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IS THIS THE SWAZI WAY?

STATE, DEMOCRACY AND THE LAND QUESTION

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Introduction

In April 1990, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Senator Nkomeni Ntiwane was petitioned to intervene in the planned removal of 30 families from Elangeni area below the Mdzimba mountain in central Swaziland. The area was earmarked as the site of one of two new hotel projects to be built in the country for the royal conglomerate Tibiyo Takangwane by the South African-based consortium Genesis Holdings, at an estimated cost of R400 million. Chief Gatshedze Magongo's people wrote in their petition that they had 'never been allowed a chance to either ask or discuss the conditions pertaining to the proposals', but that a 'typical strategy has been used to silence (us) by people we have no confidence in' (*Times of Swaziland*, 12.04.90). It came as no surprise when the authorities informed them that they would tolerate no argument about the scheme. In May, traditional leaders participated in the formal cutting of the first sod at the second hotel site in the lowveld for what will become known as the Lubombo Sheraton. They told objectors they would be 'thrown out' if there was any further resistance (*The Star*, 17.05.90).

These events are by no means isolated - in the late 1970s, when Swaziland's third sugar mill was established at Simunye, 550 families comprising some 5000 people were moved off their land. During the 1980s, the pattern continued, with several incidences of removal and eviction of rural people reported in the local press. What is noteworthy, however, is that these actions have never been met by popular resistance. In contrast to the periodic militant action of workers since the beginnings of the decolonisation period, peasants have never been mobilised into popular uprisings against the state.

This paper analyses why this is so, by focusing on the problems of repression and the state in the agrarian world of Swaziland. Following Mamdani (1988: 78), I argue that in the contemporary African context, discussions on the state and democracy need to be clearly linked to an analysis of the agrarian question. In my examination of the Swazi case, I will focus on a particular dimension of the agrarian question - the land question - which in settler colonies in Africa assumes a central role in the search for a resolution to the agrarian question. In Swaziland, it is not possible to develop a systematic account of state power in the absence of an understanding of the creation and reproduction of 'traditional' ideology. Nevertheless, such discussions remain incomplete in the absence of

an analysis of the materialisation of this ideology in the institutions and practices of the state. In this context, the relationship between the state and the people, the majority of whom are based in the countryside, becomes the major focal point for analysis.

The land question in Swaziland

The development of capitalist relations in Swaziland was stimulated by the discovery of huge gold deposits in the Transvaal, both on the Witwatersrand, as well as in the eastern Transvaal border areas of Swaziland. This brought prospectors flocking into the country and despite initial attempts to control their entry, eventually they were allowed in in increasing numbers. They were joined by a further surge of farmers and herders attracted by Swaziland's fertile soils and rich pastures. Increasingly, the royal kraal came under pressure to grant the settlers land and mineral concessions, with the result that:

Between 1885 and 1889, the whole country was concessioned away, the simpler rights being followed by absolutely ridiculous monopolies for ludicrous industrial enterprises such for instance as theatres and pawnshops, the inventions of a shoal of speculative concession seekers (Miller, 1907).

These concessionaires were willing to pay the Swazi aristocracy for access to mineral and trading rights, so that by the end of the 1880s King Mbandzeni, who presided over the cynical carve-up of Swazi territory, earned an annual income of between 15 000 - 20 000 pounds from rents, transfer dues and obligations from concessionaires (Kuper, 1980:25). Mbandzeni's death in 1889 occurred against a background of a struggle between the contending imperial designs of the Transvaal Republic and Britain, and by the Third Swaziland Convention of 1894 Swaziland found itself under the control of a Boer administration as a protectorate of the South African Republic. Boer rule was to be of limited duration, however, and in 1903, following the Anglo-Boer war, Swaziland became a British protectorate.

The most nagging problem facing the new administration, was the land question. Settler capital required that legal property rights be conferred on their land as a precondition for capitalist production, while the Swazi aristocracy was anxious to have Mbandzeni's concessions nullified. On the ground, the situation was chaotic, with 'practically the whole area of the country covered two, three or even four deep by concessions of all sizes, for different purposes, and for greatly varying periods'.¹

In the face of protest by the Swazi aristocracy, the British authorities issued and executed Proclamation No 3, in 1904, which gave notice of the Governor's intention to delimit land for sole occupation by the Swazi. Ignoring the petitions

which followed, the British colonial authorities pressed on with their plans for land division. These were effected in 1907 by the administrator Robert Thorne Coryndon fresh from establishing white settlement in North West Rhodesia. The settlement, not suprisingly, favoured the land concessionaires who relinquished a third of their concessions to the Swazis in return for freehold title to the two-thirds of the land which remained (Crush, 1980:85; Youe, 1978: 60-63). By 1914 partition had been effected in spite of the anxious protests of the Swazi leadership.

These foregoing events which accompanied capitalist development and the land partition in Swaziland brought about some profound changes in the social structure and reproduction of Swazi society. Colonialist expansion into Swaziland encountered a society organised along hierarchical lines in which a king and chiefs extracted tribute and labour from their subjects (Mugenyi, 1988: 267). During the period of 'nation building' under King Sobhuza I and King Mswati II, agriculture became increasingly important as the Swazi were forced to protect themselves by settling in scattered military settlements. Available evidence suggests that by the 1850s agriculture was playing a key role in the Swazi economy (Bonner, 1983:218), and according to Allister Miller, a prominent member of the settler community, in the late -1880s and early-1890s:

Swaziland was an exporter of maize. Traders in central and southern Swaziland bought thousands of bags from the natives - multicoloured maize which was sent to Lourenco Marques and the Transvaal... or sold to the gold mines then operating along the western border (*Times of Swaziland*, 26.02.42).

Colonialism and capitalism thus created a Swazi peasantry increasingly integrated into the circuits of capitalism through the production of agricultural petty commodities. Simultaneously, the twin mechanisms of taxation and the land partition, intensified a process of proletarianisation as greater numbers of Swazi migrated to the mines of the eastern Transvaal and the Witwatersrand. Up until 1907, however, many Swazi migrants entering the Swazi labour market did so in order to obtain cash for bridewealth and food, necessitated by an epidemic of East Coast fever and poor harvests respectively. Thereafter, colonial coercion was far more effective in forcing large numbers of Swazi to work, having restructured its tax collecting apparatus and having initiated a campaign of prosecution of tax offenders. This coincided moreover, with efforts by the indigenous ruling alliance to mobilise labour in order to raise funds to challenge colonial land policy (Crush, 1986).

By this time, the aristocracy had accepted that its passive response to the land partition, and the sending of deputations to the British colonial authorities had failed. Prince Malunge accepted the finality of the land division stating that:

The land has been divided. We have no power to stop the govern-

ment or to say do not do this; but all I say now is that the partition is now finished, it is done. The government knew that we did not like this partition...we have no power...we wash our hands of the whole question.²

It had become increasingly clear to the aristocracy that in order to restore their authority over the land, they would have to operate within the framework of capitalist relations and the land partition. In the pre-colonial period, and prior to the land partition, the central dimension of aristocratic and chiefly power resided in control over bridewealth. Cattle were made available to unmarried young men in return for labour and surplus-product (Bonner, 1983:13). Neocosmos argues that with the development of capitalism, and the land partition, aristocrats and chiefs 'based their power over the rest of the Swazi population - the peasantry - on their exclusive control of land as opposed to their previous control of bridewealth' (1987:93). Of course the development of generalised commodity economy also meant that through petty commodity production and sale, Swazis could gain access to cattle through cash sales. But with the land partition, land increasingly became a scarce resource, and this provided powerful leverage for the Swazi chiefs and aristocracy over their subjects who were on the whole peasants who depended on access to land for their reproduction (Neocosmos, 1987).

The post-partition period saw a struggle develop between the Swazi monarchy and mine labour recruiters over labour on the one hand, and between the monarchy and the colonial state over land on the other. In the struggle over labour, the Swazi aristocracy soon realised that it could cash in on labour recruitment. Prince Malunge and Swazi Tin Ltd entered into an agreement in 1906, but when a plan was devised by Albert Bremer and Josiah Vilakazi to recruit vast numbers of Swazi for the gold mines on the Rand, the colonial state stepped in.³ Nevertheless, throughout the 1905-14 period, Queen Labotsibeni and Prince Malunge encouraged labour migration by their subjects. This was because royal levies were set in the interests of repurchasing expropriated lands.⁴ The struggle of the royal Dlamini aristocracy was not simply a struggle to reassert their dominance within the social formation through regaining control over land and the mineral resources of the country. They were also engaged in a struggle to restore the legitimacy of the monarchy and hence their hegemony over the Swazi nation. The disastrous reign of Mbandzeni (and indeed his successor Bhunu⁵) had done a great deal to erode this. Land increasingly became the crucial material basis through which the aristocracy developed its hegemonic project. Land provided both a material basis of power and control over the people, as well as the material basis of accumulation. Numerous monetary levies were imposed - to fund the education of the young future King Sobhuza II, to fund the travelling expenses of royal delegations destined for

negotiations with various colonial authorities, and so on - but ultimately they were regarded with suspicion both by the colonial authorities and the mass of the Swazi population themselves. According to Booth:

As levy followed levy, the mood of acquiescence changed to suspicion and on occasion to outright opposition. It came to be widely believed that a great deal of the money collected stuck to the palms of the collectors, and that much of the remainder was used by the royal house for other than the announced purposes (1983: 29).

Efforts by the colonial administration to oversee the books proved fruitless, and these were jealously guarded by the aristocracy. But the frustrations of the Swazi people mounted and they began to dodge their obligations. In extreme cases, people retired into hiding in the mountains to avoid royal collectors (Booth, 1983).

With the accession to the throne of King Sobhuza II, further passive resistance to the land partition proved futile with numerous delegations embarking on pilgrimages which culminated in an unsuccessful appeal to the Privy Council in London in 1926. Thereafter the main strategy developed by the aristocracy to regain the land was through repurchase, although this was only tackled in earnest in the post-World War II period. The urgency with which this strategy was pursued was stimulated largely by the promulgation of the Native Administration Proclamation in 1944. The major thrust of the proclamation was the vesting of the power to appoint and depose chiefs, including the paramount chief, in the British High Commissioner. When petitions failed to overturn the proclamation the land question was addressed with greater vigour, and King Sobhuza issued a general levy in order to launch a new National Fund which became known as the Lifa fund. By the 1960s, the Swazi had managed to buy back some 268 093 acres of land, but the Lifa fund ran into problems due to maladministration and corruption and was disbanded (Kuper, 1978: 204).

In the meantime, opposition to the 1944 proclamation came to fruition in 1950 when the Swaziland Native Administration Proclamation No 79 of 1950 removed many of the aristocracy's objections to the 1944 proclamation. Great concessions were made to the king who was henceforth recognised as the sole authority for issuing any orders which were enforceable in the Swazi courts. Section 9 of the proclamation specified a wide variety of 29 different orders which could be issued by the King-in-Council 'to be obeyed by natives within any area of his jurisdiction'.⁶ The king and chiefs were further empowered to 'make rules' providing that these did not conflict with laws already in force in the country. The possibility of enforcing these 'rules' was facilitated through the 1950 Native Courts proclamation, giving the king, subject to the ratification of the Resident Commissioner, the authority to establish Swazi courts, to prescribe

their rules of procedure, and to establish courts of appeal. In 1953, Lord Hailey wrote that:

...it is noteworthy that the most characteristic of the (Swazi) political institutions have undergone little change in the course of the half-century during which they have been under Transvaal or British Administration. There has certainly been less change than is to be observed in many of the African territories... (1953:400).

The foregoing account of processes and events suggests rather that it was the development of capitalism and colonialism which facilitated the creation and consolidation of 'characteristic political institutions'. The contradictory development of the colonial state in the post-World War II period saw an extension of its apparatuses thereby incorporating the Swazi monarchy. This led to a solidification of the political base of the aristocracy and their allies in Swazi society. The 1950 proclamation provided an important component of the legal machinery which has been deployed to the present in order to develop the 'traditional' Swazi state. During the post-1950 period, it also became possible for the Swazi to repurchase land and, as noted, the launching of the Lifa fund saw major repurchase of settler-owned and crown land by the king which was 'held in trust for the nation'. Of great importance too, was another trend set by the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) as an extension to their Usuthu Forest project. In procuring the 100 000 acres which the project required, it was necessary to resettle some Swazi families. Acting on the initiative of the High Commissioner, Evelyn Baring, the CDC agreed to plant 3 500 acres of land on behalf of the 'Swazi Nation', and to credit all profits to the 'Swazi Nation' once planning costs had been met. The profits flowed to the Swaziland National Treasury, established through colonial proclamation in 1950 to replace the National Fund, which was under control of the High Commissioner, but which brought in revenue to the king through deductions from tax receipts and other state subsidies. Of major significance in the CDC Usuthu Forest deal was that for the first time, the aristocracy obtained a direct share in a major enterprise (Kuper, 1978: 169). Even more noteworthy, however, was the precedent which allowed the aristocracy to benefit from a situation in which foreign investment was contingent upon the removal, eviction and resettlement of Swazi peasants.

Royal Hegemony and the Emergence of a Comprador Bourgeoisie

These foregoing developments point to the transformation of the material class basis of the dominant Swazi classes. Before the onset of colonial plunder and capitalist development, domination was secured through control over bridewealth, land and the extraction of various forms of tribute. The develop-

ment of commodity relations provided the Swazi people with access to bridewealth, but their dependence on chiefs and aristocrats for land, meant that the extraction of tribute in the form of forced labour and forced contributions persisted. The political and ideological basis of these various forms of repression was facilitated through the creation and development of 'tradition'. Traditions are not static but are continually being transformed by changing socio-economic conditions. Notions like 'inkosi uyinkosi ngabantu' (a king is king through his people) were easily translated into a concept like '(capital assets) held in trust by the king for the nation', which has no clear Siswati equivalent, but which legitimates private accumulation by individuals within the royal Dlamini clan and other Swazis through the Tibiyo Takangwane conglomerate in particular.

It is under circumstances such as these that the transformation of the dominant Swazi classes has taken place. The aristocracy and chiefs were well placed to engage in commodity production given their control over land allocation. Lord Hailey wrote in the 1950s that the landholdings of chiefs 'are as a general rule far larger than (those) of most commoners' (1953: 397). He also observed the advantages which chiefs have through practices of forced labour and forced contributions, noting that 'many of (the chiefs) have the benefit of a certain amount of free service in cultivating their lands' (1953:397). The right of levy and the cash which they received as indirect rulers of the colonial state, particularly after the legislation of the 1950 proclamation, further strengthened the position of the aristocracy and chiefs. Hence, in the post-World War II period in particular, a petty-bourgeois group of owner peasants, whose money surplus and means of subsistence secured an annual supply over and above that which was needed for their own reproduction, began to emerge. Swazi 'commoners' were not necessarily excluded from the process, and indeed individual commoners were able to emerge as rich and middle peasants. The point is that this evolution occurred through the creation of a peasantry by capitalism and the resultant relations and processes of differentiation which this involved. The transformation of the chiefs and the aristocracy was in contrast characterised by both the development of relations internal to capitalism and the peasantry and their deployment of extra-economic forms of coercion.

The sum total of these relations comprises the agrarian question in Swaziland, and refers to the process of repression entailed in the development of capitalist agriculture. Mamdani has argued that in sub-Saharan Africa generally, the productive activity of peasants is shaped by 'double exploitative relations':

Those 'voluntarily' entered into are a result of objective circumstance faced by different peasant strata, underlining the differentiation internal to the peasantry, either because of unequal access to land or to implements of labour. These relations... constitute the stuff of petty exploitation of the rural poor by the

rural rich. In contrast are those relations imposed on all strata of peasants from above. The involuntary character of these relations is underlined by the fact that none of them can be effected without the direct use of political power, i.e. extra-economic coercion (1988: 83).

In the case of involuntary relations, political power acts as an economic force, and this gives rise to a distinct form of capital accumulation. In the case of voluntary relations, capital accumulation arises out of the process of production and competitive market forces which lead to peasant differentiation, and the emergence of a rich accumulating peasant from below. Accumulation from above, in contrast, stems from political relations, and the reproduction of this form of accumulation depends on elements of extra-economic coercion (Mamdani, 1983).

In the case of Swaziland, it is this latter form of accumulation which has predominated, and which has been central in the production of indigenous bourgeois class forces. Mao Tse Tung was the first theorist (and revolutionary!) to develop the concept of the 'comprador bourgeoisie'. He argued that the petty-bourgeois owner-peasant class constantly endeavours to transform itself into an independent bourgeoisie, but can only do so through developing links with imperialism and foreign capital (1954: 15). Maintenance of control over land allocation and land use provided the dominant Swazi classes with the opportunity to pursue a comprador route of accumulation. While this route was initially short-circuited by the large-scale alienation of land, in the post-World War II period, elements of the emergent petty-bourgeoisie who were simultaneously aristocrats and/or chiefs, were able to ally themselves with foreign capital and imperialist forces within the colonial state. This marked their transition to a more comprador role. This is not just revealed in the transformation of the Swaziland National Fund into the National Treasury. As capitalist development under the aegis of British and South African capital intensified, a new trend was set in the 1960s, which proved to be the precursor of the familiar pattern in the post-independence period. The Usuthu Pulp Company eventually bought up the area which had been afforested by the CDC for 'the nation' in 1962, in return for which the emergent comprador bourgeoisie acquired a 50 000 pound interest in the company (Halpern, 1965:391). This reveals a specific level of comprador accumulation whereby the material basis of this class is formed by a 'joint investment with foreign capital in units producing for export' (Taylor, 1979:249).

It is insufficient however to identify the development of indigenous class forces in purely economic terms. Classes only become classes 'proper', that is social forces, when they constitute themselves as such through political, social, cultural and ideological struggles. During the colonial period, the Swazi aristocracy

and their allies had undergone a two-fold process of disorganisation. They were disorganised as a hegemonic class force both at the economic and political levels. Loss of control over access to bridewealth, and colonial land alienation, threatened their economic domination. At the political level on the other hand, within the state/people relation, the Swazi people as a whole were endowed with negative social identities, and constituted by the state as 'natives' under the rule of a 'paramount chief'. Settlers viewed Swazis even more negatively. When the first Swazi completed a BA degree, considerable controversy arose over the question of his further education which revealed the existence of widespread racism within the settler community. The majority of the settlers believed he should be discouraged on the grounds 'that he would get above himself', that 'kaffirs must not be civilised', that 'raw natives are better workers', that he would put 'queer ideas into the heads of people' or 'create trouble' (Kuper, 1947:32). This meant that all Swazis had a common interest in the reconstitution of their national identity. Nationalism as we shall see took two forms: a tribal and an Africanist or Pan African form.

Decolonisation in Swaziland: Nationalism, Tradition and the Triumph of Tribalism

The decolonisation period in Swaziland was a period of contestation characterised both by antagonisms between the colonial state and the Swazi people in general, and competing forms of nationalism. As indicated above, these were a tribal form and a more standardised form of African nationalism seen elsewhere on the continent. In common with the generalised pattern, this latter form was linked to the struggles of the working class. In Swaziland these escalated to a climax in 1963, when a strike of sugar plantation workers was followed in May 1963 by the biggest strike in Swazi history to date at the Turner and Newall-owned asbestos mine in Bulembu in the north-west region of the country. After Mbabane workers had registered their solidarity by engaging in a mass stay-away, the British decided to airlift a contingent of the Gordon Highlanders into the country from Kenya. When King Sobhuza II sent a representative to Mbabane to urge striking men and women back to work, he was ignored, as were his pleas to workers in Bulembu. This demonstrated the contradictory role which the king was to increasingly play:

When the strike spread, the administration vainly asked the *Ngwenyama* to provide men from his royal 'regiments' to protect workers against intimidation. And when the British troops arrived, the workers appealed just as vainly to the *Ngwenyama* to intercede with the authorities on their behalf (Halpern, 1965:377).

King Sobhuza's hostility towards the strikes did not go unnoticed however, attracting the attention of settler capital, colonial administrators, and ultimately forces within the South African state. Indeed it was under the influence of a prominent member of the Broederbond and lawyer, Van Wyk de Vries, that the king was persuaded to form a political party which became known as the Imbokodvo National Movement (INM) (Kowet, 1978:174-75). The word 'Imbokodvo' in Siswati translates as a crushing stone in English. In the build-up to the first 'democratic' elections organised by the colonial state in 1964, it became clear that the control exercised by chiefs over land became a central element of the INM's rural campaigning. This was articulated in a joint memorandum of other political parties, presented to the Colonial Secretary:

The new party is in a position to use...the financial resources of the various organs of the tribal authority and to exert on our predominantly rural population various forms of pressure and intimidation stemming from the control of land allocation by the chiefs (Halpern, 1965: 357).

A memorandum presented to the Queen's Commissioner, Sir Francis Lloyd, in 1966 by the NNLC revealed how chiefs with NNLC leanings had been victimised during the 1964 election in which the INM won a crushing victory:

The NNLC deplores the forcible deportation of chief Saphaza of Maphungwane from his home in Ubombo by an army of police and the setting of fire of (his) homestead. We are satisfied that (his) offence was that he was a law abiding member of Congress... The NNLC also deplores the intimidation of chiefs in areas that are strongly pro-Congress... Chief Ngudumane was denied his annual stipend on the grounds that he had allowed the NNLC to thrive in his area (*Times of Swaziland*, 11.11.66).

In the 1967 independence election the NNLC obtained 20 per cent of the vote but was unable to obtain any seats in parliament under the 'winner takes all' electoral system operated by the colonial state. These electoral battles between the INM and the NNLC represent an anti-colonial struggle between two competing nationalisms: a tribal form of nationalism in the case of the INM, an Africanist or Pan African form in the case of the NNLC. This conflict was clearly articulated on the eve of independence by an NNLC activist in a letter to the *Times of Swaziland*:

The current argument of the Imbokodvo is that the people of Swaziland are firstly Swazi and secondly Africans. Pan Africanism no doubt shifts the emphasis. We would like to see the people of Swaziland realise that they are firstly Africans and secondly Swazis (22.09.67).

The INM, in contrast, drew heavily on the tribal inheritance of the Swazi which it cobbled together with social forms and practices inherited from the colonial

era. An essential feature of the king's counter-hegemonic project was his capacity to combine fraternity with the dynastic regime. Addressing the 1968 independence celebrations, he told the 20 000-strong crowd:

It is the tradition of all African kingdoms that their kings are leaders as well as kings. This is also true for Swaziland. Now, rightly or wrongly, some people have mistaken this dual capacity for a dictatorship. I would like to assure you here and now that in our kingdom, the king both leads and is lead by his people. I am my people's mouthpiece (*Times of Swaziland*, 25.04.68).

The 'Philosophy and Policies of the Ibokodvo National Movement' also stressed a tribal national identity for the Swazi arguing that:

The INM like most other parties is not the product of (a) fertile imagination... The body of (the independence) struggle comprised the entire nation... centred around the burning issues of kingship... The INM believes firmly that stability can only be founded in the proven institutions of our forefathers.

The class content of tribal nationalism in Swaziland has been characterised by the emergence of indigenous bourgeois forces. At an economic level, this emergent bourgeoisie has in alliance with settler and foreign capital, pursued a comprador path of accumulation. Within the political realm, the comprador character of these emergent bourgeois forces has been seen in their pro-imperialist position.⁹ Speaking to the anthropologist Hilda Kuper shortly before independence, King Sobhuza made it clear that any talk of getting rid of Europeans, and reserving Africa for Africans would not be tolerated. 'There are whites who have been here for generations', he argued, 'and cases where whites formed firm friendships with Africans? What good is there in chasing away our friends?' (Kuper, 1972:605). It was of little surprise, therefore, when Leo Lovell, a prominent member of the settler community was appointed minister of finance in the first post-colonial government.

The hegemony of tribal nationalism in Swaziland was also facilitated by the independence constitution, and signified a victory for the aristocracy in its struggle for control over the land and mineral resources of the country. Chapter VIII of the constitution stated that 'All land which is vested in the *Ngwenyama* in trust for the Swazi nation shall continue so to vest subject to the provision of this constitution'.¹⁰ A similar clause gave the king exclusive rights to mineral resources discovered after the promulgation of the constitution. Insofar as the constitution was a product of the colonial state, the argument developed above can now be more fully substantiated: far from a being a 'traditional' notion, the concept of capital resources being 'held in trust for the nation' by the king, was a colonial creation produced through a constitutional settlement of the national question in Swaziland.

This concept has been central in the rapid transformation of the class basis of the dominant class in Swaziland under the aegis of King Sobhuza and his successor King Mswati III. It is a concept, moreover, which dovetails neatly with 'traditional' powers of the aristocracy and chiefs, particularly their control over land allocation. These extra-economic powers have been central in the process of capital accumulation in Swaziland; they lie at the heart of the capacity of the comprador's success in developing mechanisms of accumulation. The general pattern in post-colonial African states has been one in which emergent bourgeois forces have become increasingly dependent on their control over the state apparatus in order to guarantee a basis of accumulation. In Swaziland, however, King Sobhuza's control over the state was used to extend the basis of state-directed accumulation through the creation of Tibiyo Takangwane which relied on the political power of the king for its formation and development.

Tibiyo was established in 1968 by King Sobhuza following the re-investment of mineral rights to the king 'in trust for the nation'. It soon became evident, however, that more finance would be required than royalties and mineral fees could provide. Tibiyo thus embarked on a strategy of joint investment with foreign companies and the acquisition of shares in major companies. Loan arrangements with potential foreign investment partners were secured, and negotiations involving UN and Commonwealth-backed legal assistance, led to the clinching of deals with Lonrho, Turner and Newall, and Spa Holdings (*Swazi Observer*, 27.08.83). The resultant cash flow enabled Tibiyo to enter the field of land purchase and development. By the late 1970s, Tibiyo had spent in the region of E5 million on the purchase of freehold land, thus boosting the percentage of Swazi Nation Land to 55 per cent (Daniel, 1983:105).¹¹ Much of this land is used for sugar production, and Tibiyo is now the major shareholder in the sugar industry upon which the performance of the Swazi economy is largely dependent. Although by definition, available unused Swazi Nation Land is accessible to all Swazis through chiefs via the practice of *kukhonta*, as has been noted above, many peasants have been forcibly removed from their land in order to make way for projects in which Tibiyo has a stake. Nevertheless, it has been stated that:

Tibiyo is owned by the Swazi Nation. Every Swazi National is an owner in Tibiyo - even those born today. All Swazis have the right to know about Tibiyo activities - how it works and what it does. As in all national matters, all Swazis have the right to appeal to the King with any query about the activities of Tibiyo (*Times of Swaziland*, 01.10.76).

Notwithstanding these ideological inversions, the revenues which accrue to the fund have been managed by a board of directors appointed by the king who are not publically accountable to parliament (Daniel, 1983:104). The fund has

seen the rapid growth of indigenous bourgeois class forces, and during the 1980s, Tibiyo has systematically spread its tentacles through all sectors of the economy.

The foregoing arguments suggest that tribal nationalism and the creation of 'traditions' which it has facilitated, lie at the heart of both the dominant form of indigenous capital accumulation and repression. The various forms which repression has taken in the countryside constitute a key element of the agrarian question in Swaziland. From the arguments presented, it would appear that the prospects for democracy are slight in the absence of a democratic resolution of the agrarian question; at the same time it is clear that the dominant modes of indigenous accumulation in Swaziland are predicated on the maintenance of the extra-economic powers of the king and the chiefs. In short, maintenance of repressive social relations in the countryside constitutes the *sine qua non* of the path of accumulation pursued by the dominant bourgeois forces in Swaziland.¹²

Repression in the Countryside

As has been illustrated in the analysis of the development of royal hegemony and tribal nationalism, the process of the formation of the indigenous bourgeoisie in Swaziland is essentially a post-World War II phenomenon, facilitated by colonial reforms. It has been shown how royal hegemony was secured through the successful establishment of a unifying collective will among the people through the creation and development of Swazi 'traditions'. This section of the paper attempts to demonstrate more clearly how state ideology has become embodied in state institutions of repression and control, through an examination of the concrete processes and practices of state repression in the countryside on both Swazi National and freehold title deed land.

As in all settler colonies which have experienced land alienation, the resolution of the land question in Swaziland remains a central facet of the national and agrarian questions. It has been demonstrated how the king attempted to resolve both the land question and the national question in a tribal manner. The Swaziland Native Administration Act of 1950, and the Independence Constitution formalised the powers of the monarchy and the chieftaincy, and hence their control over the land. Land regained through repurchase has been allocated at the whim of the king, and much of this land has been used for large-scale Tibiyo projects or for state farms.

In the abstract, the concept of communal tenure affords great democratic potential. In the concrete, however, tribal tenure in Swaziland (and elsewhere in Africa) has provided the basis for the repression and plunder of the peasantry. It is not my intention here to analyse how the specific processes of production and marketing in the countryside under the imperatives of commodity economy

have led to the internal differentiation of the peasantry. My concern rather is with the extra-economic forms of coercion to which peasants and 'squatters'¹³ on freehold title deed land have been subjected. These various forms have involved forced labour, forced contributions and forced removals.

Control over land allocation by the king and chiefs, has given these authorities the power to extract tribute labour from their subjects. During the colonial period, it has been shown how money was substituted for tribute labour by the king in his efforts to buy back the land. This practice has extended itself to the chiefs, who have increasingly come to demand cash or cattle from new settlers in the form of '*khonta* fees'.¹⁴ Hughes has argued that these payments are a recent innovation:

In some chiefdoms it is generally accepted that such payment should be made, and informants when asked directly whether this is Siswati, the Swazi customary way of doing things, simply state that this is the custom today, though not in the past (Hughes, 1972:134).

Hughes also shows how the primary significance of tribute labour resides in the political rather than the economic power which it gives to chiefs. He argues that most chiefs use tribute labour 'as a means of stressing the unity of the chiefdom, and in asserting their traditional rights to summon people to co-operate on public works' (1972:109). The forced contributions which flow from these powers have been exacted for building and maintaining schools, clinics and other state facilities (Neocosmos, 1987: 108). Subjects who fail or refuse to comply with demands, may be heavily fined. In 1987, it was reported in the *Times of Swaziland* (12 March) that Chief Loyiwe Maziya told his subjects that if they did not contribute to the development of the local school at Maphungwane, they would have their cattle taken away from them. According to residents in the village, the chief demanded a sum of E100 from them, but that in 1979 a similar demand had been made from them for the construction of the high school, although nothing had since been done about it.¹⁵

Forced removals are another form of repression experienced regularly amongst the peasantry. These occur for a variety of reasons, including feuding between rival chiefs; when the land is required for a state or Tibiyo project; and when local chiefs wish to 'discipline' their subjects. The following examples illustrative of these various 'reasons' for forced removals are from 1984. In the Ekupheleni area near Ngwenya, 40 families consisting of 400 people caught in a feud between their community leaders were ordered out, and given a month to 'get off the land or face forceful eviction' (*The Swazi News*, 05.05.84). Three hundred families involving about 1 000 people were ordered by the ministry of agriculture to move their homes off a government farm at Nkalashane (*Times of Swaziland*, 27.09.84). Five families were ordered off their land by the interior

ministry following their 'defiant' and 'generally disrespectful' attitude to the authorities (*Times of Swaziland*, 09.10.84). In Kwamkheli, over 15 families were 'kicked out of their area and dumped in the veld', because they refused to pay allegiance to a chief whom they rejected because in their view he had arrived in the area later than they had (*Swazi Observer*, 22.10.84).

The transition to independence in Swaziland has borne few fruits for the Swazi occupants of freehold title deed farms. Following recommendations made by a joint United Kingdom and Swaziland Land Mission in 1969, approximately 22 per cent of the country's underutilised land was identified for purchase over a period of time from non-Swazi citizens for the 'Swazi Nation'. By 1983, only one-third of the 960 000 allocated acreage had been purchased (Bullheid, 1983:13), while much of this land was used for state farm projects. Tenants and workers on the land have invariably been treated as 'squatters', and little effort has been made to integrate them into state farming projects. Moreover, 'squatters' from neighbouring farms have often moved onto these farms on hearing of their purchase by government, in the belief that they have every right to be there. The state's general response, however, has been to evict them from the land (Matthews, 1987:204).

The land rights of farmworkers and tenants are regulated by the Farm Dweller's Act of 1982 and the Farm Dweller's Control (agreement) Regulation of 1983. These acts entitle 'squatters' to written agreements within 90 days of their obtaining the status of being 'squatters'. The agreement must be in writing and in English, and should include, inter alia, the number of persons available for labour, work hours and wages, size of land to be ploughed, stock allowed, rations, tax payment and expiry of the agreement (Armstrong, 1985:27). The Farm Dwellers Act has done little to overcome the ongoing struggles between squatters and landowners (*Swazi Observer*, 23.06.84). The problem is often exacerbated when there is a change in ownership. A further problem which has emerged is the struggle between chiefs and the state over repurchased land. There have been several instances when chiefs have staked their claim for this category of land by encouraging their subjects to move onto it (*Times of Swaziland*, 01.10.88).

Squatters have also frequently argued that conditions have worsened when the farm has been taken over by Swazis. This is no doubt in part an expression of resentment towards private ownership of land by Swazis, given the historical legacy of the land partition. There is however, much evidence of intensified oppression and exploitation under the emergent class of indigenous capitalist farmers:

...it appears that the rising class of Swazi farm owning bourgeoisie is more iron-handed than the expatriates... There is an increasing

rate of mass removals, increasing intolerance of the chief's authority over farm dwellers and an increasing authoritarian attitude towards the squatter by the new class (*Times of Swaziland*, 27.04.82).

Matthews, who conducted a series of interviews with squatters, found that the new class of landowners used a variety of strategies to squeeze tenants off the land. One informant complained that :

Our farming area has been reduced to nothing! The previous owner (a white man) did not mind, you could cultivate as much land as you possibly could, the new owner (a black man) does not want us to farm (Matthews, 1987:214).

In another case, over 20 families were ordered off two farms at Dvudvusini near Mankayane. A community leader said that since the farms were bought by a local businessman:

we have not had peace of mind with the threats of eviction. Before the farm changed hands we were under the impression that we would have been notified and given a chance to purchase it as a community which we would have done, but this was not done, and the next we learnt was that a Swazi has bought it...Before the present man bought it, we lived comfortably with no trouble. Trouble began with the takeover of a local man (*Times of Swaziland*, 27.09.88).

In 1984 the Farm Dwellers Act was amended to facilitate the introduction of 'Farm Dweller Tribunals' to adjudicate disputes between squatters and landowners. This amendment has removed disputes from the courts, and in the process empowered chiefs to intervene in disputes, since they have strong representation in these tribunals (Matthews, 1967:215). Chiefs in this way also are able to make demands on squatters for labour and contributions. Squatters ultimately seem to emerge as the most repressed class (or class fraction of poor peasants) in the countryside. This is because of the state's view that private farms are a central facet of rural development, and current legislation which enables landowners to evict squatters so long as they can claim that land will be used for the expansion of agricultural production. As Matthews aptly argues, unlike peasants 'on Swazi Nation Land, whom the state ostensibly wishes to "develop", "squatters" are seen as an obstacle to such agricultural development, an obstacle which is to be removed' (1987:216).

The fate of squatters on freehold land as effective occupiers of land over which they have no de jure rights, is that they too - like peasants on Swazi Nation Land but in a different form - are subject to extra-economic forms of coercion, facilitated more formally by the Farm Dweller's Act of 1982. This legislation in the case of squatters, and the powers of the chieftaincy through the Swazi

Native Administration Act of 1950 in the case of peasants on Swazi Nation Land, lie at the heart of the repressive regime which facilitates forced labour, forced contributions and forced removals. These forms of repression are inconsistent with democracy, and are central to an understanding of why there can be no democracy under the tribal nationalist state in Swaziland. Mamdani has argued that:

Where direct force is an integral part of production relations, no consistent democracy is possible. One condition for a democratic political life is that direct producers be free of direct constraint, that is extra-economic coercion. Bourgeois democracy is predicated on contractual relations between exploiter and exploited through the market place - where a worker may 'choose' to sell his labour power to an employer or a peasant may 'choose' to sell his crops to a buyer and not in direct compulsion from above.

This requires a relative separation of economics from politics, of the market from the state. It requires that the relations between the exploiters and the exploited be relatively separate from those between the rulers and the ruled, that force not be integral to production relations, but only 'weigh in the balance' to ensure that market freedoms and class relations are indeed reproduced (1988:91).

None of these democratic conditions in Swaziland can be secured unless extra-economic coercion is brought to an end. In Swaziland, the dividing line between the compradors as an accumulating class, and the cluster of political forces under the aegis of the king which rule is very narrow indeed. The link between the state and Tibiyo - which is essentially a state institution, given its dependence on the political place of the monarchy for its existence - and accumulation, is too strong to allow for a relative separation of economics from politics. It is this dependence on the state connection for accumulation which lies at the heart of the failure of democracy in Swaziland and in Africa as a whole.

Conclusion: Royal Hegemony and Repression in Swaziland

When King Sobhuza suspended the independence constitution, banned political parties, dissolved parliament and introduced detention without trial legislation in April 1973, he argued that:

the constitution has permitted the imposition into our country of highly undesirable political practices, alien and incompatible with the way of life of 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

(Proclamation by His Majesty King Sobhuza II, 12.04.73).

In pursuing the path of 'traditionalism', the king was really attempting to combine a disparity of perceptions of the world in order to neutralise potential antagonisms. The development of the notion that the Swazis should develop the best of both European and Swazi worlds and culture, has in practice been used to legitimise the highly repressive social structure of accumulation, required for the extraction of a high rate and mass of surplus value.

Following his suspension of the constitution, the king appointed a Royal Constitutional Commission entrusted with the task of developing a new constitution. When the 'Establishment of the Parliament of Swaziland' was announced under the King's Order-in-Council No 28 of 1978, much of the institutional apparatus of the state remained unchanged, however. The major change lay in the mode of representation, which saw the development of an elaborate electoral system organised by district assemblies known as *Tinkhundla*. The *tinkhundla* system allowed for no political campaigning, and candidates elected at the 40 *tinkhundla* do not become MPs, but constitute an electoral college which is responsible for the election of 40 out of 50 MPs and half of the 20 senators. This system allowed the king to emerge as an authoritarian populist figure who effectively ruled by decree. The fragile legitimacy of the system rested largely on King Sobhuza's stature and the awe in which he was held by the mass of the people, particularly the peasantry, who were most susceptible to the ideology of 'tradition'.

Following King Sobhuza's death, the succession years were characterised by ongoing cabal within the palace by competing royal factions. The accession to the throne by King Mswati partly served to diffuse these intrigues, but the young king has displayed a disturbing inability to address the problems of repression and democracy in the country. The *tinkhundla* system in particular has come under public scrutiny, including that of chiefs in the Mbabane region who presented a memorandum to the government in 1989 calling for their replacement by a system of direct elections. King Mswati has displayed an intolerance towards such criticisms, and seems intent on following in the footsteps of his father, although he clearly lacks the charisma of the late king.

This paper has shown how royal hegemony has been developed through the creation and development of 'traditions'. These have become central elements of a highly repressive structure of comprador accumulation. These 'traditions' however, are not merely ideas or concepts, but have become materialised in the repressive practices and institutions of the state. Opposition to royal hegemony has been disparate, unco-ordinated and disorganised, and no serious counter-hegemony to royal rule has been developed. In order to succeed, such a counter-hegemony would need to draw in the oppressed and exploited classes

among the peasantry who constitute the mass of the Swazi population. Despite the fact that these peasants are on the rough edge of repression in Swaziland, they have not emerged as an oppositional force to royal hegemony. The success of traditional ideology has been predicated on the way in which extra-economic coercion has been presented as being in the very nature of things - it is the 'Swazi way'. Forced labour, forced contributions and forced removals are the major constituents of the regime of extra-economic coercion in Swaziland. Insofar as these practices are essential in maintaining the powers of the monarchy over land, they are important components of capital accumulation in Swaziland. At the same time, it has been argued that they preclude the development of a democratic political culture in Swaziland.

While the Swazi peasantry have been unable to scrape away the 'muck of ages' surrounding the 'traditional' aura of the emergent bourgeoisie, this has not been true of the working class. In June 1982, 400 workers went on strike against Wimpey International, in charge of construction of the Luphohlo hydro-electric dam in the Ezulwini valley. When confronted by the labour commissioner, the district commissioner and a senior police officer who instructed them to return to work, leave everything to the works committee¹⁷ and cease behaving in an 'unSwazi manner', the workers replied:

Is it Swazi to intimidate workers and treat a committee member like this?... What have the white men given you up there in those offices?... you can't force us to work... why can't you people negotiate with us? Why do you have to rely on threats all the time? Is that the Swazi way you are telling us about? (*Times of Swaziland*, 24.06.82).

While the workers' statements reveal that the ideological veils used to secure royal hegemony have begun to wear thin, it should be recognised that popular oppositional forces which are urban and/or working class-based will be unable to influence political events unless they are able to challenge the hold which royal hegemony has over the peasantry. This reality tempers the enthusiasm generated in 1989 and 1990 by the upsurge in worker strikes and civil servant and teacher wrangles with the state, along with the detention of 15 members of a clandestine opposition party, the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO). Only through broadly-based demands can popular opposition be developed. It is in this sense that a democratic resolution of a key element of the agrarian question - the land question - becomes a precondition for popular democratic transformation in Swaziland.

Notes

1. Annual Report of Swaziland for 1907-8, (Mbabane, 1908), p. 11.

2. Quoted by CP Youe (1978:62). Prince Malunge was a senior prince who assumed a central role in the palace during the regency of Queen Cabotsibeni.

3. 'Agreement between Swaziland Tin Ltd. and Prince Malunge' (24 September 1906), Swaziland National Archives (SNA), RCS 100/15. In the case of Albert Bremer and Josiah Vilakazi, an appeal was made to the Swazi, who were informed that 'tinkomo takaNzwane rivemuku (the king's cattle are being looted), and it was their national duty to replenish the larder' (Crush, 1983:296).
4. These levies ranged between 3-5 pounds per head, a figure which amounted to a quarter of an annual mine wage. See, 'Enraght-Moony to RT Coryndon' (24 October 1905), SNA J294/05.
5. See Kuper (1978) for an account of King Bhunu's reign.
6. *Swaziland: Proclamation by His Excellency the High Commissioner, Entitled the Swaziland Native Administration Proclamation*, Law No. 79 of 1950 (Promulgated 22 December 1950).
7. Ngwenyama is the Siswati term for 'king'.
8. M.J. Dlamini, 'The Philosophy, Policies and Objectives of the Imbokodvo National Movement', Election Manifesto, 27 April 1972.
9. This was clearly seen in the 1980s, when Swaziland and Pretoria signed a security pact in secret. After the signing of the Nkomati accord between South Africa and Mozambique in April 1984, the Swazi-Pretoria agreement became public, and an open and systematic crackdown on ANC members in Swaziland followed. This continued through the rest of the 1980s, and the ease with which South African agents operated in Swaziland has been exposed in evidence placed before the Harms Commission into the activities of the CCB.
10. *The Constitution of Swaziland, Swaziland Statutes, Constitutional Law Act 60/1968*, No. 1377.
11. Swazi Nation Land hereafter refers to land allocated and controlled by the king and chiefs, ie land under 'traditional' tenure as opposed to freehold title deed land.
12. I think it needs to be made perfectly clear here that I am not suggesting that all forms of capital accumulation in Swaziland depend on the repression of the peasantry. Nor am I arguing that capitalism is dependent on the perpetuation of 'traditional' ideology, or that all Swazi capitalists rely on such an ideology. On the contrary, I would argue that a democratisation of the system would open the space for greater numbers of Swazis to become capitalists.
13. The term squatter is used here to denote a category of people who de facto occupy freehold land, and who have done so for years, but who have no legal rights to the land. Essentially they are farmworkers and/or labour tenants.
14. The custom of *kukhonta* refers to the process through which commoners owe their allegiance to particular chiefs in order to become their subjects and gain access to land.
15. Ironically, this is the same pro-NNLC chief (he is known as Loyiwe or Saphaza) whose homestead was burnt by colonial police during the 1964 election campaign (see above).
16. For an extensive discussion and analysis of the establishment and development of the *tinkhundla*, see Levin (1990).
17. In 1972, trade unions were actively discouraged and works councils confined to each separate production unit were implemented.

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