisation in the late 1960's and the suspension of the constitution in 1977 Fransman attributes to working class pressure which once again underlines Swaziland's differences from both Botswana and Lesotho.

Daniel and de Vletter's papers concentrate on post-colonial Swaziland and trace changes in its political economy over the past fifteen years.

Citing Fransman, Daniel notes that decolonisation produced a situation virtually unparalleled elsewhere in Africa when state power was assumed by class forces which had their roots not in capitalist production, but in the pre-capitalist sector. However, as Daniel persuasively argues, the Swazi royal family has carved itself out an important place within the post-colonial economy. Through the Tibiyo Taka Ngwane fund which is controlled by the king, and which originally drew its money from mineral royalties, the Swazi royal family has entered into joint venture arrangements

with Lonhro, Tate and Lyle and other multinational companies, thereby providing it with a base in the capitalist economy, and predisposing it to adopt an even more unyielding attitude to union organisation. In the process, a situation has developed which is increasingly unbalanced and unstable. As both Daniel and de Vletter observe there is now a disturbing trend towards monoculture, and an economy overwhelmingly reliant on sugar. The recent Simunye joint-venture sugar scheme has merely accentuated this problem, promising as it does to make Swaziland Africa's second largest sugar producer and to make sugar Swaziland's biggest land user, employer and revenue earner.

An explosive situation could also arise among Swaziland's working class. As several of the contributions to this volume note, Swaziland's rulers pride themselves on the country's cheap labour structure and emasculated labour movement. However even highly restrictive legislation, and its harsh implementation has not been completely successful in curbing labour unrest as was apparent when in July 1979 large numbers of sugar plantation workers of the Ubombo Ranches struck work at Big Bend. Given the increasing concentration of workers in these plantations, and the bad conditions of work alluded to by McFadden's article in this volume, these are likely to become increasingly sensitive areas in the economy, and one obvious gap in this volume is the absence of a study of sugar and of the sugar strikes 2½ years ago.

Another problem confronting the Swazi state is its increasing dependence on South Africa. As Daniel shows South African capital has now largely displaced British capital in Swaziland, and its 'octopus-like grip' seems destined to become even tighter if the Anglo American Corporation's negotiations to take over Usuthu Pulp Mills are successful. Moreover, although Swaziland is not nearly as dependent on mine labour as Lesotho and Botswana, the restrictions placed on recruiting by the mines in 1977, are having adverse repercussions in Swaziland as well. de Vletter argues that the rate of unemployment is rising in Swaziland and the earlier 'safety valve' of migrant labour cannot be used on the same scale.

Some of the concrete implications, of Swaziland's present path of development are brought out in the article by McFadden. In this she paints a dismal picture of women's labour on Libbie's pineapple plantation and processing plant. In the absence of trade unions, McFadden argues, women are paid appallingly low wages and are used as a lever against the rest of the working class. If conditions on this 80% Nestlé-owned estate's enterprise are mirrored in the sugar plantations in Swaziland, they must presumably become the focus of future worker organisation. Whether this becomes politicised in the same fashion as before is a matter of speculation, but given the uncertainties of political succession in Swaziland, as well as the contradictions created by its current 'front line' position alluded to by Daniel, this is a possibility which cannot be ignored.

Appointment:

We would like to inform our readers that Jeremy Baskin has been appointed as researcher for the South African Labour Bulletin. He will be researching labour and related issues nationally and material arising out of this research will be published in the course of 1982.

Release from Detention:

Our managing editor, Merle Favis, was released from detention on 21 April after a period of solitary confinement since 27 November 1981. The SALB supports the growing nation-wide protests against continued detention of people associated with the democratic trade union and community movements and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees.

Briefings

ON Feb 5, 1982, Neil Aggett, the Transvaal secretary for the African Food and Canning Workers Union, died in detention. The union called for a nation-wide half-hour work stoppage of organised labour for Thurs Feb 11.

Here are accounts of union responses reported region by region:

They responded with 'conviction and determination'

A STATEMENT assessing the protest by the Food and Canning Workers Union reads:

"We saw the half-hour work-stoppage both as a commemoration of the death of our comrade and a warning to the authorities who are conducting their vendetta against the trade union movement.

"In view of the fact that we had only 3 days to organise the stoppage, we were greatly heartened by the response. There were factories that did not stop work, either those we had not been able to contact or the weakly organised, and there were factories where the response could have been stronger. But by and large the workers responded to the call with great conviction and determination.

"The arrangements for the stoppage were negotiated by our committees at each factory with the management. Only in the case of large groups with several factories did union officials contact management, and then only to ask for approval in principle for the stoppage.

"Although the Union itself had taken no decision as to whether the half-hour should be in work time or be unpaid, in most cases the workers felt very strong that the half-hour should be paid. They also resisted attempts by the employers to incorporate the half-hour into the lunch hour.

"Workers felt that so often they are asked to work more or less time to suit the convenience of their employers and that this time it

was their employers' turn to fit in with what they wanted. At one factory, in a country town where workers are supposed to know their place, the workers were ready to ban all overtime work until the employers finally backed down and agreed to pay for the half-hour stoppage.

"At another factory where the employers had shifted the lunch hour forward to 11.30 and were expecting the workers to return to work after the usual period, the workers held a commemorative service for the half-hour and then took the lunch hour at the usual time for the usual period. No action was taken against them.

"It was significant that, with one exception, no employer refused to allow the work stoppage. Several employers agreed to pay for the half-hour at the onset and in one instance employers joined with the workers at the service held.

"Employers can also not have failed to be impressed by the manner in which the work stoppage was conducted. All the workers participated, even those that aren't usually at union meetings. The committees and workers at each factory decided themselves how to use the half-hour, but in most cases there were tributes to Neil Aggett, some kind of a service, and singing. No one misused the occasion, to slip off to the cafe' etc. Some lorries stopped on the road at 11.30.

"We estimate between 12 000 and 13 000 workers in factories organised by our union stopped work in Western Cape factories. But the numbers are less important than the manner in which this was done - they honoured Neil's memory and without question workers felt more strongly committed to their organisation as a result.

FCWU

Ashton	Langeberg	1 000
Cape Town	Irving and Johnson, Fattis and Monis, SM Milling, SASKO	1 900
Ceres	Ceres Fruit Juices and Canning Co, Ceres Fruit Growers Co-op, Ceres Aartappel Ko-op, S A Dried Fruit Co-op	1 800

Grabouw	Appletiser, Highlands Canning Co, Elgen Fruit Packers Co-op, Kromco	2 400
Hout Bay	S A Sea Products, I and J	500
Montagu	Langeberg	200
Mossel Bay	Langeberg	500
Paarl	Langeberg, All Gold	1 200
Saldanha Bay	Sea Harvest	800
St Helena Bay	Suid Oranje	100
Somerset West	Gants Food	800
Tulbagh	S A Preserving Co	800
Wellington	S A Dried Fruits, Oakglen Canning Co	400
		12 400

NOTE: This list does not include factories at which the amount of support is uncertain.

FCWU, Mar 5

Their action was aimed at the State

IN Cape Town the Food and Canning Workers Union called for a nation-wide half-hour stoppage of organised labour on Thurs Feb 11. The response of the progressive trade unions was that this time the State had gone "too far". The Executive of the General Workers Union, together with many other unions, supported the FCWU's call. At a meeting of all our shop steward committees wide-spread support was given to this decision. The workers made it clear that this action was not aimed at individual bosses but at the government.

About 5 000 members of the GWU in Cape Town downed tools for half-an-hour and held mourning services in their respective factories. The services took place in a most disciplined and dignified manner. The workers who stopped work were from the best organised sectors of the union. These included approximately 700 workers at the docks, about 1 800 engineering workers, about 1 500 building and allied workers, about 500 in the public sector and several hundred workers in a cross-section of other factories.

Several hundred workers in the organised hospitals wore black arm-bands in solidarity with the action of their fellow union members.

The union officials phoned a large number of employers prior to the stoppage to inform them of the workers' decision. The response of employers was generally either cooperative or non-committal. No victimisation has since taken place in any of the factories where the work-stoppage occurred. Many employers realised too, that this time the State had gone too far and that workers' patience had run out.

The events of Feb 11 are of great significance in the history of labour organisation in this country. Organised labour in their respective unions stood together and put aside their differences over this issue. This unity of the trade union movement was a fitting tribute to Neil Aggett. It could also be the basis of further unity and cooperation of a more permanent kind in the future.

GWU, Mar 10

Organised workers protest en masse

THE work-stoppage in the Western Cape was fairly widespread, "particularly in those areas where the Food and Canning Workers' Union and the General Workers' Union are strongest". (1)

It appears that the response to the call for a work-stoppage varied immensely in the Western Cape region. In addition to the strong response from members of the FCWU and GWU, an "effective" number of the 470 members of the Fosatu-affiliated Jewellers and Goldsmith Union downed their tools for the requested half-hour.

Another Fosatu union, the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union, held a one minute work-stoppage at Leyland according to The Argus. 2 000 workers were involved.

Some members of the Bakery Employees' Industrial Union downed tools for the period while others rearranged their usual lunchtime. A "substantial number" of the Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association's members reacted in a "positive" way.

Although the workers did not down tools, they took part in a "rearrangement" of their lunch hour. Unfortunately no exact figures could be confirmed for any of the above unions.

The Western Cape Region of Mwasa as well as employees from the Cape Times, the Argus chapel of the Southern African Society of Journalists (SASJ) and employees of Allied Publishing Company attended a Mwasa organised commemorative service.

At the University of Cape Town workers from the university and a construction site suspended work to attend a meeting during the half-hour period.

Cape Town city centre however displayed little compliance with the work-stoppage. Many workers in the city either did not even know that the stoppage had been called or what it was about.

The response in the Western Cape to the work-stoppage thus varies immensely between different industries and regions and appeared to depend on the unions organising in the industries.

1 The Argus, Feb 11.

JOHANN MAREE and JOHN VAN BREDA, Mar 4

35 000 demonstrate in PE / Uitenhage

ABOUT 35 000 workers in the Port Elizabeth / Uitenhage area joined the call for a national work stoppage.

Unions described the stoppage as a 'complete success'.

The Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) reported about 25 000 workers in 23 firms in the Eastern Cape stopped work at 11.30 a m for stoppages ranging between 10 minutes to half-an-hour.

These included members from the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, the National Union of Textile Workers, the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union, the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (Naawu).

The Motor Assembly and Component Workers' Union (Macwusa) and the General Workers' Union of South Africa (Gwusa) joined the

stoppage, after the Macwusa and Gwusa executives gave immediate support to the call by the Food and Canning Workers' Union.

Virtually all leading operations in the Port Elizabeth harbour came to a stand still when stevedores, members of the General Workers' Union (GWU) stopped work for half-an-hour in response to the call.

Railway workers, also members of GWU, showed solidarity for the stoppage by wearing black arm-bands. But many railway workers were unable to work because of the stevedores' action. The GWU advised railway members not to stop work after management threatened to fire all workers if they joined the stoppage. Security and railway police kept a close watch in the harbour area during the stoppage.

A meeting of Fosatu shop steward committees decided to hold stoppages for 10 to 15 minutes. Agreement for a 10 minute stoppage was reached at most of the 23 Fosatu factories in the Eastern Cape, but at Willard Batteries and Ford a full half-hour was observed.

At Cadbury's and Plascon Paints, white supervisors, including factory and production managers, joined in the procedures to honour Neil Aggett, whereas at most firms supervisors and management officials looked on at a distance.

At Ford, both Naawu and Macwusa members stopped work at 11.30 for a jointly-organised meeting.

Hundreds of workers met in groups outside the Cortina engine and truck assembly plants singing, raising freedom salutes to shouts of 'Amandla' while union organisers from both Macwusa and Naawu paid tribute to Neil Aggett and his role in the independent trade union movement.

In the body shop at General Motors a siren went off at 11.30 a m, conveyor belts came to a stop and workers stopped work for 10 minutes at a jointly-organised Naawu and Macwusa meeting. (There is controversy over whether this meeting was jointly-organised - ed).

At most firms, a period of silence was observed followed by prayers and the singing of Nkosi Sikelel' Africa.

In Uitenhage, 4 500 workers downed tools at the Volkswagen plant for a five minute period, gathering in small groups.

At Willard Batteries, shop stewards spoke to workers about the life of Neil Aggett and what he had done for unity in the independent trade union movement.

In Port Elizabeth, Naawu members at Firestone - scene of a major East Cape strike over pensions last year - stopped work for 10 minutes, but Macwusa supporters carried on for the full half-hour, as at General Tyre. At the third East Cape tyre firm, Goodyear, workers staged a 10 minute stoppage.

Macwusa organising secretary, Government Zini, described Neil Aggett's death as a "turning point in relations between trade unions and the State". He said Macwusa, as well as its sister union Gwusa, met "reasonable understanding" from managements contacted about the stoppage.

East Cape firms were generally "sympathetic" to union requests for the work-stoppage, but most firms tightened up their security to bar reporters and tried to sabotage publicity for the stoppage once it took place.

Fosatu:

25 000 workers joined the stoppage at 23 Fosatu affiliated plants.

Chemical Workers' Industrial Union: Plascon

National Union of Textile Workers: Industex, Veldspan, Cape of Good Hope Textiles, Gubb and Inggs

Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union: Cadburys, Farm Fare, Milling and Trading

Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union: Sidwell, Timber Industries

Transport and General Workers' Union: Motorvia

National Association of Automobile Workers' Union: Car Distributors' Assembly, General Motors, Firestone, SKF, Borg-Warner, Bosal Afrika, Feltex Foam and Automotive Products, Apex Willard, Ford, Volkswagen. The stoppage lasted 10 minutes to 15 minutes at most of the 23 firms, and in most cases involved the overwhelming majority of black workers. At Willard Batteries and Ford, the stoppage

lasted from half-hour to 45 minutes.

At Cadbury's, white supervisors joined in the proceeding, while at Plascon Paints foremen also participated. Plascon's personal manager later phoned Fosatu to congratulate it on the way the stoppage was handled.

At Industex, with a workforce of 1 600, the stoppage was absolute except that management had to obtain permission from the union for members of management to operate five machines which required several hours to restart. (Fosatu)

At other firms, e.g. Volkswagen, supervisory staff watched at a distance.

At the engine plant/truck assembly plants of Ford, Macwusa and Naawu held joint meetings - lasting half-an-hour.

Following the call for a work stoppage by the Food and Canning Workers' Union, shop steward committees from Fosatu affiliated unions met to give support for the stoppage and formulate the way in which it would be observed.

The regional congress decided on a 10 minute stoppage, which included a three minute period of silence, prayer and the singing of Nkosi Sikelel' Afrika.

At Willard and Ford, organisers spoke on Neil Aggett and his work for the independent trade union movement. At Ford engine and truck assembly plants, both Macwusa and Naawu organisers spoke.

According to Naawu secretary, Fred Sauls, the majority of firms agreed not to deduct pay for the stoppage, e.g GM, CDA. Smaller firms, e.g. SKF deducted pay according to normal clocking in/out procedures.

Ford management refused to pay workers if the stoppage lasted more than three minutes, and implemented the clock-in deductions. Naawu intends to take the issue of deductions up with Ford.

Macwusa:

Ford - 30 mins, General Motors - 10 mins, General Tyre - 30 mins, Firestone - 30 mins, Feltex - 30 mins, Feraform - 10 mins and Uniroyal.

According to Zini, management reluctantly agreed to half-hour stoppages, realising that it was not an isolated demand but part of a national call.

At certain firms, where there was Macwusa / Fosatu membership at the same firm, the stoppages lasted 10 minutes as Fosatu had already requested this with management. At Ford however, Macwusa had met with management beforehand and a half-hour stoppage was observed.

Gwusa:

A 30 minute stoppage was observed at the following unionised firms. Gwusa said management did not deduct pay for the duration of the stoppage.

Wispeco, (Aluminium Steel), Cape Produce (Skins/Hides/Wool), Pelts Products (Fellmongers), M Stores (Cape Produce owned), South African Abattoirs, ICS Foods Ltd., Industrial and Commercial Cafeterias, Nampak (Ropes and Twines), and Chelsea Dairy.

General Workers Union (GWU) operations in the Port Elizabeth harbour came to a standstill when stevedores stopped work. Railway workers showed solidarity with the stoppage by wearing black arm-bands.

The Transport and Allied Workers' Union in Port Elizabeth - a member of the Council of Unions of South Africa - was initially hesitant about joining the stoppage. The union decided not to participate on the eve of the stoppage. East Cape organisers refused to give reasons for the decision.

East Cape management was reported as being 'sympathetic' in general to union requests for the work-stoppage, although South African Railways threatened workers - members of the GWU - with immediate dismissal if they participated.

The Midland system manager of the Railways, Mr. G.D. Engelbrecht, later denied Press reports that railway employees were

told they would be dismissed.

The Midland Chamber of Industries issued a statement advising its members to allow a one minute stoppage. Every company could however decide for itself how it would handle "this sensitive issue", it said.

"We are concerned about Dr. Aggett's death and sympathise with his parents and relatives. There is no conflict between organised labour and industry at the moment".

On Tues Feb 9, the director of the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, Anton Masters, issued a statement carried widely in the Press, saying that though the chamber "understood the strong trade union reaction to the death in detention of Neil Aggett", workers should "still think seriously about the proposed work-stoppage. The planned half-hour stoppage would seriously disrupt productivity".

"The chamber does not support strikes or work-stoppages as a last resort measure and in the circumstances it appeals to employee groups to consider carefully the action to be taken if they are employed by crucial industry".

Press complained that on the day of the stoppage management at all firms refused reporters/photographers access to cover the meetings.

The managing director of Nampak, Mr. Hymie Berelowitz, said although he had been approached by worker representatives about the stoppage, the company could not "let outside involvements and political emotions affect out daily production. We are not going to have some stoppage because some guy hanged himself". It was, however, established that a half-hour stoppage occurred at the company's plant in Stamford Road organised by Gwusa.

A Dorbyl spokesman, when inquiries were made about the stoppage, asked the reporter if the call for the stoppage had not been made "by the Eastern Province Herald".

Police generally kept a low profile during the stoppage and there were no reports of intimidation or harassment by East Cape Security Police. However at the docks, security police and railway police patrolled the area.

Four major groups out in East London

ABOUT 6 500 East London workers downed tools for varying periods of time in their protest at the death of Neil Aggett. The workers were members of four trade unions operating in the city – the African Food and Canning Workers' Union (AFCWU), the South African Allied Workers Union (Saawu), the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (Naawu) and the General Workers Union (GWU).

It is impossible to estimate whether unorganised workers participated and if so how many.

The strongest response appeared to come from factories organised by the AFCWU, the union of which Dr. Aggett was Transvaal branch secretary.

An estimated 2 500 workers downed tools for the full half-hour from 11.30.

These workers were from the following factories: Langeberg, Western Province Preserving, Epol, Golden Grain Bakery and Meadow Feeds.

There were no reports of workers stopping without prior arrangement with their managements.

A prayer meeting coupled with the half-hour stoppage was held at two Saawu factories: Chloride and Johnson and Johnson.

Other Saawu factories to observe the half-hour stoppage were KSM Milling, Nairn Industries and Parker Pen. Here too, all factories stopped after agreement had been reached with management. The total number of workers at these factories is about 2000. It is believed, though it is difficult to confirm, that a number of individual Saawu members stopped work at other plants.

At Hoover, however, when workers approached management with the request that they be allowed to stop work, they were told they would not be paid for the half-hour not worked. They did not stop.

At Ark Garments, managing director R. Harris told his workers that they could mourn as much as they liked on Saturday or Sunday but half-hour work-stoppages were out of the question. None risked their jobs.

At CDA, East London's Mercedes Benz manufacturing company, between 2 000 and 3 000 workers observed a five minute stoppage before their tea break. In a statement Naawu branch chairman, Cornelius Fazzie said: "Dr. Neil Aggett stood for one common cause - we only differed on our line of approach to the struggle of the workers".

While Naawu only felt able to stop for 10 minutes it was regarded as significant that Naawu was prepared to side with the other unions - with whom there has been some antagonism - over an issue such as Dr. Aggett's death.

At the harbour about 32 stevedores, members of the GWU, observed the half-hour stoppage. The vast majority, however, continued to work despite the support given by the union at national level to the stoppage and a decision by the branch executive to support the stoppage. The failure of the stevedores to stop was attributed, by local officials of the union, to their not being informed by committee members and to the insistence of supervisors that they continue working.

EAST LONDON CORRESPONDENT, Mar 18

30 000 out in PWV area

IN the central Transvaal the work-stoppage was effected by about 30 000 workers, employed mainly in the band of industrial areas stretching east of Johannesburg - the most intensively unionised in the Transvaal - but also in Pretoria, the West Rand, the Vaal area and Sasolburg.

Initial figures for the number of Transvaal workers who observed the work-stoppage in honour of Neil Aggett now seem an underestimate. Apparently left out of account were the responses of some organised workers outside the main groupings, such as members of the Engineering and Allied Workers Union. Reports of unaccounted for stoppages have been drifting into the offices of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu). The stoppage would have been more extensive but for the short notice.

The breakdown by union and union grouping would appear as follows:

- 14 000 members of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) in 33 factories, mainly on the East Rand and in Johannesburg's Carlton Centre. Half of these were members of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (Mawu), and another 4 000 were members of the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (Naawu) at Sigma.

- More than 10 000 members of unions affiliated to the Transvaal-based Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa). Of these, some 4 000 were members of the Food, Beverage and Allied Workers Union on the Reef and Pretoria and another 3 000 were members of the S.A. Chemical Workers Union in Sasolburg and the PWV area.

- 2 500 members of the Food and Canning Workers Union at seven factories in Industria, Isando and on the East Rand.

- About 3 000 members of other unaffiliated unions, including the Engineering and Allied Workers Union and the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (Ccawusa). The General and Allied Workers Union claimed a 'good response' on the West Rand and in Johannesburg, but gave no details.

A surprise bonus was the stoppage at two Wadeville liquor plants by some 900 members of a registered, unaffiliated union informally linked to Tucsa's Garment Workers Union - the National Union of Wine, Spirits and Allied Workers. The workers may have been influenced by the general upsurge in Wadeville, where Fosatu's metal and chemical affiliates had a strong response.

Fosatu attributes its success in Wadeville (where 2 200 of its members in eight factories stopped work) to the strength of its shop stewards council in the area. It was in Wadeville, however, that the federation had its biggest upset - the 2 500 African workers, at what is arguably the most influential single company in Seifsa, Scaw Metals, failed to come out.

Mawu officials attribute this to the fact that the Scaw organiser was out of town and no Scaw representative attended the shop stewards' council meeting on the night before the stoppage.

Fosatu says Scaw shop stewards were not warned in sufficient time to muster general meetings in a plant of that size.

As in other parts of the country, it was factory workers in the Transvaal who bore the brunt of the stoppage. There was little or no response from the commercial and distributive trades, or from workers in transport, building and State and municipal service.

Unions in some of these areas faced special difficulties. "If customers are already in the shop, you can't drive them out", said Ccawusa's president, Isaac Padi. An official of the Black Municipality Workers Union who broached the proposed stoppage with the Johannesburg City Council Staff Board was told: "We will view it as an illegal strike and hold you responsible".

There can be little doubt that the confidence which comes from effective factory-floor organisation was central to the strength of workers' responses. "With some surprising exceptions, it was the best organised workers who responded best", says Cusa's general secretary, Piroshaw Camay. Where organisation had been broken by an unsuccessful strike - at Mawu's Telephone Manufacturers' of S.A., for example, or at the FCWU's H Lewis - nothing happened.

Where unions were recently established, the stance of management also appeared crucial. The Sappi group took an exceptionally hard line. Its chief executive reportedly said: "This Aggett business represents no interface between us and our employees". Also the recently organised workers at the group's Enstra Mill did not stop work.

At Braitex in Springs, where Fosatu's textile affiliate last year won its first agreement in the Transvaal, protesting workers who were threatened with dismissal, sang songs but remained at their looms.

On the other hand, at Light Castings, a Boksburg factory where Mawu has been active for some years, workers refused permission for the stoppage clocked out and clocked in again 35 minutes later. These workers lost their attendance bonus.

This sort of management posture appears, however, atypical. In most instances, no active attempt was made to discourage protest

action, although "no pay for no work" was widespread policy.

The police, too, kept a low profile, although the FCWU's Transvaal officials report disturbing instance at Epol, a Premier Milling subsidiary, in Isando. Here local management crossed head office instructions by refusing permission for the stoppage and locking the factory gates - beyond which police were present in force. This account was denied by management.

The "quality" of worker response is almost impossible to gauge. Officials of all the unions say the observance comprised songs or prayers or both, but have few other details.

There were two striking displays reported from East Rand workers organised into Fosatu's Chemical Workers Industrial Union. At Reef Chemical Corporation, the entire workforce of about 150 workers staged a march through Boksburg East carrying Neil Aggett posters. As they circled the local pass office, workseekers grouped outside joined in their song.

And at Colgate-Palmolive in Boksburg, 180 workers gathered in the canteen were addressed by a shop steward who told them "the whole exercise is to re-affirm our commitment to the struggle".

JOHANNESBURG CORRESPONDENT, Feb. 27.

Fosatu

Cwiu:

Boksburg	Reef Chemicals 150 - 30 mins, Rolfes Chemicals 400 -30 mins, Colgate 180 - 30 mins.
Isando	Abecol 80 - 30 mins, Henkel 100.
Wadeville	S and CI Chemicals 80 - 30mins, Matthey Rustenburg Refinery 250 - 15 mins.

Sfawu:

Springs	Kelloggs 180 - 30 mins, Westons Biscuits 250 - 30
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Gawu:

Germiston Plate Glass 400 - 30 mins.

Mawu:

Boksburg Hendler and Hendler 1 800 - 30 mins, Vaal Metals 200 - 10 mins, Light Castings 140 - 35 mins, Nickel Chrome 120 - 20 mins, National Bolt 1 117 - 30 mins.

Benoni Chloride 130 - 30 mins, Salcast 400

Isando Siemens (Isando) 450 - 30 mins, Fenner 150 - 10 mins, Automatic Plating 84 - 30 mins.

Wadeville Henred Fruehauf 450 - 30 mins, National Spring 400 - 30 mins, Litemaster 320 - 30 mins, Domani Steel 90, TMF 350, Vesankor 90, Dresser 200.

Elandsfontein Stone Street 60 - 30 mins.

Spartan Siemens (Spartan) 180 - 30 mins.

Heriotdale Krost 1 100

Pwawu:

Kliprivier Premier Paper 350 - 30 mins, Nampak Recycling 90.

Tgwu:

Johannesburg Carlton Centre Employees 250 - 30 mins.

Naawu:

Pretoria Sigma 4 000.

Ccawusa:

Boksburg Pick and Pay indeterminate no.

Edgardale Edgars 400

Johannesburg Carlton Hotel 15

FCWU:

Johannesburg SA Milling, Epol, Langeberg, All Gold/Langeberg,
I and J, Fattis and Monis, SA Dried Fruits
Total No: 2 500

Poor response in N. Natal

THE five Fosatu unions in the Northern Natal area (Mawu, Cwiu, Sfawu, Tgwu and Pwawu) have grown very fast over the last 2 years. Now there is a high membership and much enthusiasm about the unions because of some of the things which have already been won by workers in the short time the unions have existed in the area. But there is still not enough stable organisation for widespread and systematic mobilization of the whole region in a few days.

Slow communication over the vast area we are organising in - Mtubatuba to Stanger - meant that we had to rely on telephoning or seeing one or two people in many of the factories to firstly mobilise the shop steward committee and secondly for them and their membership to make decisions about a stoppage in their factories. A serious shortage of organisers in the region aggravated this problem.

The background to the protest in this region included the attendance of members of Mawu at a national executive meeting in Johannesburg on Sunday Feb 7 where the possibility of a stoppage was discussed. Also over the week-end organisers reported verbally about Neil's death to all worker meetings held - mainly in Port Durnford and Mandini.

On Mon Feb 8 the word spread more widely - again mainly verbally, and by this time the press reports were also having some effect. All workers when told of Neil Aggett's death reacted with shock and horror and said that something should be done.

On Wed management at Triomf called for a meeting with union shop stewards at 10.30 a m on Thurs (1 hour before the stoppage

was scheduled to start). The shop stewards wrote a letter to management postponing this meeting to another day, explaining that Thurs was to be a day of mourning.

On Thurs itself:-

- All 400 employees at the Huletts Paper Mill at Felixton stopped work for 30 minutes between 11.30 and 12.00 with management co-operation.
- The 100 employees in 3 departments of the Richards Bay Town Board stopped work for 30 minutes.
- At Alusaf and Triomf 5 minute silences were observed during the lunch-hour.
- At Huletts Sugar Mill, where management may have been willing to co-operate, the response was disappointing.
- At Sappi Kraft Paper Mill in Mandini a management circular threatened action if a stoppage took place. Nothing was organised.

The experience gained in the first attempt at broad mobilization in this area provided instructive lessons for union leadership to reflect on.

FOSATU, May 11

Action was well co-ordinated

THE protest was well supported by organised workers in Maritzburg, and approached warily by the bosses.

At estimated 2 000 workers in Maritzburg downed tools for the 30-minute stoppage in response to the call from the African Food and Canning Workers Union for which Neil Aggett worked.

The stoppage was clearly a co-ordinated protest by organised workers, mainly in the engineering and food industries where the Fosatu affiliated Metal and Allied Workers Union (Mawu) and Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union (Sfawu) are active.

A meeting of all shop stewards in the area resolved to call the stoppage at some nine plants which had majority union membership. Lunch-time meetings involving several hundred union members were planned at a further seven factories.

The shop stewards further resolved to call upon the bosses not to obstruct workers who wished to observe the protest, to observe the protest themselves and also to condemn publicly the detention of trade unionists.

From the bosses there was a mixed and mainly cautious response. In the engineering sector all the bosses agreed not to obstruct the stoppage. And organisers reported that certain senior executives privately expressed sympathy with the union's protest but none did so publicly.

However, while the bosses had undertaken not to forbid the protest, workers at three of the six metal factories involved were subjected to intimidation in the form of threats to deduct wages if they stopped work. They were forced to clock out if they wished to observe the protest. Most union members did not succumb to this pressure.

Predictably, at lower management and supervisory levels there was more hostility towards the stoppage. White, coloured and most (but not all) Indian workers refused to identify with the protest. In fact at one plant the members of the S.A. Boilermakers Society (SABS), which not long ago opened its ranks to African workers, explicitly dissociated themselves from the protest.

They informed the bosses that they intended to continue working during the stoppage and objected strongly to the fact that those who did not work might get paid as if they had also worked.

This highlights the continuing cleavage between the progressive non-racial trade unions and the established registered unions. The bosses obviously took advantage of this stand by the Boilermakers and refused to pay those who took part in the stoppage. Mawu attacked the SABS bitterly for its divisive stand but observed that it was not unexpected.

Some of the bosses, while not wishing to risk a confrontation by opposing the stoppage were reported to be distinctly unhappy about the event. The issue was a "political issue" they argued, and their workers should not be involved.

Unionists report that there was anxiety in some quarters over the likelihood that an unfortunate precedent was being set and that the bosses would in future be drawn increasingly into struggles over issues external to their factories, such as bus-fare increases. Both Fosatu unions were confronted with such fears.

On the day, some 1 500 metal workers and 1 000 workers in the food industry brought their factories to a halt while they mourned the loss of a comrade.

The stoppage took place at the following Mawu organised factories: Prestige 120, Pillar 50, Ferralloys 550, Scottish Cables 600, McKinnon Chain 100 and APV Kestner 100.

The Sfawu organised factories which came to a standstill included: Meadowfeeds 350, Epol 150 and Noodsberg Sugar 500.

Notwithstanding their opposition to the stoppage, the bosses like those workers who refused to support their workmates, spent the 30 minutes in enforced idleness. Although unionists in Maritzburg are cautious about the significance of the events of the 11th, and impressive 90% of the workers to whom the call for a stoppage was directed, responded in a disciplined way to an issue of far-reaching significance.

In the wake of the events however, Mawu believes that the bosses have resolved to adopt markedly different tactics if similar circumstances should arise again. A reliable union source claims the Chamber of Industries in Maritzburg has decided to oppose from the outset any industrial solidarity or sympathy action as strongly as possible. This is consistent, says the union, with the fact that relations with several firms have plummeted inexplicably since the stoppage.

The bosses are reported to be evasive about the reasons for their change of attitude. The union attributes it to hostility arising from the work stoppage and is contemplating legal action against one firm which breached an agreement which included a stop-order arrangements.

Management intimidates but workers go ahead

DESPITE considerable management intimidation there was a good response to the call for a stoppage in the Durban, Hammarsdale, Tongaat, Estcourt and Empangeni areas. Twelve textile factories stopped production, bringing out 10 430 workers; seven chemical factories were brought to stand-still 1 590 workers and two Mawu factories stopped production bringing out 240 workers.

The Burhose factory in Estcourt was where serious reprisals were anticipated. A strike occurred there in May last year and the Nutw had experienced an uphill battle for recognition ever since. Every known union contact had been worked out of the factory at some time or for some reason. The workers therefore considered it unwise for individuals exposed in leadership positions to assume a prominent role in the stoppage.

They thus arranged the stoppage in such a way that no leaders could be identified. A short while before the stoppage was scheduled workers started singing at their machines. They stopped their machines when the stoppage was due and kept singing. Workers then observed a period of silence, which was followed by 'Nkosi Sikelel' Africa' and then resumed work. Workers found it difficult to get the whole factory to participate due to the lay out of the plant and management intimidation, however, all the major sections were involved.

At Mooi River Textiles similar problems arose. The bosses said that they did not see why they had to become involved in a fight between the union and government. Even after the shop stewards had forced them to accept the stoppage, the management tried to prescribe which machines should be kept running. Workers however simply clocked out and each of the shifts stopped work.

At South African Fabrics a shop steward was fired before the stoppage for allegedly undertaking union business during working hours and this was still an issue at the time of the stoppage. During the stoppage the company tried to stop each department from

coming out. The managing director and other directors prowled round the factory immediately before and during the stoppage and there were continual loud-speaker calls while the stoppage took place. Management forced workers back to work when the meeting got onto the question of the reinstatement of the dismissed shop steward.

In 4 out of the 12 Nutw factories that stopped, Indians and Africans came out together and the stoppage was close to 100%.

At Robertson Stone workers clocked out of the factory during the stoppage, thereby forfeiting their pay for that period.

In several other factories where workers did not feel themselves sufficiently strong, lunch-time ceremonies were held. At Henkel relations between management and workers were so tense that workers felt that the stoppage might promote confrontation, a situation in fact materialised a few weeks later over other issues.

The good response from workers in the Durban area may be attributed in part to the fact that unions in the region to some extent anticipated the stoppage call. Both Nutw and Cwiu had national executive meetings in Durban the week-end before the strike call.

Delegates discussed the issue there, agreed to the idea of a stoppage and prepared a draft of the pamphlet call on workers to stop work. When the strike call was officially made by the FCWU on Mon 8, the unions in the area were therefore in a position immediately to put the campaign into full swing.

Nutw:

Hammarsdale	- Hebox 1 750, Progress Knitting 1 400, Natal Thread 550, Gelvenor 400.
Pinetown	- Smith and Nephew 750, Ninian and Lester 500, Regina 300, Nelba Prints 100, Stayflex 80.
Tongaat	- David Whitehead 1 500.
Mooi River	- Mooi River Textiles 1 000.
Estcourt	- Burhose 1 400.
Rosburgh	- S.A. Fabrics 650.

Mawu:

Jacobs - Robertson Stone 120, Krommenie 120.

Cwiu:

Umbongintwini - S.A. Tioxide 450

Jacobs - ANCI Paints 270, Rivertex 150.

Pinetown - Durapenta Plastics 450, Omega Plastics 120.

Empangeni - Bonus Fertilizer 50

Pietermaritzburg - Incorporated Laboratories 100

FOSATU, April 13

Solidarity but no mass stoppage

FOSATU, GWU and Saawu and the Cusa affiliate, the United African Motor Workers Union organised work stoppages in Durban. While most unions in the area expressed their solidarity with the protest they stated that they were unable to participate in the stoppage because of lack of time and organisational difficulties.

Saawu organised the work stoppage at 15 factories in Durban - Defy, AECl, Romatex, Brazier and Son, Oerlikon, Resinkem, Wespeco and Turnall, Coates Brothers, Nine Feathers, van Dyck Carpets, Motor Assemblies, Sandock, Noggy Food, Hyperama and Texfin.

They obtained prior agreement from management for 5, 10 and 15 minute stoppages during working hours. However Saawu admitted they did not have accurate figures of the support given by workers or whether workers at these factories had participated.

GWU, new in the Durban dock area, described the stevedores participation in the Aggett work-stoppage as "partial and sporadic".

The Association of Distributive and Allied Workers (ADAW) took a decision on behalf of its affiliates - the National Union of Distributive Workers (NUDW), the National Union of Commercial Catering and Allied Workers (NUCCAW) and the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA), to support the stoppage in principle.

ADAW approached individual managements and was notified of their co-operation the day before the stoppage was scheduled.

Because of the shortness of time and organisational difficulties specific to shop workers, the three affiliates did not call on their members to stop work.

The United African Motor Workers Union, a CUSA affiliate, said it had organised stoppages at two motor garages, Vivor Motors and Grosvenor Motors. No work-stoppage occurred amongst workers from the other CUSA affiliates - the Chemical Workers Union, the Food and Beverage Workers Union (based in Maritzburg), and the Building Construction and Allied Workers Union.

There was also no stoppage organised by the FCWU, the African Workers Association and the National Federation of Workers (NFW).

The NFW described one exception at the SASKO Bakery in Mtubatuba where workers downed tools from 11.p.m on the Feb 10 until 5 am on the Feb 11. While shop stewards negotiated with management over the retrenchment of 16 workers the striking workers paid tribute to Neil Aggett.

LYNNE LAMBERT, Mar 12

We last held May Day in 1950

"It is the duty of every trade unionist to organise functions vigorously to ensure that every worker can celebrate May Day in one way or another together with his/her comrades in all parts of the world".

THE celebration of May Day as an international day of solidarity amongst workers originated in Australia in 1856.

Workers organised a day of a complete work stoppage together with meetings and entertainment as a demonstration in favour of an 8-hour day. It was initially planned as an isolated event, but it aroused workers to such an extent that it was decided to repeat the event annually.

By 1886 the idea of a mass worker demonstration had reached the US, where workers also demonstrated for an 8-hour day. Workers in America were prevented from organising similar demonstrations in following years because of police and legal harassment. However, in 1890 workers again planned a demonstration for May 1. The International Workers Congress decided in 1889 to use this same day as an international proletarian celebration and so demonstrations were held throughout Europe as well.

May Day commemorations are celebrated in different ways. The first protests were rallies where large gatherings of workers listened to speakers who demanded primarily shorter working hours. May Day has also been celebrated by marches where workers have proclaimed the day as theirs to do as they please.

Internationally, May Day has become a manifestation of international worker unity and solidarity. It is an event that unites workers who are atomised by the barriers and structures of capitalism and imperialism.

However, in America during the Cold War Labour Day was moved to September and May 1 became celebrated as Loyalty Day. This reflected the reformist and pro-imperialist nature of the organised US labour movements.

In South Africa from 1926 sections of the workforce were able to get May Day included as a workers' holiday in their industrial council agreements. In 1961 the Nationalist government began to curb this right by interfering with these agreements. The then Minister of Labour wrote to Sactu saying the following:

"I have to advise you that it is not government policy to approve of wage determinations and industrial council agreements which provide for May Day as a public holiday".

May Day was celebrated by the progressive trade unions during the 1930's and by the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) during the 1940's. In other parts of the world workers have often organised marches whereby their demands are articulated to the employers and to the state.

In South Africa the first such demonstration was organised by the African Federation of Trade Unions where white and black workers were brought together under the slogans 'We Want Bread' and 'Work for Wages'.

The most significant May Day event in South African history occurred in 1950. On Mar 26 the African Peoples' Organisation, in conjunction with the Transvaal branch of the ANC, CNETU, the Johannesburg District Communist Party and the Transvaal Indian Congress, convened a 'Defend Free Speech Convention' in Johannesburg. It was called to protest the proposed Suppression of Communism Act.

These organisations called for a one day stay away on May Day. This was to be the first time that the stay away tactic was used. This demonstration also supported higher wages and other worker demands.

The stay away was heeded by a substantial number of workers (approximately half of the workforce). This essentially peaceful protest turned to violence when police intervened in arguments between returning workers and boycotting workers, killing 19 workers and injuring 30.

Other demands called for over the years by South African workers have been the recognition of workers' rights to form and join trade unions of their choice, the abolition of pass laws and influx control, the right to strike, a national minimum wage, the abolition of discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of race and sex and included leave, sick leave, medical aid, unemployment and pension benefits.

By the late 1950's May Day ceased to be celebrated by South African workers as their unions were smashed by the state. To this day May Day has not again been celebrated by workers in South Africa on an organised basis, nor have workers' basic demands been met.

SIMON RATCLIFFE, JOHANNESBURG, April 1.

Up-date on detentions

SINCE Neil Aggett's death in detention on Feb 5, 1982, at least five detainees have been admitted to hospital. Two of these were trade union officials: Thozamile Gqweta (President of Saawu) and Sam Kikine (General Secretary of Saawu).

A third Saawu official, Eric Mntonga, from the East London branch, was reportedly admitted to hospital, but "neither the police nor the hospital spokesman had heard of him" (Rand Daily Mail, 1/3/82).

Thozamile Gqweta was first detained and held under the Terrorism Act on Dec 8 last year. On Feb 10, after 65 days in solitary confinement, he was admitted to a psychiatric ward of the Johannesburg General Hospital. After visiting him, his brother reported that he was "almost unrecognisable" (Mercury, 27/2/82) - he had difficulty in lifting his head, his eyes were bloodshot and he had problems with hearing.

Saawu issued a statement saying that Gqweta's detention "leaves much ground for suspicion regarding attempts by the police to crush the union" (Sunday Times, 21/2/82.)

On Mar 4, he was released together with 3 other detainees. He was immediately redetained in the Ciskei but released later the same day.

Sam Kikine was admitted to St Augustine's Hospital, Durban, on Feb 24 for psychiatric treatment. He had been in detention since Nov 26.

He was placed under police guard but allowed visits by close family and an Anglican Priest. Questioned about Kikine's condition, Brig J R van der Hoven, head of the Security Police in Durban said "it is for the doctors and myself to discuss" (Mercury, 27/2/82).

Kikine was discharged from hospital on Mar 10 on condition that he not be detained in solitary confinement. He was taken back to police headquarters, C R Swart Square.

These incidents have sparked off demands from Detainees Support Committees for detainees to have access to doctors of their own or their families' choosing. The Johannesburg committee set up an independent panel of doctors and requested that they be allowed to see detainees. This request was turned down by the State.

In a related development, the South African Psychological Association has warned that the State would have to take note of the psychological consequences of indefinite detention and solitary confinement. The Association also called on the Ministers of Justice and Police "to view statements made by detainees in the same light as statements made under physical duress", since "symptoms shown by detainees were the same as those shown by mentally disturbed people" (Rand Daily Mail, 2/3/82).

The assault on the independent trade union movement by detention of union leaders continues. Mary Ntseke, General Secretary of the General and Allied Workers Union (Gawu) and two Gawu members, Elliot Shabangu and Solly Pholotho were detained in Johannesburg on Mar 2. Shabangu and Pholotho were released on Mar 5 while Mary Ntseke was released on Mar 10.

Matthews Oliphant, the general secretary of the National Federation of Workers and Magwaza Maphalalo, the national organiser were detained in Natal on Mar 13. Maphalalo was released after questioning on Mar 15 whereas Oliphant was transferred to John Vorster Square in Johannesburg.

At the end of March, a number of people were released from detention, including Liz Floyd. She had been detained since Nov 26, and had been hospitalised during her long spell in detention. Liz Floyd was working for the Industrial Aid Society at the time of her detention.

At least eight of those recently released have been served with banning orders. These include four unionists from the Eastern Cape: Dumile Makanda, Zandile Mjuzawa, Siphon Pityana and Maxwell Madlingozi. Pityana was an organiser of the General Workers Union of South Africa (Gwusa) and the other three were all Macwusa officials.

NOTE: Merle Favis, the South African Labour Bulletin's managing editor, was released from detention on 21/4/82 after being held in solitary confinement since Nov 27 1981.

STOP PRESS: Thozamile Gqweta was redetained (for the seventh time) on May 5. He and two other SAAWU trade unionists, Sisa Njikelana and Sam Kikine, appeared in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court on May 6 charged under the Terrorism Act. The case was remanded to May 28. All three were refused bail. (Natal Mercury 7/5/82).

DETAINEES SUPPORT COMMITTEE, DURBAN, Mar 15

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SWAZI LABOUR MARKET 1900 - 1968

Alan Booth

In the growing body of literature on African labour history of the past decade, Swaziland has figured hardly at all. The reason, no doubt, lies in the numbers. No more than 4 per cent - often less - of mine labour in the Witwatersrand's catchment area was of Swazi origin. Nor did the Swazi distinguish themselves in other ways - as expert shaft sinkers, for instance, or as troublemakers. It is the purpose of this paper to shed some light on the Swazi labour market and its development, and to show that, numbers aside, its study can yield some useful findings. This is especially true of the post-World War I twentieth century, when locally, in response to capital penetration, a competitive market for Swazi labour was created which no government or monopoly was able to regulate to its satisfaction. It was a market in which wage structures and working conditions became bargainable items in the attraction of labour, employers' efforts notwithstanding, and contrary to the colonial state's early design.

A further aim of this paper is to suggest that the relative

neglect of research in Swaziland stems from its simple categorisation as one of the BLS Territories - an oversimplification that has led to some mistaken assumptions and inappropriate comparisons. What has been overlooked is the significance of settler capital penetration dating back to mineral-era South Africa, which has largely determined the character of the labour market from the earliest days, making Swaziland more reminiscent of Charles van Onselen's Rhodesia than of its designated sister states, Lesotho and Botswana.

A detailed study of the Swazi labour market merits attention for several reasons. First, there is no clearer example of a calculated and meticulously planned strategy for land deprivation and surplus extraction aimed at proletarianization by a colonial state in early 20th century Africa. That it did not succeed as planned had as much to do with the changing nature of European settlement and capital penetration as anything else.

Second, African labour history is replete with examples of work forces coerced into labouring for wages and under conditions decreed by capital and enforced by the state. Recent research has focussed on the emergence of worker consciousness attendant to class formation, and patterns of resistance that followed. In Swaziland the case was quite different. There, competition for labour between local and foreign capital, and within the country between British and South African capital, created a market which the Swazi played with increasing shrewdness for better wages and conditions. This phenomenon was most notable during the post-war labour shortages of the late 1940's and early 1950's, but its roots stretch back to the turn of the century. It meant, among other things, that the development of worker consciousness and resistance patterns emerging in post-war Swaziland reflected the position of relative leverage enjoyed by the labour force. And one really needs, finally, to view the development of Swazi cash cropping and cattle marketing against the backdrop of the changing forces driving the labour market.

What literature there is on Swazi labour history revolves

almost entirely around the period 1888-1930, when the land was concessioned away by a beguiled king Mbandzeni, the concessions (some overlapping four deep) were confirmed, disputed, and confirmed again (that time for good) by the British colonial state; and the Swazi were expelled from two-thirds of their lands in 1914. A series of dissertations trace these developments. Philip Bonner's dissertation gives the definitive interpretation of the concessions. (1) Two other unpublished works, by Balam Nyeko and Francis Mashasha, carry elements of the story up to the Great Depression. (2) Jonathan Crush deals with the early phase of European settlement and capital penetration in a master's thesis, portions of which have been published. (3) Martin Fransman's dissertation traces the themes of class formation, worker consciousness, and resistance throughout the trans-independence period. (4) Literature is being produced by anthropologists, sociologists and economists which deals mainly with the effects of labour migrancy on recent social change in Swaziland. (5)

Research for this paper, as yet incomplete, draws from the literature mentioned and from archival sources in Swaziland and South Africa. The most notable of these include the Swaziland National Archives at Lobamba, the archives of the Native Recruiting Corporation (hereafter, NRC) at the TEBA offices in Siteki, and the Allister Miller papers at the Killie Campbell Library in Durban.

European settler influence and capital penetration may be said to have commenced in the early 1980's, when gold was discovered in northwest Swaziland. This led to an immediate inflow of concession-seekers, largely British. It was they who dealt so cleverly and decisively with Mbandzeni, in the absence of effective administrative control of Swaziland by either the British or the Transvaal governments. During the king's final years (1887-1889) the concessions were granted promiscuously - so much so that two commissions were established to verify and to sort them out, one in 1890, and the second (and crucial) one in 1904, after the establishment of British colonial rule. Martin Fransman categorises the European concessionaries into three types:

- 1) Mining and (to a lesser extent) mercantile and agricultural interests, mainly British.
- 2) Grazing and (to a lesser extent) farming interests, mostly Afrikaner of Transvaal origins.
- 3) Concession and land speculators, of both nationalities.

Fransman and Jonathan Crush describe in admirable fashion the activities and Report (1907) of the Concessions Commission, which awarded two-thirds of the land to the concessionaires, and there is no need to re-cover that ground here. (7) Two or three points may be added for interest's sake. First, the Concessions Commission was staffed and charged so as to predetermine the outcome. The Commission had been established in 1904 by the British High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, whose intent was to "deal with Swaziland as nearly as possible on the same lines as an ordinary district of the Transvaal".(8)

Milner consequently placed, as head of the Commission, Johannes Smuts, the Registrar of Deeds of the Transvaal. (9) A second Commission member was W.H. Gilfillan, Surveyor-General of the Transvaal; and a third, J.C. Krough, who, as special Commissioner for Swaziland when it had been under Transvaal administration (1884-1889), had imposed a tax on the Swazi so burdensome as to accomplish his object of "induc(ing) the natives to work". (10) Smuts himself, who had served as British Consul in Swaziland during those same years, had advocated a "gentle compulsion or incentive (to labour) such for instance as the admirable Glen Grey Act of the Cape Colony, (as) in the best interests of the natives themselves".(11)

Thus it should come as no surprise that the first outline of the Commission's "findings" later announced in the 1907 Land Proclamation, had been despatched over two years beforehand by the new British High Commissioner, Lord Selborne, to the Colonial Office (12).

A major consideration in floating the 1907 Proclamation seems to have been, as Crush summarizes, a fear of Swazi rising, possibly joining with the Zulu, if the land expropriation were

overly cruel in timing or degree. So, Selborne reported to the Colonial Secretary, the Swazi would be granted just enough land to ward off "serious trouble"; (13) and the actual expulsion of the Swazi would be delayed for five years, so that "their imagination would not be confronted with the sudden loss of rights over great tracts of Swaziland". (14) The Colonial Secretary himself (Lord Elgin) furthered the ruse by assuring the Swazi protest deputation despatched to London by the Queen Regent that enough of the Government-withheld Crown Lands would be forthcoming to the Swazi so that "it is not too much to say that half the land will be in (Swazi) occupation".(15)

A second point concerns the nature of the capital penetration, to whose interests the Government was responding. Swaziland's economic potential was considered, until roughly the time of the First World War, to have been in minerals (principally gold and tin); and the extraction of minerals was almost totally under the control of British capital. A close look at the delineation of the post - 1907 land settlement shows a massive bias in favor of those mining interests. Afrikaner grazing and farming capital was provided for, to be sure, and a fair amount of the better farmland fell into the Native Areas. But the requirements of mining - which was both a labour-intensive and water-intensive undertaking, were provided for before all else.

Labour was provided for by ensuring that the Native Areas (numbering 32 in all) would not support their human and cattle population for more than a few years at best, and not at all in a few cases. It was Allister Miller, an original concessionaire, adviser to Mbandzeni, entrepreneur nonpareil, publisher of the Times of Swaziland, and trusted confidante of both Selborne and Milner before him, who had articulated the European settler case for Swazi proletarianization. "We hope", he wrote to Selborne in 1906, "that the native settlement will be so devised that it will pave the way to (European) tenure and responsibility and the denationalization of the Swazis....." "If these people are to be saved", he went on, "it is my opinion that they must be forced

..... from the exclusiveness of tribal life....(which) is enabling the idler to live in idleness"....."We believe that if the native is provided with sufficient land to meet the requirements of the present and next generation he will be amply accomodated". (16)

Miller's plan, as carried out, proved even more effective than devised in driving the Swazi to labour. George Grey, selected by Selborne to delineate the Native Areas, outlined his intent to the High Commissioner in drawing the boundaries. Gold and tin, and the water to mine them, were left in British hands. The most desirable grazing (sweet veld, grazable the year around) went to the British as well. What was more, huge tracts of the finest grazing and farmland were held out from the settlement as "Crown Lands" - for future European settlement and control. (17)

"We have been thrown back from our gardens amongst stones," (18) the chiefs complained, but poor quality of the land was only compounded by its insufficiency. Everyone knew that, in Allister Miller's words, "native communes are doubling their population every 25 years". (19) Grey's delineation provided for only enough land, at those rates of growth, to last until 1921. What is more, Grey was assuming in his calculations a "typical" Swazi family of seven persons possessing five head of cattle. But the latter figure was a massive underestimate, stemming from the cattle pandemic of the previous decade, which had killed off no less than 90 per cent of the Swazi herds.

So by the time of the Pim Report (1932), the Native Areas had become overpopulated, and were subject to "serious overstocking and erosion", with a cattle count not 5/7ths of the human population, but 2½ times as great. (20) By World War II, British medical officers were reporting the greatest rates of child malnutrition and attendant disease in those same areas - the Native Areas situated in the south and west of the country. (21) Those same areas would become the greatest generators of labour outmigration in subsequent years.

Water was secured, also, to European mining and (later) farming interests at the expense of the Native Areas, by provision

of the Swaziland Water Proclamation (No. 11 of 1910), both for current use and future growth. By the mid 1920's the European Advisory Council (a settler lobbying group) was complaining of a "precarious" water situation in the south - the same region of the greatest Native Area underdevelopment. A 1927 Government report asserted: (22)

"Many of the water courses in Swaziland which formerly were perennial are now dry except in the wet season, and many streams cease to flow except in the summer months".

Consequently, on July 1, 1914, the Swazi were expelled from the lands which they had historically claimed as theirs. Perhaps an eighth of them - 20,000 by one estimate - remained on the lands of the new European owners, as tenants. (23) The remainder were removed to the Native Areas which, by design, would not support them for very long, if at all. All were taxed at the highest rates of any "native" population in Southern Africa. (24) Thus were the foundations of the labour market laid by the colonial state.

Let us now turn to the development of that market. Earliest records indicate some Swazi workseekers at Kimberley as early as the 1880's - how many we do not know. Most early (1890's) outmigration was a good deal more localized - to the gold and tin mines in northwestern Swaziland, and across the border to the Barberton gold mines, as well as the first of the market farms in the eastern Transvaal and northern Natal. The first significant Swazi numbers migrated to the rand mines after 1902, in order, it is said, to earn the money to replenish cattle herds decimated by rinderpest and East Coast Fever during the preceding decade. (25)

Certain features distinguish the early migrations, which would remain relatively constant throughout the twentieth century. First was the pattern of government inducement / coercion which constituted a principal "push factor" to outmigration. F. Enraght-Moony in his first report as Special Commissioner for Swaziland (1903) remarked on the reluctance of the Swazi to enter the "labour markets", and on the "effortsbeing made to overcome this". That heavy taxation was one of the measures was evident from the

relentless government response to Swazi complaints over taxes: there was plenty of work in the mines. (26) And in spite of Lord Elgin's assurances, no Crown Lands became available to relieve Swazi overcrowding in the Native Areas, save one parcel of 14,000 morgen, sold in 1914 to help soften the blow of a new tax increase. (27) (No significant sales of Crown Lands to the Swazi nation occurred until the World War II era).

A second feature was the pattern of response to these pressures by the Swazi monarchy itself: the encouragement of migrancy, and even participation in its recruitment. Most often this seems to have been done in order to finance the purchasing back of concessioned lands, but that was not always the case.

In 1899 King Bhunu awarded J.J. Grobler a 15 year concession granting him the exclusive right to recruit labour in Swaziland. (28) In 1905, 1907, 1909 and 1914, the Queen Regent (Labotsibeni) and her son, Prince Malunge, encouraged men to "go out" to the mines in order to earn the money to repurchase expropriated lands. Levies were variously set at £3 and £5 per head - the latter figure amounting to one quarter of an annual mine wage. (29) There was also a contract allegedly signed by the Queen Regent's advisor, Josiah Vilikazi, to supply 5,000 men to Witwatersrand mines for a capitation fee of £2 per head, to raise revenue for some litigation in connection with a cancelled royal concession. (30) And there was an alleged agreement between Malunge and Swaziland Tin, Ltd. (1906), whereby the prince was to supply 500 labourers to the company for a fee of 10/- per head. (31) Records indicate that royal involvement in support of labour recruiting continued until at least the late 1940's, when the Paramount Chief was still calling meetings to assist Native Recruiting Corporation (hereafter, NRC) activities, no doubt in the belief that such support benefitted the society as a whole. (32)

A third constant was the competition between local and foreign (South African) capital for Swazi labour. Some time before he was replaced as High Commissioner (1905), Milner met with representatives of the Swaziland Chamber of Mines and Industry, notably

Allister Miller and David Forbes. Among the topics discussed were methods by which to retain labour within the Swaziland borders (The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association - "Wenela" - having placed an agent in Mbabane as early as 1903). Miller wanted a tax rebate granted to labour which stayed in the country, to alleviate the short supply of labour which "began to fall off in 1898". Presumably the 1907 Proclamation and the subsequent Swazi expulsion obviated the need for that. (33)

The labour which Miller, Forbes and Milner had in mind was originally destined for the local mines - tin at Havelock and gold at Forbes Reef; but as hopes for big mineral strikes receded by the time of World War I, British capital interests shifted to farming and cattle ranching. The Swaziland Corporation, headed by Miller, established Ubombo Ranches in the east, and implemented the Mushroom Land Settlement Scheme which (along with the post-war Returned Soldier's Settlement Scheme) was designed to populate the concessions and Crown Lands with a "desirable class" (i.e. British, not Afrikaner) of settler.

The colonial state fully cooperated in that effort. Given the conditions created by the land partition, there ought to have been plenty of labour. In 1914, settler-farmers entered into written or informal contracts with those Swazi who after July 1 were to become disowned, to remain on the land in return for labour. A typical arrangement called for 6 months' labour for each adult male at 10/- per month. Transvaal farmers holding grazing concessions in Swaziland commonly required the labour to be performed on their farms in the Union. An occasional farmer required a male or two per family to contract themselves to the rand mines, with the capitation fee (commonly £2 per head) reverting to him. Those refusing the terms, or who were not required as farm labour, were removed to the Native Areas, by state force if necessary, thus in theory becoming available for local mine work.(34)

It was a tidy scheme - what Selborne had referred to as "farming kaffirs" (35) - perfectly suited for what the Swaziland Corporation had in mind for its vast farm holdings, cotton

production and, later, tobacco. But theory and practice did not coincide, for aggressive labour recruiters from the Witwatersrand (dominated by British capital as well) moved in and, unopposed by the Government, soaked up available labour. "A battalion of labour recruiters from South Africa has invaded," complained a frustrated Allister Miller in 1910, "and disorganised the local labour supply". (36) Various remedies - short of raising wages - were proposed by local capital, some of which they persuaded the colonial state to adopt. Farmers insisted on written contracts with tenants, which placed the latter under provisions of the Master and Servants Law (Transvaal Law No. 13 of 1880, in force in Swaziland until 1961), which provided for harsh penalties for infractions. Farmers proposed that the Government require 2 months' notice before a squatter could relinquish tenancy. (37) A measure was adopted preventing attestation for labour outside Swaziland of any male whose tax receipt was endorsed as employed by a local enterprise. (38) Petitions were made - and rejected - which would have reduced taxes paid by local farm labour, and (since farms and mines were resorting increasingly to the employment of child labour) denying travelling passes to workseekers under age 18. (39) Ultimately local capital turned for its solution to importing labour itself - Mozambican labour ("clandestines"), which poured across the border seeking better conditions. "We do not anticipate any difficulty in getting raw hands to pick cotton", reported the Swaziland Corporation to its shareholders in 1907; "...there will be an inexhaustible supply as women from Portuguese Tongaland would readily cross over the border to participate in the picking". The Mozambique Labour Convention of 1909 theoretically had made the recruitment of any but Witwatersrand-destined mine labour illegal, but under the colonial state's blind eye the flow of clandestines never abated until the 1960's in Swaziland. (40)

The Swaziland government responded only selectively to local capital's demands for labour, because it was answerable to the needs of South African capital as well. Wenela, established to recruit "tropical" labour in Mozambique and the territories north of

22° south, operated in Swaziland from at least 1913. The Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC), incorporated in 1912 to recruit in South Africa and in the British High Commission Territories, leased its first tract of land for a recruiting office in Mbabane in 1913. (41) By the 1920's the NRC operation became well established, its headquarters at Stegi administering the activities of a dozen or some storeowners / recruiters in or near the Native Areas, who worked for capitation fees and who in turn employed "native runners" to frequent the cattle dips and beer drinks looking for likely prospects. Recruiters and runners worked particularly the most of underdeveloped Native Areas in Swaziland where the labour outflow was always the greatest, in south and west, and also the growing population centers of Mbabane and Bremersdorp (later Manzini).

Stegi was, in addition, responsible for recruiters in northern Natal (Maputa and Ingwavuma) and the eastern Transvaal (Piet Retief). It was also the headquarters for the Wenela operation in southern Mozambique, providing an alternative to the heavy flow of labour through the main attestation point at Ressano Garcia. Stegi "output" from all these sources, the exact composition of which awaits further research, averaged between 3,500 and 6,500 recruits annually up until World War II. (42)

Pressure to cease the flow of clandestines to local farms and industries came not so much from the Government after the 1920's as it did from the NRC/Wenela headquarters at Stegi. That office ultimately entered an arrangement with the colonial state whereby the clandestines were rounded up, and either repatriated or delivered to the NRC for attestation to the Witwatersrand. (43) That practise was in fact a variant of one used traditionally by the state to funnel labour to the NRC elsewhere in Swaziland, which involved periodic police sweeps for tax defaulters, who were brought before magistrates and given the choice of a jail sentence (hence convict labour) or a NRC contract. (44) It became standard practice, in fact, for NRC recruiters to frequent tax collection camps, where they paid men's taxes and / or fines as a recruiting device. (45)

In this manner a class of migrant labour was produced in Swaziland, men signing on for six, eight, a dozen or more 6-month mine tours in a career, before "retiring" to labour less dangerous and demanding, and closer to home, on plantations or (after 1938) the new asbestos mine at Havelock. (46) Swazi homesteads on farms or in Native Areas were preserved intact by means of delegating one or two sons to a mine career, leaving the family predominantly agricultural (though less productive).

If one looks at the total market numbers in Swaziland just before the Second World War, a picture emerges which is substantially different from the one which perceives the Swazi as only 3 to 4 per cent of the rand mine rosters. In 1936 the NRC sent 7,852 Swazi labourers to the mines. Another 4,824 Native Travelling Passes (NTP's) were issued to those "seeking work on own accord" - contracts and a choice of mines. (47) Another 3,711 NTP's were issued to "visiting and private", a category for the most part seeking work on farms and in wattle plantations in the eastern Transvaal, as domestics, or as cane cutters in Natal. The total (which does not include the unknown hundreds - thousands, possibly - who slipped across the border illegally rather than pay the one - shilling NTP fee) amounts to 67 per cent of the male working population which left the country to seek work that year. (48) By 1939, the year of the war, another 6,300 men were employed in-country by local capital. It is therefore no mystery why Swaziland, a surplus food producer until the cattle pandemics of the mid-1890's, became a chronic grain importer during the twentieth century. (49)

World War II brought substantial changes to the Swaziland labour market. A contingent of Swazi went off to war, nearly 4,000 strong, as the African Pioneer Corps. (50) That did not reduce the numbers going off to the mines, which, from NRC figures, averaged upwards of 10,000 to 14,000 during those years. The figures were reflective of two factors: Swazi loyalty to the Allied cause, no doubt; and a 24 per cent increase in wages on the Witwatersrand during the war years. In fact, the great worry in the High

Commission Territories was that the Pioneer Corps was siphoning off not mine labour as much as food producers. (51) That it affected farm labour in Swaziland there was no doubt; the Swaziland Farmers' Association, citing a crippling labour shortage, tried to induce the Government to restrict all recruiting licenses, and to stop labour outmigration except to the gold mines, petitions which were denied. It may have been at this point that the tried and true settler-farmer pattern of restricting labour mobility rather than raising farm wages broke down, although there is no way of knowing for sure. (52)

Whatever the specific of that, three developments set the post-war labour market in Swaziland apart from the earlier period: the development of wage competition resulting from massive capital penetration; the growth of worker consciousness; and the beginnings of labour resistance.

Initially, as in the previous era, the new capital was predominantly British. An ambitious irrigation scheme was capitalized by the Colonial (later Common-wealth) Development Corporation (hereafter, CDC), which added sugar, citrus, and (eventually) rice to the cultivation of cotton and tobacco as important irrigated crops. The CDC and Barclays Bank underwrote the first commercial timber schemes in the north, later to be bought out by the Anglo-American Corporation. (53) During the 1960's and 1970's, South African, Japanese, Taiwanese and American capital added mining, food processing, light manufacturing, and retail industries. All transformed the political economy of Swaziland, and reshaped its labour market.

Wages had been successfully excluded from the arena of labour competition in Swaziland. Farm wages, 20/- per month maximum in 1917, rose to 30/- per month in the 1920's, only to fall back during the Depression. (54) The Witwatersrand mines had actually reduced wages between the wars, from £36 per annum to £33 per annum, substituting something far more effective in luring recruits: the "advance". (55) Introduced into Swaziland by 1923, the advance provided work-seekers £5 cash to pay taxes, fines, debts to

storekeepers (many of whom doubled as recruiters), and family expenses, the money to be repaid during the contracted mine work. It was an enormously effective recruiting tool, enough so that the local farmers attempted to have it outlawed. (56) Only in 1939 was rand mine compensation adjusted in any fashion - that being when the Chamber of Mines commenced paying rail fares for recruiters, in response to pressure from the International Labour Organisation. (57) The NRC did, however, offer handsome incentives to its recruiters (30/- per recruit in early days, up to a maximum of £2.5.0 per head after the war), and recruiters in turn paid capitation fees to their runners averaging 5/- per recruit. (58)

The substantial NRC output thus generated (16,000, including Mozambicans via Stegi in 1954) was compounded, in its pressure on the local labour supply, by the increasing demands of local industry, and by corresponding requirements from an expanding South African industry. Recruiting for South African coal mines, begun as a war measure, was institutionalized with the post-war establishment of two recruiting organizations, Anglo-American (Witbank Collieries), and the Natal Coal Owners' Labour Organisation (NCOLA). (59) The burgeoning Transvaal wattle industries, and the sisal and sugar plantations at Pongola and to the South in Natal, scooped up even more surplus labour. (60) In Swaziland, timber became voracious in its labour requirements - Peak Timbers alone planting 60,000 acres of trees and building 750 miles of roads during the late 1940's and early 1950's. (61) Irrigation canals and construction projects added to the demand.

The resulting picture of the labour scene that emerges belies the traditional image of a compliant "native" labour force responding to the dictates of colonial capital. Company vehicles from timber and sugar estates toured the (southern) lowveld region - where "surplus" population remained most concentrated - engaging labour and returning it on weekends. The Transvaal wattle industry began to pay advances, and the NRC recruiters at Piet Retief began embussing recruits in order to escape the "wattle estate gauntlet." The NCOLA used miner's phthisis as an arguing point against the

NRC. Usutu forests, caught up in its own planting scheme, petitioned the NRC to send over its rejects. Local industries began paying capitation fees to Swazi storehands - 10/- twice what the NRC paid its runners - to produce recruits. They also took to paying the fines of clandestines arrested at the Mozambique border and hiring them on. Labour competition by 1952 had become, in NRC Superintendent Whittle's words, "phenomenal". (62)

The Swazi response to these new conditions was to become very selective in their choice of employment. What became most apparent to recruiters was a strong local desire to labour close to home - a willingness, even, to accept lower wages if necessary to do so. Local industry complied. Timber built new quarters for its labour which, in Whittle's opinion, were "certainly better than that which the raw Swazi is accustomed to at home". One timber concern began building accommodations for workers' families on site, most of them added recreational facilities and improved the quality of the food; all of them bussed workers home on weekends. (63) Local industries, an exasperated Superintendent Whittle informed his superiors, were underworking and "overpay(ing) their Natives". "The Swazi", he complained, "is most independent - he has plenty to choose from and sells his labour where and when he wishes". (64)

Initially, settler farmers responded to this new evidence of worker consciousness in the tried and true manner, bringing pressure to bear on the colonial state, and on "their" labourers. They petitioned the Government to cancel licenses of all recruiters, local and South African, except essential gold mine representatives. They urged it to enforce that section of the Master and Servants Law which made offering higher wages and benefits a criminal offence. (65) To labour they showed the mailed fist. They warned their farmworkers that if they took up mining employment, their families would be "victimised" in their absence. They mis-endorsed passes, preventing their men from being attested at the border. They shanghaied hitchhikers by day, and they crossed borders and "poached" labour in the dead of night. (66)

Still, labour made itself scarce to undesirable employment. "The Natives" Whittle reported to Johannesburg, "select the type of employment they fancy at times to suit their convenience". (67) Farmers took to frequenting cattle dips with their automobiles, offering to employ labour and return the men home, sometimes transporting entire families to and from work each day. (68)

Local industry was able to bring more effective pressure to bear on the colonial state by virtue of its dominance of the European Advisory Council (since 1922 a powerful influence on the colonial government), and the Chamber of Commerce and Industries. In 1949 it persuaded the state to decree a policy of differential advances: local industry was permitted to offer £5; "outside" industries (including the NRC and Anglo-American / NCOLA) were allowed to advance only £3. It was enough to drive out the coal recruiters, eventually, but NRC output dropped not at all. The reason was wages; for the first time since the war the Chamber of Mines raised its basic wage 12/6- to £4 per month, a full 10 per cent. (69)

So began a spiral of wage increases in every industry operating and / or recruiting in Swaziland, that lasted from 1949 until well into the 1970's. Timber wages rose from 2/3- per day in 1947 to £1/10- per day in 1976. The basic wage on the Witwatersrand during the same period rose from 5/- per day to £1/5- daily. In 1953 the NRC introduced a bonus scheme to compensate runners for increased output, and it lowered the contract length of a mine tour to 6 months. (70) Local industry responded with increased pay and shorter (as little as 2 month) contracts, using the old lure of the large advance differential over the NRC to full advantage. "These short contracts with big advances", Whittle reported with a discernible sense of pain, "are tying up a lot of available labour". (71)

The answer was to make other labour available. To ease the crisis, local industry turned more and more to imported labour, and to the employment of women and children. There are only hints of the numbers involved. Havelock mines were employing Mozambicans

and Nyasans as from 70 to 80 per cent of their labour force by the late 1940's. In the mid-1960's, there were at least 5,000 Mozambicans employed in Swaziland, mostly as cane cutters and farm labourers, performing work which the Swazi men shunned. (72) Peak Timbers during its planting and road building years used women and children as 60 per cent of its work force - without whom it could not have carried out its program. (73)

It is important to bear in mind that what colonial officials and recruiters were seeing during those years as Swazi laziness and sloth was, in fact, the beginnings of a sense of discrimination with which a workforce, becoming conscious of itself and of its new options, was making its selections of employment. "It often happens that a new place of employment attracts labour", Whittle explained to Johannesburg, "as the Native likes to 'try it out' to see how it compares with mining work and pay, etc." Usutu Forests was a perennial bridesmaid to the NRC in the recruiting business because timber work was unpleasant in cold, wet weather, and because it acquired a reputation for low pay and poor living conditions. The Company, Whittle wrote, "only obtained the 'left-overs' from the N.R.C.....Men go to Usutu, and when they find that there is only forest work (instead of mill work), they desert". (74)

Swazi workers also figured out how to play the "advance game" deftly, by soliciting the £5 advance from one timber company after another, deserting after a day's work at each, working the sugar estates on the lowveld in the same manner before skipping off to Johannesburg with the NRC. Companies were so desperate for labour they would not surrender the malefactors when identified; that became the task of the Swaziland and the South African Police. (75)

One other aspect of labour market consciousness bears mentioning here, although the writer's research for it remains sketchy. Swazi workers, like other workforces through Southern Africa (consistent with the design of mining capital), retained their roles as homesteaders as a source of supplementary income. The traditional cattle economy was made more liquid after 1945 when the Government established a series of cattle auctions throughout the

country. The Swazi became more adept at what they had always been proficient in, the management of cattle as an investment. There came to be a connection between the marketing of cattle and job seeking, the details of which require further research; but cattle appear to have become a source of income which became a conscious alternative to unacceptable work conditions. Prudent investment in, and shrewd marketing of cattle provided the wherewithal for, among other undertakings, avoiding work which was considered unremunerative, unpleasant, demeaning, or dangerous. Initial research indicates a negative correlation between cattle prices and NRC output. Certainly the recruiters were convinced of that. This is all the more intriguing because there does not seem to be a correlation of any significance between, say, crop failure or droughts, and NRC output.

The beginnings of labour resistance in Swaziland can thus be seen in the ways in which the workforce played the market conditions, for the best rewards in wages and conditions, withholding their labour altogether if necessary, other means of support being available. But the acute labour shortage which gave these relative advantages to Swazi workmen lasted only until the early 1960's. Slackening of the labour market, a result of population growth and a levelling off of capital investment, led companies at that time to withdraw concessions previously granted in order to attract labour, and to enforce more strictly the existing regulations. Timber companies cracked down on absenteeism, while the NRC reverted to the unpopular 9-month contract.

The Swazi labourer responded to these developments by unionizing (locally, where he could), and by staging a series of strikes and job actions throughout 1963 and 1964. The most notable unrest occurred at the Big^{Bend}/sugar complex, serious enough that a British army contingent was flown in to restore order, remaining in Swaziland until 1968. Although the state, backed by the monarchy, suppressed unionism thereafter, overt labour resistance continued on for another two years, and continued less discernibly well after

independence in 1968. (76)

Conclusion

What strikes the researcher in the study of the Swazi labour market, in contrast to, say, the Basotho experience, is the galvanic effect which free market forces can have on worker consciousness and perceptive response. On the subject of labour history, it is almost as if there were two Swazilands pre-and post-1945. Before the war, the removal of the Swazi from the means of production, and the extraction of their surplus at the hands of settler capital in league with the colonial state, reads like a textbook example of how it is correctly done. Royalty and chiefs, protesting, are suppressed, deceived, even humiliated, while their control over the pre-industrial economy and society is carefully preserved by the state. Peasants, thus impoverished, labour for settler farmers on settler terms, or go off to the mines under mineowners' conditions. What competition there develops between local and Transvaal mining capital is adjudicated by the colonial state for the benefit of all - save the Swazi labourer.

Post-1945, massive capital penetration replaced this relatively comfortable accommodation with conditions of harsh competition for labour gone scarce, which the worker, once alerted, parlayed with shrewdness and skill to his own benefit. Only when labour once again became plentiful in the early 1960's did labour manipulation of the market (a form of resistance) turn into more discernible patterns of opposition, unionization and strikes. The degree to which local industry turned to female and child labour, and foreign (notably Mozambican) workers, is one indication of the volatility of the market of which the Swazi took advantage.

Furthermore, one gets the feeling (though this requires further research) that worker consciousness produced by these conditions was but one dimension of family consciousness. Family survival was subjected to many threats in twentieth-century Swaziland, both natural and man-made. The array of defenses which the family

erected, the solutions it chose, involved decisions on work, crops, cattle, conflicting loyalties, and a host of other considerations. Family survival in the 1950's may have dictated, for example, that the father remained behind on the homestead to maximize crop productivity while the wife and children went off to Usutu to plant trees. Homestead productivity was a far greater consideration among the Swazi than colonial officials gave them credit for: witness the legendary drought of 1964, which the NRC confidently expected to generate a heavy output. Exactly the opposite happened: the 9-month contract so threatened Swazi productivity that men stayed home, ploughed greater acreages, and sold off their cattle in order to survive.(77)

Research on family history will provide useful information about how a semi-proletarianized society responded to the challenges and the opportunities provided by the post-1945 labour market conditions, what family priorities were, and how they were met. There is need for further research also on what factors generated what types of workseeking. That will require extensive quantification and analysis of data, but hopefully we can thereby arrive at some helpful conclusions on correlations amongst agricultural productivity, labour output, and social change, in a post-war Southern African labour market where elements of choice actually existed - and, for a while, flourished.

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- 19 Miller to Malcom, 21 December 1906, *op. cit.*
- 20 Sir A. Pim, "Report of the Commission Appointed By the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Inquire Into the Position of Swaziland from the Financial and Economic Points of View", London, HMSO, 1932.
- 21 B.T. Squires, M.D., "Report on the Nutritional Status of Swazi Children", 1945; Dr. S. Selby, "Report on the Nutritional Condition of Swazi Children", 1945, File 986, SNA.
- 22 Heilbronn, "Water Laws", pp. 4-5; Miller Papers, MS Mil 1 08 2 (MSS 184F and 404B). KCL. By 1927 water was being diverted far more for irrigated farming than for mining purposes.
- 23 Lord Harlech, High Commissioner (hereafter, HC), to C.L. Bruton, RC, (Secret), 20 January 1942, RCS 434/41, SNA.
- 24 Selborne to Elgin, 14 May 1906, J/06, SNA.
- 25 "Report on Swaziland", 18 September 1903, J50/1904, SNA; interview, Maboya Fakudze, Lobamba, Swaziland, 2 November 1980.
- 26 Enraght-Moony to Queen Regent, 28 April 1903: "Let (the) young men go out to labour for money". J82/03 SNA; Milner to Queen Regent, 13 July 1904: ".....in South Africathere (is) always plenty of good work and good wages for natives". J138/05, SNA.
- 27 HC to RC, 2 April 1914, RCS 434/14, SNA. One morgen equals

- approximately two acres.
- 28 3 May 1899. § 7 A, SNA. The concession was later declared by the Government to have been automatically terminated upon the king's death.
 - 29 Enraght-Moony to R.T. Coryndon, 24 October 1905, J294/05; Enraght-Moony to Rodwell. Imperial Secretary, 18 January 1907, J13/07; R.T. Coryndon, RC, to Rodwell, 3 July 1909, D09/88; Assistant Commissioner (hereafter, AC), Hlatikulu, to Government Secretary, Mbabane, 29 April 1914, RCS 371/14, SNA.
 - 30 Correspondence and Telegrams (Confidential) between HC and RC, January 1907, J13/07, SNA.
 - 31 Correspondence between D. Honey, RC, and Swaziland Tin, Ltd., January - February 1915, RCS 100/15. SNA.
 - 32 F.A.L. Whittle, District Superintendent, NRC, to C.R. Latimer. Acting Government Secretary, 16 August 1948, RCS 404/42, SNA.
 - 33 Meeting notes, handwritten, J152/06; Enraght-Moony. "Notes on Swaziland", 18 September 1903, J50-04, SNA.
 - 34 AC, Hlatikulu, to Government Secretary, 29 April 1914, RCS 371/14; AC, Peak District to Government Secretary, 6 November 1914, RCS 854/14; RC to HC, 19 June 1915, RCS 277/15; Government Secretary to AC's, 28 May 1915, RCS 328/15, SNA.
 - 35 Selborne to Elgin, 29 October 1906, J220/06, SNA.
 - 36 Crush, "Swaziland Corporation", 187.
 - 37 Petition of Hlatikhulu Farmers' Association, October 1924, RCS 474/24; Honey to Prince Arthur of Connaught, HC, 20 January 1921, RCS 564/18, SNA. The High Commissioner refused the 2 months' notice provision. Prisoners convicted under the Master and Servants Law provided free labour to build roads, bridges, and other public works - in effect a form of state subsidy to the settler population.
 - 38 Miller to Government Secretary, 14 September 1915; Government Secretary to Miller, 25 September 1915, RCS 514/15, SNA.
 - 39 Petition of Hlatikulu Farmers' Association, September 1917, RCS 489/17; Petition of Hlatikulu Farmers' Association, 23 January 1919, RCS 92/19; Meeting, High Commissioner with Chiefs, Mbabane 12 March 1923, RCS 70-23, SNA.
 - 40 Crush, "Swaziland Corporation, "188-189; Government Secretary to AC's, 10 December 1928, File 1437, SNA.
 - 41 RCS 669/13. SNA.
 - 42 Ruth First et.al., The Mozambican Miner: A Study in the Export of Labour (1977), table between pp. 24 and 25.
 - 43 File 1437, SNA.
 - 44 Meeting of Senior Officials Mbabane, 29 July 1923, RCS 682-32, SNA.
 - 45 Swaziland Annual Report, 1913-1914; Monthly Report, Mbabane, April 1949, Native Recruiting Corporation Papers, Siteki, Swaziland (hereafter, NRC).
 - 46 In 1932 the mine contract administered by the RCS was increased to 9 months, which proved immediately and universally unpopular with the Swazi worker because it cut into the agricultural season, and hence reduced homestead productivity. Thus more and more Swazi opted to "go out" under the Assisted Voluntary Scheme (AVS) system, whereby a workseeker travelled to Johannesburg at his own expense, initially, but under a 6-month, or a 4-month contract, and sought out his own work from mines with openings there.
 - 47 Cf. fn. 46 above.
 - 48 Swaziland Annual Report, 1936; Swaziland Census, 1936. The Census category of "Mature males, 15-50 years" was adjusted to the more traditional age 18-45 definition of a "working male population" in order to arrive at this percentage.
 - 49 Pim Report (1932); Swaziland Annual Report, 1939. By 1939 the asbestos mine at Havelock was employing 2 000, half of whom were said to be Shangaan "clandestines". "Labour at Havelock Mine".

- 17 October 1938. Box 741a-770b. SNA.
- 50 File 302 (1941). SNA: J.S.M. Matsebuia. A History of Swaziland (1972). p. 105-107.
- 51 "Output" figures from NRC statistics. The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) office. Mbabane. Agent for the High Commission Territories to the Government Secretary, Maseru, Basutoland, 27 April 1942. RCS 416/42. SNA: Francis Wilson, Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911 - 1969 (1972). p. 46. As Wilson points out, in real terms, there was no wage increase at all.
- 52 Meeting of the Swaziland Farmers' Association with the RC, 16 October 1940. RCS 93/40; Special Meeting of the Swaziland Farmers' Association, 19 July 1941. RCS 404/42. SNA.
- 53 Interview. Robert P. Stevens. Piggs Peak, Swaziland, 15 June 1981.
- 54 HC's Visit to Swaziland, September 1917, RCS 489/17 and 493/17; RC to HC, 15 June 1923. RCS 440/23; Meeting of Chiefs, 30 March 1932. RCS 73/32. SNA.
- 55 AC Hlatikulu to Government Secretary, 11 September 1917, RCS 493/17; Agent for the High Commission Territories to Government Secretary, Maseru, Basutoland, 1 September 1942, RCS 512/42, SNA.
- 56 Honey to Cannaught, 15 June 1923, RCS 440/23; Meeting of European Advisory Council with RC, 30 September 1923, RCS 645/23. SNA.
- 57 W.H. Clark (HC) to C.L. Bruton (RC), 8 December 1939, RCS 433/37. SNA.
- 58 "Labour Conditions in Swaziland", 30 April 1954 and 21 January 1955. File 544; "Labour Conditions", 4 May 1949, File 919, SNA. Beginning in the late 1940's, the NRC moved away from the capitation fee system toward a force of salaried professional recruiters, partially to reduce costs, and partially to stop abuses by the traders/recruiters, which were being scrutinised by the ILO. Interview with F.A.L. Whittle, Johannesburg, South Africa, 23 June 1981.
- 59 NRC Output data, TEBA offices, Mbabane; Monthly Reports, Piet Retief, June 1948 and December 1950, NRC.
- 60 Annual Report, District Superintendent (F.A.L. Whittle), 1950, NRC.
- 61 Interview, Robert P. Stevens, Piggs Peak, Swaziland, 15 June 1981.
- 62 Monthly Reports: Mbabane, November 1948; Piet Retief, January 1950; Mbabane, December 1950; District Superintendent, June 1951 and September 1952, NRC.
- 63 Monthly Reports: District Superintendent, February 1951; Mbabane, March 1951, NRC.
- 64 Monthly Reports: District Superintendent, January and March 1953, NRC.
- 65 Special Meeting of the Stegi Farmers' Association, 11 March 1946, File 919, SNA.
- 67 Monthly Report, District Superintendent, May 1954, NRC.
- 68 Monthly Reports: Piet Retief, April 1953; District Superintendent, June 1954, NRC.
- 69 Whittle to Government Secretary, 12 May 1949, File 1735, SNA; Monthly Report, District Superintendent, October 1949, NRC.
- 70 Monthly Reports: District Superintendent, August 1947, July 1952, January 1953; Bremersdorp, April 1953; Mbabane, May 1976, NRC. The NRC adjusted its contract length as much as its wages offered, in order to effect elasticity of labour supply on the rand. It reintroduced the 9-month contract in 1961; reduced it to 6 months in 1965; and re-lengthened it again to 9 months in 1971.
- 71 Monthly Report, District Superintendent, June 1957, NRC.
- 72 "Foreign Natives in Swaziland", 1949, File 1437; "Foreign Labour in Swaziland", 14 June 1965, Secretariat Box 597, SNA.
- 73 Interview, Robert P. Stevens, Piggs Peak, Swaziland, 15 June 1981.

- 74 Monthly Reports, District Superintendent, October 1960 and July 1961, NRC.
- 75 Monthly Reports: Mbabane, March, April and August 1960; District Superintendent, June 1960, NRC. These and other activities constitute what Robin Cohen categorizes as "amplifying social distance and creating a work-culture", aspects of his "hidden forms of worker consciousness". Robin Cohen, "Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness Amongst African Workers", Review of African Political Economy, 19 (September - December 1980), 8-22.
- 76 Further research will establish the relationship between fluctuations in the labour market and the levels of labour resistance. The Government inquiry into the causes of the Big Bend disturbances affords some insight into the origins of this agitation, but labour resistance in Swaziland, as this paper attempts to make clear, can be traced back a lot further. Cf. especially Fransman, "The State and Development in Swaziland", chapter 4; Swaziland Government, Confidential Report of the Committee of Enquiry Into Unrest in Swaziland, 25th June-8th July 1963, Mbabane, 1963; Swaziland Government, Big Bend Strike: The Report of the Commission of Enquiry, Mbabane, 1963.
- 77 Monthly Reports, District Superintendent, May and June 1964, NRC.

LABOUR, CAPITAL AND THE STATE

IN SWAZILAND, 1962 - 1977

Martin Fransman

Foreign monopoly capital began to make its appearance in Swaziland in the 1950s. This implied a rapid socialisation of labour and consequently raised questions regarding the appropriate structures for regulating industrial relations. As Wilson, the Labour Secretary, put the matter in May 1961:

"The main problems (in dealing 'with labour problems associated with economic development') in which all others have their cause, are the rapid growth of a large permanent industrialised labour force, and the accompanying changes in the basic attitude to employment on the part of the Swazi workers. Gone are the days when all labour problems could be settled on the basis of a personal relationship between the employers and employee: the labour relations of the future will be dominated by mass attitudes. It is important therefore, that the law should provide a framework for peaceful industrial relations under these conditions, both by guaranteeing certain minimum standards

of employment conditions in order to minimise discontent, and by providing machinery for negotiation". (1)

Wilson was in fact commenting on the F.C. Catchpole Report On Labour Legislation In Swaziland that was released in May 1960 and constituted an attempt to modify labour relations institutions in the face of the growing socialisation of labour. The conditions of the working class were, as the Report pointed out, extremely bad. "The fixing of wage rates is at present the sole prerogative of employers and there is no machinery whatever for negotiating wages in any industry" (2) Although the Wage Determination Proclamation of 1937 (Cap. 123) enabled the Resident Commissioner, "where he has reason to think that the wages paid in any occupation are unduly low", to appoint with the approval of the High Commissioner a Board to report on the rates of wages and conditions of employment, to Catchpole's knowledge this enactment had never been used. (3) Furthermore, it was pointed out that there were no trade unions in Swaziland and only a few minor amendments were suggested to the Trade Union and Trade Disputes Proclamation No. 31 of 1942. Catchpole concluded that:

"There have been no industrial disputes in the territory and there is nothing to suggest that any are likely to arise in the immediate future. Industrial expansion is, however, proceeding apace and it is conceivable that problems and difficulties affecting labour may arise in the not too distant future". (4)

The Catchpole Report also pointed to a specific feature of industrial relations in Swaziland:

"There are no organisations of workers and the task of representing complaints and grievances to employers, which is normally the function of trade unions, is undertaken by Ndunas appointed by the Swazi National Council and allocated by them to particular employers Their task is to resolve any complaints, grievances and minor disputes which arise including any problems concerning earnings". (5)

However it was felt that this system had several important defects.

"In practice workers look to Ndunas for assistance in domestic problems. Ndunas are paid by the firm to which they are accredited and it is not unlikely that workers have in some cases come to regard them as representatives of the employers rather than of workers and that in consequence complaints are not pressed as vigorously as they might otherwise be It seems probable that some Ndunas have been appointed for their political rather than their industrial experience". (6)

Nevertheless Catchpole did not take a stand against the Nduna system which was also accepted by official government policy. (7) He merely suggested minor improvements to the system which had served reactionary purposes during the strikes in the 1940s at the Havelock Asbestos Mine owned by Turner and Newall. (8)

In May 1961, the Catchpole Report was discussed in the European Advisory Council. Here Todd again expressed the prevailing view when he argued that rather than address itself to the "need for workmen's compensation or some of these technical insertions" the Report ought to have considered "broader principles". In his view the "urgent problem in the territory" was "to protect Swaziland from the particularly mischievous type of trade unionism (developed) among Africans elsewhere on the continent ..." (9) Todd pointed out.

"From my experience of the African Trade Union movement, it tends to develop along sinister lines, rather than the regulation of industrial interests. It is advancement of their - initially - standards of living. But in the hands of the organisers it can be a weapon to develop political rights and there isn't the sense of responsibility towards either the economy or to the public interests, that you discover or find in the United Kingdom and the older countries, who have a well organised society and a responsible one. As I have said, on the continent of Africa

it has been used to advance political, rather than industrial interests". (10)

In Swaziland moreover there was an additional problem: "what we should fear is that the Trade Union movement would develop at the expense of the Swazi National Council" (11) (with whom the EAC and SNC had already concluded a political alliance for the purposes of the constitutional deliberations). Todd was not categorically against the establishment of trade unions. He admitted that "the difficulty of negotiating working conditions in industry.... is due to the fact that no trade unions today exist". (12) But he wanted them to be tightly controlled by the state. Specifically he proposed the selective registration of trade unions, and the introduction of a Works Council system which would consider only "the petty things that excite the native in industry to discontent", and exclude discussions on wages. (13)

The Strikes of 1962-3

The need for institutions that would stabilise industrial relations was amply confirmed by a rash of strikes that broke out in 1962 and 1963. The first of these took place at the Usutu Pulp Company, owned jointly by Courtaulds and the Commonwealth Development Corporation, in April 1962. These workers had formed the Pulp and Timber Workers Union, which became Swaziland's first registered trade union in March 1962. According to a member of the Executive Committee of the Union the main aims of the union were to improve working conditions and payment for all workers and to improve the promotion prospects of Swazis who did not receive promotion nearly as quickly as the white employees. (14) The union also attempted to unite workers on a broader basis and its constitution stated that "The union envisages a time when all unions of Swaziland will unite in a Swaziland federation of labour".

On April 6th a strike was called by the union after demands for a minimum wage were not met and after two members of the

union had been dismissed. One hundred per cent of the company's eight hundred mill workers stayed out and and were joined by a small number of the forest workers. (The company employed a total of 320 whites and 2,500 Africans). During the strike the mill was kept in operation by the white staff.(15) The workers were given wage increases after they agreed to go back.

A significant feature of the Executive Committee of the Union, one that was to a greater or lesser extent to be repeated in the case of the other unions that were subsequently to form, was that its members were active members of either the SDP or the Zwane wing of the SPP which became the NNLC in April 1963. Both these parties attempted to organise the support of the new petty bourgeoisie and the working class. As the SDP put it:

"We do not think the trade union movement should be a branch of a political party. But in the conditions which prevail in Swaziland and the rest of Africa the gulf between economics and politics is often so narrow that the trade unionist finds it in his interest to carry on his fight on the political plane as well".(16)

A further feature was the antagonism on the part of the union leaders to the Swazi rulers.

For the members of the European Advisory Council the strike, which was accompanied by more minor events at the sugar plantations at Big Bend and Mhlume and in the farming area of Malkerns, (17) necessitated the urgent implementation of their earlier proposals made in response to the Catchpole Report. For the Resident Commissioner "The advent of trade unionism in Swaziland emphasises the necessity for employers to recast their approach to labour relations generally and in particular to the provision of adequate negotiating machinery between workers and management".-(18)

However, before further action could be taken the latent contradictions that existed between capital and labour were given an organisational form and resulted in a widespread series of strikes that affected both foreign monopoly capital and the local

bourgeoisie. While these contradictions had been a part of the production process since capitalist production had begun, the political climate in 1962 and 1963 created the conditions for the mobilisation of the working class that hitherto had not existed. Under colonial political forms the working class was disorganised and the only kind of representation open to it was through the Ndunas appointed to the larger units of production by the Swazi rulers. Neither trade unions nor even works councils of one sort or another existed. However the situation altered drastically with the transformation of the colonial political forms. The introduction of more representative political forms in the run in to decolonisation created the possibility for the mobilisation of local classes and here the antagonisms that existed between the Swazi rulers and the petty bourgeoisie had a critical effect.

While the Swazi rulers had successfully established a mass base among the peasantry in the countryside, the petty bourgeoisie had not managed to do likewise until the beginning of 1963. Without a mass base it was clear that the petty bourgeoisie would not succeed in its struggles with the Swazi rulers, the latter would consolidate its position politically and come to be the class through which the bourgeoisie would constitute its rule.

However the contradictions existing between capital and labour and the contradictions that this in turn led to between labour and the Swazi rulers, given the role that the latter had come to play in the control of the labour process, provided the petty bourgeoisie with its opportunity. This opportunity was enhanced by the political alliance that had been established between the Swazi rulers and the local bourgeoisie.(19) After the Usutu Pulp strike the leaders of the petty bourgeoisie parties came to play a direct role in the organisation of the working class and in the pressing of its demands, a role that the Swazi rulers, in the light of the abovementioned factors, were precluded from playing. In this way sections of the petty bourgeoisie (it must be emphasised that some sections of the petty bourgeoisie played a different role) attempted to establish an alliance with the working class and in this way

establish a mass base with which to challenge the Swazi rulers and to press the demands of the petty bourgeoisie. However the petty bourgeoisie did not form a single political front. Part of the petty bourgeoisie polarised more towards the bourgeoisie and this part was represented party-politically mainly by the Swaziland Democratic Party and the Mbandzeni National Convention. Another part of the petty bourgeoisie that polarised far more clearly towards the working class was represented by the Zwane wing of the SPP that later became the NNLC. It will be with the latter group that this article will be principally concerned.

The Ubombo Ranches Strike, 18th March 1963

The Ubombo Ranches strike was the second significant strike to occur during 1963. The first occurred on the 28th February 1963 when 600 employees of the railway contracting company, that was building the railway to carry iron ore to part of Mozambique, held a one day strike. A subsequent confidential committee of enquiry concluded that the grievances included low wages and the alleged "ineffectiveness" of the SNCs Nduna. It was stated that the "strike was organised by clerical staff and other workers". (20)

Ubombo Ranches was started in 1949 as a cattle ranching company and it later also produced rice. Sugar cane was first grown in 1957. The directors of the company included Dr. H.J. van Eck, the company's Chairman who later became the head of the South African Industrial Development Corporation, and G.W. Lloyd, a British Conservative M.P. In 1957 the company had a quota of 12,000 tons of sugar per year but shortly after this was increased to 40,000 tons necessitating the construction of a new mill and a large expansion of the cane fields. During the 1960-61 season the company suffered a severe setback as a result of bad rains and because it had not been successful in restructuring its production process so as to produce the required increase in output. In 1961-62 the company only produced 28,000 tons of its total of 40,000 tons. In September 1961 a new Field Manager, P.A. Andries, was

appointed in order to re-arrange production in the fields. The Field Manager was in charge of the Irrigation, Field and Transport Superintendents who in turn were in charge of a number of white overseers. The latter controlled numbers of Swazi 'ndunas' appointed by the company to supervise the Swazi workers.(21) Under Andries a 'task system' was introduced in order to determine the set of tasks the workers had to perform each day and the remuneration they were to receive. It was later reported that it was "the task system which revolutionised the old order of things at Ubombo Ranches and changed the chaotic labour conditions into the efficient and productive field organisation it is now". (22)

Following this restructuring "there was trouble with weeders because of the allegedly unreasonable measure of their task and on two separate occasions the labourers refused to go to work".(23) When the retiring General Manager, Mr. Szokolay, handed over to his successor he "stated that his biggest worry had been the African Labour and that the disturbing influence of growing political activity in and around the Estate would certainly lead to trouble". (24)

This simmering discontent amongst the workers, particularly the weeders, irrigators and cane cutters in the fields who were in terms of pay "the less fortunate classes of labour", (25) continued and on the 20th January 1963 a large meeting of workers was called. Significantly this meeting was addressed by Mr. Dumisa Dlamini, the Secretary of what was then the Zwane wing of the SPP and by Mr. Frank Groening, a local member of the party. The following day a mass march, led by Dumisa Dlamini and Frank Groening, was staged and three demands were presented to the General Manager. The first demand was for a minimum of R30 per month for all workers (a demand obviously affecting only the more lowly paid and therefore excluding the new petty bourgeoisie). Secondly the dismissal of three supervisors was demanded: Andries, the Field Manager, Percival, who was in charge of the Labour Department and also was the Compound Manager, and Gizane Gamede, the Swazi police nduna who worked under Percival. Lastly,

the re-engagement of two Swazi employees was demanded. The participants in the march were then addressed by the General Manager and they gave him a further list of grievances detailing their specific complaints regarding labour conditions. On the 28th of January management replied to the demands rejecting the initial three demands but agreeing to some of the others such as improvements to the water supply and housing. On the 5th March all the workers at one of the compounds went on strike because of the transfer to that compound of an unpopular nduna. (26) Following meetings addressed by various SPP members including Dumisa Dlamini, Groening and Macdonald Maseko, a total strike of all labour on the sugar estate and the associated Bar Circle cattle ranch, including office staff and domestic servants, took place on the 18th of March. There were daily orderly processions led by leaders of the SPP waving the party's flag. Meetings of workers followed the marches and those meetings were, significantly, also attended by the subjects of various chiefs from the surrounding part of Swazi Nation Land. The strike ended on the 27th of March pending the outcome of the results of the official enquiry that had been ordered by the government.

The report of the Commission which was published in December 1963 contained an assessment of the causes of the strike. Significantly the major cause was seen as the influence exerted by "external nationalist forces" although it was acknowledged that there were important antagonisms that existed at Ubombo Ranches.

Firstly, the Commission reported the increase in wages had not matched the rise in the cost of living. Secondly, workers were expected to work overtime, but only rarely received overtime pay. Thirdly, water, sanitary and housing conditions were unfit for human use. Finally, errors of 'man management' had occurred. (27)

One further feature of the strike which was barely touched on by the Commission was the antagonism expressed towards the King's representative. One of the complaints put forward by the workers was directed against the representative who allegedly had failed "to perform his duties as Liaison Officer because of his employment

in the Company Office". (28)

In the end it required the King himself to make a direct intervention when he called about 40 employers, employing about 15,230 workers, to the royal residence. The meeting was also attended by Brian Marwick, the Resident Commissioner. The King talked of "cheap labour in Southern Africa" and said that this worried him since it implied that the workers did not receive the proper reward for their labour. In other countries trade unions watched the interests of employees and enforced their wishes through strikes. However this was not the Swazi way. "Although you people are used to strikes - it is in your tradition - we feel that it is not the right way of doing things". Unjustified demands may be made by workers such as when they demanded higher wages from an enterprise that had not yet started making profits. He then expanded on his view of industrial production "as a partnership":

"I begin to wonder what we mean by work. To whom does an industry belong? I think that in an industry there is no employer or employee. All have equal status. The man with capital cannot do the work without labour, and the labourers would have nothing to do without the man with capital. I always regard them as partners (whose aim is) to see that the enterprise is successful. They should regard the business as a child and take care of it so that it will grow. They must nurse it together. If we regard a business as belonging to one section of the people we must expect difficulties and troubles".

If all were partners working for the success of the enterprise why should there be a need for one section to threaten another? "That is something that has always worried me about trade unions and their way of doing things". (29)

To lend weight to the King's pleas the state deployed its repressive arm. Although the strike was generally very peaceful and no damage to property occurred, it proceeded to mobilise its repressive apparatus and to pass legislation aimed at controlling future strikes. During the strike the Mobile Force of the Swaziland Police was moved into the area "as a precaution" (30) and as a

result of the strike 17 persons were prosecuted and convicted. (31) In April 1963 the Industrial Conciliation and Settlement Proclamation was passed. Under this Proclamation the Labour Commissioner could approve the voluntary establishment of bodies for consultation and negotiation between employers and workers and could register industrial agreements if the parties asked. One part of the Proclamation provided for the voluntary reporting of trade disputes to the Labour Commissioner by either party, conciliation by the Labour Commissioner and/or Conciliation Board, and reference of a dispute to arbitration with the consent of both parties, or to a board of inquiry. The 'teeth' of the Proclamation, however, were contained in the provision which stated that no strike or lockout may take place during a compulsory "cooling-off" period which lasted until three weeks after a dispute had been reported. During this period it was an offence to "incite or give financial support to a strike or lock-out". In addition a number of other measures were passed increasing the power of the police. (32)

Other Strikes

On the 29th March 1963, 150 saw-mill workers at Peak Timbers went on strike demanding, amongst other things, higher pay. In the beginning of April teargas was used by police to break up a march of 60 women led by Dumisa Dlamini of the Progressive Party. They were protesting against a government prohibition against the sale of sour milk and porridge. On the 28th May about 300 workers employed by the Peak Timbers saw-mills went on strike for a few hours "as a protest against the retrenchment of five labourers because of the closing of a small part of the industrial section". (33) Far more important, however, was the strike at Havelock Mine.

On April 25th the High Court of Swaziland granted an interim interdict restraining Dumisa Dlamini and Macdonald Maseko from entering the property of the Havelock Asbestos Mine after the mine management claimed that they had attempted to organise the workers. On May 19th the management, in an attempt to pre-empt a

strike, announced the first increase in wages since September 1962 when wages were increased by 16 cents per shift to 53 cents. This amounted to a starting amount of R13,78 for unskilled recruits. (34) However, the workers were not prepared to accept this and they went on strike on May 20th electing Dumisa Dlamini to represent them. Their demands included a minimum unskilled wage of R2 per day (which had become a general NNLC demand), the dismissal of the compound manager, three ndunas appointed by the company and the King's representative "on the grounds of ineffectiveness and various malpractices over rations and accommodation". (35) They also presented complaints about housing, sanitation, working arrangements, rations and cooking. (36) A total of 1 350 workers went on strike but the 150 white employees, none of whom joined the strike, were able to maintain limited production. (37) On May 21st, 23rd and 24th discussions were held but these produced no result. The King then sent a message to the miners:

"No true Swazis would talk to me through the strike. If any misunderstanding existed arrangements for delegates to visit (royal) headquarters should have been made through Mntfwanenkosi (Prince) Masitsela (who had been appointed by the SNC as Labour Officer to the mine)". (38)

However the strikers ignored the King's telegram.

On the 9th of June as the NNLC was holding a meeting in Msunduzi, Mbabane news arrived that twelve of the strike leaders at Havelock had been arrested. The meeting resolved that there should be a stoppage of work on the following day and that "the people of Mbabane" would not return to work until "the arrested people at Mlembe (Havelock Mines) are released and their demands met with and until a minimum wage of.....R2 a day is enforced by Government Proclamation.(39) Furthermore the meeting rejected the British White Paper on the Constitution that had been issued the previous month on the grounds that it was "racialistic" and "undemocratic".(40) Significantly it was also decided that the members of one of the age-regiments (41) - the Malindane - should organise the Swazi population of Mbabane and peacefully prevent

people from going to work. In this way the urban members of one of the important institutions of the SMP were used in the attempt to press the demands of the working class. The attempt was extremely successful as Chief Justice Williams, who was later to investigate charges of incitement, pointed out:

"There is no doubt that the leaders with the aid of the malindane achieved a remarkable feat in that in a matter of a few hours they contrived a strike which was almost complete, they separated Mbabane into two separate communities and they organised these two processions to the town without any physical injury being inflicted upon anyone".-

(42)

During the Mbabane strike the King was asked by the Resident Commissioner to send his regiments to assist the police in "restoring order". However, as a later confidential committee of enquiry was to point out, "The Ngwenyama proved to be unwilling or unable to assert his authority over his own regiment". (43)

On the 13th June another strike broke out at Ubombo Ranches when all 1 700 workers protested against the delay in the progress of the enquiry into the March strike. They had agreed to go back in March pending the outcome of the enquiry. They now demanded a minimum of R2 per day (previously they had demanded R1), the release of the Havelock strike leaders, and the withdrawal of the British Government's constitutional proposals. A similar feature of this strike was that the malindane age-regiment was used here too in order to mobilise the workers. On the same day the King sent a message saying that he wished to see some of the workers' representatives. The company provided the representatives with transport and at their meeting with the King they were directed to call the strike off. The message was conveyed to the strikers but with no effect. (44) On the 16th the King called a meeting at the Lobamba royal kraal which was attended by many workers. He told them to go back and said that he would take up the matter of wages with the Resident Commissioner but again with little effect. (45)

The situation was now getting out of control. By the end of the year more than 66 000 days of labour-time had been "lost" (46) and one estimate of the total cost of the "civil disturbances" was put at R1,7 million. (47) Doubts also grew as to whether the local police force numbering 350 were adequate to the task. The Resident Commissioner therefore requested external assistance and on the 16th June an airlift of the First Battalion Gordon Highlanders stationed in Kenya was completed. By this time Dumisa Dlamini and Macdonald Maseko had been arrested and charged with public violence or incitement to public violence. On the 17th there was a meeting of 300 saw mill and forestry workers employed by Swaziland Plantations at Piggs' Peak (in the vicinity of Peak Timbers and the Havelock Mine). After the meeting a leader was arrested followed by another 62 arrests after 100 people had marched on the District Commissioner's office to demand his release. The remaining workers returned to work.

The State and Law and Order

With the arrival of the Gordon Highlanders the state declared its firm intention to restore "law and order". At 3.00 a.m. on the morning of the 7th June the whole battalion of Gordon Highlanders set up road blocks and threw a cordon around the picket lines at Havelock mine. Over 1 000 miners were "questioned" and after this about 500 declared their willingness to return to work. The remaining 480 strikers were addressed by the District Commissioner of Pigg's Peak and after this all but 153 went back to work. The latter were arrested and charged with being illegally on strike (under the Industrial Conciliation and Settlement Proclamation) and with intimidation. On the 18th the Gordon Highlanders assisted the police to arrest suspected strikers in the hills around the mine. (48) Ultimately of those arrested 87 were convicted on charges of "public violence" (49) and a further 10, including Dumisa Dlamini, were charged with public violence and with contravening the Industrial Conciliation and Settlement Proclamation. During the subsequent

trial in the Swaziland High Court the mine manager spoke of the "general tone of reasonableness" that prevailed during the strike and, in an attempt to maintain the "peace" that had been restored by the time the trial was held, light sentences were passed. Six of the ten were acquitted while the remaining four were found not guilty of violence but guilty of inciting to strike. Sentence on them was postponed for eighteen months and they were released on condition that they were not convicted of inciting to strike during that period.(50) Dumisa Dlamini was one of the four.

On the 18th June and the following day over 1 000 strikers at Ubombo Ranches were detained and questioned by the Gordon Highlanders and the police after which about 900 returned to work.(51) Later 24 people were charged and convicted for various offences and a further 10 were convicted in the Swaziland High Court of public violence. Extremely heavy sentences were passed: of the 10, 5 were given 3 years imprisonment with hard labour while others were given 2½ years. However, again in an attempt to maintain an atmosphere of co-operation, the Court of Appeal later suspended 18 months of each of the sentences for a period of 3 years on condition that the accused were not convicted during that period of any offence involving public violence or incitement thereto.(52)

In the case of the Mbabane strike 24 arrests were made and 7 people, including Dumisa Dlamini and Macdonald Maseko, were convicted of public violence. They were sentenced to 6 months imprisonment suspended for 3 years on the same conditions as in the case of the other strikes and the Resident Commissioner later remitted one month of the sentence.(53) The state thus followed a policy of "repressive tolerance" in dealing with the strikes: extreme repression with the arrest and intimidation of many of the strikers thus coercing most of them to return to work followed by relatively lenient treatment in the courts.

The local bourgeoisie responded in different ways to the strikes and to the question of the recognition of trade unions. In September 1963 it was announced that the Citrus, Agricultural,

Plantation and Allied Workers' Union, the seventh union to be formed, had lodged application for registration. However, at its annual congress the Swaziland Agricultural Union opposed the formation of trade unions in agriculture: "we farmers all feel that, as far as agriculture is concerned, they are not of practical value, either to employer or employee".(54) However, the commercial bourgeoisie took a different point of view:

"Trade unions are not only inevitable in the evolving social pattern, but highly desirable. They can provide us with an intelligent and articulate means of communication between employer and employee. They can provide a means by which peaceful negotiations and common sense will prevail....."-

(55)

The Swaziland Chamber of Industries, the representative organisation of monopoly capital, likewise endorsed this position.(56)

Despite this relatively accommodating attitude of sections of capital, trade union influence remained limited. As the 1964 Board of Enquiry On Methods of Regulating Wages In Swaziland, pointed out, the trade unions were relatively new and were weak and generally disorganised. Furthermore the conditions made union organisation difficult. Amongst these, the "high rate of turnover militate(d) against efforts at organisation";(57) the large capitalist enterprises, mainly plantations and mines, were geographically widely dispersed which made union organisation and co-operation difficult; and obstacles were also placed in the way of union organisation by some employers and by the Swazi rulers. Although, as was pointed out, there was a growing acceptance of trade unions and recognition of their functionality by foreign monopoly capital and the commercial bourgeoisie, these sections of the bourgeoisie were extremely cautious in the light of their experience of the strikes and their consequent fear that the unions would be taken over by "extremist politicians". Thus the Commission was obliged to point out that although 11 trade unions had been officially registered by the government "only two of the registered Unions have been able to reach the situation of claiming and

obtaining formal recognition from the employers concerned.(58)

The opposition to trade unions expressed by the Swazi rulers was seen by the Commission as one of the most important obstacles in the way of the development of unions, and their power to obstruct grew in the following months. In the elections of June 1964 the King's party, the Imbokodvo National Movement swept the board. In the eight unreserved seats, the I.N.M. won 85% of the vote, and the N.N.L.C. only 12%.(59)

The election results thus proved the ability of the Swazi rulers to consolidate sufficient political support particularly as a result of their success in bringing in the peasantry as a supportative class. It was now clear that the rule of the bourgeoisie would be constituted by the Swazi rulers who were to become the "class in charge of the state". While the victory of the Swazi rulers was obtained at the expense of the petty bourgeoisie, and although the state had previously intervened in order to strengthen this class on the grounds that its co-operation was necessary in order to maintain stability, the election had shown that the petty bourgeoisie was only able to establish support amongst a relatively narrow section of the population. The continuing ability of the Swazi rulers to maintain their political dominance in the countryside had precluded the petty bourgeoisie from obtaining the support of the peasantry. As a result sections of the petty bourgeoisie which had hitherto consistently opposed the King's party began to swing into the King's camp, along with the main representatives of monopoly capital.(60)

Consequently, when workers mobilised in a new series of strikes in Manzini and Sidvokodvo in late 1964 and mid 1964 they found themselves faced with a still more unfavourable balance of forces.(61) Although employers were in 'moderate' trade unions, and in fact re-organised themselves into a single employers' federation with this object in mind, the Swazi rulers remained hostile to trade unions and wedded to the idea of Works Councils.(62)

Only towards the end of 1964 was a compromise reached. The

Swazi rulers accepted the principle of trade unionism but simultaneously intensified their efforts to extend the 'nduna' system.(63)

What this portended for workers became apparent in 1965. Two NNLC led strikes of agricultural workers were broken up by police, and many strikers were arrested under the Public order and Industrial Conciliation Proclamations.(64) Efforts to establish an opposition Federation of Trade Unions were also combated by an I.N.M. programme to form an Amalgamated National Union for Swaziland. The press release issued by the Swazi National Council to explain this development made the intentions of the Swazi rulers clear:

"The Swazi National Council envisages a sound trade union movement based on African aspirations and a progressive wage policy securing the maximum economic wage for the workers..... The Swazi National Council believes in the encouragement of industry and commerce and the investment of outside capital in the territory leading to full local employment. The Swazi National Council likens capital investment to a bird sitting on a tree. If you make threats the bird will fly away and the Council cannot afford to lose capital investors for the sake of self seekers who use the trade unions for their political ends".(65)

The Council's move however was coolly received by both employers and the state. In his annual address the President of the Chamber of Commerce declared that he did "not think that this is a good thing" while the President of the Federation of Employers warned that "The present trade unions do not appear to support this move for a national union".(66) The state itself, still under British control, opposed the attempts of the Council to exercise a direct effect in labour relations.

However the Government felt that further steps were necessary in order to prevent the trade unions coming under the control of "unsuitable persons". Measures were accordingly put forward in the Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations Bill. These included the provision that only citizens of Swaziland could hold office in a

trade union, a provision aimed at the not insignificant number of South Africans, some of whom were political refugees, who held important offices in the trade unions. Since most of them had close links with the NNLC it was hoped in this way to diminish the influence of this party in the unions.(67)

In August 1967 an amendment to the Industrial Conciliation and Settlement Act was passed through the House of Assembly which, as the Attorney-General said, provided "that any person who counselled, procured or instigated a strike other than over a trade dispute was committing an offence".(68)

In this way a combination of factors served to stifle the NNLC and its associated unions: the different forms of intervention by the state, the activities of employers largely through the Federation of Employers and the opposition of the Swazi rulers whose political muscle was significantly bolstered by the results of the 1964 elections. The consequences speak for themselves: In 1963 more than 66 000 man-days of labour were lost as many strikes involving thousands of workers occurred. In 1964 the figure was 4 130 man-days as a result of 9 strikes involving 572 persons. In 1965: 595 man-days, 3 strikes involving 388 persons; in 1966: 595 man-days, 3 strikes and 280 persons. The bourgeoisie, the state and the Swazi rulers could claim a great measure of success in their attempt to 'stabilise' labour relations through the period of transition to independent rule.(69)

Labour Relations after Independence

In essential respects the state in the post-independence period implemented the same labour relations framework that had evolved after the strikes of 1962/3. Although the law made provision for the legal establishment of trade unions, the state actively discouraged their formation but stopped short of preventing their emergence. Instead an alternative framework for labour relations was suggested, the basis of which was provided in the pre-independence period. Workers would organise at plant level by electing a Works

Council. The object of the Council was to "Provide a recognised means of consultation between the management and the employees on all matters of common interest not covered by any wage negotiating body".(70) A number of wage boards were established to determine minimum wages for specific industries. Although the Swazi rulers abandoned their attempt to form a "National Trade Union" under the control of the SNC or to infiltrate the existing unions, they continued to exert influence in the immediate process of production through a modified version of the Nduna system introduced during the colonial period. A representative of the King and SNC, or Ndabazabantu as he was now called, was appointed to the larger employers. The Ndabazabantu was to mediate between management and workers and although his terms of reference extended to work conditions generally he had a special function with regard to problems amongst workers that raised matters relating to Swazi law and custom. The Ndabazabantu was to co-operate with the Works Council, sometimes also referred to as the Libandla. The duties of the Ndabazabantu were spelled out in a memorandum from Prince Masitsela Dlamini on behalf of the SNC in August 1971. The Ndabazabantu was described as "the local authority over all the workers". He was to represent the interests of workers:

"He is the eye, the ear and the mouthpiece of the workers when making representations on their behalf to Management regarding complaints or requests or anything which is a source of worry on the part of the workers..... He will ensure that workers are not victimised or exploited because of their colour by those in...Management and see that workers receive wages commensurate with the work that they do.... and that their wages are not far below what may be called a living wage".

He was also to assist management in its relationship with Swazi workers:

"He will advise Management on all matters pertaining to Swazi law and custom.... and cultivate a spirit of co-operation and belonging which is conducive to economic

progress by affording the workers equal opportunity in order to narrow the gap between the haves and havenots". However the Ndabazabantu was a representative of the Swazi rulers and he would serve as their mouthpiece:

"The King of Swaziland will speak to the workers and the Management on all matters affecting the workers through the Ndabazabantu - so will the SNC and likewise the Management to the workers. All requests for holding meetings of workers will go to the Ndabazabantu in the first instance. The Ndabazabantu, being the King's representative will attend the National Offices or at the Royal corral whenever he has been called upon, likewise he may be summoned with his Ibandla or he and his Ibandla might wish to attend at the National Offices to hold discussions with the SNC on matters affecting the welfare of the workers. The King's Representative will attend all the National Meetings which will be convened from time to time and he will report back to the workers and also the Management".

The Ndabazabantu was to instil in the workers the notion that, whilst they were entitled to a "reasonable" wage "not far below what may be called a living wage", capital was entitled to its profit: in fact it was the realisation of better profits that enabled higher wages to be paid:

"He will encourage the workers and build a sound sense of responsibility, respect and discipline - inspire the workers with a feeling of regarding the Industry in terms of a partnership - teach the workers to realise that any realisation of profits will result in better wages and better social conditions in their villages".

Finally, the Ndabazabantu was required "To fight against and wipe out any idea that there is what is termed 'cheap labour' in the Territory".(71)

Although trade unions were not outlawed, they were actively discouraged. Thus, for example, in a report of a public speech

made in May 1972 it was stated:

"(The King) condemned the methods and philosophy of the trade unions and said they were causes of industrial unrest through strikes thus bringing the national industrial growth to a standstill. He said those who suffered most from leaders who organised industrial strikes were the poor men in the street".(72)

The same point was stressed by the Deputy Prime Minister towards the end of the year. A report of a meeting between the Deputy Prime Minister and the Council of the Federation of Swaziland noted that the former

"was of the opinion that the trade union legislation did not fit the country's needs as trade union(s) had in their ranks members who had led and taken part in the (1963) strikes.... He felt that Ndabazabantu would defend the rights of employers and keep peace among the workers".(73)

A few days later the Deputy Prime Minister reiterated these views in a speech to workers at the Havelock Mine which also stressed the unity between the institutions of the SMP and the rest of the state apparatus. As reported:

" 'Trade unionism', said Mr. Khumalo, 'is a foreign ideology to the Swazi'. He said workers should form themselves into a Workers' Council which could hear the grievances of its members. They would examine the grievances and if necessary submit cases through the Labour Department, and if it was warranted these would reach His Majesty King Sobhuza II. Mr. Khumalo said that 'all workers in this Kingdom are His Majesty's regiments. The workers' Council, or Libandla, should embrace every worker'.(74)

However despite the onslaught trade unions continued to exist although they had been considerably weakened. The main reason for their continued existence was that many sections of the working class were antagonistic to the Ndabazabantu who was paid by the company and who, they felt, in many cases did not represent their interests. In this sense the same sentiments as those noted in the

Catchpole Report of 1960 regarding the Nduna system remained. For employers the existence of two distinct negotiating channels sometimes created difficulties. In this regard employers were divided depending largely on the degree of opposition to the Ndabazabantu amongst their workforce, the degree of unionisation, and the abilities and biases of the Ndabazabantu himself. While some felt that the system of Ndabazabantu and works council was adequate, others favoured trade unions. Others thought that a compromise between the two could be reached.(75) However in the light of the experience of the 1963 strikes and continuing fear of the political influence of trade unions, employers accepted the broad outlines of the state's labour policy and made no attempt to press for the wider recognition of trade unions.

From an outright discouragement of trade unions the state, in view of the outbreak of serious strikes in the Durban area of South Africa, changed the emphasis of its policy, and stressed the necessity to pay "reasonable wages". In a meeting with Swaziland employers in March 1973 the King pointed out that "We cannot sit back complacently and say it (i.e. strikes) would not happen in Swaziland". Although industry had been prospering "there has been no improvement in wages" and this was leading to discontent. The main purpose of the meeting, the King pointed out, "is for us to examine various possibilities of forestalling or overcoming this".- (76) In August of the same year the King expanded on his views at a meeting of labour representatives at the royal capital of Lozitha. While the worker should get "an equal share for his labours" investors "should get a good profit". Industrial unrest should be discouraged since it "scared investors":

"Speaking about investment in this country, the King said it is an accepted fact of life that two hands wash each other. Investors, he told the crowd, should get a good share of the profits from their money they have entrusted this kingdom, and the Swazi should get an equal (sic) share for his labours. Overlooking this cardinal principle would result in

a chaotic situation".(77)

Signs of unrest inside Swaziland were in fact multiplying fast. Between the end of 1969 and the end of 1972 the real living standards of the majority of the working class declined. This emerges clearly from figures given in Table I. During this time period prices rose by about 6%. However during the same period the following changes took place in the average money earnings of unskilled workers (who in 1972 constituted 78% of the total employed labour force in the private sector): in agriculture, which employed 53% of the total number of unskilled employees in the private sector (numbering 34,182), male earnings declined from R16 to R15 and female earnings from R9 to R8; in forestry, which employed 10% of the total, the money wages of males remained constant while those of females declined from R11 to R10. In manufacturing, while employed 13% of the total, male wages increased significantly from R26 to R34 but female wages declined from R15 to R11. This implies that more than 50% of the total employed work-force in the private sector had to contend with constant or declining MONEY wages. On top of this there was the increase of 6% in the retail price index for unskilled workers. Workers in the mining industry in Swaziland, which employed 5% of the total, were a little more fortunate - male money wages increased from R27 to R28, an increase of 4%. Therefore the real living standards of the majority of workers in the private sector declined somewhat during the first four years of independence.

Further information is also relevant. Between September 1972 and September 1973 the average money earnings of unskilled male workers (who comprised 76% of all unskilled workers) rose from R23 to R25, an increase of 9%. During the same period average money earnings of unskilled female workers rose from R11 to R14, or 27%. From October 1972 to October 1973 the retail price index for unskilled workers rose by 17%. (It is important in assessing these figures to bear in mind that the period under review occurs before the generalised international recession that began in about 1974.

Finally, it is necessary to look, not only at changes in real

wages, but also to ask how adequate were the incomes of unskilled working-class families. The PDL figure calculated for unskilled workers in the Manzini area for July 1973 was R81.(78) Assuming such a family had both husband and wife earning the average unskilled wage (which most did not since males constituted 78% of the total unskilled wage-force in the private sector) then their combined income would have been R39 or only 48% of the PDL. This figure indicates the degree of dependence of the average family on non-wage income (consisting of both marketed and non-marketed output). Given both the low productivity on Swazi Nation Land and the small extent of petty commodity production (even smaller in the case of working class families),(79) it is clear that most working class families faced difficult and deteriorating circumstances.

The 1972 election

Workers gave vent to their dissatisfaction in two portentous acts of opposition. In the 1972 election, the opposition Ngwane National Liberatory Convention won one of the eight constituencies into which Swaziland is divided, and thereby earned itself the right to send three out of the twenty four members elected to the House of Assembly. The Mphumalanga constituency where the NNLC won, bordered on Mozambique and extended to Natal in the south. The main feature of the constituency was its inclusion of the two sugar plantations owned by foreign monopoly capital, at Mhlume (Commonwealth Development Corporation) and Big Bend (Ubombo Ranches owned by Lonrho). Accordingly the constituency contained a significant concentration of members of the working class. Since these people were largely recruited from the surrounding parts of Swazi Nation Land their significance in electoral terms extended beyond their actual numbers.(80) In addition the constituency included the pro-NNLC small-holding farmers who were part of the Vuvulane Irrigated Farms scheme at Mhlume. In the 1976 election the NNLC had attained its strongest showing in the Mphumalanga constituency obtaining 47% of the vote. The fact that there was a

further swing to the NNLC in the 1972 elections was an indication of the dissatisfaction, largely on the part of members of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie, with state policies.

The NNLC's victory was to precipitate a restructuring of the form of state. One week after the election, Thomas Ngwenya, one of the NNLC's three victorious candidates, was arrested and deported to South Africa as an "undesirable" citizen. In mid-September Ngwenya successfully took his case to the High Court which set aside his deportation order. On October 16th Ngwenya was due to be sworn in as a member of parliament but government members boycotted the session and the Speaker, lacking a quorum, called an adjournment. Ngwenya was later re-arrested and restricted to an area of Swaziland thus preventing him from taking up his seat. In November an amendment to the Immigration Act was passed in Parliament establishing a tribunal consisting of five persons appointed by the Deputy Prime Minister. "It also specifically provided that the tribunal 'shall be entitled to hear and adjudicate upon any such matter (involving matters of citizenship, MF)...notwithstanding any judgement, decision or order previously made by any authority, tribunal or court on or in connection with any issue as to whether or not such person belongs to Swaziland....'"(81) A decision of the tribunal was not subject to the right of appeal to any court but a person affected by such a decision could appeal to the Prime Minister whose decision was final. The person concerned had the burden under the Act of proving whether he/she was entitled to Swaziland citizenship. On the 29th of March 1973 the Swaziland Court of Appeal, headed by Olive Schreiner, a former South African Supreme Court Judge, ruled that the Act was unconstitutional. On the 12th of April 1973 the constitution was suspended and the King assumed formal power.(82) Special powers of detention were given to the King-in-Council, the latter consisting of the members of the Cabinet.(83)

Schreiner's ruling was to herald the suspension of Swaziland's constitution, but one further development may have hastened this event. In the first week of April 1973, one week before the

constitution was suspended, a strike broke out at Havelock Mine. Only two months previously the King on behalf of the Swazi Nation had been given 40% of the mine's equity by Turner and Newall, the company's owners. (Dr. George Msibi, previous leader of the Mbandzeni National Convention and later an official of the Imbokodvo, had been nominated as a director of the mine by the King). Ostensibly the strike was the result of a refusal by the mine to pay the workers cash in lieu of food rations but these demands were accompanied by demands for wage increases of 30%. (84)

It was this mounting unrest that prompted the suspension of the constitution. In the King's words:

"....the constitution has permitted the importation into our country of highly undesirable political practices alien to and incompatible with the way of life in our society, and designed to disrupt and destroy our own peaceful and constructive and essentially democratic method of political activity; increasingly this element engenders hostility, bitterness and unrest in our peaceful society". (85)

Minister of Finance R.P. Stevens endorsed the King's action, arguing that,

"Swaziland was on the brink of severe industrial strife as a result of the activities of politicians, political parties and outside influences...." (86)

A "suitable revision" of the political situation would lead to greater "political stability" Stevens claimed. "Without this atmosphere of stability the tempo of our industrial expansion will be seriously affected". (87)

Accordingly, Decrees 11 12 and 13 announced by the Attorney General immediately after the King's statement suspending the constitution were directed against "all political parties and similar bodies that cultivate and bring about disturbances and ill-feelings". As was shown by subsequent practice, the latter referred also to the activities of all trade unions which were accordingly seriously restricted:

"All political parties and similar bodies that cultivate and

bring about disturbances and ill-feelings within the Nation are hereby dissolved and prohibited.

No meetings of a political nature and no processions or demonstrations shall be held or take place in any public place unless with the prior written consent of the Commissioner of Police; and consent shall not be given if the Commissioner of Police has reason to believe that such meeting, procession or demonstration is directly or indirectly related to political movements or other riotous assemblies which may disturb the peace or otherwise disturb the maintenance of law and order.

Any person who forms or attempts or conspires to form a political party or who organises or participates in any way in any meeting, procession or demonstration in contravention of this decree shall be guilty of an offence and liable, on conviction, to imprisonment not exceeding six months.(88)

Henceforth trade union activities were to be ruthlessly suppressed.

Conclusion

The changing form of the Swazi state in the 1960's and 1970's was the result of the growing contradiction between capital and labour. Secondary antagonisms undoubtedly contributed, notably petty bourgeois opposition to the alleged nepotistic practices of Swaziland's traditional rulers but these I have analysed more fully elsewhere. It was the alliance between these two classes, expressed in the 1963 strikes, and the 1972 Mphumalanga electoral victory of the NNLC, that prompted, firstly the devolution of the colonial state's power into the hands of Swaziland's traditional rulers in 1968 and secondly the suspension of the constitution in 1973. The problem presented in this latter instance - as the King accurately foresaw - was that the democratic representative institutions enshrined in the independence constitution were incapable of

containing the social antagonisms that existed in the society. The Swazi rulers were thus entirely correct when they claimed that competing political parties served to inflame social antagonisms in their attempt to win the support of sections of the population. What they did not understand, however, was that the social antagonisms existed independently of the activities of the political parties and would not disappear with the disappearance of the parties: the abolishing of democratic representative institutions was at best a short-run measure but the antagonisms were sure to reassert themselves, as was to happen in the teachers' and sugar workers' strikes in 1977 and 1979.

Footnotes

- 1 Reconstituted European Advisory Council, Minutes of Meeting (hereafter REAC), May 1961, p.41, emphasis added.
- 2 Catchpole, F.C. Report On Labour Legislation In Swaziland. Mbabane, May 12, 1960, p.7.
- 3 *ibid.* p.19.
- 4 *ibid.* p.23.
- 5 *ibid.* p.3-4.
- 6 *ibid.* p.6-7.
- 7 "In the absence of trade unions, the Administration encourages the appointment of tribal representatives at all the major industrial concerns". Swaziland, Report for the year 1960. London: HMSO, 1962, p.14.
- 8 The period around 1944-7 was one of labour unrest at Havelock Mine. Correspondence shows that the nduna sent word about impending labour unrest to the King who in turn notified the Resident Commissioner who initiated steps for the removal of the causes of the unrest. Swaziland Archives, File 1344.
- 9 REAC, May 1961, p.42.
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 *ibid.*
- 12 *ibid.*
- 13 *ibid.* p.43
- 14 Interview with Zeph Lukhele, 12.3.77.
- 15 REAC, 10th and 11th April, 1962, p.14.
- 16 Swaziland Democratic Party and Swaziland Progressive Party. Sibani. No 19. Vol.1. 30th January, 1963, p.5.
(Among the new petty bourgeoisie I include lower level supervisors and clerks).
- 17 REAC. 10th and 11th April, 1962, p.123.
- 18 Times of Swaziland, 13.4.62.
- 19 M. Fransman 'The State and Development in Swaziland', D. Phil, University of Sussex 1979, Chap 3.
- 20 Confidential Report of Committee of Enquiry Into Unrest In Swaziland 25th June - 8th July 1963. Swaziland Government, 8th July 1963, p.2.
- 21 This information is taken from: Swaziland Government. Big Bend Strike: The Report of the Commission of Enquiry. Mbabane, 1963.
- 22 *ibid.* p.31.
- 23 *ibid.* p.10.
- 24 *ibid.*
- 25 *ibid.* p.27.

- 26 The term 'nduna' here refers to Swazis in supervisory roles appointed by the company and they are to be distinguished from the representatives of the Swazi National Council appointed by this body to large companies. The latter are henceforth referred to as 'Ndabazabantu', their current official designation.
- 27 Big Bend Strike...pps. 28. 19. 50. 23. 22. 47.
- 28 ibid., p.14.
- 29 Times of Swaziland. 29. 3. 63.
- 30 Times of Swaziland. 22. 3. 63.
- 31 Swaziland, Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Swaziland Police Force. Mbabane, 1963, p.7.
- 32 Proclamation 17/63. Public Order Proclamation 1963, Proclamation 18/63. Sedition (Amendment) Proclamation 1963; and Proclamation 27/63. Prevention of Violence Abroad Proclamation 1963.
- 33 Times of Swaziland. 31.5.63. The Anglo American Corporation had a large share in Peak Timbers.
- 34 Report of The Board Of Enquiry Into The Trade Dispute At The Havelock Mine. Written by Sir John Houlton, undated, (mimeo), p.7, 13. (Hereafter Houlton Report).
- 35 Confidential Report of Committee Of Enquiry Into Unrest In Swaziland 25th June - 8th July 1963. Mbabane, 8th July 1963, p.3.
- 36 Houlton Report, op. cit., p.7.
- 37 Times of Swaziland, 24. 5. 63.
- 38 Houlton Report, op.cit.
- 39 From recorded judgement delivered by Chief Justice Sir Peter Watkin Williams in the High Court of Swaziland, 21st January, 1964, p.4. High Court of Swaziland, Mbabane.
- 40 ibid.
- 41 See Fransman 'The State and Development in Swaziland, Chapter I for an explanation of the age-regiments to which all Swazis belonged.
- 42 Judgement by Sir Peter Watkin Williams, op. cit., p.8.
- 43 Confidential Report Of Committee of Enquiry Into Unrest In Swaziland...., op. cit., p.19.
- 44 Judgement by Sir Peter Watkin Williams, op. cit., p.7
- 45 Times of Swaziland, 21. 6. 63.
- 46 Swaziland Government, Swaziland Annual Report. London, 1964, p.4.
- 47 REAC, 10th and 11th December 1963, p.8.
- 48 Times of Swaziland, 21.6. 63.
- 49 Swaziland Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Swaziland Police Force. Mbabane, 1963, p.7.
- 50 Times of Swaziland, 21. 2. 64.
- 51 ibid, 21. 6. 63.
- 52 ibid, 13. 3. 64.
- 53 ibid, 6. 3. 64.
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TABLE 1

AVERAGE EARNINGS OF UNSKILLED MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES
DEC. 1969-SEPT. 1975.

INDUSTRY	DEC 1969		SEPT 1971		SEPT 1972		SEPT 1973		SEPT 1974		SEPT 1975	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Agric.	16	9	- ²	- ²	15	8	20	11	21	19	29	16
Fores.	22	11	20	9	22	10	24	10	35	13	43	22
Mining	37	27	36	32	39	28	37	30	47	45	60	47
Manuf.	26	15	25	22	34	11	34	19	41	25	43	17
Constr.	20	11	24	13	25	-	21	-	27	-	31	20

NOTES:

1. No employment survey carried out for 1970.

2. There was no information available for agriculture in the Sept 1971 survey.

SOURCE: Annual Statistical Bulletin

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT OF UNSKILLED WORKERS IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES SEPT 1972.

INDUSTRY	NUMBER	%	(Tot. = 34,182)
			PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL NO. OF UNSKILLED WORKERS EMPLOYED IN PRIVATE SECTOR.
Agric	18,234	62%	
Forestry	3,395	12%	
Mining	1,753	6%	
Manufac.	4,469	15%	
Construc.	1,569	5%	
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>29,420</u>	<u>100%</u>	

SOURCE: Annual Statistical Bulletin.

CHANGES IN RETAIL PRICE INDEX 'B'(1) FOR MBABANE LAST QUARTER 1965-1975. (Beginning 1967 = 100)

1965	96,0	1971	111,3
1966	99,5	1972	113,9
1967	101,4	1973	127,1
1968	104,4	1974	151,6
1969	108,1	1975	170,0
1970	108,8		

This price index "reflects cost of living changes facing the low wage earning Swazi".

SOURCE: Annual Statistical Bulletin.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL SWAZILAND

John Daniel

The political economy of Swaziland reveals much that is common to the Third World. Her position and function within the world economy is the typical one of i) an exporter of primary commodities and raw materials whose profitability depends upon a world-market pricing system beyond her control, ii) a supplier of cheap labour to both the local enclaves of foreign capital as well as to an external market, and iii) an importer of manufactured goods. Likewise, penetration by colonial capital produced the familiar Third World pattern of coexisting capitalist and non-capitalist social formations, with the former being export-oriented with direct links to the external market and under the overwhelming ownership and control of non-indigenous forces. In the Swazi case this was settler and multinational capital. The non-capitalist sector under colonial capitalism's impact experienced the "conservation-dissolution" tendency so common to Southern Africa with its self-sufficiency being systematically undermined to a subsistence level while simultaneously care was taken to conserve the political hegemony of

its traditional rulers.

Yet, despite these commonalities, the Swazi political economy contains unusual, even unique, features. Her colonial experience, for example, was quite unlike that of her two fellow British protectorates - Lesotho and Botswana - with whom she is commonly bracketed by historians and analysts. It was actually much more comparable to Southern Rhodesia. Further, the decolonisation process produced a situation which Martin Fransman (1) claims was virtually unequalled elsewhere in Africa when at independence state power was assumed not by class forces from within the capitalist mode but by the traditional rulers from the non-capitalist mode who lacked moreover any material base in the capitalist sector. Since independence these rulers have fashioned both an unique state form and an unusual mechanism for capital accumulation and the acquisition thereby of a material base in the "modern" sector. Finally, the Swazi case acquires particular interest from the country's growing entanglement in the armed struggle for power in South Africa, a conflict with potentially grave implications for the Swazi state and its people.

The Colonial Economy

Swaziland's incorporation into the nexus of world capitalism stems from King Mbadzeni's spate of late nineteenth century concessions granted to miners and prospectors, land speculators and hunters, and the mainly Transvaal farmers seeking winter grazing pastures for their flocks and herds. So many and so overlaid and overlapping were these concessions that, when the British High Commissioner in Pretoria assumed direct administrative control of Swaziland after the Anglo Boer War, he (Lord Milner) appointed a Concessions Committee (1904) with the ostensible task of clarifying the mess and removing thereby points of friction. Clearly this task had to be done but to interpret the Commission's work in only this way is to misunderstand Swaziland's colonial history. What this Commission actually did, along with the 1907 Land Proclamation and 1908 Grey Land Delineation Report, was to lay the basis for the full

development of capital relations of production in Swaziland and its full intergration into the global system. Booth elsewhere in this volume provides details of these documents, of the dramatic "Crossroads-type" forced removals of the Swazi in 1914 as well as of the crippling tax burden reimposed upon the Swazi in 1915 after nine years of reduced taxes in response to the decimation of the Swazi herds in the cattle disease epidemics.

The net effect of these measures was that, after only a little more than a decade of British rule, a carefully devised plan had been executed to:

- i) reduce the hitherto self-reliant non-capitalist economy to a level incapable of sustaining fully its population, a process that was only abetted by the cattle disease calamity. One response of the people to this new situation was precisely that intended by the colonial state: an acceleration in the rate of involuntary migration of workers into the local and South African cash economy. Since 1915 migrancy has been the dominant labour form in Swaziland, and
- ii) prepare the ground for the development of a fully-fledged colonial capitalist state with an unrestricted inflow of foreign capital.

After 1914, the pattern of capital penetration into Swaziland can be periodised as follows:

i) The Pre-World War II Period

Capital of two main types entered in this period:

a) British Mining Capital

Initially this capital exploited Swaziland's gold and tin

resources but the return here proved to be disappointing. However, in the 1930s, British capital found a lucrative outlet in large deposits of asbestos in northwest Swaziland and in 1938 the British multinational firm of Turner and Newall opened the mine which it still operates today.

b) British and Afrikaner Agricultural Settler Capital

Most of this capital went initially into beef ranching and after 1920 into the development of tobacco and cotton farming in the middle and lowveld areas. The entrepreneurial colossus amongst the settlers and their foremost spokesperson was Allister Miller. It is little exaggeration to describe Miller as a scaled-down version of Cecil Rhodes. A visionary and man of boundless energy, he was also a cunning schemer and thoroughgoing bigot. He despised Afrikaners and, through his mushroom Land Settlement Scheme, undertook a vigorous recruitment campaign to keep out Afrikaner settlers and populate the expropriated lands with "good British stock", ex-military officers being most favoured. To Miller's undoubted chagrin, many of these British settlers soon sold the farms they had acquired at basement prices. A very high proportion of the buyers turned out to be Afrikaners.

ii) The Post-World War II Period

A major change in the composition of capital occurred after 1945 with the large-scale inflow of multinational capital of British and South African origin. Again, as in the earlier period, this "big" capital penetrated the two sectors of mining and agriculture.

a) Mining

The Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa has been the single largest post-war investor in Swazi mining. Through a local subsidiary, it operates the country's largest coal mine at Mpaka

but its single largest mineral's investment was in the ancient iron-ore deposits at Ngwenya. Along with a minority British shareholder (10% of the equity was held by the steel company of Guest, Keen and Nettlefold), Anglo operated this from 1964-81. Virtually all the output was exported to Japan by way of a railway especially built for this purpose from the mine to the Mozambique border. So generous was the concession granted to Anglo by the colonial state, without any consultation with the King and Swazi National Council, that the one time Minister of Finance in the first post-independence government once observed to me "that Swaziland swopped an iron-ore mine for a railway" (2).

Fifteen years later the tables were turned when King Sobhuza rejected the terms under which De Beers were prepared to exploit the diamond deposits it had found at Ehlane. This after De Beers had spent five million Emalangenis on prospecting and feasibility work. The King's attitude was reported to be that in fifty years the diamonds would still be there and still be valuable and perhaps a better deal could be obtained then for their exploitation.

b) Agriculture

In agriculture the primary post-war generator of capital investment has been the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), a British parastatal organisation which operates as a profit-making commercial company. It began its operations in Swaziland in 1950 when it purchased in the Northern Lowveld 106,000 acres of an 111,000 acre concession originally granted in 1891 by Mbandzeni to a John Thorburn. Sixty-one years later Thorburn's successors were still farming the area as Swaziland Ranches Ltd.(3) It is now an extensive area of irrigated sugar, rice and citrus cultivation. Elsewhere CDC invested in tobacco, cotton, and above all timber production. Today it operates the world's second-largest man-made forest of 55 million trees in partnership with the British firm of Cortaulds. Presently the sale of the forest and pulp mill to Anglo-American is being negotiated. In

the late 1950s a second major sugar development area was opened up in Southern Swaziland by Allister Miller's former company, Ubombo Ranches Ltd., by then owned by Lonhro.

Thus, by the 1960s and the initiation of negotiations for the restoration of Swaziland's independence, the composition of capital was as follows:

- i) Private settler agricultural capital of predominantly British and South African origin. This capital was invested in large private estates and ranches and was, for the most, a highly profitable sector;
- ii) Foreign multinational capital concentrated in plantation-type agriculture (British) and in mining (British and South African).

Penetration by capital and the accompanying process of proletarianisation affected the decolonisation process in a number of ways:

- i) the presence of settlers meant that there was within the colonial bourgeoisie a powerful local fraction with particular and considerable interests to protect. Well organised, they articulated their political concerns through the European Advisory Council, various Farmers Associations and in the early 1960s through a specifically political body, the United Swaziland Association (USA). Initially they, like their counterparts elsewhere in Africa, were opposed to the very notion of Swazi independence. However, as political reality seeped through to them, they shifted to "an independence on an equal power-sharing basis" position (a 50/50 European-African share of parliamentary seats) with additional property rights guarantees. These the Swazi traditional rulers were initially prepared to give them until after the 1964 elections which the USA and the political arm of the Swazi National Council, the Imbokodvo National Movement (INM), fought in agreement. Following the INM's across-the-board election victory and sensitive to opposition

charges of a "sell-out" to Europeans, the traditional rulers reversed their position in favour of universal franchise without reserved European representation. This shift did not produce a significant rift between the Swazi rulers and the settler bourgeoisie as by 1965 more progressive elements amongst the settlers, most notably Carl Todd, Natie Kirsh and Michael Tomlinson (4), were publically opposing the USA's stance. Organised as a Committee of Twelve it included some of the biggest non-indigenous property holders in Swaziland but they eschewed any need for property guarantees.

as to.....safeguards for those Europeans who fear the future these are found in the fact that the European with his capital, experience and skills is vital to the economy, development and prosperity of the territory. This is recognised by the Swazi Nation and therein lies the guarantee (5).

Reassured by the "Twelves" confidence and as it was the most conservative option available, the vast majority of settler voters supported Imbokodvo in the 1967 pre-independence elections in concrete expression of the coalescence of interests and outlooks which had developed between the traditional rulers and settler capital.

ii) Foreign multinational capital took an initially neutral position on the question of which element of Swazi society would control state power at independence. While ideologically it tended to favour the traditional rulers because of their more conservative disposition and accommodating attitude to capital, it also tended to feel that one or a coalition of the petty-bourgeois nationalist parties reflecting the interests of the better educated sections of the population might actually be more functional to capital's needs. A second factor which kept foreign capital from outright support for the Swazi rulers was their position on the ownership of mineral rights and royalties. The King and National Council were determined to regain exclusive control of Swaziland's mineral wealth and this was a position which multinational capital naturally opposed. By the mid-60s, however, it had abandoned its neutrality and thrown its

not inconsiderable weight behind Imbokodvo. This shift was occasioned by two main factors.

a) The overwhelming popular support for the INM as reflected in the 1964 election results;

b) the 1963-64 strikes and wave of labour militancy which swept through all the main centres where multinational capital was located and then spread into the capital Mbabane. These events alarmed both the colonial state and the traditional rulers and they co-operated to crush the worker challenge. The King's decisive anti-strike position impressed the foreign bourgeoisie while the support for the strike and the increasingly socialist and strident rhetoric of the main opposition party to the INM alienated it. In this context foreign capital came to realise that support for the traditional rulers was in the best interests of capital.

The development of labour class consciousness in the early 1960s has been subjected to little analysis. Why, after years of dormancy was there this sudden surge of worker unrest? Fransman attributes it to an increasing rate in the socialisation of the relations of production (i.e. an increase in the size of the working class) and a concomitant development of labour class consciousness (6). No doubt this was a factor but it is a very generalised explanation and does not adequately explain the lack of worker class action in the 1940s and 1950s when even then there was a comparatively high level of proletarianisation. The argument offered by Booth in his paper in this volume seems more plausible. He suggests that the rapid increase in the rate of unionisation in the early 1960s and the subsequent strike wave was labour's response to the dramatic change in the labour market when quite unexpectedly supply exceeded demand. In response, capital withdrew long-standing concessions in the form of labour inducements and enforced more rigorously regulations which it had frequently ignored in the period when there was acute competition between settler, multinational and South African capital.

iii) The domination of the independence political struggle by the traditional rulers was not simply the result of support from capital; it was also the product of the colonial state's conscious concern not to undermine too severely the authority of the king and 'Liqoqo' in the non-capitalist sector. While the state refused to accord Sobhuza his rightful title of 'King' and referred to him as "Paramount Chief" instead, it did affirm the monarchy's legitimacy in other ways. It collected for the traditional authorities the various tax levies they imposed from time to time upon the Swazi, subjected their control of the customary courts to little interference and, in the 1940s, provided cash grants to facilitate the King's programme of buying back the appropriated lands. This conservation strategy was both politically necessary as well as being functional to capital's needs. The traditional land tenure system, for example, enabled the Swazi rulers to perform the political function of control over the peasant majority while, as Richard Levine has put it, this "same control which the Swazi rulers had over land allocation proved to be a significant pre-capitalist economic practice which was perpetuated in the interests of capital since it also constituted an important pre-condition for a steady supply of cheap labour power" (7).

Thus by colonial design and their own efforts the traditional rulers entered the 1960s as the single most powerful and coherent indigenous group and the natural claimants to state power. They acquired that power in 1968 through the effective mobilisation of their peasant constituency and with the solid backing of settler and multinational capital. The stage had been set for an harmonious post-colonial state-capital alliance.

The Post-Colonial Economy

Swaziland's post-colonial political economy reveals a basic continuity from the colonial situation and a smooth transition from a condition of colonial to neo-colonial dependency. Yet no situation

is constant and the thirteen years of independence have brought changes to both the nature of capital's domination and the state's response. The salient features of the contemporary political economy can be summarised as these:

- i) the continuing subordination of the Swazi economy to foreign capital but with a shift within the constellation of capitalist forces active in the economy so that today South African capital is the dominant factor;
- ii) a consolidated and intensified capital state partnership functioning at both an ideological and structural level with the Swazi government and or Swazi Nation having entered into joint venture arrangements with capital, normally as a minority shareholder;
- iii) the development of the Swazi ruling class of a material base in the capitalist sector through skilful use of the King's exclusive control over the nation's mineral royalties;
- iv) a consolidation of the position and power of the traditional rulers over the Swazi people through a change to the form of the state involving an abandonment of many aspects of the inherited Westminster system and an imposition over the entire system of an amended version of the traditional structures of authority previously confined by the colonial state to the non-capitalist sector;
- v) an increased level of repression with the abolition of party politics, the effective destruction of the labour movement and the imposition of a seemingly permanent state of emergency which includes provision for such coercive measures as detention without trial;
- vi) an emerging trend within the economy towards monoculture

dependency with an hugely increased reliance for export and foreign exchange earnings upon a single crop, sugar;

vii) an increasing embroilment in a vortex of bloody conflict as the revolutionary struggle against the apartheid state escalates and spreads waves of violence across Southern Africa, a situation with menacing consequences for the Swazi state;

These points each require some elaboration:

Subordination to Foreign Capital

Independence has brought a steady inflow of capital into every sector of the economy except mining where there has been an actual decline with the closure of the iron-ore operations. Biggest recipient of this inflow has been agriculture where corporate investment in sugar in particular has produced increased annual yields up from 161,223 tons in 1970/71 to 240,695 tons in 1979/80. Further expansion presently underway will boost that amount to over 400,000 tons by 1982/83. Elsewhere government has stimulated a steady growth in manufacturing with the creation of three industrial estates for the location of import-substitution concerns while a flourishing tourist industry has grown up mainly around the Holiday Inns group which operates four hotels including the lucrative Royal Swazi Spa and Casino. In fact it was the huge profits generated by the Swazi Casino which triggered the establishment of the chain of gambling casinos in South Africa's "independent" homelands and neighbouring dependencies. Swaziland now has two of them.

Up until 1968, British and South African capital dominated certain sectors of the economy separately and were jointly involved in others. Today British capital dominates only banking and agriculture, a situation which in the latter area will change somewhat if the sale of the Usuthu forest to Anglo-American is concluded. With their existing ownership of the large Piggs Peak forests (Peak Timbers Ltd.), Anglo will then control over 90% of

production of Swaziland's second biggest earner of export revenue.

Each year since independence has seen South Africa supplying Swaziland with more than 95% of its imports by way of a freight haulage system operated by South African Railways which has a virtual transportation monopoly over Swaziland's import and export traffic. The only dent in this monopoly is the small volume of trade which flows in and out of Maputo by way of the railway originally built for the iron-ore mine. With the mine's closure the railway now carries coal, some sugar and other assorted goods. However, far from developing this outlet and reducing the reliance upon the South African connection, it has instead been consolidated by the recent construction of a new rail link to Richards Bay and the announcement of an intention to extend that line across northern Swaziland to the South African border near Komatipoort. Legislation authorising an extension of the Komatipoort line to the Swazi border was passed recently in the South African Parliament. During the Assembly debate it was stated that it would serve the Mhlume sugar refinery in Swaziland while "the project was welcomed as a constructive step which would help cement and improve relationships with Swaziland" (8). The extraordinary feature of this increasing intergration of the South African and Swazi rail systems is that it runs directly counter to the strategy of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) of which Swaziland is a member. One of SADCC's stated objectives is a reduction in the dependence upon South Africa's transportation network.

The growth in the manufacturing and mercantile sectors has been fuelled mainly by South African capital. Here the most active investor has been the new South African corporate giant, Natie Kirsh. His Kirsh Industries has a monopoly over maize milling and importation, holds the lucrative Datsun and Mercedes-Benz franchises, operates the largest trade wholesaler (Metro) as well as the largest hardware and agricultural supply stores, owns 50% of the shares in the country's two largest shopping plazas, has a small timber estate as well as factories for the manufacture of plastic goods and medical drugs for export in the African market.

Little surprise then that Mr. Kirsh spent E200,000 on his recent 50th birthday celebrations in Swaziland.

South African capital thus has an octopus-like grip on the Swazi economy which provides mechanisms of domination complementary to that provided by Southern African dominance in the regional Customs and Monetary Union. This agreement which dates back to 1910 has, as Crush has noted, "served, in practice, to provide close and deepening economic subordination to South Africa" as well as retard Swaziland's fiscal autonomy (9).

British capital now occupies a secondary position in the overall context of the Swazi economy but Britain nevertheless remains an important market and source of aid. Even so, since 1968 new investors, markets and donors have emerged, the most important of which is the European Economic Community where, in terms of the Lomé Convention, Swaziland has important sugar and citrus quotas at guaranteed prices. Outside Europe, Taiwan, Canada and the United States are major donors. In the area of outside assistance, therefore, we see a diversification of Swaziland's external dependence.

Partnership with Capital

Swaziland operates an "open-door" policy in regard to outside investment. The National Industrial Development Corporation of Swaziland (NIDCS) is the parastatal charged with the function of soliciting capital and, in its operations, it offers the generous incentives common to the Southern African peripheral and homeland states. In its promotional literature NIDCS makes a virtue of Swaziland's cheap labour structure and emasculated labour movement: "Wages in Swaziland are low even when compared with those in other African countries Swaziland has only one effective trade union..... strikes are rare" (10). It also stresses the state's desire to work in partnership with outside capital and its normal policy is that investors should have at least 51% share control. In fact, that percentage is usually a good deal higher as NIDCS will

not normally take more than 40% of the equity and "neither does it desire to manage any enterprise as it considers this is the prerogative of the promoting technical partner"(11). This partnership theme is ideologically expressed in the frequent pronouncements of such public officials as Minister of Justice, Polycarp Dlamini, who once told Holiday Inn's officials "we do not intend to take over but we would like to work in partnership with you"(12).

The capital state alliance is given structural expression through joint venture arrangements with capital by either government, through NIDCS, or the Swazi nation through the Tibiyo Taka Ngwane Fund (for details on this Fund see next section). The NIDCS ventures are usually entered into with manufacturing concerns while it is Tibiyo which acquires equity in the multinational concerns such as Turner and Newall and Lonhro and CDC's sugar operations. In each case, Tibiyo's equity share is 40%, as it is in a recently concluded share transaction with Swaziland Brewers, a subsidiary of South African Breweries. It also holds 33% of the shares of Rennies Swaziland operation while it recently acquired half-share control of CDC's Swaziland Irrigated Scheme, a large agricultural export estate. There have been only two instances where an outright majority shareholding has been acquired. NIDCS holds 51% control of a newly established cotton gin at Big Bend while the Swaziland government and Tibiyo each have a 32% shareholding in the newly opened sugar development area at Simunye. Despite this joint majority control, the Simunye case again illustrates the "alliance approach" to capital with operating control of the project having been given over to the British sugar giant Tate and Lyle in terms of a management contract.

The Material base of the Swazi Rulers

Section 91 of the Independence Constitution vested control over Swaziland's mineral wealth in the King in trust for the Nation. In 1968 the King created the Tibiyo Taka Ngwane Fund into which all funds derived from mineral royalties were to be deposited. In 1975,

the King decreed that these funds would henceforth be held by a new organisation (Tisuka Taka Ngwana) while Tibiyo's activities were henceforth to be financed by dividend payments from its share holdings and other income generated by its various projects. According to a report in a local newspaper, (13) Tibiyo's financial accounts as at April 30, 1980 revealed Accumulated Funds of E37,963,216 while Barclays Bank's 1981 Economic Survey of Swaziland reported Tibiyo's income for the 1978-79 financial year as E9.4 million, of which E9.3 million was from dividends (14).

According to this report in the Swazi Observer, itself owned and operated by Tibiyo, Tibiyo's income for the 1978-79 financial year as Tibiyo, Tibiyo's funds have since 1968 been spent in the following ways:

- a) land purchases;
- b) share acquisitions;
- c) investments in agricultural and other projects. These latter include joint ventures with other investors in the Royal Swazi National Airways and in an insurance corporation, Tibiyo Insurance Brokers. In agriculture, Tibiyo has launched schemes designed to advance Swaziland towards self sufficiency in such basic foodstuffs as maize, rice, vegetables (15), beef and milk. In addition, Tibiyo operates an Angora goat-breeding scheme for the development of a mohair industry and is planning the creation of a poultry industry;
- d) educational assistance in the form of a secondary school bursary scheme and the provision of scholarships for overseas University studies;
- e) grants and loans to local institutions such as the University College of Swaziland, the Swaziland Defence Force and various cultural groups.

The E5 million which Tibiyo has spent in purchasing freehold land has boosted the percentage of the land under the nation's control to 55%. Much of this land is now under sugar cultivation. This includes the Simunye project in which Tibiyo invested E13 million and two smaller schemes - Sivoya and Sivunga - which

involves a number of small Swazi farmers under the management of Lonhro's Ubombo Ranches Company.

In a dependent, peripheral economy with a limited potential for domestic capital formation, Tibiyo has emerged as the major vehicle for domestic capital accumulation. But the point to note is that this revenue does not accrue to the Ministry of Finance but to the traditional rulers and neither are Tibiyo's operations publically accountable to Parliament. Its Board of Trustees is appointed by the King and its present Chairman is the Prime Minister, Prince Mabandla. Its five other members include two additional members of the royal family, Princes Mfanasibili and Makhungu, as well as the King's Private Secretary, Mr. Martin Mdiniso. Day-to-day operations are conducted by a Management Committee headed by Dr. Sishayi Nxumalo, former Minister of Industry, Mines and Tourism and a close confidante of the King. Thus, the Tibiyo Fund, while contributing much that is beneficial to Swaziland's development effort, should also be viewed as the mechanism by which the Swazi rulers have acquired a material base in the capitalist sector of the economy, acquiring thereby a degree of influence over the economy while simultaneously solidifying their alliance with foreign capital.

The Changed State Form

Swaziland inherited a conventional Westminster-type framework of government headed by the King as a constitutional figurehead with real power vested in an elected executive and bicameral legislature. The Constitution allowed for multiparty political activities although all elected seats in the first Parliament were held by the Imbokodvo National Movement. This constitutional situation prevailed until 1973 when the King revoked the constitution, suspended Parliament, banned all political parties including his own Imbokodvo party and took all executive, legislative and judicial powers to himself. Simultaneously he announced the formation of a national army. This all occurred after a protracted legal wrangle over the Swazi citizenship of one of the three

opposition MPs to have been elected in the first post-independence election in 1972. The actual trigger to the King's action was a decision of the Swaziland Appeal Court (then, as it is now, comprised of three South African judges) to declare unconstitutional the Immigration Amendment Act passed by Parliament to deal with cases of disputed nationality. Some years of personal rule by decree in conjunction with a Council Ministers followed but, since 1980, a new state form has emerged.

Basically, the new system amounts to an imposition over the entire society of the long-standing traditional governmental structures to which certain forms of the Westminster system have been wedded. The two-chamber Parliament has reopened but party politics remains banned. Its MPs are now elected by a process which involves the traditional Tinkundhla (16) selecting a 80 member (2 per Tinkundhla) electoral College which then elects the lower house of Parliament. However the King's ultimate control over the procedure is achieved by provisions empowering him to approve all candidates at the Tinkundhla level as well as to nominate some members of the lower house and the entire upper house. The Prime Minister too is selected by the King and thus far all three premiers of the post-independence era have been Princes of the royal Dlamini clan.

Thus, while Tibiyo has given the traditional rulers a material base in the capitalist economy, the new state form has enabled them to secure social and political domination over both the non-capitalist and capitalist sectors. In a very real sense, the Swazi cabinet and civil service are merely the administrative agents for decisions which originate with the King and Swazi National Council and reach them by way of a modern-type Parliament dominated by carefully chosen traditionalists.

Increased Political Repression

When measured against most Third World dictatorships, Swaziland is a human rights paradise. Political opponents do not

disappear, terror against the people is not used as a political weapon and most principles of the rule of law are observed. Yet since 1973 there has been a discernible rise in the level of political repression. Party politics is proscribed and non-traditional political elements have no effective political outlets. Trade unions are legal but official policy is hostile to their existence on the grounds that they, like political parties, are "un-Swazi", as well as being divisive forces in the society with a capacity to affect adversely the investment climate. However, while political parties have been banned, trade unions, with one exception, have not. Instead the provisions of the state of emergency have been applied to emasculate them. These regulations provide that any gathering of a political nature of ten or more individuals requires police authorisation and this permission has simply not been given, not even when the unions have only wanted to elect office bearers. Consequently the trade union movement has been forced into non-activity and has just withered away. As of January 1970 there were nine registered unions in Swaziland. Today none of those functions while one, the Swaziland National Union of Teachers, is actually banned, having been outlawed in 1977 after a teacher strike and a wave of student demonstrations. The one union which does function is the small Bank Workers Union formed in the early 1970s. Its small size, petty-bourgeois orientation and the fact that it is recognised by the employers probably accounts for its survival.

Accompanying the King's suspension of the constitution in 1973 was the introduction of a provision allowing for the detention without trial of individuals for periods of 60 days at a time. It has not been widely used although some 15 individuals were held for two years in the late 1970s. Included in that group were the one-time opposition leader, Dr. Ambrose Zwane, and one of the leading figures in the early 1960s labour movements, Prince Dumisa Dlamini. All were released in 1980 and presently there are no political detainees. However the very existence of a detention provision has had an intimidating effect on any expression of

dissent and there is little doubt that the present rulers have the necessary means with which to contain any internal challenge to their hegemony.

The Tendency towards Monoculture

A superficial examination of the Swazi economy suggests that it is a balanced and diversified one with revenue derived from a number of agricultural products (sugar, wood and wood products, cotton, tobacco, citrus fruits and rice), from raw materials in coal and asbestos as well as from tourism and receipts from the Customs Union. However, closer examination reveals disturbing signs and none more so than in the growing dependence upon sugar. Sugar is quite simply "King" in the Swazi economy. Figures were given earlier of the dramatic increase in the production tonnage in the 1970s. That increase is set to continue until 1983 when the Simunye scheme will be in full operation. By then the sugar industry estimates that annual production will be over 400,000 tons which will make Swaziland the second biggest producer in Africa. Already in Swaziland sugar is the largest land user, the greatest exploiter of natural resources through its use of extensive irrigation, the largest single employer (as of 1979 it was estimated that 60,000 people were wholly or partly dependent upon sugar for a living), a major revenue earner for government outside normal company taxation (the industry pays an additional tax levy of 50% on ex-mill earnings above a basic price per metric ton that is fixed by government), and the biggest single earner of foreign exchange. Here the shift in the balance of the economy is dramatically revealed. In 1972 sugar contributed only 20% to foreign exchange earnings; in 1980 that contribution had soared to 50% and the estimate is that it will reach 53% in 1983. Noting this trend towards monoculture dependency, the Barclays Bank Economic Survey of Swaziland commented:

This reliance on a single crop for export and foreign exchange earnings introduces an element of insecurity into the

economy. Moreover the position is further aggravated by the erratic fluctuations of sugar prices on world markets. Any additional major expansion programme in the sugar industry would increase the economy's vulnerability(17)

No such expansion beyond 1983 is envisaged but the Simunye scheme could prove a costly gamble. The world sugar price has slumped since 1980 and there seems little immediate prospect of a major improvement and, by 1983 when the industry reaches full production, 75% of Swaziland's sugar will have to be sold at prevailing market prices. The agreement with the European Economic Community which guarantees Swaziland a price presently well above the world level covers only 116,400 tonnes of white sugar.

Overall, the Swazi economy presents a worrying picture. Real growth in the latter half of the 1970s was estimated at between 2 to 3% but every indication suggests that the rate is falling. In 1974 Swaziland had a trade surplus of E44 m. This fell to E18 m in 1977 with negative balances being achieved in both 1978 and 1979. The surplus in the balance of payments achieved in 1980 was followed by a deficit of E60 million in 1981. Given the present recession in the world economy an even larger deficit is anticipated for 1982. The recent deficits have resulted in a drop in the level of Swaziland's international reserves to E89.5 million in December 1981, a 20% drop over the position twelve months earlier. A further factor of concern is Swaziland's growing external debt burden as a result of loans taken out to finance a number of large development projects. Repayments on a number of these loans must be begun in the 1980s.

Domestically unemployment is looming as a major problem. An estimated 7,000 school leavers enter the job market each year to compete for the approximately 2,400 jobs being created annually. Again this is a situation that can only worsen given Swaziland's accelerating rate of population growth, presently at over 3% p.a. The seriousness of the situation is recognised by the King who told parliament in February of this year that the unemployment problem was "bound to reach crisis proportions"(18). In a recent lecture at

the University College of Swaziland, the local economist, Dr. M.S. Matsebula, described Swaziland's economic future as bleak. He argued that average standards of living were falling for Swaziland as a whole with the situation being worst on Swazi nation land where he claimed standards had been falling since 1974 (19).

In short, therefore, it would seem as if the solid growth years of the Swazi economy are over and that the prediction made by Crush in 1979 was correct. Surveying future economic prospects, he argued that Swaziland would "move towards" the more common peripheral capitalist position of balance of payments deficits and larger external indebtedness (20). That condition has now been attained.

Conflict in Southern Africa

A frequently voiced question in Swaziland today is "what will happen when the King dies". While the death of a revered and longstanding national leader introduces an element of uncertainty about that nation's future, in my view Sobhuza's death poses fewer dangers to Swaziland's stability than does the struggle for liberation in South Africa. With the collapse of the Portuguese buffer zone, Swaziland is now a forward position in a war of mounting intensity. Evidence from trials in South Africa of ANC insurgents suggests that Swaziland is a well-worn infiltration route into South Africa and that many of those responsible for the escalated level of ANC actions in 1981 entered via Swaziland. It is this latter fact and the ANC's increased effectiveness which presents a real danger to the Swazi state and its rulers who find themselves caught in a classic dilemma between their obligation as an OAU member to at least not obstruct the liberation effort and the possibility of severe South African military retaliation. Already South African agents have penetrated Swaziland's security to kidnap ANC members, blow up ANC houses and ambush ANC guerillas. The threat the Swazi rulers must face up to is that the target of such and other more destructive actions will shift from the

ANC to those who tolerate its presence in Swaziland. Southern Angolan type raids on economic targets in Swaziland is not an unthinkable possibility. Such attacks could destroy Swaziland's fragile infrastructure virtually overnight and bring the country to its knees economically.

So how are the Swazi authorities likely to react as the war intensifies in the eighties and becomes ever more destructive and vicious? Will they maintain the status quo of tolerating an ANC presence and the use it makes of Swaziland and risk being turned into a Southern African Lebanon, or will they clamp down and perhaps expel the organisation and its members and sympathisers from the country? My own view is that the latter course is the more likely. Perhaps a clue to their actions will be provided by the outcome of the present discussions over Kangwane's possible incorporation into Swaziland. While the issue is presented as a simple one of Swaziland regaining some of its 'lost' territory, many are convinced that there is a hidden factor in the deal and that the quid pro quo South Africa will expect for a surrender of some of its territory will be an elimination of the ANC threat emanating out of Swaziland. Already there are signs of a hardening of attitudes by the Swazi authorities to the ANC with more stringent enforcement of refugee regulations, more frequent raids on known ANC houses, tougher sentences for those caught bearing "arms of war", a near total embargo on travel by ANC members to and from Maputo, talk of a large camp to house all refugees and the "withdrawal" of the longstanding chief ANC political representative in Swaziland. Are these actions part of the Kangwane scenario or a simple response to warnings said to have been given to Swaziland by Pretoria, or perhaps both?

Kangwane's incorporation, whether accompanied by an ANC clamp down or not, will create other problems for the Swazi government. It is certain to evoke a strong reaction within the OAU where it will be seen not only as a violation of the OAU's position on the adjustment of inherited colonial boundaries but also by the more militant members as a "sell-out" to South Africa and a drawing

of Swaziland into South Africa's constellation of states. Will, in these circumstances, nations like Mozambique permit Swaziland to retain its membership of the counter-constellation SADCC? Will the ANC see incorporation, especially if tough action is taken against the organisation, as meaning that Swaziland has sided with South Africa against the liberation forces? Will they then view Swaziland as they do the Bantustans where the ANC has mounted several attacks on police stations etc?

In the rapidly changing political environment of Southern Africa in the 1980s, the precise course events will take is impossible to predict. However one thing is certain and that is that the political machinations of the South African government, the escalating armed struggle for change in South Africa and the regime's aggressive and militarised response, is causing large storm clouds to gather over Swaziland's future.

Footnotes

- 1 See Martin Fransman, The State and Development in Swaziland 1960-1977, unpublished D. Phil Thesis, University of Sussex, 1978.
- 2 Interview with the Hon. Leo Lovell, Mbabane April 1973. Between 1949-58, Lovell was labour Party M.P. for Benoni in the South African Parliament.
- 3 Details derived from CDC in the Swaziland Lowveld, CDC brochure published in London, undated, p3. An interesting historical footnote is provided by the fact that John Thorburn's son married Allister Miller's daughter.
- 4 Todd, Kirsh and Tomlinson were all then South African citizens with large property holdings in Swaziland. Todd, a partner in a Johannesburg law firm and director of more than 30 South African companies, began cattle farming in Southern Swaziland in 1939 and was a pioneer of private estate sugar farming in Swaziland. He was the first European settler to join the Imbokodvo National Movement and was appointed to the first post-independence Senate by the King. Similarly an appointed Senator, Tomlinson came to Swaziland in 1958 and is today a successful cotton and potato farmer near Manzini. He is now a Swazi citizen. Kirsh acquired a maize importation monopoly in 1958 and from that start has built up his enormous and growing business empire.
- 5 Statement published in the Times of Swaziland, April 1, 1966 reprinted in Fransman, op cit, p.277.
- 6 Fransman, op cit, chapter 5.
- 7 Richard Levine, "State, multinational and uneven development in the Swazi formation: the case of Simunye", paper presented to the Development Studies Honours Seminar, Witwatersrand University 1980, p8.
- 8 Rand Daily Mail, February 9, 1981.
- 9 Jonathan Crush, "The Parameters of Dependence in Southern Africa: A Case study of Swaziland", Journal of Southern African Affairs, Vol. VI. No.1, January 1979, p.56.
- 10 NIDCS, A Guide for Investors in Swaziland, Mbabane, undated.

- 11 "NIDCS Major Role in Economic Development", The Swazi Observer, September 4, 1981.
- 12 Hon. Senator Polycarp Dlamini quoted in Times of Swaziland, July 4, 1976.
- 13 "Tibiyo's record of Achievement", The Swazi Observer, September 4, 1981.
- 14 Swaziland: An Economic Survey and Businessman's Guide. Published by Barclays Bank of Swaziland Limited, 1981, p.35.
- 15 With the outbreak of a cholera epidemic in the Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland in 1980, Swaziland imposed a total ban on the importation from South Africa of fruits and vegetables. This move has created a major local market opportunity for vegetable and fruit production as there is little likelihood of the ban being relaxed in the foreseeable future. Only by invoking a "health requirement" can such bans be imposed without violating the provisions of the Southern African Customs Union.
- 16 The Tinkundhla is an institution of which all Swazis are members. There are 45 Tinkundhla in the country organised on a ward basis usually embracing two or three chieftancies. At their gatherings, which all members are expected to attend, local and regional issues are debated. No votes are taken but attempts made to develop a general consensus of the meeting's views. If necessary, these views can then be conveyed by the MPs to Parliament or by the Chiefs to the Swazi National Council.
- 17 Barclays bank, op cit, p 11.
- 18 Times of Swaziland, February 17, 1982.
- 19 Ibid. October 9, 1981.
- 20 Crush, op cit, p. 63.

LABOUR MIGRATION IN SWAZILAND: RECENT TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

Fion de Vletter

Introduction

Southern African migration literature has been inclined to relegate Swaziland as the subordinate case of the "BLS" composite. Ostensibly common geographical and historical characteristics, combined with migration research having been almost exclusively restricted to Lesotho and Botswana, has ipso facto led to Swaziland being treated as a parallel case, differentiated by degree only. Assimilation into the "common" migrant labour problem has generally been justified on the grounds of superficial evidence (e.g. South African mine recruitment) in the purported absence of more substantive data.

Recent work, largely inspired by the 1976 ILO Swaziland Migration Project, (1) will hopefully put Swaziland's case in a better perspective: not only are the contemporary flows structurally very different (at least spatially) to Lesotho and Botswana, but historical processes significantly divergent (Booth, 1981). Limited

by scope, this paper seeks to highlight the basic features of post-independence labour migration and briefly to consider its impact and policy considerations. Granted the paper largely addresses itself to current flows, it hopes to avoid falling into the neoclassical pitfall of ahistorical statics. Though not explicitly examined here, the evidence suggests an internal process of underdevelopment which has affected Swaziland's rural homestead population in ways not dissimilar to that of the more extreme labour reserves contiguous to South African industry. Thus, despite impressive macroeconomic performance, the rural exodus of labour, comparable to that of Lesotho, points to serious internal structural distortion.

By emphasising the importance of country case studies, and by implication the need for country specific policy recommendations, we should of course not decry the desirability of consolidating migrant supplier state efforts through the Southern African Labour Commission (SALC) (2) to exert greater bargaining leverage and focusing on truly common labour issues such as migrant worker rights and conditions. (3)

The Deployment of the Workforce

The directional flow of labour in terms of internal and external employment shows an almost inverse relationship between Lesotho and Swaziland. About half of Lesotho's adult males are employed in South Africa and external migration is said to exceed internal employment by a factor of 6 - 8 (Cobbe, 1981). Swaziland, on the other hand, is alleged to have the highest domestic rate of labour force employment in "developing" Africa (US AID, 1980).

Census results for 1976 found that 41,4 per cent of the resident African labour force was engaged in income generating activity, (4) the remainder being classified as "not employed". The domestically "active" workforce (as interpreted by the census) is skewed by disproportionate male participation: as a percentage of resident African labour force, there are twice as many men (58 per cent) as

women (28 per cent), rising to a ratio of three to one in full-time wage employment. Yet, the proportion of men with no education is marginally less than women, and those with secondary school education only slightly more. (5)

Wage employment is dominated by primary agriculture and linked to industry. The category "agriculture and forestry" (largely foreign controlled sugar, citrus, pineapple, and forest plantations) absorbs almost 40 per cent; while agricultural processing accounts for 85 per cent of manufacturing employment. Combined, agriculture and agro-based industry generate about half of total domestic wage employment. Once quite evenly diversified, modern agriculture has become increasingly overshadowed by sugar production, exposing the labour force to the inherent fluctuations of an open monocrop economy.

Absentees in 1976 were officially recorded as 25,650 of which 95 per cent were of working age and almost all were located in South Africa; absentees tend to be young (40 per cent fell within the 20 - 29 year age cohort), and men out-weighted women by the same proportion as in domestic employment. The census admits the strong likelihood of under-reporting and conservatively estimates the absentee figure to be in the region of 32,000, implying that a little more than one-tenth of the de jure labour force were based outside the country. Assuming that all those of working age in the upward estimate are employed, (6) almost half (47,7 per cent) of the de jure labour force was engaged in an income-generating activity but heavily lop-sided by males.

Dimensions and Characteristics of Labour Migration

i) External Migration:

Mine recruitment figures excepted, data on external migration is at best contentious. Swaziland census figures for absentees are widely divergent from numbers relating to foreign Swazis in South African censuses (see Table 1). Such discrepancies can in part be

explained by the clandestine nature of some flows, definitional amendments, misguided impressions of "temporariness", (7) etc. Empirical ambiguities notwithstanding, significant trends can be gleaned from the data: since the turn of the century, external migration, though increasing absolutely, has slowly declined in relation to total population; but, more importantly, absentees as a proportion of domestic employment have dramatically fallen. (8) Much of the decline can be attributed to the acceleration of domestic income generating opportunities, rising from 13 per cent of the resident African labour force in 1956, to 34 per cent in 1966, and 41 per cent in 1976 (see Table 1), but over the past two and a half decades legislation amending the status and mobility of BLS workers has been particularly discriminatory against the entry of women from the BLS states. (9) Reflecting the difficulty of re-employment in South Africa following temporary repatriation, about two thirds of the female absentees were said to be absent for more than one year compared with little more than a third for men. (10)

Although the 1976 census attempted to categorise the sectoral distribution of the absentees, little was added to the current fund of knowledge as almost half (49 per cent) were categorised as "other", with the remainder working on the mines (43 per cent) or "farms" (8 per cent). The enigmatic "other" would include thousands of workers from border catchment areas (11) working on nearby plantations and related industry where influx control measures do not appear to be strictly enforced. (12) Survey evidence also suggests that many more absentees are involved in skilled employment and professional services than is generally assumed. (13)

Accurate mine recruitment figures have not only provided a reliable barometer of external flows, but have allowed for quantitative analyses of variables influencing migrant decision-making. Mine recruitment up to 1977 was relatively free of exogenously imposed restrictions of flow; mine work was generally open to any Swazi male of sufficient age, weight and height. (14) Since 1977, when reacting to an overwhelming supply response to

higher wages and intensified recruitment campaigns, gold mines imposed restrictions on foreign recruitment and Swazi participation was dramatically reduced from the previous peaks of the mid-1970s (see Table 2), effectively precluding further trend analysis for free flow migration models.

The absolute number of Swazis recruited to the South African mines from the 1930's to mid-1970's has remained remarkably constant over the long run, averaging between 7,000 - 8,000 per annum; (see figure 3 in de Vletter, 1978), with short-term fluctuations induced primarily by the vicissitudes of agricultural production (Doran 1977; Booth 1981).

Unlike most labour reserve areas in Southern Africa, labour migration from Swaziland is not the export of a redundant labour surplus with no alternative option: during the most intense period of economic development (late 1940's to mid-1970's) Swaziland was plagued by labour shortages in certain sectors (see Booth's paper in this edition). Doran's simulation and regression studies demonstrate that a key determinant in the decision to work on the mines is the real Swaziland rural / South African mine income differential. His multiple regression analysis over 1970-76 (15) found that 96 per cent of the variation in recruitment was explained in terms of rural income (the push factor) and mine wages (the pull factor), with the relative importance of the pull factor outweighing the push factor by a factor of 3. This suggests that the foreign labour supply to South Africa is much more wage elastic than was imagined prior to 1976, (16) and explains the virtual doubling of recruitment over a short two year period (1974-76) - an upward trend stopped only by forced retrenchment (see Table 2).

External migration was felt by many local employers to be largely responsible for internal labour shortages which in turn was partially filled by Shangaan labour from Mozambique (de Vletter, 1978). The implication was that a large number of workers preferred work on the South African mines rather than at least some forms of domestic employment. Survey results (de Vletter 1978, 1981b) found, not surprisingly, that the majority of interviewed outgoing miners

preferred to work in Swaziland given the right conditions. Asked whether they were willing to work as manual workers on farms or forestry, citrus, and sugar plantations - areas suffering labour shortages at the time of enquiry - most responded negatively to each category, citing low wages and hard work as the principal reasons. (17) It was also found that 90 per cent of novice recruits had held previous domestic jobs, with more than 40 per cent leaving because of low pay. (18)

The skill range of Swazi miners is diverse, but they are particularly highly regarded for their abilities as drillers. Although many Swazis are career miners, the average Swazi recruit has a much more intermittent contract pattern than the Basotho or Mozambicans who generally regard mine work as a fairly long term source of income. (19) Before recruitment restrictions were imposed, Swazis were found to have the shortest average contract lengths with the mean number of previous contracts being 4,5 (2,8 median). Only 12 per cent of non-novices had worked on the mines ten or more times (de Vletter, 1981b).

ii) Internal Migration:

The dominant flow of labour migration is internal, primarily from the rural homestead base to wage employment opportunities. Census data provides some insight, but is limited to inter-censal "snapshots" of population movements, useful for the purposes of illustrating the spatial effects of unbalanced development, but giving no information about oscillatory patterns.

The preliminary results of the Swaziland Rural Homesteads Survey (20) (de Vletter, 1981a) corroborated and elaborated earlier survey evidence from the ILO Migration Project on labour movements and habits. It was found that one-quarter of the rural homestead population is normally absent, of which 80 per cent were in employment (as found by the 1976 census, employed males outnumbered females by a ratio of 3 to 1). More than two-thirds (67,6 per cent) of the homesteads had absentee workers (averaging more

than two per homestead). Including those homesteads who have resident (commuter) workers, it is estimated that 80 per cent of all rural homesteads have members earning off-farm income.

The majority of homestead absentees gravitated towards domestic activities: more than three quarters (77,5 per cent) remained in Swaziland, and of this internal flow, two thirds moved to "urban areas" defined to include company towns. Only 17,4 per cent of the absentees were known to be in South Africa of which 8 per cent (or 13,3 per cent of adult male absentees) were on the mines and 9,4 per cent in other activities (proportions similar to those for absentees in the 1976 census).

Growth of urban population, as registered up to 1976, has been surprisingly slow, but would be explained by Doran's model in terms of the "safety valve" of South African employment opportunities. Overall urban population growth during the 1966-76 inter-censal period was 3,5 per cent per annum, only marginally higher than the total national annual growth of 2,8 per cent. The fastest growth of 6,5 per cent was registered in the Manzini peri-urban area influenced mainly by the development of a new industrial area. However, since the 1977 mine recruitment restrictions were imposed, there has been visible evidence of rapid urban influx and subsequent open unemployment.

The migrant's agnatic position in the homestead was found to be important in determining the place of work and the remittances patterns. Senior members or those with strong family commitments are inclined to find local work while external migrants were generally younger with considerably fewer dependants. (21) Internal migrants, although on average earning less than external mineworkers, remitted more regularly and in greater amounts to their homesteads. The majority of nationally-based workers maintained close contact with their homestead base, visiting their families at least monthly. Mine workers in 1976 were found to average a period of 7-8 months away from their homes and an inter-contract home stay of 3,4 month (de Vletter, 1978; 1981b).

The Economic Impact of Labour Migration (22)

i) Homestead Labour Resources (23)

The effect on the homestead based labour resources is striking: almost one-third (31,6 per cent) of the homestead adult labour force (including those above 65 years) is physically absent, while one-tenth of the adults, though not absent, are engaged in wage employment near the homesteads, leaving no more than 58 per cent of the homestead adults (including the old and infirm) available for homestead based activities. Furthermore, this residuum is preponderantly female: only 42 per cent of the adult males appear not to be directly involved in off-farm activities versus almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of the adult females. About one-quarter (22,1 per cent) of the homesteads have their homestead head absent and 13,7 per cent are without all adult males.

ii) Homestead Cash Income (24)

The shortfall in labour inputs is generally compensated for in the form of money or in-kind transfers. The pervasive incidence of migration and the concomitant injection of cash for homestead expenditure underscores the degree of wage sector dependence. Half the homesteads indicated that they received remittances from absentee workers on a regular basis (usually monthly) averaging E40.2 per month or E482,4 per annum (Emalangeneni and Rands are interchangeable). More than one-third (38,7 per cent) had homestead-based workers, aggregating an average of E117,4 per month or E1,408,8 per annum.

By contrast, income from crops, except for only 14 per cent earning more than E500 per annum, was for most of the 41 per cent selling crops, an insignificant amount derived from residual surpluses. Similarly, livestock was sold by one-third of the homesteads and contributed an average of only E206 per annum. Non-agricultural homestead-based activities such as beer-brewing,

and traditional medicine was second only to migrant remittances as a source of cash, being engaged in by nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of the homesteads who averaged E213 per annum.

It should be borne in mind that just as the real value of agricultural production will be underestimated by not taking into account the imputed value of consumed crop and livestock production, the contribution from migrant workers has not considered the value of goods purchased and transferred home; substantial spending on building material; (25) the numerous cattle purchased by returning mineworkers (see iv below), and irregular remittances.

iii) Cropping Patterns

Homestead production in the BLS states and indeed most of Southern Africa consists predominantly of staple food crops with few homesteads opting for viable cash crop alternatives. Barriers to more "progressive" cropping systems are in terms of deficiencies in knowledge and the constraints of traditional attitudes. Rural development strategies therefore tend to be variations of a combined package of extension services, input facilities and resettlement schemes.

As part of the ILO migration project, Low (1977) undertook a micro-economic analysis of homestead cropping and the effect on or from labour migration. Together with Fowler, he has since synthesized his findings with the theoretical support of a labour allocation model (Low and Fowler, 1980: RDA MEU, 1980). The model was used to explain seemingly paradoxical trends observed in the homestead sector of Swaziland as well as Lesotho. Whereas the adoption of new technology, especially of hybrid maize, and tractors, was high in the Rural Development Areas of Swaziland, the desired shift to cash cropping was not forthcoming; furthermore, the number of deficit maize producing homesteads appears to have risen causing maize imports to increase at alarming rates in recent years, while cultivated lands have diminished.

On the basis of the labour allocation model, these trends can largely be explained in terms of relationships between the high purchase price of maize (staple food), the comparatively low cost of growing maize, the returns to wage labour and yields of cash cropping alternatives. Present differentials in these variables indicate that cash crop yields are not competitive with wage employment nor would it be rational in terms of the opportunity cost of buying maize to switch from staple food production to cash cropping.

Increasing returns to wage employment combined with higher rates of school enrolment (itself a function of wage levels) has explained a diminishing homestead labour force and consequent reduction in cultivated land. This trend has been exacerbated by rapid adoption of hybrid maize which has allowed for reduced labour inputs to grow the same quantities of food as previously but which has had the effect of releasing labour for wage employment instead of for cash cropping as envisaged. The greater use of tractor hire facilities has also encouraged labour outflow. As the return to wage employment increases relative to the purchase price of maize, so one can expect a greater outflow of labour and subsequent reduction in staple food production.

iv) Homestead Differentiation

The commonly assumed dichotomy between "farming" homesteads and migrant supplying homesteads does not appear to exist in Southern Africa. (26) Instead of a negative relationship between homestead agricultural income and off-farm earnings (a relationship implied by the "poorer homesteads are forced to migrate" pundits), a positive correlation was found in recent data and postulated 20 years ago. (27) An analysis of wealth and income distribution based on "wealth points" (28) gave a highly skewed stratification with a lorenz curve gini ratio of 0.462 (de Vletter, 1979). Although further research is needed, preliminary investigation shows a correspondence between homestead size and welfare (29) and that

migrant remittances constitute an important component of the overall incomes mix in wealthier homesteads (de Vletter, 1981a). The role of migration in the homestead "development cycle" (Spiegel, 1981; Murray 1980) requires further rigorous examination and should unveil new dimensions on the dynamics of homestead evolution.

v) Agricultural Investment

Exposure to a more cosmopolitan environment and new ideas during the course of off-farm employment will transmute some aspects of traditional homestead lifestyle, particularly via expenditure patterns. In Mozambique, migration to the mines appears to fit into a fairly distinct life-cycle pattern: after some 20 years of minework many migrants manage to accumulate surpluses to be invested in small businesses (often reflecting a skill learned while on the mines such as tailoring, carpentry or welding) or cash cropping (e.g. cashews or palms). (30) In Swaziland no identifiable transition is apparent, except perhaps in the purchase of cattle. Expenditure predilections between internal and external migrants showed interesting and significant variation: for most homesteads, migrant earnings were primarily used for family support. This was particularly evident from the response given by internal migrants, indicating that they spent money mainly on food, clothing, household goods and education, leaving little surplus for agricultural investment. External migrants also emphasised the importance of family support, but at least equal emphasis to the purchase of cattle - at least half of the interviewed mineworkers explicitly stating their intention to buy cattle. The importance of buying cattle was a trait conspicuously differentiating the external mineworker from the internal migrant, largely explained by the mineworkers' ability to accumulate wages and fewer family commitments. (31) Cattle, from the individual's perspective, are not only easily acquired but, in terms of expected yields, their purchase is an attractive investment. (32) But, from a national point of view, further stocking is detrimental as cattle density is

already the highest in Africa and overgrazing serious.

Although external migrants were found to spend more on agricultural inputs, the expenditures were relatively insignificant. Thus, rather than migration being a channel through which to infuse new ideas and capital for agricultural expansion, the net effect from a macro perspective would appear to be negative. The growing importance of cash income appears, however, to have had a positive influence on educational expenditure and housing improvement.(33)

vi) Skill Drain

The magnitude of the skill drain has been a continuing bone of contention but unfortunately has not been subjected to serious quantification. Results from the school tracer survey (Sullivan, 1981) offer some - albeit limited - insights indicating that a rough "maximum" of 12 per cent of Form 3 and Form 5 school leavers had worked in South Africa. As mentioned earlier, there are indications of many skilled professional Swazi working in South Africa.

To date, the skill drain has probably not merited undue concern, but developments in the South African labour market and the pattern of control adjustments over foreign labour flows (e.g. amending the status of "BLS" migrants in 1958, the prohibition of female migrants in 1963 and restrictions on mineworker recruitment since 1977) could, in the light of the severe shortages of skilled black labour in South Africa (Bloch, 1978), foreseeably lead to a situation where foreign skilled black workers are encouraged through wage incentives while the number of unskilled foreign workers, in the face of mounting South African black unemployment, would be progressively curtailed through adjustments in influx control measures.

vii) Factor Use Distortion

Complacency by government in the labour market, particularly

towards employment creation has probably been due to rapid economic growth over the past 30 years and the "safety valve" option for mine work in South Africa. However, in the span of a few years, Swaziland has reversed from a position of labour shortage to rapidly worsening unemployment, influenced by several contributory factors, namely: a slowing of economic growth in the late 1970's, a restricted flow of external migration since 1977, and the adoption of perverse technologies.

Capricious labour movements influenced particularly by concurrent outflows of Shangaan and Swazi workers, led to the introduction of labour-displacing capital for plantation work such as cutting and harvesting on the then existing sugar plantations, and sophisticated new technologies for the recently established Simunye Sugar Estate. (34) This trend has been exacerbated by government incentives such as generous capital cost allowances. Consequently, the adoption of such excessively capital intensive technologies has meant that employment growth, especially in sugar has not been increasing in proportion to total output.

viii) Domestic Working Conditions

External migrant reactions to some domestic employment alternatives suggests that accusing fingers pointed at South African conditions may be somewhat misdirected, and should perhaps first concentrate on putting the domestic house in order. Reliance by many plantations on cheap pliant imported labour and the seasonal employment of women (and sometimes children) has led to the oppressive conditions and low pay. The labour squeeze of the mid-1970's however, triggered both capital intensification (labour displacement) and heightened competition for labour through wage hikes and substantial improvements in worker housing. This trend was nevertheless soon tempered in the wake of the 1977 mine recruitment restrictions and subsequent domestic labour surplus.

Though much of the labour force are indeed "men of two worlds" - earning wages for family support while, by choice or

necessity, maintaining usufructory rights to land through the homestead - there is evidence that working conditions on many establishments intensify migratory oscillations. A comparison of two companies in the same industry showed that the company, where most workers were housed in isolated single-worker compounds with a minimum of facilities, suffered from very high rates of turnover and absenteeism; while the other, offering centralized family housing with diverse facilities, maintained a remarkably stable labour force (de Vletter, 1981b). It would appear that many men are not migrant workers by choice, but are willing - as a result of the prevailing primogeniture system of inheritance (see Rosen-Prinz and Prinz, 1978), changing attitudes, and land rights (if married) which can be exercised at a later stage - to move to the place of work with their families.

Repression of trade union activities coupled by serious staff shortages in the department of Labour (35) and abetted by growing unemployment, has relieved employers of much of the pressure needed to improve pay and conditions.

Policy Implications (36)

It has been officially recognised that growing unemployment, concomitant urban congestion, and increasing dependence on staple food imports (despite the explicit policy objective of self sufficiency by 1983) are among the most pressing economic problems currently faced by Swaziland and the following brief discussion of policy implications will be considered in the light of them.

It is assumed that migrant labour-related policies would fall within the framework of a regionally encompassing strategy adopted by the Southern African Labour Commission (SALC). Such a strategy would be expected to stabilise external migration flows in a predetermined pattern which, in turn, would allow individual countries to draw up meaningful national employment policies with specific labour absorption targets. A SALC initiated stabilization policy could follow one of a variety of possible actions ranging

from the 15-year withdrawal programme of the hypothetical "Association of Home Countries of Migrants" (AHCM) (Bohning and Stahl, 1981) to bilaterally (SALC Chamber of Mines) negotiated quota agreements.

Whatever strategy chosen, events over the past few years have made it clear that external and internal employment opportunities have been and will continue to be outstripped by a rapidly growing labour force. Hitherto unbalanced development patterns must therefore be reversed through conscious policy focusing on land as the only realistic alternative for suitable income generating activities.

i) Widening the Perspective of Rural Development

Agricultural production is sharply dichotomous; staple crops being mainly grown by the homestead or "subsistence" sub-sector and commercial crops by foreign controlled plantations and private farms. The commercial sub-sector, linked with agro-based industries dominates the economy in terms of value of economic output, foreign trade and wage employment.

Despite the strong interdependence between the two sub-sectors (primarily through wage employment), the realm of government formulated rural/agricultural development policy is clearly delineated, focusing on the homestead as a microeconomic unit rather than an integral component of a macroeconomic system. Thus, the homestead is viewed by planners as a knowledge and input-deficient production unit; whereas an analysis of labour utilization by cross-sectoral and international options, would see it more as an income-maximizing family base. The commercial sector, on the other hand, is judged, endorsed or often collaborated with by government on purely financial considerations.

As long as government isolates the two sub-sectors, the current imbalance of agricultural development will prevail, accompanied by continued homestead out-migration. The effect of rural development will at least be ad hoc and fragmentary, with homesteads

manipulating available services and inputs to maximize the benefits from all possible labour-use alternatives.

ii) Incomes and Pricing Policy

Short of direct physical controls, out-migration and urban drift will continue in spite of growing unemployment. Todaro's (1969) migration model, elaborated by Doran (1977), demonstrates that as long as "expected" (37) urban income exceeds real rural income, labour will continue to seek wage employment, and, as observed elsewhere in Africa, will often continue regardless of massive unemployment and urban squalor.

Swaziland's rural-urban income disparity has widened (38) and foreseeable trends underline the urgency for some form of incomes policy. Existing wage structures show considerable inter-sectoral variations (largely reflecting relative capital intensity) (Bevan and de Vletter, 1977) and, although earlier discussion implied that improvements were probably necessary on some plantations, inter-sectoral wage standardization should be considered. Free access to the South African mines has previously inhibited wage restraints, but the 1977 recruitment restrictions and perceived SALC strategies should allow greater wage structure independence, at least for unskilled and semi-skilled categories. Low (1977) demonstrated that by imposing taxes on South African mine earnings (currently exempt) the income incentive for the mine would be reduced, followed by a regional redistribution of mine recruitment and wage income with subsequent improvements in cropping techniques.(39)

The income differential concept is further refined by the Low/Fowler (1980) labour allocation model, arguing that the ebb of rural out-migration is conditional upon the right balance between wages, staple food prices and cash crop yields. Government agricultural pricing policy, might however require some amendments to the Southern African Customs Union Agreement.

iii) Commercialization of the Homestead

Many homesteads will have access to sufficient resources and suitable conditions enabling viable cash cropping systems; most, however, are faced with land area, soil fertility and climatic constraints, precluding any possibility of total reliance on agriculture. Outside of costly extensive irrigation projects on Swazi Nation Land, perhaps the only possible alternative would be radically to change the concept of the homestead. Currently, the homestead is effectively a producer of labour dispersed into a variety of activities (generally a combination of staple food production, wage employment, non-agricultural homestead activities and occasionally cash cropping) to maximise homestead income. With the employment option disappearing, smallholder plantation cropping could well provide a suitable alternative. The Vuvulane Irrigation Scheme, comprising of homesteads on carefully apportioned lots producing mostly sugar cane for a nearby mill, has proved very successful, as have other similar schemes. (40) Transforming large-scale sugar plantations (which are inappropriately capital intensive) into smallholder schemes requires some fundamental changes in government planning procedures, specifically, changing from commercially biased evaluation methods to socially adapted analyses (e.g. allocating more realistic shadow wage rates to labour (41)). With large shares of the sugar industry having fallen into the hands of government and the Swazi Nation, (42) such re-orientation should be easier. (43)

iv) National Employment Policy

A national employment policy embraced by a regionally imposed SALC strategy would not only be timely (in fact very overdue) but, with effective propaganda, psychologically important. Such a policy would be multi-pronged, encompassing various aspects of manpower utilization. Firstly, it would have to reverse hitherto luke-warm attitudes towards employment creation by focusing on unacceptably

high rates of capitalisation and low labour/output ratios. However, only a fraction of the growing labour force (probably no more than one-half, in the most optimistic of circumstances (44) can be absorbed by the formal sector. The second, and perhaps most important component, would therefore be the promotion of productive rural activities by means of a more coherent rural development strategy, incomes and pricing policies, and smallholder schemes, etc. Thirdly, in recognition of the close interdependence between homestead welfare and the wage sector, it is necessary to monitor closely dubious labour practices in commercial agriculture, especially during times of labour surplus, to provide greater security to dependant homesteads otherwise under the constant threat of capricious employer behaviour. (45) Finally, the national employment policy would have to tackle such emerging problems and issues as rising secondary school unemployment, curriculum development and industrial decentralisation.

Footnotes

- 1 The findings of the ILO project were published in five working papers - Doran (1977); Low (1977); Rosen-Prinz and Prinz (1978); de Vletter (1978); and de Vletter (1980) - the last paper being mostly reproduced as de Vletter (1981c). The main findings of these papers were summarised in two chapters (de Vletter 1981b and c) of the recent ILO book Black Migration to South Africa edited by W.R. Bohning. Follow-up and related work include: Funnell (1977); Low and Fowler (1980); RDAMEU (1980); and de Vletter (1979 and 1980a).
- 2 Following the 1978 Conference on Migratory Labour in Southern Africa (Lusaka), the Southern African Labour Commission was established, now comprising of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Although potentially effective and meeting regularly, apart from some administrative matters, it has not yet agreed on any notable regional policy relating to migrant workers in South Africa.
- 3 See de Vletter (1981c) for a fairly comprehensive discussion of policy recommendations relating to foreign black workers on the South African mines.
- 4 The 1976 census separated those in income-generating activities into 3 categories "full-time employed", "part-time employed" (i.e. those who worked for less than 12 months in the previous year) and "self-employed", respectively accounting for 25.2%, 6.7% and 9.5% of African residents aged 15 years or over.
- 5 The 1976 census found that 42% of the male resident labour force had no education vs. 45.5% for females; and that 16.7% of the male resident labour force had form 1 or higher education vs. 14.6% for females.
- 6 Realistically, a fair proportion of the absentee females are likely to be dependants.
- 7 It is likely that reporting on the part of the South African census may reflect wishful thinking as many of their defined "Swazis" are, from the viewpoint of Swaziland, permanent emigrants.
- 8 As a proportion of domestic employment, absentees fell from more than 200% in the 1930's to 30% in 1976, and probably 25% in 1980. Considering definitional changes in the term "absentees", this trend was probably more dramatic in reality.
- 9 From July 1963 no women or families could be recruited from the BLS countries nor could they accompany recruited husbands (Breytenbach, 1979).
- 10 It seems likely that many of these women are married dependents, returning to Swaziland for periodic visits.
- 11 See figure 7 in Volume 1 of the 1976 Census Report.
- 12 Personal communication in 1977 with Swazi labour and police officers in these areas indicated that it was easy to cross the border illegally and that it was regularly done. Furthermore, there was evidence of South African employers carting Swazi labour back and forth in lorries on a weekly basis.
- 13 A survey of secondary school students indicated that more than half had relatives or friends in South Africa. The three most frequently mentioned sectors were services (34%) manufacturing (16%) and mining (16%). Many of the vocations mentioned were at the skilled or professional levels (de Vletter, 1978).
- 14 Age is often difficult to prove so more reliance is given to height and weight.
- 15 Trend analysis could not be extended prior to 1970 because of inadequate data relating to the government sector as well as Swazi Nation crop production data. Furthermore, changes in statistical recording procedures in 1969 made pre-1970 private sector data unreliable.

- 16 Stahl (1974) attempted to calculate approximate wage elasticities of foreign black labour flows to South Africa, but subsequent events imply that his estimates were too low.
- 17 When asked why they went to the South African gold mines, the predominant reason was high wages, but one-third of the respondents mentioned the inability to find work. But, "work" would appear to imply suitable work as between 50-60% said they would not consider manual work in the four Categories mentioned, where labour shortages were being experienced.
- 18 It is generally assumed that a wage differential between Swaziland and South Africa is largely responsible for external migration. However, a wage study (Bevan and de Vletter, 1977) found that sectoral wage rates were similar (e.g. mining in Swaziland was competitive with South Africa), but that inter-sectoral differences (e.g. South African mine wages being considerably higher than Swazi agricultural wages) were responsible for labour shortages in the agricultural sector.
- 19 Van der Wiel (1977) found that the average length of time the Basotho migrant workers (mostly miners) spend outside Lesotho is between 13 years (for those on the Mountain zone) and 16 years (for those from the Lowlands). The Mozambique study (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane 1977) found that the worker-peasants on average spent 42-49% of their working lives on the mines with only about one-quarter spending less than 30% and another quarter spending nearly two-thirds of their working lives on the mines.
- 20 The survey sample covered 1 150 homesteads proportionately distributed in the four main topographic areas over the period 1978-79.
- 21 The average age of domestically-based workers (31.5) years was 3 years greater than for miners and the former had an average number of dependants of 6.9 (median 5.8) vs. 4.5. (median 3.4) for miners (de Vletter, 1978).
- 22 For a more comprehensive discussion, see de Vletter (1978; 1981b).
- 23 These findings were derived from de Vletter (1979; 1981a).
- 24 See note 23.
- 25 Over the past decade or so there has been a noticeable increase in the number of "permanent" structures (made of cement bricks) found in rural homesteads. This in itself is worth further investigation as it casts doubts on the argument that communal land tenure inhibits capital expenditures on agriculture due to the inherent insecurity.
- 26 See for example findings from Guma and Gay (1978) and van der Wiel (1977).
- 27 Although Hughes (1964) originally hypothesized a dichotomy between better farmers and migrant--dependant homesteads on examining his data, he found that homesteads producing larger amounts of maize also tended to have higher wage incomes.
- 28 "Wealth points" were made up of selected variables considered to be easily quantifiable by weighting and important in the contribution of homestead welfare e.g. cash income, cattle and goats owned, vehicles, sewing machines, etc. (see de Vletter, 1979).
- 29 Available evidence shows that larger homesteads tend to have a greater range of income earning activities and a more substantial wealth base. Thus they are often found to be comparatively progressive farmers, have larger numbers of cattle and more members in off-farm employment. However, preliminary analysis shows that wealth and income do not rise proportionately to homestead size (i.e. per capita "wealth points" are negatively related to homestead size). (Unpublished Rural Homestead Survey results).
- 30 See Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (1977) for a detailed discussion of post-mine work investment behaviour.
- 31 Virtually all Swazi miners opted for the deferred pay system, meaning that apart from a nominal monthly stipend (averaging between E 10-20 in 1976), wages are saved up until the end of the contract.

- 32 Calculations by economists with the Swaziland Development and Savings Bank have shown that the real rate of return on cattle is in the region of 15% per annum.
- 33 Educational expenditure is now pervasive and homesteads appear to consider it as a social (if not economic) necessity. Expenditures do not seem to be income or "wealth point" elastic (unpublished results from the Swaziland Rural Homestead Survey).
- 34 The new sugar mill is expected to employ workers at a capital cost of about E 65 000 per head, and the plantation will generate employment at a proportionately much smaller rate than existing plantations.
- 35 The past few annual reports of the Department of Labour have complained about serious staff shortages which have prevented the Department from efficiently conducting its stipulated duties.
- 36 See de Vletter (1981b) for a wider range and more comprehensive discussion of recommendations.
- 37 "Expected" urban income is determined by the probability of finding urban employment (a function of the level of unemployment, and one's experience in the job market) and the average level of income earned by those economically active. In other words, a very rough approximation of "expected" urban income is the probability of employment times the average wage level.
- 38 Funnel (1977) and Doran (1977) have estimated that real rural income at best has probably only managed to keep pace with the growth in population while modern sector incomes, particularly on the gold mines have risen dramatically.
- 39 Low argues that following a tax on miners, external labour would be proportionately higher than before in relatively labour abundant rural areas, meaning that income distribution would further favour areas such as the Middleveld and Highveld at the expense of the Lowveld. This adverse tendency would have to be weighed against subsequent improved cropping methods.
- 40 The Vuvulane scheme was initiated in 1963 by the Commonwealth Development Corporation and comprises of approximately 260 small-holders. A similar scheme has recently been initiated by government but further expansion has met resistance from traditional authorities (see note 43).
- 41 Low (1977) demonstrated that, on the basis of the seasonality of traditional cropping, the opportunity cost of external migration is virtually zero as mining contracts (previous to 1977) could be timed to complement agricultural input requirements. Current opportunity costs of rural out-migration would be somewhat higher, but, nevertheless a realistic shadow wage rate would be much closer to zero than prevailing wage levels.
- 42 The Tibiyo Fund (the trust fund for the Swazi Nation), in addition to its other interests (banks, major hotels, mines, agriculture, etc.), has a half interest in the Mhlume Sugar Company; a 40% share of Ubombo Ranches (sugar) and, in conjunction with the Swaziland Government, a 55% share of the S'imunye Sugar Company.
- 43 Traditional authorities appear sceptical about leasehold schemes, feeling that they would tend to undermine the chief's authority and foster rural elites. One way of overcoming the latter has been to reduce leasehold terms to 25 years on one scheme.
- 44 At an economic growth rate of 7% it is estimated that between 3-4 000 of the annual growth in the labour force of 7 000 could be absorbed by modern sector employment. Currently, however, the economic growth rate is about 3% and only between 1 300 - 1 700 new employment opportunities are being created annually (Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 1981).

- 45 Two examples of labour abuses which apparently occur on plantations are: (a) many workers are hired seasonally with terminal contracts with no allowance for continuity or credit for previous work when applying for work in the following season; (b) task and bonus work on sugar plantations have resulted in various forms of exploitation, such as workers bringing in families or sub-contracting work to children at appalling rates of pay.

**DEMOGRAPHIC DATA RELATING TO EXTERNAL MIGRATION FROM
SWAZILAND AND SOUTH AFRICAN CENSUS RESULTS**

Year	Swaziland censuses						South African census				
	de jure African population	Absentees	Absentees		Absentees as % of population	Domestic employment	Absentees as % of domestic employment	Absentees (5)		Absentees	
			Male	Female				Male	Female		
1911	104 533	5 800(1)	5 700	100	5.6	-	-	-	-	-	
1921	110 295	5 990	5 839	151	5.43	3 094	193.6	29 177	17 285	11892	
1936	153 270	9 561	9 451	235	6.23	3 354	285.1	31 092	21 311	9781	
1946	181 269	8 677	8 254	423	4.78	4 835	179.5	33 738	21 768	11970	
1956	229 744	11 728	10 569	1159	5.10	13 404	87.5	42 914(6)	26 721	16193	
1966	381 687	19 219	12 817	6402	5.03	60 116	32.0	38 892 (7)	23 402	15490'	
						(36 815)(2)					
1976	520 184	25 650	18 903	6747	4.93	104 250(3)	24.6				
						(76 942)(4)					

(1) The 1966 census gives a figure of 8 500 for "estimated" absentees, whereas the official 1921 census figure is 5 800. (2) According to the Manpower Information Unit employment in Swaziland at December 1966 was 36 815 as against 60 116 in the 1966 census. (3) This figure includes those categorised as "self-employed", "irregular employees" and "full time employees" in the 1976 census. (4) The Annual Wages and Employment survey (Central Statistics Office, 1977) gave this figure for the total employment in 1976 of which 66 215 were in wage employment. Given the nature of this survey, these figures are likely to be less than the actual numbers (more accurately reflected by the census). (5) "Absentees" in this table refers to Swazi nationals present in South Africa at the time of enumeration. (6).1951. (7). 1960.

TABLE 2

RECRUITMENT OF SWAZI MINERS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD AND
 PLATINUM MINES BY THE CHAMBER OF MINES
 1960 - 1981.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Recruits</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Recruits</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Recruits</u>
	(contract & AVS)				
1960	7 894	1968	7 505	1975	16 272
1961	8 468	1969	7 941	1976	20 634
1962	8 838	1970	9 035	1977	14 917
1963	6 671	1971	6 653	1978	12 153
1964	6 157	1972	6 901	1979	11 297
1965	5 844	1973	7 859	1980	9 367
1966	6 420	1974	9 350	1981	10 284
1967	5 978				

Source: TEBA (Swaziland)

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WOMEN IN WAGE-LABOUR IN SWAZILAND: A FOCUS ON AGRICULTURE

Patricia McFadden

The Demise of Peasant Self-sufficiency in the Third World

The decline of peasant subsistence production and the destruction in many areas of peasant economies, has been characteristic of the increasing capitalist domination of pre-capitalist social formations. 'The process of colonial conquest and heightened capitalist penetration was not homogeneous in the different regions of Africa. Distinctly different capitals with their own specific demands for labour and commodities moved into each territory, and met distinctly different production systems and pre-capitalist social relations. The contradictions and social struggles which arose led to different outcomes with respect to the economic structure and pattern of class formation in each colonial state, and the conditions of existence of individual women and men'. (Mbilinyi, 1981)

Land alienation and the extraction of labour (male) from the peasant household, led to fundamental changes within the peasant household, and undermined its viability as an economic and social unit. 'Although the forms of peasant household production units appear to be old, traditional relations, they are the product of

completely transformed modes of organising the labour process' (Mbilinyi 1981). As commodity relations began to pervade the countryside, first in the form of petty-commodity production and later in the form of large-scale agricultural units, the position of women within the peasant household changed. 'Almost everywhere, the introduction of widespread production for exchange disrupted whatever reciprocal division of labour existed ... in village communities women made a major contribution to the production of foodstuffs and appeared to have had access to the product of their labour'. (Mullins, 1976).

Women found themselves carrying the burden of having to reproduce the peasant household without the help of the man. This burden increased as the demand for male labour to work in the mines and industries led to lengthening of contracts and more land alienation. The colonial Governments all over the continent adopted the policy of retaining the families of the migrants in the rural areas, not only because of the nature of capital's labour needs at that time, but more importantly because of the advantages this had for capital accumulation. The wages of the migrant worker were calculated on the basis of his individual needs only - those of bare minimal survival - and the wages have been kept at these appallingly low levels on the grounds that the migrant's family is reproduced on the land 'back home' in the rural areas.

But the reality belies this argument. With the men away, peasant productivity began to fall, the poor land onto which most peasants had been pushed during the colonial period, yielded less and less, and the poor physical condition of the women only intensified this decline in productivity. (Boserup, Mbilinyi, Mullins). The responsibility of reproducing the family of the worker became more and more difficult and the chances of survival less and less. Attempts by women at petty-commodity production were fraught with all kinds of problems which stemmed from the status of women as users of land. Colonial policy was premised on the belief that '.....cultivation is naturally a job for men ... and virtually all Europeans shared the opinion that men are superior to women in

the art of farming; it seemed to follow that for the development of agriculture male farming ought to be promoted to replace female farming'. (Boserup, 1970)

Therefore, in the colonial and post-colonial periods, men produced commodities for the market and women were not integrated into commercial schemes, except as part of the man's family i.e. to provide free family labour, and to grow food for the household. 'This division was partly the result of pre-capitalist property relations in which the male head of clan or household, or the chief controlled the allocation of land, livestock, labour and labour product. Women had only usufruct rights to land or livestock by virtue of marriage in most cases Elders control over the exchange of women mediated by brideswealth (or lobola in Southern Africa) was a vital aspect of their control over production and over the labour force supply. Control over women was necessitated in order to ensure a regular supply of off-spring, the future labour force of the group, and to ensure the supply of labour embodied in the women themselves'. (Mbilinyi, 1981).

Therefore, the commoditisation of the peasantry has not only undermined the viability of the peasant household as an economic unit, but it has also eroded the status of the peasant woman vis-a-vis the means of reproduction. Commercial agriculture is undertaken almost exclusively by men, it is the men who get loans, who are allocated land under traditional land tenure systems, and it is the men who own property. 'As cash cropping developed and the commodity economy became widespread, women's labour became inferior and private, it did not produce the cash crops needed to enter the money economy, and its function was now limited to the domestic group'. (Mullins, 1976)

Boserup argues that; 'The corollary of the relative decline in women's labour productivity is a decline in their relative status within agriculture, and, as a further result, women will want to abandon cultivation and retire to domestic life, or to leave for the town.' (Boserup, 1970). This problem of 'unsuccessful reproduction' through subsistence production is at the root of the large

outflows of women from the rural areas of Swaziland, in search of alternative means of reproduction. 'They are being forced to seek alternative forms of income in wage labour or non-farm self employment in order to survive. Moreover, all members of poor peasant families are being pushed into the labour market or into commodity production of some kind; wives, husbands, female and male children and other dependent relatives'. (Mbilinyi, 1981). 'The first advantage to capital of the tendency of modern industry to employ all the members of the workmen's family is that the value of labour-power tends to be lowered since the costs of reproduction are spread over all the members of the population. Thus the portion of the working day in which the labourer works for himself is lowered, and more surplus value is thereby extracted'. (Beechey, 1978).

The Destruction of Peasant in Swaziland

Land alienation, in the form of concessions granted to white settlers, combined with various kinds of taxes and natural disasters, began the process which finally transformed large sections of the Swazi peasantry into wage-seekers, dependent on the sale of their labour power for survival. The concessions, granted from the best land in this little country, were the major source of peasant distress. In 1907, Commissioner Grey was appointed to demarcate one third of each concession, all of which took up about 4,000 sq miles of Swaziland, and out of a total area of 6,553 sq miles, the Swazi ended up with 2,420 sq miles, of the poorest land.

'In calculating the area of land to be allocated to Swazi families, Grey employed the principle that each family would be allocated the amount of land that was especially necessary for their reproduction'. (Fransman, 1978). The criteria used by Grey to determine what was socially necessary for the reproduction of each peasant family are unclear but what is obvious is that British colonialism made possible the accumulation of capital through the

extraction of cheap male labour and through the expropriation of the Swazi people's land. About 37% of the poorest land in the country was made available to the Swazi people, and this land was scattered around in 35 pieces. (This policy is very similar to that of the Bantustan policy of South Africa).

By the mid-1930's, the self-sufficiency of the Swazi peasantry was declining very rapidly, and cattle diseases were further eroding the ability of the peasants to sustain themselves. Labour migration increased through the 1940's and 50's, and the peasant household began to rely more and more on remittances of the migrants for survival. 'A measure of the generally depressed state of the economy, and especially of the Swazi sector, was the continued outward movement of labour to the Witwatersrand gold mines and to the plantations and mines of the Eastern Transvaal. During the 1930's labour was Swaziland's most valuable export, in 1938 deferred pay and remittances totalled some £51,000 while cattle exports during the same year were valued at £4,000 less'. (Colonial Report, 1966) As Fransman explains it further, '.....it was increasingly the rapidly rising population; land and cattle; land ratios that led to the undermining of Swazi agriculture. In addition the vicious cycle of low agricultural productivity, led part of the economically active population to seek wage labour, in turn leading to even lower productivity'. (Fransman, 1978).

According to the Colonial Report of 1966, two years before independence, there were 40,860 male Swazi and 12,877 Swazi women employed in wage labour in Swaziland. This amounted to 49.5% and 13.7% respectively of the working population. The same report estimated the number of men employed in South African gold mines in 1966 at 6,325 with 342 in the coal mines in South Africa.

Agricultural productivity did not improve during the war years and Swaziland, like the whole of Southern Africa, was not unaffected by the capitalist depression. In a memo, quoted by Fransman, which was submitted in the 1940's on behalf of the High Commission Territories to a Commission which had been appointed to examine the remuneration of Africans on the gold mines, the

position of the peasantry was made clear; 'Whilst in 1904 those inhabitants of the Territories who emigrated to the Union labour centres were receiving a useful addition to their agricultural resources by way of cash earnings, the position is now reversed and the labourer today relies more and more on his mine earnings to live, supplemented by what he can earn from the land. The payment, therefore, of an uneconomic wage by the mines on the grounds that the labourer is only supplementing his income which is mainly derived from agriculture, is unsound and will lead to disaster'. (Fransman, 1978, from Public Records Office, D.O. 35 1172 Y708/6).

By 1960, the Hollerman Survey showed that almost 83% of the rural population relied in varying degrees, according to the different districts, on wages. Between May 1978-June 1979, a survey of 1150 rural homesteads in Swaziland was undertaken by F. de Vletter of the Department of Economics of the University College of Swaziland. 21.6% of the homesteads sampled were in the Highveld, 42.7% in the Middleveld, 28% in the Lowveld and 7.6% in the Lubombo District. These are some of the findings of the survey;

'Countrywide, 67.6% of the homesteads have absentee workers; only 42.4% of the adult male labour force is engaged in homestead-based farming activities, and it is confirmed that much of the farmwork is done by women; 72.3% of whom are homestead-based for this purpose'. (de Vletter, 1979). The report goes on to say that, 'Only 6% of homesteads surveyed could even be regarded as generating a viable existence from crops alone, (and even this figure is upwardly biased due to the presence of Vuvulane sugar growers). 96.1% of the homesteads grow maize, only 12.2% sell any, and 48.3% need to supplement their crops with purchases. 58.4% of all homesteads sell no crops at all'.

Recent studies by the author of the paper of workers employed in the sugar plantations confirm this increasing trend towards almost total reliance by large numbers of rural dwellers on wage labour. Statistics from the Swaziland Government Individual Tenure Farms Census for 1979-80 also confirm this trend. (See Table One).

These facts have very important implications because they expose as a myth the argument that the majority of Swazi people 'live' in the countryside, and get their sustenance from the land. This kind of political rhetoric is merely a justification for the poverty and misery which capitalism inflicts on the oppressed and exploited classes in Swazi society.

Women in Wage-Labour in Swaziland – Agriculture and Processing

Since the early 1970's, women have been drawn in increasing numbers into wage labour within the Swazi economy, for various reasons, some of which will be discussed below. Essentially, they form a reserve army of labour, to be drawn into production when the need arises, and thrown out when the need no longer exists. As Beechey puts it; 'the industrial reserve army provides labour power which can be absorbed in expanding branches of production when capital accumulation creates a demand for it, and repelled when the conditions of production no longer require it. It is therefore a crucial component of capital accumulation'. (Beechey, 1978).

Under neo-colonialism, and as the needs of capitalist production have changed in relation to labour, the demand for female labour has increased in those sectors of the Swazi economy which benefit from the employment of female labour, i.e. Libby's Citrus company. But, the employment of women began already in the 1920's and the population census of 1921 showed that 2.6% of women were engaged in wage employment mainly in agriculture and as domestic workers. In 1921, Millin suggested the use of female and child labour to fill the vacuum created by the migration of men out of the Swazi economy.

'I think women will be very useful at some later date when labour is very much in demand and other propositions start up in Swaziland. And I think there is a lot of light work in the sheds that can be taken over by women, and the cooking on the compounds

as well' (Fransman, 1978).

As more women were employed, their employment had to be regularised and Proclamation No. 73 of 1937 was passed to regulate this matter. The 1956 census showed that '25,928 Swazi were peasant farmers, 200 own their own businesses, and 26,050 were enumerated as employees, of whom 14,322 were employed within the Territory Some 24% of the total labour force was employed in farming and forestry, 9% in domestic service and 26% in mining'. (Colonial Report, 1960).

The 1963 Colonial Report showed a dramatic increase in the numbers of Swazi engaged in wage labour. 'Salary and wage earners make up more than 50% of men in Swaziland and more than 8% of the women'.

The Report noted that '....in 1962, (the working age population (aged from 15 - 64) was about 138,000 or 15% of the total African population. Of this total African working age population 65,000 were men and 72,100 were women), and of these 32,500 (49% of men) and 5,700 women (8% of women) were in employment, making a total labour force of 38,200 representing 24,800 workers in rural areas, 5,400 workers in proclaimed urban and peri-urban areas and 8,000 in industrial settlements'. (Colonial Report, 1963).

'Among rural females 5% only were engaged in wage employment and among urban residents 21% of females were so engaged ... The main employers of rural families were domestic service (61%), farming and forestry (22%) and religious and welfare services (11%), while in urban areas most women were employed in domestic service (65%) and Government (18%)'. (Colonial Report, 1963).

As the numbers of 'propositions' have increased, especially since independence in 1968, hundreds of women have been entering the labour market as the cheapest source of value, unprotected by labour legislation and completely vulnerable to excessively high rates of exploitation in the production mainly of agricultural commodities (and as providers of domestic services, working an average of 60 hours a week for appallingly low wages).

'In general, a large proportion of wage labourers work in unskilled, low paying jobs in the modern organised sector or what

is called the 'informal' sector. The majority of women workers are relegated to these jobs. Moreover, women often have access only to seasonal, casual or temporary labour leading to even lower pay and irregularity of income' (Mbilinyi, 1981).

In agriculture, women are the cheapest labour simply because they have no alternative to what is offered them. They are usually illiterate and unskilled, and have no job security as casual and seasonal labourers. In many cases they are not even registered as employees and this enables the companies to pay dismally low wages, thereby increasing their profits. They are 'employed' for only a few months in the year, and once the job is finished, they are laid off and told to try the next season. They cannot be assured of a job in the next season, but because they cannot return to the rural areas for very long, they return to the plantations to offer their labour-power at whatever price is offered. In our presentation of the interviews with female workers at Libby's, this helplessness will be brought out by the statements made by these women on the question of job availability and job security.

Companies like Libby's who grow most of their raw materials (pineapples, oranges and grapefruit), and the sugar companies which depend on locally produced cane, prefer to use female labour because it is supposed to be least 'troublesome', and should be docile. These women have been socialised from childhood not to question authority (represented by the male figure, not only in the home but also in the work-place), and this oppressive socialisation, combined with a strong patriarchal ideology, has served capital's interests extremely well in Swaziland.

This is not to suggest that women workers in Swaziland are not aware of their exploitation, it is merely an acknowledgement of the effects certain social and political forces can have on worker consciousness. As Akerele put it, 'The employers prefer to hire women because they are more careful, patient and manually dextrous.' (Mbilinyi, 1981). Because of this lack of formal training, women have no real bargaining position, and in the

absence of Trade Unions, they are used even more effectively as a lever against the rest of the working class - to depress the wages of the workers and keep them as low as possible. Not only does capital have to pay less for the reproduction of labour, it uses female labour as a lever to reduce even further the costs to capital for the reproduction of the working class.

'The lower wage received by a specific group, in this case women workers, contributes to the lowering of the wage for all workers.' (Mbilinyi, 1981). 'Female employment also poses particular pressures on wages since womens' wage rates are substantially lower than men's. The fact that women's wages can be paid below the value of labour power means that women are part of the industrial reserve army by virtue of the sexual division of labour which consigns them to the family and inscribes a set of assumptions about women's roles'. (Beechey, 1978).

As the process of pauperisation has intensified in the countryside, thousands of women, who no longer can reproduce their families on the little bits of ground they cultivate by virtue of being 'someone's wife' and who are unable to satisfy basic needs from the unreliable remittances sent by migrant husbands, have flocked into the towns seeking employment of any kind. Many end up in the fields and on the factory floor of companies like Libby's.

Working for Libby's

Housing (1)

The majority of the workers, especially those working in the fields, live in slums bordering the pineapple plantations. Sprawling clusters of crudely built structures, most consisting of corrugated iron, scraps of cardboard and other odd-fitting materials, litter the area which has come to be known as Emangozeni (mangoes).

The place is a death trap; garbage is scattered all over the place, and the shacks and lean-to's are so crammed with people

and so close together that one can hear someone else breathe next-door. Privacy is an unknown luxury. Worst of all, there are no water or sanitation facilities. The people would like to build latrines, but cannot do so because there is hardly space to move. Consequently, the place has become a hot-bed for diseases like cholera, dyptheria, typhoid and tuberculosis. There isn't the remotest chance that these people will get any of the basic infrastructural facilities in the near future.

The slum is located on various plots of land which belong to the Carrington family. Mr. Carrington, who came to Swaziland during the colonial period, acquired by whatever means, large tracts of land in the Malkerns area. This valley is the most suitable in the area for pineapple and citrus production. Carrington divided the land among his children and it is upon these plots of land that the slum has mushroomed.

There are two types of housing in the slum, the 'single' rooms which are built by the landlady/landlord, and rented out to workers at approximately E10.00 a month, and which relatively speaking, are less depressing than the second type. This latter type is built by the worker, using any material she/he can get hold of. The plots are leased to several 'slumlords' who in turn rent out a portion of the plot to several workers. The worker then pays the 'slumlord' the rental, also approximately E10.00, of which the 'slumlord' keeps part and gives the rest to the owner of the plot. This type of arrangement releases the landowner from any responsibility for the people living on her/his land. The slumlords are responsible for rental collection and for maintaining 'law and order'. They have employed security guards, and interestingly enough, there is a rather large police station opposite the slum. The residents of the slum 'buy' water from the police.

The crime rate is very high in the area, and a new and different social scene has evolved. Women have assumed headship of the household and one respondent told us that the women call the shots in most relationships. The male-female relationship is based on a new set of values. The women are the breadwinners in most

cases since the industry employs mainly women workers, and the man is usually unemployed and lives-in as a boy-friend. This peculiar relationship - peculiar within the setting of a strongly patriarchal and male dominated society like Swaziland - has come to characterise the majority of working class 'marriages'.

We interviewed a middle-aged woman who lives in the 'build-it-yourself' section of the slum, and she, like many in her position, expressed a great deal of hostility and anger at her situation. She blamed the authorities for failing to enforce certain conditions with which landlords should comply, and implied that in fact, having failed to enforce these conditions, ie. the provision of water, sanitation and electricity, the Government was obliged to provide them itself.

She took us around the slum, and unhesitatingly showed us the poverty and squalor that abounded. The biggest complaints were about unsatisfactory housing and insecurity of fencing. No control exists over rents, and the landowners, through the 'slumlords', can demand any amount of money as rent, non-payment of which leads to eviction. The same person also raised the problem of nepotism and bribery, and expressed disillusionment with the authorities responsible for public welfare.

Her sentiments, which can be said to represent the general feelings of the slum dwellers, were appropriately expressed in this statement; 'You do not exist for them (the authorities). Only when there is work to be done, so-called community projects to be undertaken, then they remember you. Otherwise, you are nothing'.

We were then showed the 'single' room section of the slum. These rooms are built very close together, in a barracks-type style, a very dull and colourless long building with small doorways opening into its many rooms. There is only one entrance to each room, and all face the same way with rows facing each other. Each room measures about 2 - 2 meters, they are small, low-roofed, stuffy cubicles, poorly ventilated and with only a tiny window to let in some light and air.

In spite of the fact that most of the workers live with whole

families in these tiny rooms, most of the workers keep their rooms as clean as can be expected under such conditions. They cook, eat, wash, entertain and sleep in the same room. As one worker put it; 'They (the company) don't care where we live. We are employed but they don't care what happens to us. We sleep in the same room, porridge under the bed, children on the floor. Disease is rampant in this place'.

A woman worker whom we approached first when we entered the 'compound', described the rooms thus; 'They are built for you to live alone, and not to have any property'. These workers sometimes have to pay as much as E10.00 for smaller rooms, and again they have no say over rentals, and must pay what the landlady/landlord demands. Asked why they did not want to live in the compound as alleged by the company officials, the workers reacted very angrily. They complained that the company housing was not only inadequate, but also very poor. Approximately 60 women are crowded into a dormitory and the bunker beds are without mattresses, which means that the workers have to sleep on the springs. The company only began providing some accommodation in the late 1960's after Libby's took over the industry. Before then, workers were recruited and picked up from certain points in the valley, and after work they had to fend for themselves. The situation is still unchanged for the majority of the workers. One employee of the company explained that during the peak season the numbers of women employed can reach a thousand, and the company can barely house half this number.

The regulations in the company compound are unacceptable to most workers who felt that they were being treated like children. This rejection of the restrictiveness of company 'morality' is another sign of the growing assertion by young Swazi working class women of their right to decide on their own morals. The matron at the company compound bemoaned the break-down of traditional/national morality, and argued that there was an urgent need for the company to provide adequate and decent accommodation suitable for adult women. The large numbers of illegitimate children, the

breakdown of family structures, loose morals and vices like drunkenness, were all 'evils' which could be partially controlled if the workers were provided with proper housing, among other things.

She said, 'My child, the company has an obligation to look after the workers, especially since they are women, coming from the rural area into a situation where there is no one in charge of them. They need to be protected from themselves'. The attitude of the matron is typical of those occupying a position of authority over female workers, an attitude re-inforced in this case by the matron's close ties with the royalty who sees her duty extending into the realm of 'personal responsibility over minors'. In Swazi customary law, women, married and unmarried, remain minors all their lives.

Conditions of work

Women workers at Libby's are divided into two groups - Agricultural workers, who work in the fields, growing and harvesting the pineapples, and Industrial or factory workers, who clean and can the pineapples and other citrus which the firm processes into juices, preserved fruit, and jam. The workers are then sub-divided into Permanent, Seasonal and Casual within these two main categories, with conditions of employment differing in some cases.

Agricultural Workers

Libby's grows about 65% of its pineapples, and buys the remaining 35% from private growers in the Malkerns area. Most of the agricultural workers are seasonal or casual, and are employed by Libby's. Some are employed by the private estates which provide Libby's with agreed quotas of citrus. Because the conditions of employment do not differ in any real way between Libby's and the private growers, we have generalised the conditions of work relating to Libby's for all agricultural workers in the area.

These women work long hours in the blistering sun, without

any protective clothing to keep the prickly pineapples from injuring their legs and arms. They try to improvise, most of them wrapping the long black plastic strips used to protect the young pineapples from the sun, around their legs and arms. Others wear tattered old-fashioned tights, and still others simply tie dirty rags around their bodies. On their heads, they wrap odd scraps of dirty cloth, to try and keep the heat off. As one passes by, one might wonder what sort of strange birds these are, bent double, seemingly crawling slowly along the endless rows of succulent looking pineapples. The scene is reminiscent of Southern slavery in the North American continent a hundred years ago. They wear a perpetually tired look on their faces, it is difficult to believe it when they say how young they really are. Most are between the ages of 20 and 35, but they look much older.

They are mostly casual and seasonal workers, and one woman told us that it was virtually impossible to become permanent as a picker. They come to the Malkerns Valley every year, and most do not return to the rural areas after a season in the fields. Instead, when the picking is over, around November, they hang around in the slum, waiting until the planting begins in the new year. While they wait, they live by whatever means they can, most engaging in illicit beer-brewing and prostitution.

These women have no maternity leave, and when they do fall pregnant, they are told to 'resign' and take at least 3 months unpaid leave. After three months have elapsed, they can join the line outside the company offices and try to get to a job again. This means getting up at 3 o'clock in the morning to get to the gates first, because there are hundreds every day seeking unskilled jobs at the firm. These conditions also apply to seasonal workers employed in processing the fruit.

An employee of the company gave several reasons for the low labour turn-over in the firm, especially among the unskilled women. The main reason was that these women have no alternative means of livelihood. They come mainly from the Shiselweni District in the south of the country (about 50% come from the south), another 25%

come from the Hhohho District in the north, and about 25% the Lubombo and Manzini Districts.

Having worked as a picker before, even if for the last ten years, does not guarantee one a job during the next season. After the pineapples have been cleared from the fields, the women are laid-off until the next season, when they start at the bottom of the scale again, earning approximately 44cents per hour. In spite of the fact that most of these women are seasonal and casual and earn the lowest rates, they still have to pay taxes and have to contribute to the National Provident Fund (NPF). For instance, one woman who is seasonal showed us her pay slip, and all the deductions made from what she earned after about 58 hours in a fortnight in the blistering sun. The value of 58 hours of work was E25.74. Then the company deducted E1,25 for NPF, 69c for Graded Tax, 08c for some other tax which is not clearly identified, and E2.64 for meals. Total deductions equal E4.66. She takes home E21.08c in a fortnight.

Like the women employed in processing (seasonal), the agricultural workers complained bitterly about having to pay all this tax and then still have deductions for meals which they do not want. The company insists on providing the workers with the only meal they have a day, a practice common to the sugar industry as well. In this way, the company can pay the workers less because it claims that it feeds them. It can buy cheap rotten food, and thereby keep the wages below the legal minimum, a minimum which is set without the consultation or real participation of the workers affected. So far, the companies have used the legal provision in National labour legislation which makes it legal to pay women even below the minimum wage.

The workers rejected the practice of providing them a meal, because they say that the food they are given is 'rubbish'. They called it 'luzizi', an inedible mixture of rotten beans, maize, bits of meat and some vegetable scraps, unfit for human consumption. We were reminded of the so-called food we had seen being prepared for workers at the sugar estates. The 'cook' was literally throwing all

kinds of junk into a big black three-legged pot, which hadn't been properly washed so that yesterday's muck still clung to the edges of the pot. He threw in chunks of unwashed cabbage, scraps of meat, etc. and the final mixture was absolutely revolting. We could not believe that this disgusting looking muck was to be served to people who had been in the fields since day-break.

The women (and men) at Libby's complained about their helplessness regarding these meal deductions, and said that even if one refused to eat company food, the company still made the deductions. Seasonals in the field or in the factory do not get any compensation in cases of injury, and even those permanent workers who live off the company compound are not eligible for medical aid in cases of injury which occurs outside the work place. With what they earn, they can barely afford to pay hospital fees, and this is a contributory factor to the high mortality rate in the area, especially among children in the 1 - 5 age group.

Factory Workers

Here too, the women are sub-divided into seasonal and permanent workers, but since we discussed the conditions of seasonal workers in agriculture, and those conditions apply to seasonals in the factory we shall now concentrate on so-called permanent workers.

Most of the women who were in the permanent bracket had worked for the company for at least 7 to 10 years. One worker described the criteria for becoming permanent thus;

'To become permanent, you must work with all your might, and "roll yourself over", "kill yourself", then you might become permanent. The company sets certain work levels which you must reach. These are virtually impossible to reach, of course, but if you try hard enough, go without your meal break, you might get promoted to "permanent" status'.

They stand for up to 10 hours at a time, sometimes more, in fruit juice, usually on the ice-cold cement floor, without the

protection of boots or planks on which to stand. When they first join the company they are issued with a pair of boots, gloves, a plastic apron, an overall, and a head-scarf. The cost of these items is deducted from their wages at the end of the first month. In addition, they have to pay for an identity card, without which they cannot enter the factory. After a short while, the boots and gloves are dissolved by the juice and fall apart. Because Libby's pays even below the minimum wage (by special arrangement with the Deputy Prime Ministers' Office), these poor women cannot afford to buy another pair of boots or gloves. So they stand bare-footed or in cheap takkies for long hours every day in citrus juice, and after a while they develop ulcers on the hands, arms and legs. After a few years, they end up with arthritis, varicose veins and all kinds of related diseases which leave many crippled for life. One woman put it this way; 'After working for several years, in these conditions, you are useless even to yourself, and the company tells you to go home'.

Job security

The workers said that they were instructed on how not to injure themselves, but that there are no courses as such on safety. They complained that because they are unskilled, even after working for several years they remained at the bottom of the scale. Graduates who enter the company with little or no knowledge of the job, earn many times more than they earn. This presents a problem, which creates antagonisms between 'skilled' and 'unskilled' nationals. One of the workers posed the problem to us;

'Why does the company give people with degrees more money than someone like me, yet I have learnt this job through practical activity. There is no school for my experience, except on the factory floor. I now have to teach this newcomer. Why should I have to teach someone who is supposed to know more than me?'

If a permanent worker suffers injury, they are eligible for compensation, but the workers used a very apt phrase to describe this eligibility. They said 'Oh yes, they say we are eligible for

compensation, but you have to dig for the money'. They gave the example of a woman employee who lost her arm in an accident inside the factory. She received about E2,000 compensation after a long struggle, and was kept on as an ordinary worker doing odd jobs.

We came across similar cases in the sugar industry, where in one instance a man who lost a leg in the mill, received only E40,00 compensation, and was kept on as a sweeper.

Most permanent workers earn approximately E38.00 per fortnight, for about 56 hours of work at a rate of 63 cents an hour. From this the company deducts E1.90 for NPF, 69c for Graded Tax and E1.32 for Income Tax. These workers do not have to pay for the meals because they do not get any. Their meals are included in the 63 cents per hour, although some permanent workers can earn as little as 52 cents an hour.

During the peak season, these women can work from six to six without any breaks, except for lunch. It is during this time when work is plentiful that they earn the above quoted wages. But as the year draws to a close, the number of hours they are allowed to work also decreases. The company tells the women to work for less hours and they get paid only for the time they have worked. There was bitter resentment at the unfairness of this practice, because the women felt that as permanent workers they should be paid a full working day even if there was less work to be done.

This problem became clearer when we asked the women what they did during the off-months. We had assumed that most workers return to the rural areas to plough, and return in the new year for the next season. But we found out that this assumption was unfounded. The workers pointed out to us that they now live in the Malkerns area, and they have made their homes there. As women, most of them unmarried and therefore without any rights to land under traditional tenure, they had additional reason not to return to the rural areas. Most of them come from rural areas, especially from the south, but as one woman put it; 'We won't return to the rural areas, we have lived here too long. Of course there is land

in some places, you can grow a bit of food, you won't really starve, but, how are you going to pay the school fees; where will you get the money to pay for the hospital since clinics are far away; what will you wear?'

They also explained that most of them were unmarried and had several illegitimate children whom they described as orphans (tindzanza) and they could not survive in the rural areas. 'Our life is different here'. Therefore, the company policy of saying that some days the workers should not even come to the factory, was a way of not having to pay their employees during slack periods, thereby making higher profits at the expense of the workers and their families. We asked one worker what she thought about this practice, and she replied; 'I would like to say that it is wrong to make us work for one day in a week, and yet we have to eat and pay rent. We want the company to pay us even if we are not working because they stop us from coming to work, and because we are permanents. If I work from 6 - 8 a.m., I only get paid for those 2 hours, yet I didn't say I want to stop working at 8 a.m. If the machine breaks down, we are told to leave the factory, and are paid only for the few hours that we worked'.

Leave

Permanent workers are eligible for leave after a few years of employment. During the off-season, a worker can take her 3 months leave but she gets paid for only 2 weeks of the 3 months. If she gets ill during her leave period and overstays the time, she loses the job as a permanent, and can only be re-employed (without guarantee, of course) as a seasonal. The same applies with pregnancy. Once she falls pregnant, she must leave the job at 7 months, for three months, without maternity leave pay. If she overstays the leave period, her name is cancelled from the permanent list, and she starts all over again as a seasonal.

'Even if you are ill, you have to go to work. They refuse 'tinyanga' (traditional healers), they want a doctor's certificate.

You don't argue, you are just grateful to get the job back'.

Libby's is not contented with extracting the highest rates of surplus value possible from cheap defenseless female labour, it refuses to pay such a meagre sum as maternity benefits, and instead will use any illness resulting from child-birth as a pretext to push workers back to a position where the rate of exploitation is highest. As Mbilinyi puts it, 'So long as the employer pays the cost of providing maternity leave benefits and pays for the substitute labour force, without state contributions to defray the costs, hiring child-bearing women becomes less profitable.' (Mbilinyi, 1981). But for Libby's which is owned almost completely by Nestles (80%, the Swazi Government and the Commonwealth Development Corporation own 10% respectively) to pay for maternity leave would make it 'unprofitable' and not worth remaining in the country - a country which has provided the company with some of the cheapest labour-power in the world, and with a very high rate of profits over the 12 years that the company has been in operation. (See Table 2).

The company refuses to give the workers a bonus at the end of the year, using the same excuse which the sugar industry and many other capitalist firms use, i.e. that it is not making enough profit, and therefore needs more land before it can give bonuses or improve the basic living conditions of the workers. (2)

In an article published by the Swazi Observer newspaper of 21 November, 1981, the company's Managing Director, Mr. David Jelly, complained that the lack of land has led the company to halt any plans for wage increases, housing and training programmes for its employees. 'He said more land around the factory would help him regain profits which could be re-invested into this country through increasing wages for employees, housing and training for localisation'. (Swazi Observer, 21.11.81).

It is the same old story concocted by capitalist industry all over the Third World. When the capitalist world economy slides into a recession, it is the working class which must bear the burden of so-called lost profits. Since 1969 when Libby's began operating as

a multinational concern (previously it was a privately owned company which grew and processed the pineapples), the company has made steady profits, and 'eaten up' thousands of acres of land in the Malkerns Valley, land which could have been used to grow food for the Swazi people. The author is reliably informed that the chemicals used by Libby's and other growers of pineapples are so strong, that after a few years the land upon which the pineapples have been grown becomes completely barren and unproductive, unless for anything else except to be left idle. No wonder that Mr. Jelly is asking for more land. The Company wants more land to increase its production, thereby depriving the Swazi people of any alternative sources of reproduction, and consequently creating an even bigger reserve of cheap black labour dependent on the abysmally low wages the company pays.

Conclusion

The workers at Libby's, like those in the sugar industry, and in all the capitalist enterprises in this country, are angry and tired. Government claims that Swaziland is a peaceful country, perfect for foreign investment, do not reflect the real mood of the people who make these excessively high rates of profit possible. The workers know that they are exploited, they know how much the company is making every year, because they produce the wealth. They grow the pineapples and the sugar cane, they process it, pack it and see the profits enjoyed by the management. Libby's, like most foreign companies in Swaziland, pays some of the highest salaries to skilled personnel (local and expatriate), provides them with housing of the highest standards, and with all the other privileges which the petty-bourgeoisie enjoys in most African countries where capital is uncontrolled in its exploitation of the working class.

Government participation in such companies does not benefit the Swazi worker in any real way - except as a politically

expedient excuse to enable the petty-bourgeoisie to claim that the Swazi people have a share in the company. The Government ends up with the task of holding the whip over the workers, reminding them that the companies are here to help them, and that they should be grateful for the jobs that they have.

The workers were in fact very cynical about the Government's role in the industry, and when we asked them if they received any help from the Labour Department, they said that they did not even know about such a Department. 'If you take your case to them, you can be sure that you will lose, even if you know you are in the right. They never come to see us, only to see the company. You can see by the flag going up that Government people are around, that is all. They don't care where we live, how we live'. Another worker put it this way; 'Anyway, the District Commissioner's office is open only during working hours'.

Because Trade Unions are banned in this country, the workers are unable to organise and defend themselves against the excessive exploitation and oppression of the company. The absence of Trade Unions makes Swaziland even more of a favourite for foreign capital, and leads, on the part of the workers, to uncertainty, disunity and intimidation. They (the workers) told us of a case of a woman who dared to question the company's policy of limiting working hours during the slack period. She was reprimanded and warned that if she dared to 'instigate' the other workers again, she would be fired. We asked the workers what they would have done if she had been fired, and they said 'Nothing'. One worker said quite honestly, 'If she had been sacked, we would have hidden, we would not have come out in support of her because we want to keep our jobs. We are here because we need to work, even if we are oppressed, we still come here to work'.

Another worker said in reference to the separation of Agricultural and Factory workers; 'We are divided, yet the company is one. We know nothing about Trade Unions. They (the company) victimise us if we try to talk. There are so many of us without jobs, the company can hire and fire as it pleases.'

The company uses the carrot and stick approach to control workers' discontent, depending on the circumstances. If the worker is fast, efficient and has a high productivity record, rather than lose her, the company will either give that worker a slightly superior job, or bribe her into silence, or put her on another job in a different section. The workers put it best in this phrase; 'They put a pineapple in your pocket?'

The company can also demote a worker to a menial job if she is suspected of inciting' the other workers. We found this practice in the sugar industry as well. The workers told us of cases where vocal workers were made to cut grass on the company premises for several weeks, to get them out of the mill and 'teach them a lesson'. The arrogance of the oppressor who has not yet tasted the wrath of the oppressed.

Unfortunately, we were unable to discuss with the workers the forms that worker resistance takes under such conditions, but it is hoped that in the future such a study will be undertaken, to bring out more clearly the true nature of this section of the Swazi proletariat. Although the workers appear to be afraid, and this was the impression we got with the workers in the sugar industry as well, this is mainly because of the lack of strong leadership and of better conditions of struggle. Once these two factors come into existence, the workers in this country will begin to flex their muscles more openly.

Footnotes

- 1 The author was unable to visit the company housing or any part of the compounds because she was refused an interview by the company, which argued that there are certain things which Libby's does not want to be publicised because they would jeopardise the reputation of the company. That is one reason why we have concentrated on living conditions outside the company compound, but we are reliably informed by the workers that the company housing is not much better than that available outside the company property.
- 2 Of course, the figures given to Government Departments by these companies are unreliable simply because they cannot be double checked, and Libby's has the notorious reputation among Government researchers into industry, of being the most unco-operative industry in the country as far as the release of statistics concerning labour and productivity are concerned.

TABLE 1

NUMBER AND WAGES OF PAID EMPLOYEES ON FARMS - MANUAL WORKERS AND TOTALS
UNSKILLED MANUAL WORKERS

REGION	SEX	SEPTEMBER 1979		JUNE 30 1980	
		NO.	TOTAL WAGES	NO.	TOTAL WAGES
SWAZILAND	MALE	12 882	905 837	13 650	1 157 834
	FEMALE	3 649	153 193	5 152	215 216
	TOTAL	16 531	1059 030	18 802	1 373 050
HIGHVELD	MALE	2 130	174 366	2 282	212 257
	FEMALE	525	24 779	656	31 290
	TOTAL	2 655	199 145	2 938	243 547
MIDDLEVELD	MALE	1 535	61 045	1 614	67 124
	FEMALE	1 021	27 290	1 276	37 816
	TOTAL	2 556	88 335	2 890	104 940
LOWVELD	MALE	9 042	666 523	9 546	873 815
	FEMALE	2 001	99 104	2 484	133 371
	TOTAL	11 043	765 627	12 030	1 007 186
LUBOMBO	MALE	175	3 903	208	4 638
	FEMALE	102	2 020	736	12 739
	TOTAL	277	5 923	944	17 377

Swaziland Government, Census of Individual Tenure Farms, 1979-80. Central Statistical Office, Mbabane Swaziland. Page 25.

TABLE 2
AREA, PRODUCTION AND SALES OF CITRUS FRUIT

CROP / REGION	<u>Orchard on 30.6.80</u>					
	Area ha	No. of Trees	No. of Trees harvested Winter 1980	Quantity Produced m. tons	Quantity Sold m. tons	Value of Sales E.
<u>TOTAL CITRUS</u>						
HIGHVELD	9	357	128	4	4	640
MIDDLEVELD	650	114 692	83 735	8 314	8 214	1 025 442
LOWVELD	1 743	459 080	412 768	51 172	51 166	8 241 598
SWAZILAND	2 402	574 129	496 631	59 490	59 384	9 267 680
<u>ORANGES</u>						
HIGHVELD	3	42	28	1	1	40
MIDDLEVELD	599	106 821	75 861	6 714	6 642	865 785
LOWVELD	648	169 175	166 117	20 544	20 544	3 365 416
SWAZILAND	1 250	276 038	242 006	27 259	27 187	4 231 241
<u>GRAPEFRUIT</u>						
MIDDLEVELD	34	7 102	7 102	1 485	1 484	148 140
LOWVELD	1 037	271 650	228 401	29 536	29 530	4 562 952
SWAZILAND	1 071	278 752	235 503	31 021	31 014	4 711 092

Swaziland Government, Census of Individual Tenure Farms, 1979-80, Central Statistical Office, Mbabane, Swaziland, P.18.

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DOCUMENTS

Speeches prepared for the funeral of Neil Aggett on 13 Feb 1982

General Workers Union's speech made on behalf of a number of independent unions

Comrades, I have got a lot that I want to say today because Neil was a trade union leader and I think the trade union movement must have a lot to say today and in the future about Neil's death. In the last three months the democratic trade unions and other democratic organisations have been leading a strong fight against the system of detention without trial. And now one of those leaders who was detained without trial is dead. And maybe there's a lesson in that - maybe the lesson we must learn is that whenever we are protesting against detention without trial we are protesting against the government killing our leaders. Because when people are detained without a reason and the government wants there to be a trial, then the government must make the evidence for this trial. And to make the statements for the trial it must get confessions and it must get comrades to give evidence against comrades. And when the kind of person they choose to make these statements or to give evidence against his or her comrades is somebody like Neil, then either they will lose their case or Neil will die and we must

remember that. And now Neil is dead they must get their statements and their evidence out of somebody else - who are they going to turn to now? Maybe they'll turn to Thozamile Gqweta now, or maybe Emma Mashinini or maybe Samson Ndou. And if they turn to these people to give evidence against their comrades or to convict themselves then either they will lose their case or these people will die also.

We must look at why Neil was in jail in the first place. We must look at what Neil's crime was. We must see whether Neil was a criminal or not. I think that Neil was a criminal. You can see the evidence against him was very strong. Neil was a man who believed that the workers of South Africa are oppressed and exploited and he believed the only way they could end their oppression was by organising together. So he joined the trade union movement and in a country where the police don't allow the workers to belong to the trade unions they want to, then Neil was a criminal for wanting that. And Neil didn't only believe that workers must join unions Neil believed those unions must be democratic unions. They must be controlled by the workers, and in a country where workers are not allowed to have control over anything, even over their own unions, then Neil was a criminal there as well. And Neil saw that the workers lives didn't end at the factory gate at 5 o'clock - he saw that there was no democracy anywhere in South Africa. And he saw that for democratic unions there must be a democratic country. So Neil fought for democracy in South Africa. And in a country that is ruled by a minority, anyone that fights for majority rule is a criminal in this country. So if Neil was a criminal so is everybody else in the democratic trade unions, criminals. And we are proud to be criminals like Neil.

Comrades, what crimes has the state said Neil has been guilty of? They've said through their newspapers that Neil infiltrated the unions. We say that's nonsense, because firstly, Neil was a democrat not an infiltrator. And we say that the unions don't work that way either, because the unions aren't controlled. The democratic unions aren't controlled by one man at the top. They're

controlled by the workers and there's no place for infiltrators in the unions. Comrades, the workers have said what they have thought about Neil's death; on Thursday more than 100 000 workers sat down for half an hour to say what they thought about Neil's death. And it's very fitting that the workers of all unions in all places should have sat down for Neil, because Neil wasn't an ordinary trade unionist. Neil's vision wasn't just with the Food and Canning Workers' Union, with the workers that he organised. Neil saw all the workers and one of Neil's main jobs in the trade union movement was to bring all the unions together. And the new unity that is being born in the trade union movement that has been very divided in the past is in large part due to Neil's work. And that was Neil's greatest crime comrades. Neil's work and Neil's death is what is going to bring us together. I think Neil's death is a great price to pay for the unity of the union movement, but I think that the trade unions must see now clearly who the common enemy is. We must take the example that the workers showed on Thursday. And we must take the example of this funeral and I think we must start to think about uniting the trade union movement. And that must be the monument that we must build to Neil Aggett. We don't want a big building on a hill. The Monument that we must build to Neil must be the unity of the trade union movement.

So people, we must protest at Neil's death and we must work and we must organise. We must show the government that while they sit in Parliament passing new laws about the trade union movement, that their hands are full of the blood of our heroes - we must show them that. We must show to the government that we are not an organisation just in South Africa - that the workers' movement is an international movement. We must show that to them. And we must show them that the sanctions that they fear so much in South Africa, they will come one day. And they won't come from the British or American governments, they will come when the British and American workers don't want to deal with blood-stained South African goods. That's when they will come. And they must know

that. But mostly comrades, we must do what Mr. Pendlane said - We must show the government that for every Neil they kill there will be a thousand to take his place. That's what we must show them. So comrades, I think let's say to Neil's parents and let's say to Liz, that they won't mourn Neil alone. Let them know that the workers of South Africa will mourn Neil also, but we won't mourn him by closing our doors. We will mourn Neil by taking forward his work. And let's tell Neil's family and Liz that they will not remember Neil on their own. That we will also remember Neil and that we will remember Neil as a kind, gentle person - that is what we will remember. Neil as a democrat who never wanted personal glory. That's how we'll remember Neil and I think that we should remember Neil in the words that a great comrade of Neil's used to describe him as: Comrade Oscar Mpetha who is one of the great leaders of the South African people, and who is in jail now, maybe dying in jail now. Comrade Mpetha said of Neil, he said a very short and simple thing about Neil, he said that Neil was a 'man of the people', and there's no greater thing that can be said about anybody, and there's no better person to say it about than Neil, and I think that if we remember Neil that way, then victory really will be ours.

A M A N D L A!

Federation of South African Trade Unions' speech

On behalf of the 95 000 members of FOSATU we extend our deepest sympathy to the family of our departed comrade Neil. On Thursday more than 75 000 of our members stopped work in mourning, protest and solidarity. We mourn the untimely death of a fellow trade unionist. We protest against the inhuman and oppressive security laws of the Nationalist Government. We show solidarity as a warning to the system that we, the oppressed workers of this country, we are toiling and suffering to enrich our oppressors, we the people whose labour has been divided and exploited, we who have been mercilessly uprooted and forced into

compounds, overcrowded townships and barren homelands, we the people of South Africa shall not tolerate this injustice for much longer.

Comrades, our members outside the Transvaal did not know much about Neil Aggett. What we did know was this. We knew he was a trade unionist. We knew he was the Secretary of the African Food and Canning Workers Union in the Transvaal. We knew that under his guidance that Union branch had grown and we conclude that he therefore was organising and representing the general wishes of workers. This is no small task. Organising a Union in such a way that it is truly democratic and represents the wishes of workers, developing worker leadership from the factory floor, doing these things in the hostile environment of South Africa requires time, energy, patience and courage. For the South African situation is actively hostile to democratic worker organisations. They have been hounded by police, victimised by management and actively opposed by minority trade unions. Even in a tragedy like this we see how the largest of the co-ordinating bodies of the minority unions has remained silent. Their silence speaks volumes for the kind of unions that they are.

Then he disappeared, detained incommunicado in November last year. This is where our knowledge of him ends - tragically with his death hanging in a lonely cell. No one knows what horrors caused his death. We wonder if any ever will know.

We will remember Neil Aggett from our knowledge of him. We will not accept insinuations about his activities or his character. We will not accept half baked statements claimed to be in the process of having been made by the police. And we do not accept that there can be any justification for his death.

All we know is that once there was a trade unionist called Neil Aggett, and that after being held by the Security police under solitary confinement, he was no more. Nothing more damning can be said about solitary confinement and the system it represents.

HAMBA KAHLE MFOWETU AGGETT

The Union movement stands in Tribute to one of its lost sons.

Extracts from General and Allied Workers Union's speech

Comrades and compatriots, I greet you all in the name of the popular upsurge of worker militancy which is currently wafting through the corridors of this country. Perhaps it is imperative for me to state here and now that the people's struggle against racism, oppression and exploitation is so weighty that the enemy has seen cause to resort to measures which reflect nothing but desperation on its part. In this context it is clear that one will refuse to see the deaths in detention of Mkhuthuzi Joseph Mdluli, Ahmed Timol, Lawrence Ndzanga, Neil Aggett and many more others, as accidents. In terms of this, every day is "Heroes Day" for everyday this unjust socio-economic system sifts through the ranks of its population to choose its victims. It is in the light of this observation that I wish to strongly warn the Botha-Malan regime to stop selling us dummies when in truth we know why comrade Neil Aggett was removed from us.

Comrades, I shall once more confine myself to the essential of our coming together today by paying special tribute to Comrade Doctor Neil Aggett. He rightly deserves that. At times we tend to perceive poverty as "certain people who unfortunately are poor", and not as a reflection of injustice. Comrade Neil saw many diseases as evidence of poverty. Lapa Munnik, the so-called Minister of Health will tell you that diseases are "natural". Comrade Neil was far sighted enough to see that treatment in the hospital does not affect the causative factors of diseases. It is for this reason that his commitment in the workers' struggle must be seen as an act aimed at creating a healthy home for all South Africans. I therefore submit that those who are responsible for his death have committed a crime against mankind. In the same breath I would make a recommendation to all freedom loving people in South Africa: "Petty differences within the ranks of the people must be submerged to the cause of true humanity. Let us stand and strive together to dislodge the enemies of peace and prosperity".

Comrades, I would like to dispel the myths which hold that the

problem in this country is one of Blacks against Whites. The stark realities of our situation prove beyond any shadow of doubt that the system which all men and women of honour and integrity abhor, transcends race and colour. When I look at puppet Kaizer Matanzima and his hoodlums who terrorise people day in and day out, I see in them a group of individuals who have given themselves body and soul to the service of capital and oppression. When I look at traitor Patrick Mphephu, the man who is still to account for the death of Tshifhiwe Muofhe, I see in him a man who would rather die than settle for a South Africa which belongs to all live in it. Gatsha Buthelezi would not agree with Sammy Adelman on the demand that the doors of learning and culture be open to all. Therefore, I want to make it abundantly clear that to see the struggle in this country as a situation where blacks are fighting against whites is tantamount to assuming that black people have reached a consensus about the situation. I for one, would be legitimately hesitant about making such a baseless, unscientific and cock eyed assumption. If colour was really an issue, Comrade Neil Aggett would still be alive today.

In conclusion dear Comrades, I would again make a call to all those who, like Neil Aggett, uphold the principles of a genuine democracy, to rally to the defence to the interests of the working class movement in this country.

I feel there is a dire need for us to unite and march towards a South Africa which will banish famine and land hunger, a South Africa which will banish slums, a South Africa which will ban detentions and banning orders. The way towards that South Africa - the South Africa which we shall all cherish and love, is guided by the "FREEDOM CHARTER".

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!"

**Extracts from TUCSA statement published in the Garment Worker
in response to protests over Neil Aggett's death in detention**

TUCSA is perturbed about the recent death in detention of a

young detainee (as it would be about the unnatural death of any person in detention), and it therefore calls for the legal enquiry into the circumstances concerning this event to be dealt with as efficiently and speedily as humanly possible.

TUCSA cannot however, comment on the background, occupation, trade union activity, or any other matter concerning this late detainee, since TUCSA has no knowledge whatsoever in relation to these factors.

TUCSA unhesitatingly distances itself from any calls for industrial action in connection with this specific tragic event, because it cannot subscribe to strikes, work stoppages and other forms of industrial activity not connected to the employer/employee relationship, and also because it does not believe in any hasty and emotional reaction to events which have not been completely clarified.

Equally, TUCSA does not believe in supporting negative actions which do not find favour with the workforce in general, and which will only have the effect of discrediting all sections and elements of the labour force. Its view is that engaging in actions which result in the destruction of labour's credibility, is far from positive activity.

TUCSA is always conscious of the fact that the interests of the workers concerned are of primary importance, and TUCSA does not lightly call for actions which could result in hardship and suffering for the workers involved. TUCSA therefore distances itself completely from the various worker organisations who have recently committed themselves to have no contact whatsoever with any Government Department, since TUCSA (as the major element in the organised trade union movement) is deeply committed to the welfare and socio-economic progress of all its affiliated unions' members, and the workers in general.

TUCSA also cannot be identified, in particular, with statements that have been made by some organisations that the Department of Manpower is condoning the vendetta being waged against the trade unions by the Security Police, since it has seen no evidence to

support these extravagant allegations.

TUCSA also deploras statements to the effect that persons should not be brought to trial if they have committed an offence, since what is evidently being sought as an alternative is "the abolition of all detention laws". As already stated on numerous occasions, TUCSA believes in the rule of law, since to subscribe to anything less, and to strive for the introduction of something else, can only lead to chaos and anarchy.

TUCSA must also express its deep-felt concern at recent hasty and ill-considered statements by some individuals, certain political interests, and some employers. Many of the statements that have been made have done nothing to assist in calming our present volatile labour relations climate. South Africa's rapidly developing labour and industrial relations systems, which are experiencing all the expected stresses resulting from a dramatically changed dispensation, needs the inputs of calmness, moderation, understanding and goodwill (if the systems are going to succeed) rather than contributions of an emotional and irresponsible nature.

TUCSA repeats its conviction that the interests of its membership, the workers in general, and all of South Africa's manifold peoples, can best be achieved through orderly and progressive socio-economic advancement, by subscribing to utilising, and participating in sound and practical labour and industrial relations systems. Any activities which seek to sabotage these socio-economic goals will be vigorously resisted by TUCSA, and its rapidly growing non-racial and non-sectional membership.

Obituary

A Leading Woman in the Worker

Struggle

IN March, the African Food and Canning Workers Union was hit once again - this time by the tragic death of its Durban secretary, Peggy Dhlamini. Peggy suffered a brain haemorrhage on March 23, soon after giving birth to a daughter.

Both at a memorial service, and at her funeral on April 3, numerous trade unionists and community leaders spoke of the contributions she had made in her short active career: a firm believer of unity within the trade union movement, her death had been a setback to the progressive trade unions in Durban. Tribute was paid to the courage she had shown, particularly at this time of increasing state harassment, especially for the AFCWU, who recently lost another committed organiser - Dr. Neil Aggett.

Peggy was born on 29 January 1953 in Durban. She schooled in Clermont, and later at Inanda Seminary. After attending the University of Zululand for two years and training for a short time as a nurse, she joined the trade union movement.

In 1980, she worked for Saawu as secretary. When the African Food and Canning Workers Union established a Durban branch in mid-1981, she became its secretary. She played an important role in the formation of the Natal Ad Hoc Trade Union Solidarity Committee. In February of this year, she was elected its secretary.

Although organising workers was Peggy's main priority, she was active in a number of other organisations, including SASO (1972-77), Clermont Residents Association (Solomzi) as secretary and the Durban Women's Group.

She felt particularly strongly about women's rights and the role of women in the struggle. On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of South African Women's Day in August 1981, Peggy noted that "Traditionally, the women's place is in the home - in the kitchen to be precise. This has inhibited women in all spheres of life. Men do not have confidence in their womenfolk, so much so that they do not see the role women can play in the labour movement.....women should look back at their history and see what the Lilian Ngoyis and Helen Josephs have done in the past and continue from where they left off. The potential is there but women should be encouraged to take the initiative in the labour movement and spread their wings to the struggle as a whole" (Interview in the Sunday Tribune, 16/8/81)

Because of Peggy's involvement in the struggle, she has spent some time in detention. She was also interrogated on a number of occasions but this harassment never weakened her commitment.

A fitting tribute to her work would be to follow her example. As a speaker from the Natal Ad Hoc Trade Union Solidarity Committee said at the memorial service, her spirit shall be an inspiration to continue in the struggle of the workers.

