

# **Kingship and Transition in Swaziland, 1973-1988.**

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## Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the *Liqoqo* years in Swaziland and the extent to which King Sobhuza's reign and the introduction of the 1973 Decree created the conditions that led to the crises that plagued the country after the monarch's death in 1982. It argues that Sobhuza II's brand of cultural nationalism, the removal of the Independence Constitution, the introduction of Tinkhundla governance and the transformation of the *Liqoqo* sowed the seeds for political crisis that engulfed the kingdom. This study refutes the traditionalist/modernist debate and proposes that King Sobhuza II, albeit unwittingly, was the architect of a scenario that almost destroyed the long reigning Swazi monarchy. While this dissertation focuses on events leading up to and during the *Liqoqo* era, the aftermath is equally fascinating witnessing unparalleled civic dissatisfaction and the emergence of more vocal and organised opposition groups during the final decade of the century.

## Key Terms

Tradition in Swaziland, Royal succession in Swaziland, Swaziland 1973 – 1988, King Sobhuza II, King Mswati II, Indlovukazi Dzeliwe, Indlovukazi Ntombi, Liqoqo Era, Tinkhundla Governance, Prince Mfanasibili.

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## Glossary

<i>Bantfwabenkosi</i>	King's male blood relatives from his father's line
<i>Buhhihhihi</i>	Talking in corners/rumours
<i>Ekhaya</i>	Home
<i>Emabutfo</i>	Age regiments, warriors
<i>Emakhosikati</i>	King's wives
<i>Emahiya</i>	Traditional cloth
<i>Emalangen</i>	Dlamini Family/ also the name of the Swazi monetary currency
<i>Kraal</i>	Cattle byre
<i>Imbokodvo National Movement</i>	A political party formed by King Sobhuza II in 1968
<i>Imfabantfu</i>	King's fields
<i>Incwala</i>	Annual ritual of kingship held in Dec/Jan each year
<i>Indlovukazi</i>	Queen Mother
<i>Ingwenyama</i>	King of the Swazi
<i>Inyanga</i>	Traditional doctor
<i>Khonta</i>	Pay allegiance to chief
<i>Kraal</i>	Cattle byre
<i>Kuhlambisa</i>	gifts purchases by a bride for her in laws
<i>Labadzala</i>	The elderly
<i>Libandla</i>	Swazi council comprised of chiefs, community leaders and all adult males
<i>Lifa Fund</i>	National Fund that collected taxes from Swazis. The proceeds were used to repurchase land from British and Boer settlers
<i>Liqoqo</i>	Council that advises the king
<i>Liqunga</i>	Council of senior princes
<i>Lobola</i>	Bride price usually paid in cattle
PUDEMO	People's United Democratic Movement
<i>Ndabazabantu</i>	Officers appointed by King Sobhuza II to mediate between employers and employees

<i>Sigodlo</i>	Royal enclosure where Queen Mother and Kings wives lived
<i>Sikhulu</i>	Chief
<i>Swazi Nation Land</i>	Communal land allocated to Swazis by chiefs on behalf of the king
<i>Tibiyo Taka Ngwane</i>	Royal company that purchases shares in business interests on behalf of the Swazi nation.
<i>Tinkhundla</i>	Regional Committees
<i>Tisuka Taka Ngwane</i>	Royal company that collected mineral royalties and invested them on behalf of the Swazi nation
<i>Umbanga</i>	Conflict/fighting
<i>Umcwasho</i>	Ceremony during which maidens agree to remain virgins for a period of two years. They wear tassels to indicate that they have made the commitment. Girls who fall pregnant or break the pledge are fined
<i>Umhlanga</i>	Reed Dance held in Aug/Sept annually
<i>Vusela</i>	Meetings commissioned by King Mswati III to determine if Swazis wanted a new constitutional order.

## Chapter One

### Methodology and Sources

As one of a few surviving monarchies in Africa, Swaziland has attracted its fair share of attention since attaining independence in 1968. Unlike many African nations, it is a country that has clung to traditional ideals and practices. Its traditional path has been engineered by a powerful monarchy that can trace its origins back to the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Yet events in pre-independent and post-independent Swaziland have exposed cracks in the fabric of the traditional kingdom and challenged royal hegemony.

This dissertation focuses on the period between 1973 and 1988 which witnessed a flurry of political instability and activity in Swaziland. 1973 proved a convenient starting point in that it was a watershed year with the introduction of the 1973 Decree and the expansion of the king's role and powers. The research question revolves around events of the *Liqoqo* (Council that advised the king) era (1982-1988) and the extent to which King Sobhuza II's reign (1921-1982) and the abrogation of the Independence Constitution in 1973 influenced events of the post-Sobhuza years. It examines Sobhuza II's influence in shaping the political and social landscape of the kingdom. King Sobhuza II receives attention as the possible architect of an autocratic state that appeared to implode after his death. Variables such as the role of tradition and culture, and tensions between traditional and modernist camps are addressed along with the impact of regional relations, the presence of a power vacuum and the motivations of individuals in the Swazi political arena. The main aim of this dissertation is to determine whether King Sobhuza II's reign and legacy paved the way for the crises that characterised the *Liqoqo* era. Although the *Liqoqo* era ended in 1986 with the coronation of King Mswati III, it was decided to expand the dissertation to 1988 which marked the conclusion of Prince Mfanasibili's treason trial, an event that sounded the death knell for the *Liqoqo*.

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<sup>1</sup> BA Marwick, *The Swazi*, Chapter One. See also p 206.

Twenty seven years have passed since the death of King Sobhuza II in 1982 and the political crisis that followed. Events of this period have begun to recede with the passage of time. The controversial era has essentially been shrouded in a veil of silence and questions remain unanswered. Having arrived in Swaziland in 1981, as a young teacher, I lived in the country through the tumultuous *Liqoqo* years that were charged with doubt, apprehension, and a sense that the days of the Swazi kingship were numbered.

My observations and experiences provided the impetus for this dissertation. The mood of the general populace changed quickly after the death of Sobhuza II as Swazis were ordered to mourn the deceased king. Swazi adults were required to display *inzilo* (symbols of mourning). Males had to shave their heads while women were required to don a black string around their heads.<sup>2</sup> To my surprise such requests were not optional but enforced by members of the police force who visited homes (mine included) and demanded that the dictates of the elders were carried out. While such acts amounted to an invasion of one's privacy, they also seemed to portend the arrival of significant change in the kingdom.

Lack of information and a sense of insecurity were noticeable throughout the *Liqoqo* years.<sup>3</sup> The general public was unsure of what was going on and rumour became the order of the day. A frank editorial in *The Times of Swaziland*<sup>4</sup> observed that 'the Kingdom was abuzz with rumours and people did not know whether they were coming or going.'<sup>5</sup> Reports of widespread detentions for misdemeanours such as copying pamphlets fanned the flames. In October 1983 four women were charged with distributing seditious pamphlets that were critical of Prince Sozisa, the Authorised

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<sup>2</sup> JSM Matsebula, *A Tribute to the Late His Majesty King Sobhuza II*, pp 66-67. Matsebula discusses national mourning and the form it took after the death of Sobhuza II in 1982.

<sup>3</sup> *Liqoqo* era or *Liqoqo* years are euphemisms used in public discussions in Swaziland to refer to times of terror and instability after Sobhuza II's death and before Prince Makhosetive became King Mswati III.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times of Swaziland* is a privately owned newspaper established in Mbabane at the end of the nineteenth century. Despite its private ownership it has been subjected to governmental interference over the years.

<sup>5</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 23 July 2008, p 1.



Person.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps one of the most shocking rumours alleged that *Indlovukazi* (Queen Mother) Ntombi was pregnant with Prince Mfanasibili's child.<sup>7</sup> The daily news on the radio and television in addition to *The Times of Swaziland*, the sole daily publication at the time, were the main sources of information. It was not long before observers suspected that press releases were heavily censored. In February 1984, Professor SM Guma, Vice Chancellor of the University of Swaziland, lent credence to suspicions when he stated: 'Trust the Press'.<sup>8</sup> Some sought commentary from the limited South African media available at the time.<sup>9</sup> There was certainly a sense that the country had moved from a calm, peaceful era into one of increasing suspicion, intrigue and unpredictability. This led to a palpable sense of unease and uncertainty about the future.

It would be shortsighted to regard the *Liqoqo* era in isolation and conclude that King Sobhuza II's death unleashed a period of political instability that paved the way for opportunists. Initially I had intended to focus exclusively on the *Liqoqo* era (1982-1986). However it quickly became apparent that the events of 1982-1988 were not isolated but the product of a number of variables unique to Swaziland. Hence the dissertation developed from a narrowly focused examination of the *Liqoqo* era to a broader analysis of King Sobhuza II's legacy and how it influenced the *Liqoqo* years. During my research journey I came to understand that it was a country with a proud cultural heritage and set of traditions. An understanding of the monarchy, Swazi culture and how it influenced both political institutions and the person on the street were fundamental. I realised that the role and legacy of King Sobhuza II put in motion numerous scenarios that would erupt during the *Liqoqo* era. The long-reigning monarch was a central figure who had an enormous impact on the events that took place during his reign and after his death. A popular ruler, he shaped the country's political landscape, quashed dissent and ruled supreme. His death led to the emergence of a powerful *Liqoqo* and a new face of Swazi politics which was characterised by rumour,

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<sup>6</sup> The Times of Swaziland, 12 October 1983, p1.

<sup>7</sup> Prince Mfanasibili refuted such allegations as propaganda during an interview in Manzini on 24 July 2008.

<sup>8</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 24 February 1984, p 5. Professor Guma made the statement during a lecture organized by the Swaziland National Association of Journalists. The lecture was attended by journalists and dignitaries such as the British High Commissioner and the Taiwanese Ambassador to Swaziland.

<sup>9</sup> Magazines like *Drum* and *Pace* were among the few publications available in Swaziland during the early 1980s. Both magazines were black owned and generally regarded as pro ANC.

speculation, palace intrigues, detentions, dismissals, uncertain times and power brokering.

When considering the structure of this dissertation I felt that it was important to provide readers with extra information in order to make the text more accessible. Hence it includes a glossary of siSwati words and terms to facilitate both reading and understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary. Readers will note that English meanings/explanations are provided in brackets the first time a siSwati phrase or word is used in each chapter. Thereafter the glossary should prove useful. Copies of various pieces of legislation referred to in the dissertation are also included for the reader's convenience. The lineage of Swazi kings stretching from Ngwane III to Mswati III will enable readers to trace royal lines from 1750 to the present day. A map indicating the land lost to South Africa during King Mbandzeni's reign enables readers to visualise the extent of the land claims pursued by King Sobhuza II.

The dissertation is presented in six chapters. Chapter One is devoted to methodology and sources. It begins with a brief discussion of my personal experiences and observations which left many unanswered questions and fuelled my desire to dig beneath the surface of the *Liqogo* era. The first chapter also conducts a literature review considering the work of anthropologists, historians and other commentators. It concludes with a description of data collection methods and the challenges encountered during the data selection and collection phases.

Chapter Two is devoted to explaining Swazi tradition and the central role it plays in Swazi society. It considers the structure and role of Swazi kingship and the manner in which it exerts control over the population. Furthermore it traces the emergence and development of cultural nationalism under King Sobhuza II. It also acknowledges the multifaceted nature of independent Swaziland, being a hybrid state characterised by a fusion of traditional institutions and those of a twentieth-century liberal state. An understanding of Swazi tradition is paramount to contextualise Sobhuza's lengthy kinship and the post- Sobhuza era.

Sobhuza II's reign and legacy form the basis of the third chapter. Sobhuza II carved a niche for himself and expanded the power and influence of Swazi royalty throughout his sixty-one-year reign. Particular emphasis is placed on Swaziland's independence in 1968 and the manner in which the Independence Constitution frustrated the aging monarch. The year 1973 witnessed the introduction of a new decree that revolutionised the face of Swazi politics and paved the way for a non-party state. This chapter analyses Sobhuza's legacy and the extent to which his actions laid the foundation for the challenges of the *Liqoqo* era.

In Chapter Four it was important to make sense of the complicated and convoluted post-Sobhuza years (1982-1988). So much was happening that many people were confused and bewildered. Sobhuza's death was followed by successive challenges and counter-challenges that tested the mettle of Swazi royalty. It witnessed the emergence of a newly empowered *Liqoqo* along with individuals and cliques. Varying interpretations of Swazi tradition and Sobhuza's legacy became the source of an intense struggle that threatened to overthrow the monarchy. An understanding of Swaziland and its relations within the southern African region during the *Liqoqo* era was imperative to facilitate a frank analysis of one of the most controversial episodes in modern Swazi history.

Chapter Five presents diverse historical interpretations of events during the *Liqoqo* era. It recognises that there were probably no winners in the struggle for political control between 1983 and 1986. While *Liqoqo* members may have savoured a brief moment in power they were ultimately its victims. Although a wide array of variables influenced events of the time, Swazi cultural nationalism emerged as the victor and ensured that Swaziland well and truly remained in the Sobhuza II mould.

Chapter Six concludes the dissertation. It includes a brief summary of the main themes and findings and goes on to examine the findings from a historical perspective. It also suggests potential areas for future study and consideration.

Events in Swaziland have attracted the attention of historians, anthropologists, political scientists and other commentators. Scholars have focused on tradition and culture, the

monarchy, the impact of colonialism, the reign of Sobhuza II, the abrogation of the Independence Constitution and the *Liqoqo* era. While researchers have posited various theories, the occurrences of the post-Sobhuza II years remain a subject of debate. One of the shortcomings of existing research is that some scholars failed to acknowledge the complexity of Swazi society and the myriad variables that produced instability in the post-Sobhuza II years.

Hilda Kuper's anthropological studies on Swaziland<sup>10</sup> proved to be a useful starting point for this study. Under King Sobhuza II's patronage, Kuper enjoyed unlimited access to the Swazi royal family.<sup>11</sup> This enabled her to observe, describe and portray the Swazi way of life. Kuper's work provided valuable background to twentieth-century Swaziland. She focused on rituals such as the *Incwala* (first fruit ceremony), the regiments, traditional land tenure, the monarchy and the life and achievements of King Sobhuza II. Her research is still valuable today although some critics question her objectivity in the light of her close ties with Swazi royalty. JSM Matsebula lent credence to such criticism when he observed that Kuper resided with Sobhuza II's queens for a period of two years.<sup>12</sup> Peter Forster and Bongani Nsibande argued that Kuper 'relied on a limited circle of key informants'.<sup>13</sup> Leroy Vail and Landeg White suggested that Kuper's work was dominated by 'a sense of respect for the Swazi monarchy' and a desire to build up the monarchy.<sup>14</sup>

Likewise historian Matsebula provided background information about the Swazi monarchy. Matsebula, the first Swazi to write a history of Swaziland, traced the genealogy of kings from Dlamini I to Mswati III.<sup>15</sup> His close links to the monarchy<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> H Kuper, 'Royal Ritual in the Changing Political Context', *Cahiers d'etudes Africaines*, Vol 12, No 4, 1972; H Kuper, *Sobhuza II: Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland*; H Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*; H Kuper, *The Swazi: A South African Kingdom*.

<sup>11</sup> Kuper, *Sobhuza II: Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland*, pp 1-16.

<sup>12</sup> Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland*, p 15.

<sup>13</sup> PG Forster & BJ Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xxxiii.

<sup>14</sup> L Vail & L White, *Power and the Praise Poem*, p 178.

<sup>15</sup> Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland; The King's Eye*.

<sup>16</sup> JSM Matsebula belongs to the Matsebula clan that is closely associated with the ritual and political duties of Swazi kingship. Indeed a Swazi king is required to select a wife from the Matsebula clan before he is permitted to take any other wives. King Mswati III's first wife is La Matsebula in accordance with cultural dictates. La Matsebula, like her predecessors, plays a major role in the *Incwala* ceremony.

and his experiences as King Sobhuza's private secretary between April 1967 and April 1974 enabled him to go behind the scenes providing greater insights into the Swazi royal family and King Sobhuza II's reign.<sup>17</sup> Like Kuper he was criticised for failing to adopt an objective perspective focusing instead on glorifying Sobhuza's rule.<sup>18</sup> British representatives like BA Marwick<sup>19</sup> and missionaries like Joan Scutt<sup>20</sup> also provided insight into Swaziland. Scutt spent many years in the kingdom while Marwick was Resident Commissioner between 1957 and 1963.<sup>21</sup> Marwick wrote from a colonial perspective and was heavily influenced by the requirements of his position and the prejudice that was common among British colonialists at the time.

Tradition, particularly Swazi tradition, has received considerable attention in this dissertation. In many respects it can be regarded as the anchor that enabled the kingdom to weather storms during the twentieth century. It is a complex concept that has been the subject of intense debate that has led to different interpretations and viewpoints. Robert Martin viewed tradition in a static fashion and declared that 'the tradition business in Swaziland is a fraud.'<sup>22</sup> Yet it is worth noting that scholars including Kuper, Pieter Esterhuizen and Phinda Zwane recognised the dynamic attributes of tradition, particularly Swazi tradition.<sup>23</sup> Indeed Swazi traditions evolved, and were moulded with the passage of time providing the foundations for a monarchical kingdom.

Traditionalism in Swaziland attracted the attention of Hugh Macmillan and Mfaniseni Sihlongonyane. Macmillan focused on Kuper's interpretation of tradition and used her work as a starting point to explain the emergence and development of traditionalism and cultural nationalism in the country from the 1920s onwards. Macmillan argued that

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<sup>17</sup> Matsebula, *The King's Eye*; Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland*.

<sup>18</sup> Vail & White, *Power and the Praise Poem*, p 178.

<sup>19</sup> Marwick, *The Swazi*.

<sup>20</sup> J Scutt, *The Story of Swaziland*. Joan Scutt worked as a missionary for thirty years in Swaziland. She was awarded an MBE on her retirement in 1982 and received land from King Sobhuza II. Interestingly the foreword of the fourth edition was penned by Prince Bhekimpi. See p 4.

<sup>21</sup> Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland*, pp 187-188, 211.

<sup>22</sup> R Martin, 'Swaziland: The Ideal Bantusan,' *Transition*, No 47, 1975, p 65.

<sup>23</sup> Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p 150; P Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza II', *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 5. See also *The Swazi Observer*, 21 July 2006, p 18.

traditionalism proved to be a successful strategy for Swaziland's ruling elite, although he acknowledged that events after Sobhuza's death sullied the concept that had proved successful for the long-reigning monarch.<sup>24</sup>

Sihlongonyane emphasised the manner in which Swazi rulers portrayed themselves as the custodians of culture, encouraged cultural homogeneity and discouraged diversity. He also acknowledged that King Sobhuza II's reign led to increased understanding and appreciation of Swazi culture.<sup>25</sup> The monarchy in modern Swaziland is still in a strong position whereby the king is viewed as the embodiment of everything that is Swazi. Richard Levin attributed the development of royal hegemony in Swaziland to the creation and development of traditions which found expression in repressive practices.<sup>26</sup> It would appear that tradition may have been a guise used to blinker Swazis during King Sobhuza's reign. The trials and tribulations of the post-Sobhuza era may have removed the wool from many eyes, yet the realities of royal hegemony remained a power house that has endured into the twenty-first century.

The strength and resilience of the Swazi monarchy should not be underestimated. King Sobhuza II's reign ensured that traditional authority grew and prospered throughout the twentieth century. Christian Potholm examined Swazi politics from World War Two through independence. He maintained that the successful transition of Swazi traditional authorities could be mainly attributed to King Sobhuza II's political expertise and the resilience of the traditional political system. He acknowledged that Swaziland's destiny appeared to rest with Sobhuza II and raised concerns about the post-Sobhuza era.<sup>27</sup> Such reservations were also raised by Robert Jackson and Carl Rosenberg and echoed by Absalom Vilakati.<sup>28</sup> While such concerns held water in the aftermath of Sobhuza's

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<sup>24</sup> H Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, pp 643-644.

<sup>25</sup> M Sihlongonyane, 'The Invisible Hand of the Royal Family in the Political Dynamics of Swaziland', *African and Asian Studies*, Vol 2, No 2, 2003, pp 166-167.

<sup>26</sup> R Levin, 'Is this the Swazi Way?' *Transformation*, No 13, 1990, p 63. See also J Baloro, 'The Development of Swaziland's Constitution: Monarchical Responses to Modern Challenges,' *Journal of African Law*, Vol 38, No 1, 1994, p 19.

<sup>27</sup> C. Potholm, *Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernization*, p 3.

<sup>28</sup> J Vieceli, 'Swaziland after Sobhuza: Stability or Crisis?', *A Journal of Africanist Opinion*, Vol XII, No 3, Fall/Winter 1982, p 56.

death, the monarchy has proved its mettle and consolidated its hold on power despite being subjected to an intense power struggle during the *Liqoqo* years. Yet it has to be acknowledged that Sobhuza II's reign had a major impact on the brand of Swazi politics that still endures today.

Swazi traditional institutions have been scrutinised by Richard Levin who noted that King Sobhuza II propagated tradition and played a central role in developing and maintaining royal hegemony.<sup>29</sup> Levin's argument that the Swazi monarchy gained hegemony through a process of accumulation<sup>30</sup> and political repression holds water. There can be little doubt that the monarchy defined tradition and intensified its control over access to land and capital while snuffing out dissension and opposition. Levin warned that such structures should be more amenable to change if Swazi society was to avoid crises. He championed the cause of the voiceless and urged the kingship to redefine itself and embrace change.<sup>31</sup> The need for reform was evident; indeed the problems associated with the Independence Constitution, the introduction of the 1973 Decree, and the difficulties of the *Liqoqo* era provided signals that all was not well. Yet there was much truth in Sihlongonyane's observation that culture was a function of the entire nation, not merely an instrument used by the state.<sup>32</sup> While the king and royal family exercised considerable power, the man in the street was not necessarily enslaved under an autocratic monarchial system.

Events of the post-Sobhuza years have been portrayed as a struggle between modern and traditionalist factions. Supporters of this view have pitted royalists along with conservatives and proponents of tradition against the Prime Minister, Prince Mabandla and *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe who voiced dissension and were widely regarded as progressives. Louis Picard pointed to a schism between political elites in the

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<sup>29</sup> R Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 1-3.

<sup>30</sup> Swazi royalty accumulated power by attaining greater control and ownership of land, finance and business within the kingdom.

<sup>31</sup> R Levin, *Hegemony and Crisis*, p 380.

<sup>32</sup> M Sihlongonyane, 'The Invisible Hand of the Royal Family in the Political Dynamics of Swaziland', *African and Asian Studies*, Vol 2, No 2, 2003, p 160.



kingdom.<sup>33</sup> While such divisions were increasingly emerging, Levin disputed such proposals arguing that the struggle centered predominantly on filling the power vacuum that remained in the absence of King Sobhuza's highly personalised leadership style.<sup>34</sup> Martin also questioned such explanations and argued that the real question revolved around whether institutions, traditional or modern, were attuned to the people's needs and fulfilled their aspirations.<sup>35</sup> Such questions carried as much weight during Sobhuza's reign as in the years after his death.

Robert Davies, Dan O'Meara and Sipho Dlamini maintained that Swaziland's political troubles were essentially a clamour for personal position that emerged after the introduction of the *Tinkhundla* system (traditional system) of government in 1978. They go on to argue that King Sobhuza's death in 1982 opened the flood gates for faction rivalries.<sup>36</sup> Yet there is much truth in the observation that all potential factions were divided by a lack of common interests and goals.<sup>37</sup> This became evident when *Liqoqo* members turned on each other with accusations and wrangling between late 1983 and mid 1984. Yet it would be shortsighted to explain the struggles of the post-Sobhuza years purely as an individual power struggle without considering other contributory factors.

Swaziland's economy attracted the attention of John Daniel, Michael Stephen, Alan Booth and Louis Picard. Daniel echoed Martin Fransman's<sup>38</sup> argument that Swaziland's colonial and decolonisation experiences differed significantly from that of other colonies in the region.<sup>39</sup> Though all three countries were collectively administered by the British High Commissioner in South Africa, they took divergent paths after

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<sup>33</sup> L Picard, 'Traditionalism, the Bureaucracy and Political Development: Local Administration in Swaziland', pp 20-21. Paper presented at the African Studies Association, Boston, 1983.

<sup>34</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 146.

<sup>35</sup> Martin, 'Swaziland: The Ideal Bantusan,' *Transition*, No 47, 1975, p 65.

<sup>36</sup> R Davies, D O'Meara & S Dlamini, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, pp 47-48.

<sup>37</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 148.

<sup>38</sup> Fransman explored industrial relations in pre-independent and post-independent Swaziland and the royal response to the emergence of trade unions in the country. See M Fransman, 'Labour, Capital and the State in Swaziland, 1962-1977', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol 7, No 6, 1982, pp 58-86.

<sup>39</sup> J Daniel, 'The Political Economy of Colonial and Post Colonial Swaziland', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol 7, No 6, 1982, pp 91-100. See also Baloro, 'The Development of Swaziland's Constitution: Monarchical Responses to Modern Challenges', *Journal of African Law*, Vol 38, No 1, 1994, p 33.



independence. This was evident in the manner in which traditional authorities assumed power in 1968.<sup>40</sup> Botswana took the path of democracy while Lesotho became a constitutional monarchy and Swaziland remained a traditional monarchy. Sobhuza 11 gained independence for Swaziland with the backing of Swazis, settler and multinational capital. The formation of *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* (royal company that purchased shares in business interests on behalf of the Swazi nation) and the monarch's control over mineral royalties enabled the ruling class to establish a material basis for its hegemony in the post-independence era. Stephen focused on labour, land tenure, agricultural and industrial production, wages, financial institutions and parastatals and how they influenced Swaziland's development. He noted that the current system that placed ownership of production, access to foreign capital and political power in the hands of a minority worked against the interests of the nation. He concluded by saying: 'the Swazi economy must bend or strike a rock.'<sup>41</sup>

Alan Booth examined Swazi traditionalism from an economic perspective tracing the manner in which the traditional economic power base changed since the nineteenth century. He concluded that traditional hegemony was threatened by the emergence of an elite middle class and an entrepreneurial peasantry.<sup>42</sup> Such propositions were echoed by Daniel who noted the growing contradiction between capital and labour along with nepotism in traditional circles.<sup>43</sup> Picard agreed, in part, using events of the *Liqoqo* era as evidence of the struggle between traditional and progressive forces in the country.<sup>44</sup> Picard went on to question the existence of a single political economy in Swaziland. His observation recognised that Swazi society may not necessarily be neatly boxed and explained. Picard proposed that Sobhuza's death led to the emergence of a schism between the political elites in Swaziland.<sup>45</sup> While economic differences may have been

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<sup>40</sup> Countries like Lesotho and Botswana attained independence as fledgling democracies. As the Sotho king lost power, the Swazi king consolidated the power of traditional rulers in the country.

<sup>41</sup> J Daniel & M Stephen, *Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland*, pp 215-216.

<sup>42</sup> AR Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, pp 74-79.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel, 'The Political Economy of Colonial and Post Colonial Swaziland', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol 7, No 6, 1982, pp 85-86.

<sup>44</sup> L Picard, 'Traditionalism in Swaziland: The Economic Basis of a Southern African Monarchy', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 4, No 1 /2, October, 1985, pp 295-296.

<sup>45</sup> Picard, 'Traditionalism, The Bureaucracy and Political Development: Local Administration in Swaziland', pp 20-22. Paper presented at the 1983 African Studies Association Meetings, Boston, Dec 1983,

partly responsible, it is clear that it has to be considered in conjunction with other variables.

Sihlongonyane questioned Swaziland's apparent resilience in the face of change. In his view it was a mistake to analyse Swazi politics 'according to historically constructed and particularised contexts and dynamics without fusing the wide ranging factors that play various roles in the politics of the country'.<sup>46</sup> Events in Swaziland can be described as the culmination of a number of factors. While Sihlongonyane recognised the role of most of the aforementioned variables he maintained that culture was paramount.<sup>47</sup> Indeed there is much truth in such assertions as culture still pervades all aspects of Swazi life and politics.<sup>48</sup>

Swaziland's regional relations have also been the subject of scrutiny. Swaziland's links within Southern Africa, notably South Africa, were explored primarily by Paul-Henri Bischoff who argued that Swaziland's alliance with apartheid South Africa arose out of necessity. Bischoff proposed that Swaziland's accommodationist stance was influenced by factors such as Sobhuza II's accommodation with foreign capital, the country's overall economic orientation and the historical development of the movement for independence.<sup>49</sup> Thula Simpson concluded that African National Congress (ANC) activity in Swaziland, particularly on the Eastern Front with Mozambique, in addition to the ANC's failure to respond to the concerns of the Swazi and Mozambican authorities, cost the ANC dearly during the early 1980s.<sup>50</sup> While Sobhuza II succumbed to the lure of incentives, Swaziland's links with the apartheid regime gathered greater momentum during the post-Sobhuza era. Booth suggested that may also an element of self-preservation as King Sobhuza feared that the increasing political consciousness of South Africans, fired up by the political ideologies of the

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<sup>46</sup> Sihlongonyane, 'The Invisible Hand of the Royal Family in the Political Dynamics of Swaziland,' *African and Asian Studies*, Vol 2, No 2, 2003, p 155.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p 160.

<sup>48</sup> Sihlongonyane, 'The Invisible Hand of the Royal Family in the Political Dynamics of Swaziland,' *African and Asian Studies*, Vol 2, No 2, 2003, pp 158-162.

<sup>49</sup> PH Bischoff, 'Why Swaziland is Different: An Explanation of the Kingdom's Political Position in Southern Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26, No 3, 1988, p 471.

<sup>50</sup> T Simpson, 'The Bay and the Ocean: A History of the ANC in Swaziland, 1960-1979', *African Historical Review* Vol 41, No 1, 2009, p 117.

ANC, may have an impact upon Swazis.<sup>51</sup> Closer ties with the National Party government in South Africa placed Swaziland in a dilemma compromising the kingdom's regional and international relations. The result in Daniel's words was 'causing large storm clouds to gather over Swaziland's future.'<sup>52</sup> Yet it would be unwise to regard Swaziland as a helpless, dependent state held to ransom by its large, powerful neighbour. The turn-around in Swazi-South African relations held the promise of dividends for the monarchy and those who held the reins of power in the years after Sobhuza II's death.<sup>53</sup>

From the onset I was aware that data collection would be a challenge. Having lived through the period between 1982 and 1988, I observed that many Swazis would prefer to forget those troubled times. People who were detained or imprisoned decided to put the past behind them. This was evidenced by the ex-Prime Minister, Prince Mabandla, who returned to Swaziland but firmly declined to discuss his story. It is also important to note that many of the principal players died without leaving any memoirs or accounts of their experiences. Prince Bhekimpi, George Msibi and Arthur Khoza were cases in point. A few of the survivors are still influential figures in royal circles. AK Hlophe, Prince Gabheni and Edgar Hillary are widely respected and still in public office today, hence their reluctance to be interviewed.

Interviews were a major source of historical information. While face-to-face meetings may appear straightforward, a number of constraints have to be taken into account. Obtaining informed consent from interviewees was paramount. The research question dwelt on an emotive time in Swazi history and posed controversial questions about the kingship and prominent figures in Swazi politics. Although freedom of speech is enshrined in the new constitution, criticism of the monarchy and the corridors of power are not well received. Some would argue that expressing critical sentiments could have a negative impact on them personally. Given the sensitivity of the research topic,

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<sup>51</sup> AR Booth, 'South Africa's Hinterland: Swaziland's Role in Strategies for Sanction-Breaking', *Africa Today*, Vol 26, No 3, 1988, p 44.

<sup>52</sup> Daniel, 'The Political Economy of Colonial and Post Colonial Swaziland,' *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol 7, No 6, 1982, p 112.

<sup>53</sup> Forster & Nsibandwe wrote that the apartheid government was a strong supporter of the traditional monarchy. See Forster & Nsibandwe, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p 14.

respondents required detailed explanations about the project, its purpose and how information would be used. Establishing a rapport with key informants held the key in this respect. Intermediaries assisted greatly in establishing initial contact as respondents tended to drop their guard. By the time I contacted most respondents, they were already expecting an approach and willing to consider participation. In a small country like Swaziland such strategies are useful; indeed it is generally regarded as a good way of getting things done.

Judith Bell's<sup>54</sup> work provided useful guidelines on interviews and interviewing techniques. Preliminary structured interviews proved cumbersome as respondents expanded on questions and steered the interview in other directions. Bringing the interviewee back to set questions proved frustrating and impeded the flow of conversation. Guided interviews seemed best suited to securing data for this dissertation. Interviews were guided around selected topics that gave the respondent a considerable degree of latitude. Open-ended questions gave respondents the freedom to express their views in their own time. Marie-Therese Feuerstein noted the flexibility of guided interviews in that the interviewer may adapt questions according to the respondent's answers.<sup>55</sup> It also provided scope for probing questions that enabled the researcher to expand on information and to move on with the interview. All interviewees rejected the use of tape recorders; indeed a few even attempted to dictate their responses such that they were quoted accurately. All in all guided interviews enabled me to gain access to information and to form a clearer picture of events, experiences, knowledge, attitudes and the premise upon which actions of some respondents were based.

Key informants were an important part of this research. It was important to meet respondents more than once in some instances to ensure that they were provided with ample opportunity to consider and expand on their inputs. It also created scope to probe deeper and to clarify or follow up previous conversations. Lengthy residence in the kingdom<sup>56</sup> proved advantageous in that the author already had connections that

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<sup>54</sup> J Bell, *Doing Your Research*, Chapter Nine, pp 156-172.

<sup>55</sup> MT Feuerstein, *Partners in Evaluation*, pp 87-89.

<sup>56</sup> The author has been resident in Swaziland since 1981.

proved useful when gaining access to sources. It was important to identify respondents who were willing to discuss the subject matter. Among the respondents was Almon Mbingo, a long-serving civil servant who had served in various capacities within the Government. He had close ties with King Sobhuza II, and possessed background knowledge and vast experience of Swazi politics. He also had a reputation of speaking his mind and being willing to tread where others faltered. Perhaps one of the most valuable contacts was Bheki Makhubu. Author of Prince Mfanisibili's biography<sup>57</sup> and an outspoken journalist, he is editor of *The Nation*, one of Swaziland's few independent magazines that analyses current events. The magazine regularly takes on the monarchy and fearlessly reports and comments on Swazi politics. Parks Mangena, a journalist and official royal photographer to King Sobhuza, also proved to be a valuable source of information.

One of the advantages of key informants is that they frequently facilitate contacts with other respondents. This was certainly the case with high profile individuals like Prince Mfanisibili, a key respondent on the *Liqoqo* era. It was also important to secure respondents from the various interest groups to gain a balanced perspective. While Prince Mfanisibili is regarded as one of the architects of the problems that beset Swaziland in the aftermath of King Sobhuza's death, Winnie Mkhonta was a People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) activist who was imprisoned by the *Liqoqo* regime. Her experiences led her to become a vocal and spirited opponent of the Swazi monarchy. Likewise Mario Masuku<sup>58</sup> is a political activist who regularly challenged the authorities and incurred their wrath. As the current president and long-term member of the organisation, he commented on PUDEMO's mission and experiences during the turmoil of the early 1980s.

In common with all data collection techniques, the use of key informants has inherent drawbacks. Securing interviews was a challenge, as some expressed their insecurities and exercised caution. Prince Mfanisibili posed the greatest challenge as we met on

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<sup>57</sup> Makhubu's biography, *Prince Mfanisibili: The Liqoqo Strongman*, is still a work in progress.

<sup>58</sup> It is interesting to note that Mario Masuku was imprisoned (Feb-Sept 2009) and charged with supporting terrorism. The charges arose out of statements he made supporting the attempted bombing of a bridge close to Lozitha Palace. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 26 February 2009, p 4 and *The Swazi Observer*, 7 April 2009, p 3.

numerous occasions, where he made limited contributions and hinted that an interview would follow. Months of pursuit finally yielded an interview that almost failed when he put yet another obstacle in the way. I believe that such tactics may have been used as a determinant of my commitment to meeting him. Prospective respondents also proved elusive when pressed for a meeting. Hence a lot of time was spent phoning unavailable respondents and trying to reschedule meetings. I was conscious of the need to exercise patience and resolve in this regard, if the research component was to be fruitful.

Bell advised on the danger of bias and the need to take it into account.<sup>59</sup> A number of factors could have affected the findings of this study. I was conscious of my own preconceptions, both as a newly arrived immigrant and a Swazi resident during the *Liqoqo* era. It was necessary to be aware of my own responses throughout the research and evaluation process. It was also important to take informants' feelings into account. Prince Mfanasibili was a case in point: 'I am a human being and I have feelings like everyone else.'<sup>60</sup> He acknowledged bitterness about the events of the *Liqoqo* era and the manner in which he felt he was misunderstood and treated. He voiced his concern that he had a number of bad experiences where he felt journalists had misrepresented him.<sup>61</sup> His reticence was understandable and his need for rapport and trust was clear. A further reservation emanated from the fact that his biography was being written at the same time. Another respondent<sup>62</sup> chose to be anonymous due to his position within government circles and the anger he harboured against *Liqoqo* members, particularly Prince Mfanasibili. Yet he provided intriguing detail about events of the time. It was also necessary to recognize that oral informants may exaggerate their roles or information in subtle ways.

I quickly realised that I would have to rely on secondary sources which contain interpretations of events. However locating secondary literature posed a problem from the beginning. An initial foray by the History Subject Librarian at the University of South Africa (UNISA) yielded a paltry reading list. One of the characteristics of

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<sup>59</sup> Bell, *Doing Your Research*, pp 166-167.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> A transcript of this interview has been lodged with my supervisor and is available for scrutiny, if required.

secondary sources is that historians have different opinions about the past and how events, people and facts should be explained. While a few historians published books on the 1973-1988 era, footnotes provided further printed sources that proved invaluable. Bibliographical references led to journals such as *Africa Insight*, *Africa Now*, *Africa Today*, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *Africa Report*, *South African Labour Bulletin*, *Africa Contemporary Record*, *Journal of African Law*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *Transformation*, *Transition* and others.<sup>63</sup>

Given the absence of large volumes of academic research on the topic, the print media proved invaluable. Newspapers such as *The Times of Swaziland* and *The Swazi Observer* covered the events within Swaziland. Yet it was important to note that local journalists were subjected to intimidation and interference. That led most reporters to focus on merely reporting events, while they avoided challenging or criticising the status quo. One respondent recalled that the Swazi media faced challenges during the *Liqoqo* years and commented: 'We were expected to dance to their music.'<sup>64</sup> At one stage *The Swazi Observer* was forced to print a picture of Prince Mfanisibili in traditional dress on its front page.<sup>65</sup> Perusing the print media of the late 1970s and early 1980s could easily lead readers to conclude that there were no crises in the country.<sup>66</sup>

South African newspapers like *The Star*, *The Rand Daily Mail*, *Golden City Press*, *The Argus*, *The Financial Mail*, *The Pretoria News*, *The Evening Standard*, *The Sunday Mirror* and other newspapers published articles and commentaries that were both frank and critical. Indeed it is interesting to note that news relating to events in Swaziland frequently broke in the South African media before anything was known in Swaziland.<sup>67</sup> From time to time South African magazines like *Drum*, *Pace*, *Newsweek*

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<sup>63</sup> All books and journal articles used in this dissertation appear in the bibliography at the end of the dissertation.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Winnie Mkhonta, Mbabane, 29 May 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with anonymous respondent was held in Mbabane, 31 July 2008.

<sup>66</sup> The 1973 Decree appeared in the newspapers in April 1973, thereafter it was not mentioned despite the fact that there was opposition to it. The announcement of the *Liqoqo* members was published by both local papers, yet no mention was made of public discontent with the appointees. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 26 August 1982, p 1. The swearing in the *Liqoqo* received similar treatment in *The Times of Swaziland*, 22 September 1982, p 1.

<sup>67</sup> The Swazi authorities have not been reticent to shut down the media in Swaziland. Journalists have been subjected to arrest and detention over the years. Others have joined the ranks of the unemployed. Articles that are critical of



and *Time* included articles that focused on events and personalities in Swaziland at the time. The criticisms contained in such magazines led to the banning of *Drum* in Swaziland in 1983.<sup>68</sup>

The Swaziland National Archives proved to be a good source of information yielding access to legislation, unpublished papers and documents. The Archives provided access to public speeches made by King Sobhuza II and King Mswati III. Moreover, it assisted in securing access to the print media, particularly magazine articles relating to King Sobhuza II and events during the interregnum after his death in 1982. However, I encountered serious challenges with important sources like court records. The inaccessibility of court records pertaining to *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe and Prince Mfanasibili's trials was a limitation as the latter repeatedly argued that the trial cleared him of treason and exonerated him. He maintained that the court records should be made public so that his role during the *Liqoqo* era could be cleared.<sup>69</sup> Early in 2009 the High Court of Swaziland ordered that Prince Mfanasibili and others should get full transcripts of their High Treason Tribunal. Justice Maphalala criticised the government for 'a failure to understand that the standard norm is to have trials conducted in open court and that the public must have reasonable access to all records generated in the process.'<sup>70</sup> Despite such utterances and court rulings, the records have not been released or opened to the public. Hence the dissertation lacks some of the archival material that would generally be expected at this level. Meanwhile the struggle for the release of information continues.

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the king or deemed to embarrass the king seldom see the light of day. A good example of such tactics occurred a few years ago when the South African *Sunday Times* was not distributed in Swaziland for a period of two weeks due to an article implicating one of the king's wives in an extra-marital affair. The authorities appeared to forget that the same newspaper could be accessed on the Internet. While the attempt to quash the article failed, many Swazis were unaware of the drama surrounding the king.

<sup>68</sup> Stan Motjwadi's article on Mfanasibili and Dlamini led to the banning of *Drum* in Swaziland. This was discussed during an interview with a respondent who preferred anonymity. The interview took place in Mbabane, 31 July 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Court records relating to *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe's challenging her dismissal and Prince Mfanasibili's treason trial have been sealed for thirty years.

<sup>70</sup> A report on Prince Mfanasibili's application to have records of the Treason Tribunal released appeared in *The Swazi News*, 28 March 2009, p 1.



In the course of my research journey, there were emotional challenges. One of the biggest challenges I faced was overcoming my fears. It was difficult to approach respondents knowing that some of them were powerful political figures in the country. Initial contacts made me nervous as I did not know what kind of reception I would encounter. Furthermore I worried about the responses my questions may evoke. Would I be forced to retreat, perhaps interviews would be terminated abruptly. In retrospect while this aspect proved challenging, I gained greater confidence with each contact and interview. Another concern revolved around reaction to the subject of the dissertation. Such fears proved unfounded as all respondents were willing to engage and to voice their opinions and viewpoints. After a hesitant beginning I gained greater understanding and perspective as I located further sources of information. Interviews proved both interesting and intriguing as respondents offered their interpretations of events and experiences.

While this dissertation is not the first examination of post-independence Swaziland, it examines Swaziland on its own terms. The unique character and mould of Swazi society is explored and taken into account. The study accepts that the Swazi case should not be oversimplified or defined within restraining precepts. Swazi culture is recognised as the glue that bonds the fabric of Swazi society. It accepts the intrinsic role of the monarchy and its role in determining the path of Swazi politics. Individual resilience is also identified whether it takes the form of submission to the monarchy, opposition to the powers that be or the pursuit of individual goals. Sobhuza II may be the author of modern tradition and culture who held detractors at bay. Despite an intense power struggle, his successor has opted to build on his legacy, maintaining the status quo. Opponents may appear numerous, yet the person in the street refuses to find fault with the monarchy opting instead to apportion blame elsewhere. Squalls and instability may be unavoidable in the scheme of things but they cannot be neatly explained from a narrow perspective. Maintaining an open mind leads one to the conclusion that the trials and tribulations of post-1973 Swaziland are the product of wide ranging factors that have cumulated and festered over time. An examination of such factors will yield a greater understanding of the subject matter of this study and expand upon existing research in the field.

## Chapter Two

### Tradition in Swazi Politics

Studies of political activity in Swaziland cannot afford to adopt a limited perspective. Although Swazi politics is unique in some respects, it is also a multi-dimensional affair that is deeply rooted in Swazi tradition and customary practices.<sup>71</sup> Political activity in Swaziland is largely the product of interaction between traditional and modern elements and the forces that regulate the content of such tradition. The monarchy occupies a pivotal position<sup>72</sup> that can be likened to a siphon through which all activity is filtered, monitored and controlled. To understand the role of tradition it is necessary to examine the components and characteristics of Swazi tradition and how it influences individuals and the larger community.

The Swazi nation is comprised of numerous clans subscribing to the royal Dlamini family at the nucleus. Dlamini I is regarded as the founder of the royal dynasty in the sixteenth century.<sup>73</sup> The origins of modern-day Swaziland<sup>74</sup> can be traced back to the nineteenth century and the reign of King Sobhuza I (d 1836).<sup>75</sup> At the time Sobhuza I and the Swazis were embroiled in regional conflicts commonly referred to as the ‘*mfecane*’.<sup>76</sup> Thereafter he survived the threat posed by Shaka, King of the Zulu.

Sobhuza I was a great strategist who used a mixture of force, diplomacy and political will to consolidate the Swazi claim to the land.<sup>77</sup> In an effort to keep the peace with neighbouring states, Sobhuza I sought an alliance with Zwide, the Ndwandwe ruler, whereby Sobhuza I married Tsandzile, daughter of Zwide. Sobhuza also gave his daughters, Lonkulumo and Mphandzeze in

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<sup>71</sup> PG Forster & BJ Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xvi. See also P Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaries*, pp 5-8.

<sup>72</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xxvi.

<sup>73</sup> P Esterhuizen, ‘The Legacy of Sobhuza II’, *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 14.

<sup>74</sup> Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaries*, p 46.

<sup>75</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xvi. See also Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaries*, p 30.

<sup>76</sup> AR Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 8. See also Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaries*, p 32.

<sup>77</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xvi. See also Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, pp 8-9. Bonner also writes on Sobhuza I’s diplomacy and shrewdness. See Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaries*, p 37.

marriage to Shaka.<sup>78</sup> Tsandzile became *Indlovukazi* (Queen Mother) after the death of Sobhuza I in 1836. Her son Mswati II succeeded Sobhuza I.<sup>79</sup> Christian Potholm noted that Mswati II (d 1868) was the warrior king who succeeded in unifying the Swazis into a tribal nation,<sup>80</sup> and ensured that the Swazi state became a well-organised political entity.<sup>81</sup> His successor, King Mbandzeni (d 1889), is remembered as the king who surrendered vast tracts of Swazi land to concessionaries.<sup>82</sup> The struggle to regain land became one of the greatest unfulfilled ambitions of his grandson, King Sobhuza II (d 1982).

While modern Swaziland is a country with a relatively brief history, it has been labeled as both ‘traditionalist’<sup>83</sup> and conservative.<sup>84</sup> Indeed tradition and custom have played a prominent role affecting many aspects of life in Swaziland. Traditional institutions and customs still regulate the lives of many Swazis.<sup>85</sup> During the twentieth century the Swazi monarchy became a traditional elite with its own political practices.<sup>86</sup> King Sobhuza II devoted much time and energy to ensuring that traditional ideals and beliefs became the guiding light and central theme of his lengthy reign (1921-1982). Swazis were frequently reminded that they should be patriotic and adhere to how things were done in the past.<sup>87</sup> One may argue that the emphasis on tradition enabled King Sobhuza II to strengthen and perpetuate the kingship and the position of royalty in the kingdom. King Sobhuza II stood at the helm of traditional modern institutions for a large part of the twentieth century dominating both sectors during his lifetime.

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<sup>78</sup> Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaries*, p 37.

<sup>79</sup> H Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, pp 18-19.

<sup>80</sup> C Potholm, *Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernization*, pp 8-9.

<sup>81</sup> J Daniel & M Stephen, *Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland*, p 142. See also Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, pp 9-11 and Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaries*, p 45.

<sup>82</sup> Potholm, *Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernization*, pp 8-9. See also Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, pp 13-14. CP Youe, ‘Imperial Land Policy in Swaziland and the Swazi Response’, *Journal of Imperial Commonwealth History*, Vol 3, No 1, 1978, pp 57-58.

<sup>83</sup> P Bischoff, ‘Why Swaziland is Different’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26, No 3, 1988, p 458. Swazi traditionalism is also discussed by Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, pp 346-347; R Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 3-5.

<sup>84</sup> J. Daniel, *Destabilisation: Swaziland and South Africa’s Regional Strategy*, p 1. Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 1.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p 33.

<sup>86</sup> C Geertz, *Old Societies and New States*, pp 4-5. Geertz examines traditional and modern elites, their ideologies and politics in post-independence Africa and Asia. Sobhuza II can be likened to the traditional elite described by Geertz.

<sup>87</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 21 July 2006, p 18.

To study the nature of Swazi tradition, it is necessary to examine the concept and what it entails. Spiegel and Boonzaier defined tradition as ‘the transmission of culture - the repeated handing down of ideas, conventions and practices which humans need in social interaction.’<sup>88</sup> There is an emphasis on continuity and adherence to past practices. While traditions seek to inculcate norms and behaviour, they also seek to establish historical links with the past. Consequently tradition is frequently linked with the ideas of inflexibility and conservatism. This is evident in the continuation and perpetuation of age old practices. Swaziland is no exception in this regard maintaining customs such as the payment of *lobola* (bride price) and *kuhlambisa* (gifts purchased by the bride for her in-laws) during wedding ceremonies. Cattle still feature prominently playing economic, social and cultural roles.<sup>89</sup> The same trend is evident in the custom of offering tribute labour to the king and local chiefs at various times of the year. The selection and installation ceremonies of Swazi kings also rely on ancient practices which link Swazi kings to their predecessors.<sup>90</sup>

Yet it would be erroneous to suggest that Swazi tradition is entirely rigid and unchanging or that it fails to evolve with the passage of time. Indeed tradition is at its best when it responds to the evolutionary nature of human ideals and values. Hugh Macmillan recognised the ‘need to distinguish Swazi traditionalism from concepts such as conservatism, resistance to change, and the preservation of old customs’<sup>91</sup> and practices. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger addressed this issue by coining the term ‘invented tradition’<sup>92</sup> to include traditions that are old and institutionalised along with those that emerge over time.

Journalist Phinda Zwane argued that although King Sobhuza II urged Swazis to adhere to what they knew best, he was not paranoid. On the contrary, he recognised the need for culture and customs to change and adapt.<sup>93</sup> King Sobhuza II frequently declared the need to look for the best

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<sup>88</sup> A Spiegel & E Boonzaier, “Promoting Tradition: Images of the South African Past” in E Boonzaier & J Sharp, *South African Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts*, David Philips, Cape Town, 1968, p 40.

<sup>89</sup> H Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p 150. See also Potholm, *Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernisation*, pp 8-9. Cattle are still regarded as a form of wealth. Indeed *lobola* is generally paid in cattle or an amount equivalent to cattle.

<sup>90</sup> P Esterhuizen, ‘The Legacy of Sobhuza II’, *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 5.

<sup>91</sup> H MacMillan, ‘Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 643.

<sup>92</sup> E Hobsbawm & T Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, p 1.

<sup>93</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 21 July 2006, p 18.

in local and foreign traditions, to incorporate the best elements of each and to move forward.<sup>94</sup> As a result Swazi culture has to be viewed as a modern phenomenon comprising a fusion of both traditional and western aspects.<sup>95</sup> Such views are neither new nor unique and Swaziland has changed and adapted to new challenges throughout its brief history. The reign of King Sobhuza I (d 1836) witnessed the arrival of white missionaries, farmers and traders. Instead of alienating the new arrivals and withdrawing into tradition, King Sobhuza I urged Swazis to select the Bible offered by missionaries as opposed to the money<sup>96</sup> proffered by traders and miners. This advice proved to be a guiding principle that influenced subsequent generations of Swazis including *Indlovukazi* Gwamile, King Sobhuza II and King Mswati III. One of the best examples of the flexibility of Swazi tradition is the metamorphosis of the *Liqoqo* (inner council that advises the king) from the early days of King Sobhuza II's reign to the hiatus after his death.<sup>97</sup>

In common with African nations such as Uganda and Lesotho, Swazi history is closely linked to the genealogy of successive kings.<sup>98</sup> The kingship occupies the pinnacle of Swazi society not only controlling politics but also the lives of Swazis through an intricate system of patronage to the king and monarchy. Pieter Esterhuizen argued that the king is the personification of his people.<sup>99</sup> Hilda Kuper expressed the king's position succinctly when she suggested that Swazi political power radiates from the king.<sup>100</sup> Unlike the Sotho monarchy, succession to the Swazi throne is not based on primogeniture. A basic principle of royal succession is while 'a King is King through the blood of his father', it also specifies that 'a King is King through his mother.'<sup>101</sup> The *Liqunga* (Council of Senior Princes) is responsible for the selection of a new king. Its main requirement is that the successor to the Swazi throne should be an only child. The maternal line and the mother's personal attributes heavily influence the selection process. In

<sup>94</sup> *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe reaffirmed this view in her National Christmas address to the nation in 1984. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 28 December, 1984, p 1.

<sup>95</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger recognised that invented tradition was not limited to traditions that originated in Africa but included traditions imported from Europe and elsewhere. See Hobsbawm & Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Chapter Six.

<sup>96</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 16 March 2008, p 16.

<sup>97</sup> Macmillan discusses the evolution of the *Liqoqo* in 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, p 667.

<sup>98</sup> Swazis trace the royal lineage back to Dlamini I in the sixteenth century. See L Vail, *Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, pp 290-293 See also L Vail & L White, *Power and the Praise Poem*, pp 155-157.

<sup>99</sup> Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza', *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 9.

<sup>100</sup> H Kuper, *The Swazi*, p 43. This is also discussed in Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp 186-189. See also Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 45.

<sup>101</sup> Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p 21.

most instances there is a time lapse between the death of one king and the installation of another.<sup>102</sup>

Since 1973 Swaziland has been ruled along traditional lines whereby the king is assisted by an inner council, known as the *Liqoqo*, which is comprised largely of selected princes and chiefs. The king is empowered to take numerous duties and responsibilities, being the head of state and government as well as commander-in-chief of the army, the police and correctional services. He also serves as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Swaziland. Yet the question remains, how did a traditional leader like King Sobhuza II become so powerful and influential at a time when many African nations moved towards independence and democracy? John Beattie explored Max Weber's work on the sources of political authority in unilineal kingships like the Swazi. He concluded that there can be little doubt that the authority of such leaders was primarily based on traditional grounds, in addition to personal attributes such as King Sobhuza's personal charisma and magnetism.<sup>103</sup>

Power and position are not the exclusive domain of the Swazi king. Indeed the king's uncles and brothers also exert considerable political and social influence. They comprise a group known as *bantfwabenkosi* (the King's male blood relatives from his father's line) acting as senior advisers and counsellors. The ruling Dlamini clan<sup>104</sup> has featured prominently in the political arena since independence in 1968. Every Swazi Prime Minister since 1968 has been a Dlamini.<sup>105</sup> Notwithstanding the above, Prince Mfanasibili recently noted that the Constitution of Swaziland makes no provision for the appointment of a Dlamini to the post of Prime Minister.<sup>106</sup> Yet post-independence cabinets have also been dominated by members of the Dlamini clan. Until 2008 the Minister of Home Affairs has always been a member of the royal family.<sup>107</sup> This may have

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<sup>102</sup> There was almost a four year hiatus between the death of King Sobhuza II and the coronation of King Mswati II. King Sobhuza II was Crown Prince from the tender age of six months until he turned twenty one in 1921. *Ibid.*, pp17-18.

<sup>103</sup> J Beattie, *Other Cultures*, pp 160-161; Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 1-4.

<sup>104</sup> The term 'Dlaminism' was coined to depict the manner in which Dlaminis are appointed to government posts. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 12 March 1995, p 5.

<sup>105</sup> Post-independence Prime Ministers include Prince Makhosini Dlamini, Mabandla Dlamini, Prince Bhekimphe Dlamini, Sotja Dlamini, Obed Dlamini, Absalom Themba Dlamini and Barnabas Dlamini (current Prime Minister).

<sup>106</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 28 September 2008, p 19.

<sup>107</sup> Prince Mfanasibili was Minister of Home Affairs in the first post independence cabinet (1968-1972). Prince Sobandla occupied the post for three consecutive terms from 1995 to 2003. Prince Gabheni was the most recent occupant of this post between 2003-2008. Chief Mgwagwa Simelane took over the Home Affairs Ministry in October 2008. The latter's mother was King Sobhuza II's eldest daughter.



been due to the fact that the Ministry of Home Affairs liaises with royalty on setting dates for the *Incwala* (First Fruit Harvest) and *Umhlanga* (Reed Dance) ceremonies. Even in the twenty-first century Swazi princes and members of the Dlamini clan occupy ministerial posts,<sup>108</sup> civil service positions, parastatal jobs, in addition to serving in the diplomatic corps and chiefdoms. In recent times Chief Gija Dlamini has been selected to head the team organising the 2008 national elections.<sup>109</sup>

Although the king and royal family have considerable influence and power, in theory, ordinary Swazis are not excluded or deprived of voicing their opinions. Musa Nkambule argued that dialogue was the core of Swazi cultural heritage.<sup>110</sup> The *Libandla* (Council) forms the outer circle and is comprised of the chiefs (*sikhulu*), community leaders and councillors in addition to all adult males.<sup>111</sup> The king summons the *Libandla* to the royal cattle byre from time to time to discuss issues of national concern or to make important national announcements.<sup>112</sup> Appointments to the position of Prime Minister have also been announced at such gatherings.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, any Swazi who is aggrieved by a chief or politician has the right to appeal directly to the king.<sup>114</sup> The overt intention is to provide ordinary Swazis with a platform to express their views.<sup>115</sup> Consequently Nkongo Hlatshwayo argued that the principle of representation is

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<sup>108</sup> Prince David was Minister of Justice from 2003-2008. Mathendele Dlamini was Minister of Foreign Affairs and AT Dlamini was Prime Minister in the same cabinet. Prince Lonkhokhelo is the Chief Executive of the Swaziland Provident Fund. Prince Hlangusemphi became the Minister of Economic Planning in October 2008 while Barnabas Dlamini was appointed Prime Minister for the second time.

<sup>109</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 7 March 2008, p 1.

<sup>110</sup> *The Weekend Observer*, 3 January 2009, p 7. Musa Nkambule is Chairman of Sive Siyinqaba National Movement, a political group that has aligned itself with traditionalism and the monarchy.

<sup>111</sup> Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 646.

<sup>112</sup> The *Indlovukazi* has similar powers before the installation of a new King. *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe summoned the nation to Lobamba in August 1983 after she had been ousted by the *Liqoqo*. The summons was quite unusual as the *Emakhosikati* (King Sobhuza II's wives) were still mourning the death of the former king. During the mourning period *Emakhosikati* remain in seclusion and cut off from state affairs. Dzeliwe's action highlighted her desperate situation within palace circles at the time. See *The Swazi Observer*, 12 August 1983, p 1.

<sup>113</sup> In most instances the Prime Minister is unaware of his appointment until the public announcement is made. Swazis believe that they cannot turn down a royal assignment (*bulawa*), hence Government Ministers and Prime Ministers often find themselves in power without seeking the position in the first place. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 24 March, 1983, p 1 for the announcement of Prince Bhekimpi as Prime Minister. Sotja Dlamini's appointment was made in a similar fashion in 1986. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 7 October, 1986, p 1.

<sup>114</sup> Beattie, *Other Cultures*, p 162.

<sup>115</sup> The King summoned the nation to the Royal Kraal during the Vusela Commission (to determine which form of governance Swazis wanted) and the subsequent Constitutional Review Commission (to draft a new constitution to replace the 1973 Decree). Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 646.

embedded in the *Libandla*.<sup>116</sup> *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe proclaimed that the kingship belonged to the people and that it was up to the people to support and protect it.<sup>117</sup> King Mswati III (1986- to date) reiterated this sentiment during his coronation speech when he stated that ‘a king is king by his people’.<sup>118</sup> Such assertions and practices have led to the perception that Swazi traditionalism is based on consensus. Yet Hugh Macmillan argued that while all males have the right to participate and make submissions at such gatherings, the presence of the King, *Indlovukazi*, *Liqoqo*, members of the royal family and political elite do not make it easy for contributors to express themselves freely.<sup>119</sup> Such forums also provide ambitious individuals with a platform to court royal attention and favour<sup>120</sup> in the hope of gaining recognition and positions in the political hierarchy. The *kgotla* system<sup>121</sup> in Botswana has been subjected to similar criticism.

King Sobhuza II frequently appointed members of the royal family and commoners who had impressed him to positions of authority. Prince Mfanisibili and Prince Bhekimpi made use of royal connections and public forums to gain royal attention. Both princes received a number of commissions from the king. They were members of the *Liqoqo* both before and after the king’s death. Prince Mfanisibili served as Cabinet Minister in addition to a number of other high profile posts. Both men became part of the post Sobhuza II *Liqoqo* that brought so much division and instability to the kingdom. Little has changed within modern political circles in Swaziland. This was evident in the early 1990s when the later Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mathendele Dlamini attended Vusela meetings<sup>122</sup> throughout the country making submissions on numerous occasions. Having attracted royal attention with his pro-royalty submissions, Mathendele Dlamini was subsequently appointed Swaziland’s ambassador to the United Nations. After serving in the Foreign Service in the United States of America and Malaysia, he was later appointed Minister

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<sup>116</sup> N. Hlatshwayo, ‘Constitutionalism and Swazi Culture: A Recipe for Harmony or Disaster’, Unpublished Paper presented at The Institute for Democracy and Leadership Conference, Manzini, Swaziland on 15 October 1994, p 10.

<sup>117</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 28 December 1984, p 1.

<sup>118</sup> Coronation speech of King Mswati III delivered on 25 April 1986 at Somhlolo National Stadium.

<sup>119</sup> Macmillan, ‘Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 646. In 2003 King Mswati III summoned newly appointed MPs to tell him publicly what political visions they had. Some observers viewed this as intimidation.

<sup>120</sup> Mzizi wrote about a teacher’s meeting with King Sobhuza in January 1978 which he entitled ‘The Meeting that was Hijacked!’ See J Mzizi, *Man of Conscience: The Life History of Albert Heshane Shabangu*, pp 61-62.

<sup>121</sup> Botswana encourages similar practices through the *kgotla* system which is based on leadership through dialogue.

<sup>122</sup> Vusela Meetings were commissioned by King Mswati III to determine whether the people of Swaziland desired to draft a new Constitution.



of Foreign Affairs.<sup>123</sup> Those who followed tradition as defined by the ruling faction have always been rewarded in Swazi politics.<sup>124</sup>

Traditionalism as a political weapon began to emerge in Swaziland during the 1920s and 1930s. Hugh Macmillan argued that this was necessitated as the country 'sought to make sense out of its dislocation' and the challenges posed by colonialism.<sup>125</sup> After Swaziland had gained independence an emphasis on traditionalism became the focus of political activity in the country. The brand of Swazi nationalism that emerged during King Sobhuza's reign (1921-1982) centered on forging and 'revalidating' a national cultural identity.<sup>126</sup> Peter Forster and Bongani Nsibande proposed that it also focused on asserting the power of a traditional leader, namely King Sobhuza II who had only been acknowledged as a paramount chief by the British colonial authorities.<sup>127</sup>

Swaziland's move to cultural nationalism was not unique. Indeed nationalist movements with differing agendas emerged in many parts of Africa.<sup>128</sup> Joyce Nonhlanhla Vilakati outlined four models of nationalism which have been used on the African continent: nationalism that was working towards freedom and independence; nationalism working towards the creation of national cohesion; nationalism of older nations that was manifested in attempts to preserve the traditional way of life; and nationalism which evolves into a totalitarian ideology.<sup>129</sup> Swazi nationalism had aspirations of attaining national independence from Britain while desiring to establish a strong cultural identity that revolved around King Sobhuza II. Swaziland was uniquely positioned in that it did not have to contend with the challenges of a multi-cultural/multi-tribal state.<sup>130</sup> Yet one has to concede that while the contents of the 1968

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<sup>123</sup> Mathendele Dlamini is currently a member of the *Liqoqo*.

<sup>124</sup> This is also evident in Chapter Five where mention is made of how Mswati III welcomed Chief Dambuza Lukhele's loyalty to the Swazi monarchy.

<sup>125</sup> Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 643.

<sup>126</sup> R Young, *Post Colonialism: An Historical Introduction*, p 240.

<sup>127</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xvi.

<sup>128</sup> Young, *Post Colonialism: An Historical Introduction*, p 240. Nkrumah argued that while nationalism was an important step in the liberation struggle it should not be viewed as the only solution to the economic and social problems facing newly independent nations.

<sup>129</sup> JN Vilakati, 'From Cultural Nationalism to Christian Nationalism', in ST Du-Pont Mkhonza, T Vilakati & L Mundia, *Democracy, Transformation and Public Policy in Swaziland*, p 92.

<sup>130</sup> Forster & Nsibande note that Swaziland's population of less than one million is overwhelmingly Swazi. See Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xvi.

Independence Constitution were designed to place Swaziland on the road to democracy, Ackson Kanduza described such attempts as ‘still born’ and ‘embryonic’.<sup>131</sup>

The Swazi monarchy employed a number of mechanisms that enabled it to exert considerable control over the country and the population. Over time a number of strategies have been adopted to strengthen and enhance the position of the kingship. The monarchy’s control over land allocation has enabled it to wield enormous power and influence over the general populace. This was reinforced with the introduction of the Land Speculation Act (1972) which enabled the monarchy to control the market for title deed land.<sup>132</sup> Meanwhile the majority of Swazis reside on Swazi Nation Land<sup>133</sup> while title deed land remains beyond the reach of many people. The concept of ‘Swazi Nation Land’ dates back to the reign of Sobhuza I (d 1836).<sup>134</sup> Using the *khonta* system (paying allegiance to the chief), Swazi Nation Land is communal land allocated to subjects, at no cost, by *sikhulu* (local chiefs) acting on the king’s behalf.<sup>135</sup> Chiefs’ control over access to land and land allocation made them central pillars of the royal power structure.<sup>136</sup> In return residents are subject to the local chief and the demands he may place upon them. A chief’s requirements would include tribute labour such as weeding the local chief’s fields, participating in local community projects, e.g. building schools, dipping tanks, etc. and other assignments as decided by the chief and local *Libandla*. Mfaniseni Sihlongonyane argued that ‘anyone who resides on Swazi Nation Land is a subject of the king and all his possessions belong to the king and he must pay tribute to the king.’<sup>137</sup> Robert Davies, Dan O’Meara and Siphso Dlamini

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<sup>131</sup> A Kanduza, ‘Intellectuals in Swazi Politics’, in Du-Pont *et al*, *Transformation and Public Policy in Swaziland*, p 65.

<sup>132</sup> Macmillan, ‘Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 665.

<sup>133</sup> Swazi Nation Land is owned by the King in trust for the nation. People may petition local chiefs for land on which to build a home and to carry out subsistence farming. Although a family may live on land for many generations, they never own the land. They are permitted to occupy it and to use it as long as the authorities permit them to do so. Many Swazis have opted for Swazi Nation Land because they cannot afford to buy title deed land in the urban areas. See RH Davies, D O’Meara & S Dlamini, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 37. Davies noted that two thirds of Swaziland’s population lived on Swazi Nation Land in 1976. See also Esterhuizen, ‘The Legacy of Sobhuza II’, *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 7.

<sup>134</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 15-16.

<sup>135</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 2 February 2008, p 17. Chiefs may come from the royal family or from specific clans such as the Mamba, Nxumalo and Tsabedze.

<sup>136</sup> M Doro, ‘Swaziland: Young Lion Faces Great Challenges’, *Africa Contemporary Record*, Vol 22, 1989-1990, p 664. Also discussed by R Levin in ‘Is this the Swazi Way?’ *Transformation*, Vol 13, 1990, pp 51-52.

<sup>137</sup> M Sihlongonyane, ‘The Invisible Hand of Family in the Political Dynamics of Swaziland’, *African and Asian Studies*, Vol 2, No 2, 2003, p 169. See also AK Armstrong, *Legal Aspects of Land Tenure in Swaziland*, pp 3-5.

maintained that royal control of Swazi Nation Land since the 1960s has secured the total domination of this block in Swazi politics.<sup>138</sup>

Furthermore, rural households are required to carry out royal assignments during the *Umhlanga* and *Incwala*. Chiefs require male subjects to weed or harvest the king's fields (*imfabantfu*) at Lobamba.<sup>139</sup> Chiefs have even been known to use their power and position to ensure that subjects participate in local and parliamentary elections. This was evident in October 1983 when residents of the Nkomanzi area were told: 'Take part in the coming elections or get out of my area.'<sup>140</sup> Failure to adhere to such requirements may result in the imposition of monetary fines, the removal of cattle<sup>141</sup> or, in extreme cases, expulsion from the chiefdom.<sup>142</sup> In the past attempts by residents on Swazi Nation Land to embrace modern agricultural methods or build modern homes were frowned upon.<sup>143</sup> This forced most farmers to operate on a subsistence level producing enough grain for the family with a small surplus for sale. Subsistence farming was necessitated primarily by inadequate land area along with agricultural practices that produced small yields. This remained the status quo for many rural farmers until the 1990s.

The advent of independence also enabled the Swazi monarchy to enhance and bolster its economic position. Alan Booth argued that the *Lifa Fund* (a fund used to repurchase land that had been lost through concessions) along with royalties from minerals and the formation of *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* (Wealth of the Nation) in 1968 were the greatest source of strength for the Swazi royal family. *Tibiyo* was an investment fund acting on behalf of the Swazi nation<sup>144</sup> that was created in terms of Section 91 of the Independence Constitution.<sup>145</sup> In reality it was a royal

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<sup>138</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 42.

<sup>139</sup> The king's fields are also held in trust for the nation. Families in the rural areas are requested to send someone to carry out national duties such as the annual weeding and harvesting of the King's fields. See Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, pp 72-73.

<sup>140</sup> This threat was made by Indvuna Kadavu Madvuna. See *The Swazi Observer*, 17 October 1983, p 1.

<sup>141</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 2 February, 2008, p 7 reports that residents of the Lomahasha community who failed to weed the king's fields at Mfabantfu were required to pay a fine of one cow by Chief Mlungeni. Another example occurred in Big Bend whereby a man who refused to gather marula fruit on religious grounds was fined by the local chief. *The Times of Swaziland*, April 15, 2007, p 17.

<sup>142</sup> Chiefs may resort to expulsion in cases where their authority is challenged or where subjects are guilty of carrying out witchcraft.

<sup>143</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 54. See also Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 123.

<sup>144</sup> Theoretically Swazis have a right to be informed about *Tibiyo's* activities. See *The Times of Swaziland* 1 October 1976.

<sup>145</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 85.

company into which mineral royalties were deposited.<sup>146</sup> Such royalties enabled *Tibiyo* to form a strong capital base to fund its activities and enabled the monarchy to ‘become increasingly involved with multinational capital’<sup>147</sup> and to exercise greater control over the population.<sup>148</sup> It also allowed the monarchy to establish an independent financial base to support the royal family’s upkeep and activities.

*Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* developed and strengthened considerably through the years acquiring shareholdings in most foreign companies in Swaziland,<sup>149</sup> buying land and developing businesses.<sup>150</sup> *Tibiyo* entered joint ventures with international and South African companies.<sup>151</sup> It operates as a private company controlled by the royal family. The king appoints the Board of Directors comprised mainly of princes and members of the aristocracy. *Tibiyo*’s managing director occupies a very powerful position by virtue of the enormity of *Tibiyo*’s operations.<sup>152</sup> Yet it is important to highlight that *Tibiyo* has a number of unusual features that are not enjoyed by other companies/businesses in the country. *Tibiyo* is not required to publish its accounts, undergo government audits or pay taxation. Furthermore, the profits are not accrued to the Treasury.<sup>153</sup> Though *Tibiyo* claims to act on behalf of the nation, *Tibiyo* funds are largely used to support the royal family.<sup>154</sup> Over the years *Tibiyo* became a powerhouse accumulating dividends along with land and business interests throughout the country. John Daniel and Johnson Vilane argued that such acquisitions and financial returns strengthened the monarchy and transformed it from ‘a petty bourgeoisie into the embryo of a national bourgeoisie.’<sup>155</sup> Jackie Viecele reached a similar conclusion arguing that *Tibiyo*’s investment strategies strengthened the political base of

<sup>146</sup> In May 2009 *Tibiyo*’s assets stood at R1.13billion. See *The Swazi Observer*, 12 May 2009, p 4.

<sup>147</sup> Macmillan, ‘Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 665.

<sup>148</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 65.

<sup>149</sup> *Tibiyo* invested in a spectrum of activities ranging from banking and agriculture to commerce and manufacturing. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 18 December 1986, p 10.

<sup>150</sup> Daniel, *Destabilisation: Swaziland and South Africa’s Regional Strategy*, p 10.

<sup>151</sup> Natie Kirsch formed the Swaziland Industrial Development Corporation (SIDC) and entered into a number of ventures with *Tibiyo*. South African companies like South African Breweries, Parmalat and Illovo entered into similar agreements with *Tibiyo*.

<sup>152</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 18 December 1986, p 10. Sishayi Nxumalo was probably the most influential of *Tibiyo*’s Managing Directors playing a key role during the *Liqoqo* era in 1984-1985. Ref Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 19.

<sup>153</sup> Daniel provides a detailed description of *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane*’s operations in *Destabilisation: Swaziland and South Africa’s Regional Strategy*, pp 9-10.

<sup>154</sup> Esterhuizen, ‘The Legacy of Sobhuza II’, *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 7. It should also be acknowledged that *Tibiyo* awards educational bursaries to a limited number of Swazi students.

<sup>155</sup> J Daniel & J Vilane, ‘Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma’, *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 10.

the Swazi monarchy<sup>156</sup> and acted as an exclusive vehicle of capital accumulation for the royal family.<sup>157</sup>

Ritual forms another important part of the Swazi kingship and features prominently in the annual calendar. Alan Booth argued that King Sobhuza II's skillful manipulation of annual rituals served to reinforce the legitimacy of the monarchy.<sup>158</sup> Both King Sobhuza II and *Indlovukazi* Gwamile mobilised public support by consistently making use of traditional symbols and appealing to traditional values and mores.<sup>159</sup> Rituals enabled the monarchy to consolidate its power base and to focus the attention of the nation on the kingship. The most important rituals on the Swazi calendar are the *Incwala* and *Umhlanga* ceremonies. The former revolves around the king while the *Indlovukazi* is central during the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

Subtle and overt means are also used to compel participation. Threats from traditionalists promote passive participation in cultural events by a significant number of the population. Such ceremonies provide Swazis with an opportunity to declare allegiance to the kingship. Local media frequently suggest that high attendances amount to a public show of support/loyalty for the king.<sup>160</sup> Hugh Macmillan noted that 'there was increased interest in and participation in traditional ceremonies such as the *Incwala* during the 1960s.'<sup>161</sup> Such ceremonies serve to unite Swazis under the banner of tradition while promoting a sense of pride in Swazi culture and perpetuating it.<sup>162</sup> King Mswati III reiterated this view in a recent speech remarking that 'the nation continues to demonstrate its patriotism and unity' as witnessed by their attendance at all cultural events.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> J Viecele, 'Swaziland After Sobhuza : Stability or Crisis?', *A Journal of Africanist Opinion*, Vol X11, No 3, Fall/Winter, 1982, p 60.

<sup>157</sup> Daniel & Stephen, *Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland*, pp 186-187.

<sup>158</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 65.

<sup>159</sup> Viecele, 'Swaziland After Sobhuza: Stability or Crisis?', *A Journal of Africanist Opinion*, Vol X11, No 3, Fall/Winter, 1982, p 62.

<sup>160</sup> In recent years attendance at the Reed Dance has soared reaching an estimated 100 000 participants in 2007. See *Swaziland Today*, Vol 13, No 34, August 2007, p 2.

<sup>161</sup> Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 664.

<sup>162</sup> Bischoff, 'Why Swaziland is Different', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26, No 3, 1988, p 464.

<sup>163</sup> His Majesty King Mswati III's speech during the state opening of Parliament 2008 in *The Nation* Supplement, April 2008, p 12.

Alan Booth argued that the annual *Incwala* ceremony<sup>164</sup> is both symbolic and practical<sup>165</sup> with the king playing a central role in the ceremony. King Sobhuza II once declared: '*Incwala* is necessary for kingship, where there is no king, there is no *Incwala*.'<sup>166</sup> It is a complex ceremony that takes place in December/January, depending on the phase of the moon. It is essentially a time for renewal whereby the king's powers are renewed and revitalised. The king goes into seclusion for the duration of the *Incwala*. The population at large plays an important role, not only witnessing the event but also participating in singing and dancing along with the king, *Indlovukazi* and members of the royal family. At the end of the *Incwala* ceremony the king and the country are renewed and prepared to face the challenges of the year ahead. The *Incwala* has also been described as an economic weapon of the kingship as no one is permitted to partake of the new crop before the king. Such restrictions are limited and do not include staple foods such as maize.<sup>167</sup>

Unlike the *Incwala*, the *Umhlanga* ceremony revolves around the *Indlovukazi* and paying homage to her position. Yet it is also necessary to recognise the king's role. During the *Umhlanga* ceremony the king is entitled and expected to select a wife.<sup>168</sup> At the end of August or the beginning of September each year unmarried girls, who are expected to be virgins, are commissioned by the king to collect *umhlanga* (reed) to repair the wind breaks in the *Indlovukazi*'s kraal. After collection, the *umhlanga* (reed) is presented to the *Indlovukazi*. Participants are also encouraged to celebrate their nubility and sexual purity. Great emphasis is placed on learning traditional songs and dance movements which are performed before the king, *Indlovukazi*, royal family and members of the public on the final day of the ceremony. Alan Booth maintained that the ceremony acts as a vehicle to reinforce the traditional, largely domestic roles occupied by women in Swaziland.<sup>169</sup> The *Indlovukazi* has, on occasion, referred to the important role women play as homemakers.<sup>170</sup> While attendance at the *Umhlanga* waned during the latter years of Sobhuza II's reign, it has gained increasing popularity since his death

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<sup>164</sup> Bruce Lincoln wrote an interesting summary of the *Incwala* ceremony in B Lincoln 'Ritual, Rebellion, Resistance: Once More the Swazi *Incwala*', *Man* (new series) Vol 22, No 1, March 1987, pp 132-135.

<sup>165</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 47.

<sup>166</sup> Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p 72.

<sup>167</sup> *The Weekend Observer*, 13-14 December 2008, p 11.

<sup>168</sup> King Mswati III does not select wives on an annual basis, though La Magongo La Mhlanga, La Intents, were amongst those identified during the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

<sup>169</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 43.

<sup>170</sup> *Swaziland Today*, Vol 14, No 9, March 2008, p 2.



attracting huge attendances each year.<sup>171</sup> The attraction of a young king and the benefits of a royal life may have provided the impetus for such large numbers of participants.

In common with other states Swaziland has placed emphasis on the Swazi nation,<sup>172</sup> Swazi history, patriotism, custom and traditional practices. As early as 1933 King Sobhuza II criticised mission education maintaining that it alienated Swazi scholars from their culture and environment without setting up any effective substitutes for them<sup>173</sup>. Such views led to renewed interest in traditional ceremonies and in promoting the siSwati language. It also resulted in moves towards discontinuing the teaching of Zulu in schools, in favour of siSwati.<sup>174</sup> Citizenship was another thorny issue that caused much debate. Gaining Swazi citizenship involved more than long-term residence in the country. In 1963 the Swazi National Council argued that one could only become a Swazi after pledging allegiance to a chief through the *khonta* system, thereby requiring prospective citizens to subscribe to royal hegemony.<sup>175</sup> To compound matters, birth in Swaziland did not automatically qualify an individual for citizenship. This remained a problem up to the mid-1990s and resulted in many people being deprived of citizenship.<sup>176</sup>

Having dwelt on the role of tradition in Swaziland, it is also important to consider modernisation and the role modernity has played in post- independence Swaziland. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the majority of the population resided in the rural areas under the jurisdiction of local chiefs. During the same period people started to migrate towards urban centres seeking employment<sup>177</sup> as subsistence farming could not meet the economic needs of rural dwellers. This was largely due to the fact that the *khonta* land plots were too small to facilitate the production of

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<sup>171</sup> Media reports indicate that 100 000 maidens attended the 2007 Reed Dance. See *Swaziland Today*, Vol 13, No 34, August 2007, p 2.

<sup>172</sup> Swazi royals have made appeals to the Swazi nation on numerous occasions. *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe put her hope in the Swazi nation in her Christmas address on 24 December 1984. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 28 December 1984, p 1. Prime Minister, Prince Bhekimpi, mentioned the Swazi nation in a speech in July of the same year. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 28 July 1984, p 1.

<sup>173</sup> Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, pp 650-651.

<sup>174</sup> Zulu was taught in Swazi school due to the lack of written Siswati materials, e.g. textbooks. The publication of Swazi literature led to the introduction of Siswati in schools in 1975.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p 655.

<sup>176</sup> Swazi women who had children with foreigners were affected as they could not register their offspring as Swazis. Members of the coloured population were severely affected and many found themselves being stateless and unable to procure passports or identity documents. This problem has re-emerged in 2009.

<sup>177</sup> In 1976 15% of Swaziland's population lived in urban centres. See Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 37.

cash crops.<sup>178</sup> Despite increasing urban migration throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the homestead<sup>179</sup> remained the most prominent social unit.<sup>180</sup> Modern-day Swaziland is predominantly a patrilineal society<sup>181</sup> where men still occupy positions of authority in homes and in the community.<sup>182</sup> Women and children are widely regarded as subservient to senior males in the home and community. This was aptly demonstrated when chiefs in the Shiselweni region rejected voting for women arguing that it seemed ‘to make Swazis lose their identity and culture’.<sup>183</sup> Chief Dambuza Lukhele said, ‘it has a foreign evil element which we can’t accept.’<sup>184</sup>

While there have been modifications, tradition and custom have been incorporated into many aspects of modern life in Swaziland. Although polygyny is regarded as a traditional custom, it is still practised in the twenty-first century. It is evident in the manner in which Swazis from all walks of life opt for customary weddings and maintain homes in the rural chiefdoms.<sup>185</sup> While women are educated, secure professional employment and increasingly active in the work place, they are still regarded as minors according to Swazi culture. Yet one cannot deny the forces of change that have begun to impact in some areas.<sup>186</sup> Cultural practices such as lengthy mourning periods for widows are increasingly under threat as women’s attitudes are changing.<sup>187</sup> However respect and humility are personal traits that are still encouraged and expected among the general populace.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p 27.

<sup>179</sup> Swazi homesteads are typically populated by extended families. While some are polygamous, others are monogamous. A man may live with his wife/wives and children while his mother, brothers, sisters and their children may also reside within the homestead.

<sup>180</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 34.

<sup>181</sup> Potholm, *Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernisation*, p 18.

<sup>182</sup> His Majesty King Mswati III’s speech during the state opening of Parliament 2008 in *The Nation* Supplement, April 2008, p 12.

<sup>183</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 8 July 2008, p 1.

<sup>184</sup> This took place during a ‘Vote for a Woman’ campaign that took place in the run-up to the 2008 elections. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 8 July 2008, p 1.

<sup>185</sup> There are regular reports in the print media which cover traditional marriages throughout the country. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 26 April 2008, p 8.

<sup>186</sup> The need for customs to adapt to modern times was expressed and highlighted in the report that the Constitutional Review Commission presented to King Mswati III. See p 92.

<sup>187</sup> J. Mzizi, ‘Swazi Culture, Christianity and Development’, p 15. Paper presented at a Seminar October 4-6, 1994, Mbabane, Swaziland.

<sup>188</sup> Most Swazis kneel in the presence of the King and display due respect when in the company of *bantfwabenkosi*, chiefs, Members of Parliament, etc. His Majesty King Mswati III’s speech during the state opening of Parliament 2008 in *The Nation* Supplement, April 2008, p 12.



Hilda Kuper noted that age played an important role in how Swazis behave.<sup>189</sup> This assertion is still relevant today as age still has a bearing on one's position in Swazi society. Forster and Nsibande acknowledge that rank and status are integral components of Swazi society whereby 'good' Swazis are those who accept subordination while those holding superior positions are acutely aware of their obligation to their subjects.<sup>190</sup> *Labadzala* (the elderly) occupy a special place in Swazi homes and communities. Their knowledge and wisdom are valued and sought after during consultations at a family and community level.<sup>191</sup>

Modernisation and development in the post-independence era certainly benefited the Swazi economy. In the first decade after independence the country enjoyed a healthy annual growth rate of 6% to 7%.<sup>192</sup> The number of pupils receiving education also climbed steadily. Increased educational opportunities were a contributory factor<sup>193</sup> to increasing migration trends towards the urban and peri-urban areas. Migrants were primarily motivated by the necessity of finding employment in Manzini, Mbabane or the Industrial Site in Matsapa. Others sought jobs on the sugar cane plantations, commercial farms or the mines in South Africa.<sup>194</sup> Whereas most business and professional positions had been occupied by European and foreign nationals prior to independence, locals began to secure white collar positions. Over time this gradually led to the emergence of a small elite group of Swazis who wielded greater economic power and social standing. The new elite stood in stark contrast to the majority of the population who were underprivileged, undereducated and living in subsistence conditions. Some members of the elite recognised the need to protect their position and began to identify with the traditional ideology espoused by Sobhuza II. In the process the emerging petite bourgeoisie served a purpose reaffirming both the monarchy and the importance of the Swazi nation.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Kuper, *The Swazi*, p 22.

<sup>190</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xxvii.

<sup>191</sup> All important decisions are taken after consultation with the elders within families and the local *Libandla* at community level.

<sup>192</sup> Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza 11', *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 7.

<sup>193</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 55.

<sup>194</sup> Central Statistical Office, *Employment and Wages*, 1981, Table 2, p 5 and Table 12, p 11 reveal that 11 048 Swazis were employed on a contract basis on South African mines in 1981.

<sup>195</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 42.

Throughout the 1960s middle class Swazis increasingly recognised that they had unique needs and interests that were substantially different from those of the ruling elite.<sup>196</sup> Their discontent may have been stifled, but it continued to gain ground and momentum throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Worker discontent led to the establishment of *Ndabazabantu* (officers appointed by the king to mediate between employers and employees) during the early 1970s. The *Ndabazabantu* were frequently members of the traditional elite appointed by King Sobhuza II<sup>197</sup> to represent worker interests in the work place. Yet John Daniel and Michael Stephen noted that the *Ndabazabantu* were also required to ensure that workers' demands were not excessive.<sup>198</sup> They were predominantly unsuccessful as they were committed to maintaining the status quo.

Aspiring professional groups found themselves thwarted in their attempts to establish professional organisations. A number of approaches were used. Political activity was inhibited and discouraged. Political parties were forcibly removed from the scene in 1973. Civil servants, teachers, students and worker groups were also subjected to state interference. The Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) was banned in 1977<sup>199</sup> while public meetings required police permission.<sup>200</sup> In the unlikely event that such permission was granted, there would be a heavy police presence at such gatherings. The general populace was prevented from expressing grievances or dissatisfaction.<sup>201</sup> This led to the development of a situation whereby there appeared to be no dissension, hence factionalism could not develop. It could be argued that the monarchy adopted a benevolent paternal role in that it tended to decide issues on behalf of the general populace in the belief that it was in the best interests of the country and ultimately individuals.

In Swaziland failure to conform or to abide with established tradition and customs may still be viewed as 'unSwazi.' Detractors face suggestions/accusations that they are letting the side down

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<sup>196</sup> L Picard, 'Traditionalism in Swaziland: The Economic Basis of a Southern African Monarchy', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 2, No 1/ 2, October 1984, p 294.

<sup>197</sup> Interview with Almon Mbingo, Mbabane, 5 May 2007.

<sup>198</sup> Daniel & Stephen, *Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland*, pp 148-150.

<sup>199</sup> Mzizi, *Man Of Conscience*, pp 64-65.

<sup>200</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 100-101.

<sup>201</sup> Booth, *Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, pp 73-76.

and behaving like foreigners. Recent criticism of the *Incwala* provoked the following response from traditional headquarters: 'We'll not allow any citizen of this country to insult the *Incwala* ceremony and get away with it just like that!'<sup>202</sup> Failure to participate in cultural events, criticising the king and royal family and expressing dissenting views are also interpreted as 'unSwazi'.<sup>203</sup> The monarchy reinforces such views appealing to the nation to 'stand united behind the throne,'<sup>204</sup> and to follow the counsel of the monarchy. Reluctance to follow such advice has been viewed as the root cause of problems that emerged during Sobhuza's reign and in the interregnum after his death. In March 1983, Prince Sozisa declared: 'The future well-being of this country depends upon how you as a nation behave. You will only have yourselves to blame if things go wrong.'<sup>205</sup> Likewise those who hold political office are also expected to toe the line. Failure or refusal to comply could result in 'instant dismissal'.<sup>206</sup>

In the latter decades of the twentieth century Swaziland has found itself straddling the fence between tradition and modernity. This dichotomy is immediately apparent in the structure of the Swazi political institutions. John Daniel and Johnson Vilane wrote that since 1968 Swaziland has two distinct yet interrelated sets of political institutions.<sup>207</sup> The Monarchy, the *Liqoqo* and the *Libandla* represent the Swazi nation while Parliament and the Cabinet assumed the role of governing the country after the advent of independence. Whereas the former are aligned with tradition, the latter are viewed as being linked with modern governance. Traditionally the king was viewed as supreme wielding executive, legislative and judicial power. He exercised enormous control over all aspects of governance in Swaziland. This has limited the scope of both Parliament and the Cabinet. The former has been limited to enacting legislation and conducting debates. Yet the king's assent is required to pass all legislation. Cabinet powers and functions have also been subject to the king's approval. This often places members of Parliament and Cabinet in conflict with traditional authorities. Coupled with this is the king's right to determine who occupies key posts in the political hierarchy. Furthermore, chiefs are appointed by the king

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<sup>202</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 19 August 2009, p 2.

<sup>203</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 28 September 2008, p 21.

<sup>204</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 16 March 1983, p 1; *The Times of Swaziland*, 28 December 1984, p 1.

<sup>205</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 16 March 1983, p 1, p 16.

<sup>206</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 18 March 1985, p 1, p15.

<sup>207</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 56

and answerable to the king. In common with many political appointees they are generally selected from the royal family or specific clans.<sup>208</sup> Indeed succession is also kept within traditional circles as chiefs are generally succeeded upon death by a son or family member.<sup>209</sup>

It would be erroneous to suggest that the Swazi monarchy had an easy path to hegemony. The monarchy has been faced with numerous challenges during the twentieth century. Swaziland suffered under British colonial rule, losing mineral rights and two thirds of its land area to land and mineral concessionaries. During the colonial era Swazis were subjected to heavy taxes and forced into migrant labour while the monarchy was reduced in status.<sup>210</sup> As African nations embraced various forms of nationalism during the 1950s and 1960s the Swazi elite found itself under threat. Later, they were faced with the challenge of dealing with increasingly vocal workers, along with the demand for greater political rights since the country gained independence in 1968. The Swazi monarchy is an integral component of Swazi tradition and culture. This is as true today as it was at the beginning of the twentieth century. Modern Swazis are deeply rooted in traditional practices and subscribe to the monarchy due to a combination of pressure and necessity. The royal family has displayed resilience in the face of challenges and opposition. Admittedly King Sobhuza II ascended the throne at a time when the Swazi kingship was under severe strain. Yet sixty one years later he left behind a monarchy that was stronger than ever. Sobhuza II's reign brought much insight into and appreciation of Swazi culture.<sup>211</sup> His legacy is a multi-faceted one that sets the scene for later developments in the country.

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<sup>208</sup> Many chiefs are princes while a few princesses also serve as chiefs, e.g. Princess Tease in the Mkhwakhweni area. In some areas a specific family has been selected for chiefly duty. The Mamba clan is subject to Chief Maja while the Magongos have Chief Nkukwane.

<sup>209</sup> Booth discussed the role of chiefs in *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, pp 34-35.

<sup>210</sup> Macmillan discussed the impact of colonialism on Swaziland in Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, pp 644-645.

<sup>211</sup> Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza II', p 6.

## Chapter Three

### The Legacy of King Sobhuza II (1921-1982)

Any discussion of politics in twentieth-century Swaziland would be incomplete without considering the role and legacy of King Sobhuza II. This chapter focuses on Sobhuza's reign and the legacy that has endured beyond his death. He served his people and country for a period in excess of sixty years. Having ascended the Swazi throne in 1921, he led Swaziland through many challenging periods. His greatest triumph was that of securing independence in 1968. Even though the colonialists reduced King Sobhuza II's position to that of paramount chief<sup>212</sup> and introduced a dual legal system, Sobhuza resisted the imposition of indirect rule.<sup>213</sup> He asserted his status as king, adopting anti-colonial overtones and initiating a campaign to buy back Swazi land.<sup>214</sup>

As Swaziland's first western-educated monarch, he walked a tightrope dealing with the expansionist aspirations of South Africa and the United Kingdom, along with the challenges of adapting to the ever increasing tendency to move away from traditional practices towards new ones. He crafted a unique kingdom that sought to combine the best of western culture and Swazi tradition believing that both parties could learn from each other. Indeed he emphasised the need to combine the best of Swazi and foreign cultures many times in public addresses.<sup>215</sup> Furthermore, he advocated a non-racial stance for Swaziland at a time when South Africa was under apartheid rule, winning support from both Swazi and non-Swazi residents at the time. He was revered by his people and widely respected by colonial administrators like AG Marwick.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Sobhuza II was not permitted to use the title of king until 1967. See AR Booth, 'European Courts Protect Women and Witches: Colonial Law Courts as Redistributors of Power in Swaziland 1920-1950', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 18, No 2, 1992, p 259.

<sup>213</sup> PG Forster & BJ Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xxix.

<sup>214</sup> RH Davies, D O'Meara & S Dlamini, *The Kingdom of Swaziland: A Profile*, p 4.

<sup>215</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 20 April 1973, p 1.

<sup>216</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xxix.

In common with most Swazi kings, King Sobhuza II was groomed for the position of *Ingwenyama* (King of the Swazi) from birth. He was mentored by strong women like Lomawa, his mother and Labotsibeni Gwamile La Mdluli,<sup>217</sup> his grandmother, who was regent from the death of King Bhunu in 1899 until Sobhuza II ascended the throne in 1921.<sup>218</sup> *Indlovukazi* (Queen Mother) Gwamile was tasked with preparing her grandson to rule twentieth-century Swaziland. She maintained that Sobhuza II's father, King Mbandzeni, had been handicapped by the lack of a sufficient standard of western education<sup>219</sup> and did not want Sobhuza to be placed at a similar disadvantage. King Mbandzeni's response to the land claims during the 1880s and the subsequent British Land Partition in 1907 resulted in two thirds of the country being taken away from Swazis.<sup>220</sup> Ackson Kanduza noted that *Indlovukazi* Gwamile rejected missionary education in favour of a secular approach fearing that missionary education would draw Sobhuza away from Swazi tradition. Gwamile's efforts enabled the future king to receive his early education at Zombodze National School.<sup>221</sup> Later on he held the distinction of being the first Swazi king<sup>222</sup> to receive formal high school education at Lovedale<sup>223</sup> in the former Transkei (now part of the Eastern Cape Province). Sobhuza's time at Lovedale also ensured that he established links with the educated progressive black political leadership in South Africa at the time.<sup>224</sup>

*Indlovukazi* Gwamile ensured that King Sobhuza II was also schooled in the traditional ways of the Swazi and remained a firm protagonist of Swazi tradition throughout his life and reign. Having the benefit of western education and a traditional upbringing, he recognised that 'true

<sup>217</sup> AM Kanduza studied Labotsibeni's background in a study entitled 'You Are Tearing My Skirt: Labotsibeni Gwamile LaMdluli'. See C Youe & T Stapleton, *Agency and Action in Colonial Africa*, pp 85-86. Gwamile's father was a member of one of King Mswati II's regiments who was killed in a battle with Pedi chief, Tsibeni. Thereafter she grew up in the royal court at Ludzidzini where she gained an intimate knowledge of royal etiquette and Swazi politics.

<sup>218</sup> Booth, 'European Courts Protect Women and Witches', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 18, No 2 1992, p 256.

<sup>219</sup> Sobhuza's grandmother, Gwamile, recognised the need for Sobhuza II to be educated such that he would be equipped to deal with the affairs of state. See Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xviii.

<sup>220</sup> H Kuper, *The Swazi*, pp 12-13. See also JSM Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland*, pp 278-282.

<sup>221</sup> Kanduza, 'You Are Tearing My Skirt' in C Youe & T Stapleton, *Agency and Action in Colonial Africa*, pp 95-96.

<sup>222</sup> Nquku pointed out that Sobhuza II was the first in his lineage to be educated. Ref JJ Nquku, *Bayete*, p 11.

<sup>223</sup> H Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 647. Macmillan indicates that Lovedale provided the best secondary education available to black students at the time. Interestingly Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa, was a student at the same school during the 1950s. See also *The Nation*, December 2007, p 7.

<sup>224</sup> L Vail & L White, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History*, p 160.

education is more than book learning, wisdom is greater than knowledge.<sup>225</sup> He maintained that everyone who pays allegiance to the king is the king's man irrespective of colour, race or creed.<sup>226</sup>

During his lengthy reign, King Sobhuza II was a man of his people, being an individual of simple tastes, requiring little in the line of luxury.<sup>227</sup> He resided in the royal enclosure at Lobamba and preferred to remain within the boundaries of the country. He shunned the attractions of a modern urban lifestyle in Mbabane and led a traditional lifestyle in Lobamba. As the father, guide and protector of his people,<sup>228</sup> he accumulated a large *sigodlo* (enclosure where the *Indlovukazi* and king's wives resided) and had numerous progeny. He favoured the traditional mode of dress, walking barefoot and wearing *emahiya* (traditional cloth worn with a loin skin) opting for western clothing on special occasions such as the annual garden party held to celebrate his birthday.<sup>229</sup> He loved and respected his people and was viewed as an honest, trustworthy and legitimate leader<sup>230</sup> who wished to improve living standards in the country. He consulted with the *Liqoqo* (Council that advised the king) advisors and individuals before taking decisions. The fate of the country lay firmly upon his shoulders and he bore his duty with formidable strength of purpose and commitment. His simple lifestyle served to endear him to Swazis who believed that he had the best interests of his people and nation at heart.<sup>231</sup> Upon his death, Gatsha Buthelezi (leader of the Inkhata Freedom Party in South Africa) proclaimed, 'We have lost a wise elder statesman in Southern Africa.'<sup>232</sup>

One of Sobhuza II's greatest strengths lay in his ability to communicate with his subjects. Swazi history and tradition has been orally transmitted from one generation to the next via folklore and stories. Elders have always been accorded special recognition and status on the grounds that they are the repositories of knowledge about the past. Sobhuza II was widely recognised as a skilled

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<sup>225</sup> H Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p 105.

<sup>226</sup> JSM Matsebula, *The King's Eye*, p 54.

<sup>227</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 21 July 2006, p 18.

<sup>228</sup> *The Swazi Observer, Independence Supplement*, 5 September, 2006, p 3. See also H Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p 72

<sup>229</sup> Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p 7. See also *The Swazi Observer*, 21 July 2006, p 18.

<sup>230</sup> 'The Post-Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan/Feb 1984, p 51.

<sup>231</sup> This assertion is based on conversations conducted with a number of Swazis.

<sup>232</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 25 August 1982, p 1. This view was reiterated in an editorial comment in *The Times of Swaziland*, 27 August 1982, p 1.



orator<sup>233</sup> who made widespread use of analogy and story-telling to reinforce his message. In 1976, he likened his position to that of a man carrying a clay pot that was so valuable that he himself had to be carried, in case he should fall and break the treasure.<sup>234</sup> His public-speaking style not only reflected traditional lore, it also engaged listeners by relating political concepts to everyday life in Swaziland. Many Swazis regarded him as a fountain of wisdom and humility.<sup>235</sup> Over the years he displayed his talent in a wide range of forums ranging from national addresses at the National Cattle Byre to challenging South Africa on land issues<sup>236</sup> and campaigning for his country's independence both locally and in Britain.

Unlike the majority of African nations, Swaziland gained independence in 1968 as a monarchy.<sup>237</sup> Swaziland also held the distinction of being a nation where the people shared one language, belief system and culture. During the reign of Sobhuza II, traditionalism, or cultural nationalism began to emerge as an ideology. While tradition is essentially ever evolving and changing, it has also been viewed in a homeostatic manner<sup>238</sup> whereby the emphasis is on resistance to change and the preservation of customs and practices.<sup>239</sup> During Sobhuza II's reign many Swazis lived in traditional huts, dressed in traditional attire and took part in traditional ceremonies, though Peter Forster and Bongani Nsibande reported that there had been a decline in traditional culture from the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>240</sup> This may have been due to the fact that ceremonies such as the *Umhlanga* (Reed Dance) and *Incwala* (First Fruit Harvest) could not take place in the absence of a king. Swaziland did not have a king after King Bhunu died in 1899 until the coronation of King Sobhuza II in 1921.

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<sup>233</sup> R Levin, *Hegemony and Crisis*, p 478. Sikelela Dlamini compared King Mswati's public addresses to King Sobhuza's parable-laden speeches in *The Nation*, December 2007, p 14.

<sup>234</sup> Kuper makes numerous references to Sobhuza's analogies. See Sobhuza II, pp 210-211, 256-257, 316, p 339. AM. Kanduza, 'Evolving Significance of Sobhuza's 1941 Petition', *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol 25, 1996, pp 110-122.

<sup>235</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 21 July 2006, p 18.

<sup>236</sup> Vail and White noted that a deputation travelled to London to discuss the land issue in 1922. See Vail & White, *Power and the Praise Poem*, p 163. Land was also a major component of Sobhuza's Petition of 1941. Kanduza, 'Evolving Significance of Sobhuza's 1941 Petition', *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol 25, 1996, pp 110-122.

<sup>237</sup> AR Booth, *Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 5.

<sup>238</sup> *The Nation*, December 2007, p 14. See also H Kuper, 'Royal Ritual in a Changing Political Context', *Cahiers d'etudes Africaines*, Vol 12, No 4, 1972, pp 605-607.

<sup>239</sup> Macmillan, *Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 643. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

<sup>240</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xxix.

Colonialism and the influence of Christian churches and missions also played a role in denigrating tradition and discouraging participation in traditional ceremonies. Hilda Kuper wrote that attendance at the *Incwala* began to improve just before Independence in 1966-1967.<sup>241</sup> Vail and White commented that 1967 saw the educated elite taking part in the *Incwala* alongside the ordinary Swazi in the traditional age regiments.<sup>242</sup> Sobhuza II made no secret that he wished to retain traditional practices like polygyny and age regiments. At the same time he desired to strengthen institutions such as the monarchy and the aristocracy.<sup>243</sup>

Sobhuza II was regarded as ‘an icon’<sup>244</sup> among Swazis who believed that the king was ‘the overall figure on whose shoulders all political power should be vested.’<sup>245</sup> He became the foundation upon which tradition was revived and incorporated into Swazi life from the 1930s until the present day. While he was in favour of change and reform, he was also conscious of the threats posed by western influences like colonialism and missionary activity. There can be little doubt that Swaziland changed as a result of its contact and interaction with western cultures and customs. Such sentiments have been expressed in praise poetry:

Sobhuza is a mighty force  
Concentrated in mystic waters.  
He destroys people when he handles them  
He tracked Shaka like an antelope  
He danced in two worlds.  
Sobhuza danced in the compounds of Robinson Deep and Havelock  
Danced he with tools and hammers  
While Ndvungunye\* and his men attacked but with spears  
Black hero of the Swazi.  
Jaw that cracks all bones,  
Great Conqueror!

<sup>241</sup> H Kuper, ‘Royal Ritual in a Changing Political Context’, *Cahiers d'études Africaines*, Vol 12, No 4, 1972, p 604.

<sup>242</sup> Vail & White, *Power and the Praise Poem*, p 178. This is also discussed in Kuper, ‘Royal Ritual in a Changing Political Context’, p 608.

<sup>243</sup> Forster & Nsibandé, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xxix.

<sup>244</sup> *The Swazi Observer, Independence Supplement*, 5 September 2006, p 3.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p 2.

All Hail! You of the Inner House!<sup>246</sup>

(\*A former Swazi king)

Kuper maintained that Swazi tradition is a modern phenomenon comprised of both traditional and western elements that cannot be separated.<sup>247</sup> It could be argued that King Sobhuza II's approach was a calculated one that gained popular support and ensured that culture and tradition remained at the forefront of political and administrative agendas throughout his reign and that of his successor, King Mswati III.

Being a traditionalist did not necessarily mean that Sobhuza II was conservative, resistant to change and rooted in the past. Sobhuza II was fearless and inclined to advocate for change.<sup>248</sup> He believed in a traditionalist ideology but was not afraid to incorporate positive aspects of the new and modern with age-old practices and systems. Both Kuper<sup>249</sup> and Macmillan<sup>250</sup> maintained that many historians have displayed a lack of political awareness in their tendency to view tradition as rigid and unchanging. While King Sobhuza II was a passionate advocate of traditionalism, it would be unjust to accuse him of failing to incorporate elements of modernity into his rule. He wholeheartedly supported the advancement of education and development projects in the country. Many of his reforms were confined to the socio-economic<sup>251</sup> field while gender issues and democracy did not merit as much attention.

His reign heralded unparalleled change in the country with the establishment of national schools, a national university,<sup>252</sup> army and police force. He also did much to redress the land problems that he had inherited from King Mbandzeni. King Sobhuza II spent part of his reign attempting to regain Swazi land from South Africa; negotiations were still in progress at the time of his

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<sup>246</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 19 December 1969, p 1.

<sup>247</sup> Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p 9.

<sup>248</sup> Forster & Nsibandé, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p xxviii.

<sup>249</sup> Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p 9.

<sup>250</sup> Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, pp 643-644. While the establishment of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland was not wholly Sobhuza's initiative, he supported the joint project with between Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. The University was established in the 1960s in response to the difficulties students in the region faced acquiring tertiary education.

<sup>251</sup> P Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza II', *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, pp 6-7.

<sup>252</sup> S Schoeman, 'Swaziland: A Modern Monarchy', *Africa Insight*, Vol 16, No 3, 1986, p 171.

death.<sup>253</sup> In addition, the economy was increasingly passing from the control of expatriates into the hands of locals.

Over the years Sobhuza II deliberately began to revive and integrate traditional practices and ceremonies. This is seen in the observance of age-old rituals such as the *Incwala*, *Umhlanga* and *Umcwasho* (a chastity rite), the revival of the *Emabutfo* (male-age regiments) along with the creation of national institutions such as *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* (Royal company that purchased shares in business interests on behalf of the Swazi nation), *Tisuka Taka Ngwane*, (Royal company that collected mineral royalties and invested the proceeds on behalf of the nation), *Tinkhundla* (Regional Committees), *Lifa* Fund (National fund that collected taxes for the repurchase of land from settlers)<sup>254</sup> and the Swazi Commercial *Amadoda* (organisation to promote Swazi participation in retail ventures).<sup>255</sup>

Sobhuza II was a statesman, diplomat and skilled negotiator who was an expert in the game of political chess, where Stan Schoeman maintained he displayed craftiness and shrewdness.<sup>256</sup> Such traits were evident in the manner in which he avoided confrontation and worked within the confines of problems using a mixture of diplomacy and intuition. His approach was well expressed in a quote recorded by John Marvin where the king stated: 'I don't act on impulses.'<sup>257</sup> Alan Booth pointed to the manner in which he deftly sidestepped the British and beat them at their own game during the 1960s. In this instance he did not appeal to the nation but acted within the provisions of the constitution,<sup>258</sup> forming the *Imbokodvo* National Movement (a political party), successfully contesting and gaining a resounding victory during the 1968 elections. The emergence of a constitutional monarchy was not an option for Sobhuza II. He avoided the demise which African kings, like King Moshoeshe II, had experienced with the advent of independence.

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<sup>253</sup> J Daniel, *Destabilisation: Swaziland and South Africa's Regional Strategy*, p 12.

<sup>254</sup> L Picard discusses these institutions and their functions in 'Traditionalism in Swaziland', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 2, No 1/ 2. October 1984, pp 292-293.

<sup>255</sup> Vail & White, *Power and the Praise Poem*, p 176.

<sup>256</sup> Schoeman, 'Swaziland: A Modern Monarchy', *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 3, 1986, p 174. See also Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 5.

<sup>257</sup> J Marvin, 'King Sobhuza II of Swaziland', *Optima*, June 1983, p 95.

<sup>258</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, pp 67-68.

Historically, change in Swaziland was viewed with trepidation and suspicion. The advent of independence in 1968 proved to be no exception. The contents of the Independence Constitution largely forced on Sobhuza II by the British added fuel to the fire ensuring that the king followed the path desired by the United Kingdom. While Sobhuza II remained Head of State, his powers were entrenched in the constitution. He retained the right to select the Prime Minister, although his selection was limited to elected members of the House of Assembly. The Prime Minister and Cabinet became the king's advisers on matters pertaining to governance while the Swaziland National Council was limited to matters involving Swazi law and custom.<sup>259</sup> Swazi traditionalists feared that they would be disadvantaged in the face of emerging political parties such as The Swaziland Democratic Party, the National Convention Party and the Swaziland Progressive Party, all of which advocated a constitutional monarchy.<sup>260</sup>

Labour relations proved to be a thorn in the side of the authorities. Worker discontent erupted in industrial action in 1963 which saw eight major strikes that involved three thousand workers.<sup>261</sup> By 1967 worker support began to have an impact on the political arena, particularly the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC). In 1972 the workers' vote enabled the NNLC to win three of the twenty four parliamentary seats that were contested.<sup>262</sup> While trade unions were legally permissible, the state discouraged their formation promoting traditional forums instead. Zonke Khumalo, the Deputy Prime Minister at the time, denounced trade unions describing them as 'foreign to the Swazi way of life.'<sup>263</sup> Khumalo also claimed that 'all workers in this kingdom are His Majesty's regiments.'<sup>264</sup> His Majesty publicly condemned trade union philosophies and methods in May 1972.<sup>265</sup>

Almon Mbingo argued that workers were poorly treated in the post-independence years while Martin Fransman pointed to a sharp decline in the living standards of the working class.<sup>266</sup> The

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<sup>259</sup> The Independence Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 1968, Article 135.

<sup>260</sup> C Potholm, *Swaziland: The Dynamics of Political Modernisation*. Chapter 3 focuses on the emergence of political parties prior to independence in 1968.

<sup>261</sup> J Daniel & M Stephen, *Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland*, p 147.

<sup>262</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 45.

<sup>263</sup> J Daniel & M Stephen, *Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland*, p 149.

<sup>264</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 15 December 1972, p 8.

<sup>265</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 25 May 1972, p 1.

<sup>266</sup> M Fransman, 'Labour, Capital and the State in Swaziland 1962-1977', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol 7, No 6, 1982, pp 81-82.

king was inundated with grievances and struggled with the demands being placed upon him.<sup>267</sup> Workers were encouraged to form Works Councils and *Ndabazabantu* (officers who mediated between employers and employees) were introduced. Prince Matsitsela described them as ‘the local authority over all workers’ as they represented the Swazi rulers and acted as their mouthpiece.<sup>268</sup> Mbingo was of the opinion that the introduction of *ndabazabantu* enabled the king to provide employment for some princes and members of the royal family.<sup>269</sup> Tensions ran high and the 1973 Decree sounded a warning bell for trade unions as meetings involving more than people required special permission that was never forthcoming. The year 1977 witnessed the banning of the Swaziland National Association of Teachers following industrial action which saw students taking to the streets in support of the teachers. It is not surprising to note that only one trade union survived at the time of Sobhuza’s death in 1982.<sup>270</sup>

King Sobhuza II did not hide his dissatisfaction with the Independence Constitution. He viewed it as a ‘confusion’ and argued that while Swaziland had been proclaimed a sovereign state, it was denied the right to change or amend the provisions of the constitution.<sup>271</sup> The Independence Constitution ensured that Sobhuza II would be subject to greater scrutiny and accountability. While initially it may have appeared that King Sobhuza II had relented and accepted the provisions of the Independence Constitution, in April 1973 the *Ingwenyama* had a surprise in store for everyone.

King Sobhuza II’s controversial actions in April 1973 challenged the aforementioned constitution and put Swaziland on a very different path, reforming the structure of the state and consolidating the position of royalty. On 12 April 1973 Sobhuza II declared ‘a complete lack of confidence’<sup>272</sup> in the Independence Constitution and announced that the constitutional crisis would be resolved by repealing the 1968 Constitution. The new decree outlined reasons for the landmark decision. Sobhuza II insisted that the 1968 Constitution failed to provide machinery for good governance. He viewed it as the main cause of unrest and dissatisfaction within the

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<sup>267</sup> Interview with Almon Mbingo, Mbabane, 7 May 2007.

<sup>268</sup> Fransman, ‘Labour, Capital and the State in Swaziland, 1962-1977’, *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol 7, No 6, 1982, pp 77-78.

<sup>269</sup> Interview with Almon Mbingo, Mbabane, 7 May 2007.

<sup>270</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 46.

<sup>271</sup> Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p 328.

<sup>272</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 13 April 1973, p 1.

country. The Decree went on to argue that the Independence Constitution permitted the importation of undesirable political practices that were incompatible with the Swazi way of life. Sobhuza II believed that political parties undermined national unity.<sup>273</sup> Potholm argued that they also constituted a threat to the king and tradition.<sup>274</sup> The Independence Constitution was held responsible for the importation of hostility, bitterness and unrest into a peaceful society.<sup>275</sup>

The 1973 Decree enabled the king to assume supreme power vesting all executive, judicial and legislative power in his hands.<sup>276</sup> Thereafter he ruled as a King-in-Council<sup>277</sup> whereby he would consult with the Executive Council, the Cabinet, the Swazi National Council and other counsellors.<sup>278</sup> The aforementioned lend credence to Richard Levin's observations that: 'the state became increasingly centralised while state power was personalised'.<sup>279</sup> A state of emergency was declared giving the king powers to detain people without trial for a period of sixty days. The courts had no jurisdiction in such matters. In addition all political activity was banned.<sup>280</sup> Nevertheless, Ambrose Zwane and the Congress Party continued to voice their opposition. By May 1973, Zwane, Samuel Myeni (Treasurer of the NNLC) among others were arrested under the new legislation. Zwane was detained for 'his refusal to keep quiet about the political situation'.<sup>281</sup> Sobhuza II was also upset with Zwane for attracting the attention of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) by means of a cable.<sup>282</sup> While the impression was created that the decree enjoyed widespread support, one can only speculate as to why the Royal Swaziland Police was present 'in force'<sup>283</sup> when the decree was announced. Furthermore, there may also be a question as to why the establishment and deployment of a new army was announced at the same time. Such incidents could be interpreted as the use of intimidatory tactics against the general public as well as members and supporters of the banned political parties.

<sup>273</sup> JH Proctor, 'Traditionalism and Parliamentary Government in Swaziland', *African Affairs*, Vol 72, No 288, July 1973, p 277.

<sup>274</sup> C Potholm, 'Changing Political Configurations in Swaziland', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 4, No 3 1966, p 314.

<sup>275</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 13 April 1973, p 1.

<sup>276</sup> King's Proclamation to the Nation, 12 April 1973, Section 3.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 3.

<sup>278</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 20 April 1973, p 1.

<sup>279</sup> R Levin, 'Swaziland's Tinkhundla and the Myth of Swazi Tradition', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 10, 1991, p 5.

<sup>280</sup> King's Proclamation to the Nation, 12 April 1973, Decree No 2.

<sup>281</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 3 May 1973, p 1.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p 1.

<sup>283</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 13 April 1973, p 1.



The 1973 Decree was initially presented as a temporary measure designed to enable a commission to shape the country's destiny taking circumstances in the country along with Swazi culture and tradition into account. It was believed that the country would return to 'some form of popular representation within six months.'<sup>284</sup> Despite claims to the contrary, King Sobhuza II ruled by decree from 1973 to 1978. During that time detention without trial, the banning of political parties along with the repression of trade unions became tools for depoliticising Swazi society and crushing the opposition forces.<sup>285</sup> In October 1978 the *Tinkhundla* system (traditional system) of government was instituted. Swaziland became a non-party state, a scenario that has prevailed into the twenty-first century. In November 2008 Prime Minister Barnabas Dlamini declared: 'political parties have been banned in the country not now but forever'.<sup>286</sup> This statement seemed to overlook the fact that the new constitution made provision for the existence of political parties.<sup>287</sup>

While Sobhuza enjoyed supreme powers in Swaziland, he was subjected to pressure within the Southern African region during the 1980s. Having established a multi-racial kingdom,<sup>288</sup> King Sobhuza II was opposed to apartheid. Indeed he had close links with the African National Congress (ANC) dating back to 1912.<sup>289</sup> Swaziland provided refuge for ANC activists,<sup>290</sup> many ANC leaders enrolled their children in Swazi schools. Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu opted to send their children to the renowned Waterford Kamhlaba College in Mbabane. Such links led him to turn a blind eye to ANC incursions onto Swazi soil during the 1970s. Membership of international organisations like the Southern African Development Coordination Committee (SADCC), Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations (UN) encumbered the Swazi state with obligations.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 3 May 1973, p 1. Mantoe Phakato draws attention to the fact that Swaziland remained under emergency rule until the introduction of a new constitution in 2005. See *The Nation*, December 2007, p 38.

<sup>285</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 48.

<sup>286</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 15 November 2008, p 2.

<sup>287</sup> Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act No. 1, 2005, Section 25.

<sup>288</sup> PH Bischoff, 'Why Swaziland is Different?' *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26, No 3, 1988, p 473.

<sup>289</sup> Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, pp 46-47. See also R Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 168.

<sup>290</sup> Simpson noted that ANC refugees began recruiting Swazis as early as 1965. See T Simpson, 'The Bay and the Ocean: A History of the ANC in Swaziland, 1960-1979', *African Historical Review*, Vol 41, No 1, 2009, p 4.

<sup>291</sup> S Ellis, 'Swaziland: King's Gambit', *Africa Confidential*, 1986, p 6.

Thula Simpson argued that King Sobhuza II was not immune to political pressure from the National Party government in South Africa.<sup>292</sup> Swaziland's economic dependence on South Africa meant that the Swazi authorities were forced to maintain a delicate balance between opposing apartheid, and being economically reliant on South Africa at the same time.<sup>293</sup> The country was in a difficult position in that it was virtually encapsulated by South Africa, save for the eastern border with war-torn Mozambique. Yet it would be incorrect to suggest that Swaziland's opposition to apartheid was always subdued. This was evident in 1981 when Prince Mabandla chaired a meeting with the leaders of Mozambique, Botswana and Lesotho. At the end of the discussions a communiqué that was critical of 'South Africa's attempt to destabilise its neighbouring black ruled states'<sup>294</sup> was released.

Swaziland, in common with Lesotho and Botswana, was a member of the Southern African Customs Union<sup>295</sup> and the Rand Monetary Area.<sup>296</sup> South Africa dominated the regional economy producing a large percentage of the region's electricity, staple foods (including maize, wheat and sugar cane) along with minerals like coal and iron ore.<sup>297</sup> Swaziland's economic dependence on South Africa was apparent in a number of areas. Unskilled Swazi labourers relied on South Africa's migrant labour system for employment,<sup>298</sup> while Swaziland depended on the volume of trade between the two countries. By the early 1980s, 95% of Swaziland's imports originated in South Africa while most of its exports were destined for markets outside of the region,<sup>299</sup> though some of the goods for the export market were distributed by appointed agents in South Africa.<sup>300</sup> Jonathan Crush noted that by the end of the 1970s a large proportion of

<sup>292</sup> Simpson, 'The Bay and the Ocean', *African Historical Review*, Vol 41, No 1, 2009, pp 94-95.

<sup>293</sup> Swaziland's position was not unique as Lesotho and Botswana encountered similar challenges.

<sup>294</sup> J Daniel & J Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 62.

<sup>295</sup> Crush believed that the Customs Union ensured that South Africa remained fiscally dominant in addition to facilitating easy repatriation of profits to South Africa. See J Crush, 'The Parameters of Dependence in Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Affairs*, January 1979, pp 57-58. Cornwell wrote that Swaziland received revenue of over R100 million per annum from the Customs Union. Ref R Cornwell, 'The Swazi Regency: A Time of Troubles', *Africa Insight*, Vol 12, No 3, 1982, p 180.

<sup>296</sup> Botswana pulled out of the Rand Monetary Area in 1976. See Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 111.

<sup>297</sup> Forster & Nsibandze, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p 5. See also AR Booth, 'South Africa's Hinterland', *Africa Today*, Vol 36, No 1, 1989, pp 48-49.

<sup>298</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 110.

<sup>299</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 72.

<sup>300</sup> Bischoff, 'Why Swaziland is Different?', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26, No 3, 1988, p 462.

consumer and manufactured goods along with machinery and fuel reached Swaziland through South African transportation routes.<sup>301</sup>

However, it has to be acknowledged that Swaziland also enjoyed advantages by virtue of its geographical position and its stance against apartheid. While sanctions were in place against South Africa, Swaziland gained concessions and grants to SADCC nations in addition to international aid.<sup>302</sup> The Swazi security forces benefited from technical assistance and equipment provided by a range of nations including the United States, Britain, Israel and Taiwan.<sup>303</sup>

During the latter years of King Sobhuza II's reign South Africa increasingly attempted to force the aging monarch's hand.<sup>304</sup> Paul-Henri Bischoff described Swaziland as the weakest link in the chain at the time largely due to the fact that it was open to negotiation on territorial claims. Sobhuza II responded cautiously before succumbing to an offer to return land in KaNgwane and Ngwavuma that had long been claimed by Swazis. The extent of such claims is evident in the map above. In addition there was a promise of improved revenue for Swaziland under the Customs Union agreement.<sup>305</sup> It is believed that Swaziland was offered a payment of R50 million by the National Party government in 1982.<sup>306</sup> Negotiations culminated in the signing of a non-aggression pact, subsequently described as 'one of the best-kept security secrets'<sup>307</sup> that only became public knowledge two years later during the signing of the Nkomati Accord in 1984. Swaziland made history becoming the first country to enter into such an agreement with the apartheid authorities.<sup>308</sup> Bischoff noted that the peace treaty was the first inter-state instrument used to suppress ANC activity in the region.<sup>309</sup> The significance of the deal was not lost on South

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<sup>301</sup> Crush, 'The Parameters of Dependence in Southern Africa', p 57.

<sup>302</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 72.

<sup>303</sup> Bischoff, 'Why Swaziland is Different', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26, No 3, 1988, p 468.

<sup>304</sup> In 1980 an ANC attack on Sasol, generally believed to have been initiated in Swaziland led the South African government to mount increased pressure on the Swazi authorities to limit ANC activities in Swaziland. See Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change on a Southern African Kingdom*, p 118.

<sup>305</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', p 63.

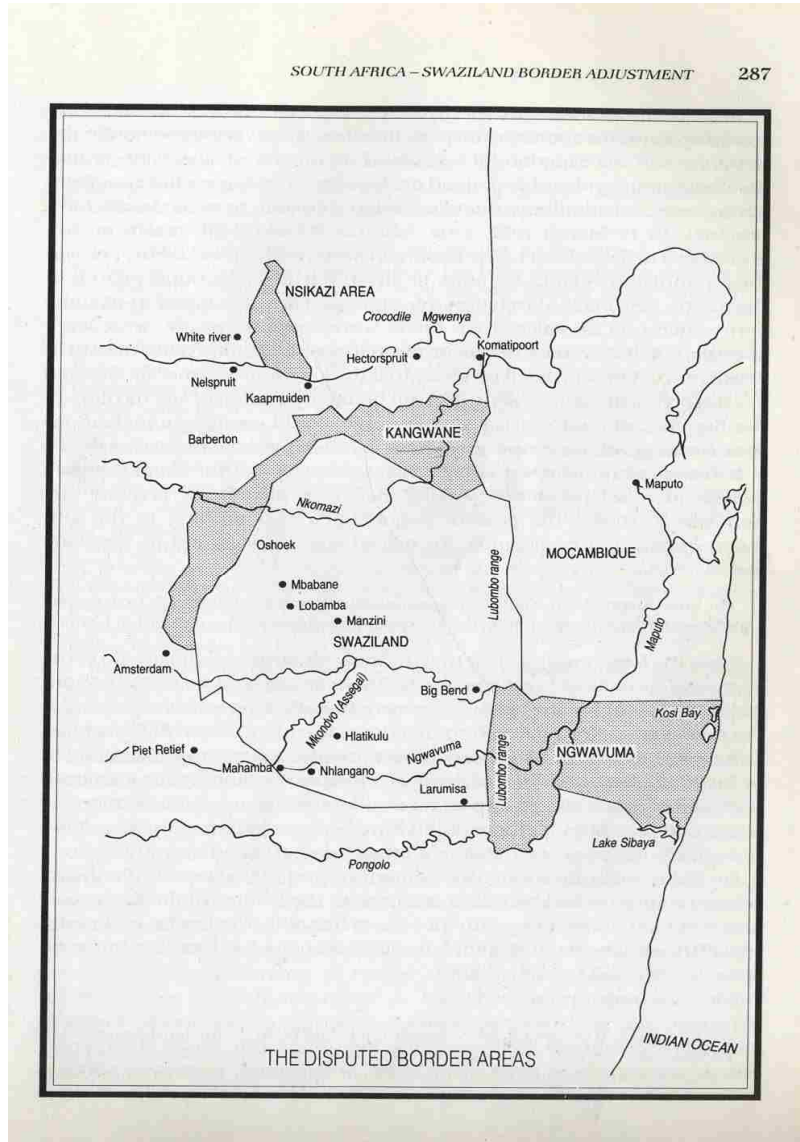
<sup>306</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 75.

<sup>307</sup> *Pretoria News*, 2 April 1984, p 5.

<sup>308</sup> R Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 178.

<sup>309</sup> Bischoff, 'Swaziland: A Small State in International Affairs', *Africa Spectrum*, Vol 21, No 2, 1986, p 187.

African president, PW Botha, who later paid tribute to King Sobhuza II noting that under his leadership the country had been an example of moderation, stability and progress.<sup>310</sup>



Source: JSM Matsebula, a History of Swaziland

<sup>310</sup> *The Argus*, 11 May 1984, p 2.

One may query what impact the secret agreement had on ANC activities in Swaziland and how it was manifested in the years that followed. Article One of the pact required both countries to combat terrorism and gave each party the right to call on each other for military assistance to fight terrorists.<sup>311</sup> Neither country would permit foreign bases to be established within their boundaries. Both countries undertook to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>312</sup> Before Sobhuza II died, a few months after the signing of the pact, the ANC began to feel the impact of the secret agreement. The ANC leadership in Swaziland was effectively neutralised using a combination of tactics including expulsion and assassination. ANC leaders like Stanley Mabizela were deported. His replacement, Petros Nzima and wife Jabu were killed. Swaziland's acceptance of the security pact resulted, to some extent, in the expansion and development of Pretoria's political hegemony within the kingdom.<sup>313</sup> However it is important to emphasise that South Africa's policy of harassment was not limited to Swaziland. Instead it could be viewed as a ploy to destabilize South Africa's neighbours and make pave the way for attacks on the ANC outside South Africa. South Africa's aspirations of attaining similar results in Botswana, Angola and Mozambique never came to fruition.

During the early 1980s Swaziland also took steps to neutralise the influence of refugees from South Africa and Mozambique on Swazis insisting that refugees should not participate in political activities or seek employment. Refugees were accommodated in special camps at Mpaka and Malindza, where they could be closely monitored. The Swazi authorities feared that the integration of South African and Mozambican refugees would lead to the importation of political views that were not in line with the monarchy.<sup>314</sup> Isolating refugees could be viewed as a ploy to ensure that Swazis did not subscribe to the revolutionary ideas that could challenge the foundations of the Swazi monarchy.

It is important to note that the signing of the non-aggression pact with South Africa was not an isolated advance by the National Party government. Later on it emerged that Lesotho and Botswana had rebuffed similar approaches and intimidatory tactics adopted by the apartheid

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<sup>311</sup> This began almost immediately. See *Keesing's Record of World Events*, p 2.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, p 2.

<sup>313</sup> Bischoff, 'Why Swaziland is Different?', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26, No 3, 1988, p 468. .

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 465-471.

regime.<sup>315</sup> One may question King Sobhuza II's allegiance to allies in the region. Perhaps he was motivated by the opportunity to expand his power base within a larger Swaziland. He may simply have been out-manoeuvred by the South Africans. Meanwhile Sobhuza II walked a political tightrope trying to position Swaziland as a safe, neutral territory while conflict raged in South Africa and throughout the region. Mozambique was consumed with civil war from 1975 to 1985. Likewise Angola was embroiled in civil war from 1975 to 2000; while Namibia was engaged in an armed liberation struggle as South Africa illegally occupied and attempted to legally annex Namibia.<sup>316</sup> Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was consumed with the struggle to overthrow Ian Smith's regime. Swaziland managed to avoid becoming embroiled in the struggles that surrounded the country. Indeed Sobhuza II opposed war believing that dialogue provided the best solution to conflict. Sobhuza II positioned himself strategically<sup>317</sup> in such a way that he maintained a strong hold on Swazi politics. Not only did he steer the country through the process of gaining independence during the 1960s, he revoked the Independence Constitution in 1973 and introduced an alternative system of government in 1978.<sup>318</sup> If anything, he consolidated and strengthened the position of royalty in Swaziland. In common with his ancestors he expanded the web of traditional kingship through marriage with other royal families in the region. King Sobhuza's daughter, Princess Mantfombi married King Zwelutini while others married into the royal houses of the Transkei and the Bakgatla.<sup>319</sup>

While King Sobhuza II may have played a pivotal role in twentieth-century Swaziland, there are those who question his approach to politics.<sup>320</sup> Critics like Ambrose Zwane argued that Sobhuza II was a dictator who crafted a kingdom that recognised him as a demagogue while one reporter talked about a 'leap back into feudalism'.<sup>321</sup> Sobhuza II disagreed maintaining that he was

<sup>315</sup> Lesotho was subjected to an economic blockade that prevented the importation and exportation of goods. Although the country was virtually brought to its knees, the Sotho government refused to be intimidated by South African tactics. See *The Swazi Observer*, 21 May 1983, p 1 and 5 October 1982, p 4.

<sup>316</sup> R. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, p 548.

<sup>317</sup> Schoeman, 'Swaziland: A Modern Monarchy', *Africa Insight*, Vol 16, No 3, 1986, p 172.

<sup>318</sup> Colin Legum highlighted the fact that the *Tinkhundla* system of government revolved around 40 electoral zones spread throughout the country. See C Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Time in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record 1983-1984*, Vol XVI, p 856

<sup>319</sup> Kuper mentions numerous such marriages. See Kuper, *Sobhuza II* pp 344-345. Later on Prince Thumbuzini married Nelson Mandela's daughter. Leroy Vail argues that dynastic marriages assisted the process of integration. See L. Vail, *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, p 291.

<sup>320</sup> *The Nation*, October 2008, pp 34-37. See also R Martin, 'Swaziland: The Ideal Bantusan', *Transition*, No 47, 1975, pp 65-66.

<sup>321</sup> C. Legum, 'Swaziland', *Africa Contemporary Record 1973-1974*, Vol. VI, p 474.



following in the path of African monarchs who were not only leaders of state but also kings.<sup>322</sup> Kingship, in Sobhuza II's view, was intrinsically a duality whereby a king leads and is led by his people. He maintained that an African king 'rules and reigns'.<sup>323</sup> This belief was reiterated in King Mswati III's maiden speech in 1986 when he stated that 'a king is king by his people'.<sup>324</sup> Such views were frequently misunderstood by outside observers and colonial authorities.<sup>325</sup> Some Swazis would argue that the king should not be described as a dictator because he rules in council and follows the advice of the counselors. This was evident early in King Mswati III's reign. At the time he wished to marry La Mbikiza. However *Labadzala* (the Elders) informed him that he was obliged to marry La Matsebula and La Motsa in accordance with custom before taking a wife of his own choice. A church ceremony with LaMbikiza was cancelled. King Mswati III acted in accordance with tradition marrying La Matsebula and La Motsa before taking La Mbikiza as his third wife in a traditional ceremony.

Sobhuza II's message was primarily one of political unity, harmony and selective modernisation. For King Sobhuza II political parties were not a reflection of democracy but a potential source of dissension and discontent described as *umbanga* (fighting or conflict). During the speech marking Independence Day in 1968, Sobhuza II suggested that multi-party democracy 'sets one group against the other only in the interest of gaining a brief day of power for themselves'.<sup>326</sup> It could be argued that Sobhuza II was intent on preserving the status quo, ensuring that he secured and retained complete control of the country. It is possible that the king believed that he enjoyed sufficient support and authority to effect the desired changes without destabilising the country or plunging it into strife.

Yet critics such as Mandla Hlatshwayo maintained that the 1973 Decree was a silent *coup* that ousted democracy and usurped supreme powers.<sup>327</sup> It was a watershed in Swazi history that led the country to suffer irreparable damage. Hlatshwayo convincingly argued that 'the King's Decree of 1973 banned political parties, killed the whole concept of the separation of powers,

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<sup>322</sup> Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p 290.

<sup>323</sup> Kuper, 'Royal Ritual in a Changing Political Context,' *Cahiers d'études Africaines*, Vol 12, No 4, 1972, p 601.

<sup>324</sup> Taken from King Mswati III's coronation speech made on 25 April 1986.

<sup>325</sup> One example of this is found in BA Marwick, *The Swazi*, pp 301-302.

<sup>326</sup> Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p 290.

<sup>327</sup> *The Nation*, October 2008, p 34.



weakened the role of the electorate and parliament, undermined the development of an engaging civil society and stunted public participation in governance.<sup>328</sup> Hlatshwayo also maintained that the 60 Day Detention law was largely responsible for instilling fear and sustaining a culture of passive participation. It led to the weakening of the fundamental institutions of governance as appointments to key posts became politically motivated while ignoring merit.<sup>329</sup>

Despite criticism of King Sobhuza II, Swaziland changed much during his 62-year reign. His early years were taken up with the land question, while the 1960s were focused largely on the struggle for independence and national development. The 1970s heralded the arrival of a newly educated, modern elite who had radically different ideas about the monarchy and political structures in the country. Recent independence and the new constitution only served to increase their demands for the establishment of a multi-party democracy. Trade unions were also beginning to emerge, flexing muscle and engaging in work stoppages.<sup>330</sup> Sobhuza II and traditional leaders were acutely aware of the revolutionary potential of workers.<sup>331</sup> Increasingly there was a perception that Swaziland seemed to be heading away from the traditional perspective towards the path of modernity followed by so many nations.

Historians like Alan Booth<sup>332</sup> and Hugh Macmillan<sup>333</sup> have argued that while the introduction of the 1973 Decree may have solved immediate problems for Sobhuza II, it also sowed the seeds for further destabilisation in the future. While he was alive he held all power and ruled with a strong sense of purpose. Indeed he was a 'rallying symbol of national unity and progress.'<sup>334</sup> The big question was whether anyone would be able to take up his mantle and lead the tiny kingdom into a future that held challenges which would severely test the very foundations of the monarchy and the country. At the forefront lay the challenge of dealing with the increasingly vocal demands of the modernists/progressives who had been held at bay for so long. Would Sobhuza II's legacy stand up to the test of time or would it collapse after his death?

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<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 34-37.

<sup>329</sup> *The Nation*, October 2008, pp 34-37.

<sup>330</sup> Booth, *Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 72.

<sup>331</sup> Daniel & Stephen, *Historical Perspectives of the Political Economy in Swaziland*, p 146.

<sup>332</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, pp 78-79.

<sup>333</sup> Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 666.

<sup>334</sup> J Dlamini reported on Prince Mabandla's speech at King Sobhuza II's funeral. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 28 August 1982, p 1.

Swaziland would never have another King Sobhuza II. Would the ‘time bomb’<sup>335</sup> predicted by Prince Makhosini explode a quarter of a century later? Suspense and speculation were the order of the day, and only the passage of time would provide the answers that were so desperately sought. The hiatus between Sobhuza II’s death and the coronation of his successor proved to be the catalyst for the emergence of political challengers who would shake the monarchy and the country to its core. Swaziland had moved onto an unknown path that saw royalty and traditional institutions tested and forced into a fight for survival. There were many casualties before royalty reasserted itself and ensured that its hegemony endured beyond King Sobhuza II.

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<sup>335</sup> Esterhuizen, ‘The Legacy of Sobhuza II’, *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 6. Prince Makhosini maintained that Britain was granting Swaziland independence such that it would not have to deal with the increasing frustration and the problems caused by white control over large tracts of land and mineral rights while the majority of the Swazi population lived in poverty.

## Chapter Four

### The *Liqoqo* Era and the Triumph of a Swazi Traditional State (1982-1988)

The *Liqoqo* era tested the foundations and resilience of the kingship that Sobhuza II had moulded. His kingship endured numerous challenges and survived the onslaught of British colonialism and an indigenous aristocracy gained power in 1968. Decolonisation posed problems and entailed compromise. Sobhuza II rose to the challenge and positioned himself strategically such that he could play his trump card. The abolition of the Independence Constitution in 1973 and the introduction of the *Tinkhundla* system (traditional system) of government in 1978 ensured that Sobhuza was the only bull in the *kraal* (cattle byre). His death in 1982 provided an opportunity to test the strength of the institutions he had built. They appeared fragile with a new Queen Mother and proposals to entrench the *Liqoqo* (Council that advises the king) as a new executive organ of the Swazi National Council incomplete. The highpoint in the transition process was a palace struggle that destabilised and confused the country.

King Sobhuza II's death in August 1982 marked the beginning of the controversial *Liqoqo* era in Swaziland which stretched from 1982 to 1988. King Sobhuza had looked beyond his reign and put plans in place before he died. A new Queen Mother was appointed in 1980, and became a regent following Sobhuza's death in 1982. A Prime Minister had also been selected in 1979. There are indications that Sobhuza II also indicated a successor to his throne.<sup>336</sup> Furthermore he provided for the establishment of a new-look *Liqoqo* with a fresh mandate in June 1982, just two months before his death. *Indlovukazi* (Queen Mother) Dzeliwe, Prime Minister Prince Mabandla and *Liqoqo* strongman Prince Mfanasibili became household names during the struggles of the *Liqoqo* era. This chapter examines *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe's regency, the struggle with Prince Mabandla, the changing role of the *Liqoqo*, the crisis that engulfed the country between 1983 and 1986, the struggle between traditionalists and modernists and how Swazis resolved the challenges that characterised the post-Sobhuza era.

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<sup>336</sup> Crown Prince Makhosetive (King of Many Nations) was named by Sobhuza II and was one of his favourite children. See A Booth, *Historical Dictionary of Swaziland*, pp 82-83. One respondent noted that Prince Makhosetive was frequently at Sobhuza II's side and destined for kingship. Interview with anonymous respondent took place in Mbabane on 31 July 2008.

*Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe represented the continuing domination of the royal house by Sobhuza II's lineage.<sup>337</sup> She was suddenly thrust into the limelight after Sobhuza II's death. Having lived a secluded life in the *sigodlo* (royal enclosure where the king's wives resided) she would have been unprepared for the complexity of her task and the demands being placed upon her. Yet Alan Booth highlighted the fact that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe was both strong-willed and intelligent.<sup>338</sup> She was also acutely aware of the role she had inherited from Sobhuza II and was committed to performing her duties in accordance with tradition and Sobhuza II's wishes.<sup>339</sup>

The death of Sobhuza II led to a succession crisis within the Swazi royal family in which the *Indlovukazi* was embroiled. Richard Levin noted that rebellions between Swazi princes were not unusual. Such conflicts emerged after the death of kings such as Sobhuza I (1836), Mswati II (1865) and Mbandzeni (1889).<sup>340</sup> Disputes between rival princes punctuated the beginning of King Mswati II and Ludvonga's reigns. Problems also emerged after the deaths of King Mbandzeni and King Bhunu. While the first major assault on Swazi kingship cannot be laid at the feet of Sobhuza II's successors, there are lessons that can be learned from a thorough investigation of the era.

The *Liqoqo* has always occupied an important niche in Swazi politics. Its role and functions evolved with the passage of time. Historically the *Liqoqo* was viewed as 'Privy Council, comprised of the wisest men in the nation'<sup>341</sup> (senior princes, chiefs and a few commoners) who were lifelong members. The *Liqoqo* had some executive power, kept the king informed of public opinion and occurrences within the country and ensured that he dealt with pressing issues relating to Swazi law and custom. During Labotsibeni's regency (1899-1921)<sup>342</sup> and the early years of Sobhuza II's reign (1921-1940s) the *Liqoqo* was essentially an informal body that was quite inactive, meeting rarely and keeping no records.<sup>343</sup> The latter part of the twentieth century

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<sup>337</sup> J Daniel & J Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 60.

<sup>338</sup> A Booth, *Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 78.

<sup>339</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 54.

<sup>340</sup> R Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp147-148.

<sup>341</sup> BA Marwick, *The Swazi*, p 263.

<sup>342</sup> Indlovukazi Labotsibeni was Sobhuza II's grandmother and the widow of King Mbandzeni. See Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 644.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, p 647.

saw the *Liqoqo* undergoing significant changes. The process began in 1978 when King Sobhuza II introduced a new constitutional structure that enabled the *Liqoqo* to function as the executive wing of the Swaziland National Council. At that stage membership was largely secret, determined by the king and elders.<sup>344</sup> From then onwards policy making became a royal affair limited to the monarchy and the *Liqoqo*.<sup>345</sup>

The profile of the *Liqoqo* changed significantly on 18 June 1982 when Sobhuza II issued a royal decree recognising it as the ‘Supreme Council of State’.<sup>346</sup> It is possible that Sobhuza II foresaw troubled times ahead and wished to provide *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe with the benefit of a strong support and advisory system. The decree formalised the *Liqoqo* and gave it sweeping powers. It provided that *Liqoqo* members were ‘appointees of the monarch’.<sup>347</sup> However, the decree did not contain the names of the *Liqoqo* members. Richard Levin pointed out that the decree focused on the powers of the king, and defined both the regency and the manner of succession to the throne.<sup>348</sup> Pieter Esterhuizen argued that the new-look *Liqoqo*’s function was not limited to advising the king but was extended such that it gained the power to appoint an “Authorised Person” to perform the duties of a regent, if for any reason, the regent was unable to perform his/her duties.<sup>349</sup> Such an appointment could be made at any time should the need arise.<sup>350</sup> Prince Sozisa became the first Authorised Person, though he was believed to be illiterate and inexperienced in political and world matters.<sup>351</sup> He was related to King Sobhuza and described as one of the most senior princes at that time. His seniority was evident when he announced the death of King Sobhuza II to the nation.<sup>352</sup> He also introduced Prince Makhosetive, the heir apparent, to the nation.<sup>353</sup> Prince Sozisa largely adopted a low profile during his tenure as Authorised Person, perhaps due to his inexperience in politics. It is ironic that the provisions of the 1982 Decree paved the way for the assault on the monarchy that was to follow.

<sup>344</sup>C Legum noted in ‘The Royal Drama in Swaziland’, *Third World Reports*, December 1983, p 6 that the names of the *Liqoqo* members are not published in accordance with custom.

<sup>345</sup>RH Davies, D O’Meara, & S Dlamini, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 47.

<sup>346</sup>P Esterhuizen, ‘The Legacy of Sobhuza II’, *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 9. See also R Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 147.

<sup>347</sup>Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 147.

<sup>348</sup>*Ibid.*, p 147.

<sup>349</sup>Esterhuizen, ‘The Legacy of Sobhuza II’, *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 9. Indeed the Authorised Person, Prince Sozisa was instrumental in the dismissal of *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe in August 1983.

<sup>350</sup>*The Times of Swaziland*, 25 June 1982, p 1.

<sup>351</sup>Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 78.

<sup>352</sup>Interview with Bheki Makhubu, Mbabane, 5 May 2008.

<sup>353</sup>JSM Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland*, p 309.

The new *Liqoqo* differed greatly from that of Sobhuza II's time. The new regent was faced with a *Liqoqo* that seemed to reduce the status and position of the *Indlovukazi*. This meant that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe could not wield ultimate authority as Sobhuza II had done throughout his reign. Sceptics argued that Sobhuza II would never have compromised the *Indlovukazi's* authority.<sup>354</sup> It would appear that he underestimated the ambitions and desires of those who would be appointed into the new more powerful *Liqoqo*. It was not long before the *Indlovukazi* found herself caught between the *Liqoqo* and the Prime Minister.<sup>355</sup> Within year the Prime Minister's tenure and Dzeliwe's regency were undermined, compromised and vulnerable.

The Prime Minister's relations with the *Liqoqo* were strained as early as 1979, when he clashed with members of the *Liqoqo*. King Sobhuza II had selected Prince Mabandla to take over the Prime Minister's post after the death of Prince Maphevu in November 1979. At that time it was noted that 'he does not speak much but is a good listener and strong enough to express his opinions clearly and honestly.'<sup>356</sup> Although Mabandla was a novice in the field of politics, he quickly gained support and popularity.<sup>357</sup> He had established a reputation for integrity and was determined to clean up corruption,<sup>358</sup> winning him the support of the general populace. One of his first actions was to seek to improve relations with Mozambique. He released fifteen Mozambican detainees who had been incarcerated for periods ranging from a few months to a few years.<sup>359</sup> In contrast to his predecessors, Prince Maphevu Dlamini and Prince Makhosini Dlamini, he instituted a Commission of Enquiry into Corruption. The first accusations of corruption had been raised by Peter Mabhodveni Forbes, during the tenure of Prince Makhosini. Although the issue was a hot potato, it received no attention until Prince Mabandla was appointed Prime Minister.<sup>360</sup> It appears that the enquiry was intended to focus on Government Ministries and Departments. However, it also put the spotlight on the operations of parastatals like *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane*, a development and investment corporation that had close ties with the monarchy.

<sup>354</sup> Almon Mbingo expressed this opinion during an interview in Mbabane on 7 May 2007.

<sup>355</sup> This argument is discussed in A Mlamali, 'Battle of the Swazi Princes', *Africa Now*, No 25, May 1983, p 35.

<sup>356</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 23 November, 1979, p 1. See also J Scutt, *The Story of Swaziland*, p 43.

<sup>357</sup> Davies et al., *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 48.

<sup>358</sup> C Legum, 'The Royal Drama in Swaziland', *Third World Reports*, December 1983, p 4.

<sup>359</sup> The detainees included a number of important men who had been detained on the orders of Prince Mfanasibili. See Schoeman, 'Swaziland: The Monarchy at Work', *African Institute Bulletin*, Vol XXVI, No 3, 1987, p 38.

<sup>360</sup> Almon Mbingo noted that princes, ministers and others including Prince Mfanasibili and others were implicated in corruption. Interview with Almon Mbingo, Mbabane, 26 August 2009.

*Tibiyo* was a powerful organisation that had shares in all South African and multi-national operations in Swaziland. By April 1981 *Tibiyo* had accumulated assets to the tune of R46 million. Some commentators argued that while the fund was intended to serve the interests of the Swazi nation, *Tibiyo* acted as a vehicle of capital accumulation for royalists and those in government circles.<sup>361</sup> Before long, prosecutions were instituted against prominent royalists and members of the *Liqoqo*. Such moves did not go down well in the corridors of power. Sobhuza II was pressurised by members of the royal family and the *Liqoqo* to go over Prince Mabandla's head<sup>362</sup> and discontinue the Commission of Enquiry in August 1980.<sup>363</sup> The findings of the commission were never released as Sobhuza II argued, 'It acted like the police.'<sup>364</sup> Prince Mabandla's hands were tied. While he managed to gain support among the petty bourgeoisie, he made enemies in the royalist camp that would come back to haunt him in the future. Mabandla had made the cardinal error of stepping on the toes of powerful royalists; his day of reckoning would come.

Meanwhile Esterhuizen argued that the *Liqoqo* began to rule the country with the same powers as the king.<sup>365</sup> In reality the *Indlovukazi* no longer ruled or governed the country. Section 2c of the 1982 Decree provided the *Liqoqo* with the means to neutralise the *Indlovukazi*. Hence, Colin Legum noted that the *Indlovukazi* was relegated to a status below the *Liqoqo* in contravention of her traditional position.<sup>366</sup> Sidelining Dzeliwe effectively meant that she was unable to perform her functions. Thus the *Liqoqo* armed itself with grounds for her orchestrated dismissal. Similarly the Cabinet and Parliament were also pushed aside as the *Liqoqo* took a 'more active role in the daily administration of the country'.<sup>367</sup> It is claimed that the Prime Minister needed the *Liqoqo*'s approval before taking any action.<sup>368</sup> The *Indlovukazi* and the Prime Minister were faced with a situation where they had no real power. The seeds for a clash between the *Indlovukazi* and the *Liqoqo* were sown<sup>369</sup> and germinating slowly but surely. The fact that there

<sup>361</sup> Centro de Estudos Africanos, 'The Current Political Situation in Swaziland', *Southern African Dossier*, Maputo, 1983, pp 2-4.

<sup>362</sup> Mlamali, 'Battle of the Swazi Princes', *Africa Now*, No 25, May 1983, p 36.

<sup>363</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 49.

<sup>364</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 21 March 1983, p 16.

<sup>365</sup> Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza II', *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 9.

<sup>366</sup> Legum, 'The Royal Drama in Swaziland', *Third World Reports*, 1983, p 5.

<sup>367</sup> Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza II', *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 9.

<sup>368</sup> Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 78.

<sup>369</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 52.



was already bad blood between Mabandla and some *Liqoqo* members as a result of the commission investigating corruption only added salt to a wound that had been festering since 1979.

The *Liqoqo* has always been closely linked with the king and royal circles. Its membership was largely comprised of royalty and supporters of the king. Members of the traditionalist camp believed that it played an important role in preserve the status quo.<sup>370</sup> The Swazi populace accepted the new *Liqoqo*, though some had misgivings about the credentials of the new appointees. Membership included Prince Makhungu, Prince Mfanasibili, George Msibi, Prince Mancibane, Prince Lusekwane, Prince Sifuba, Chief Tsekwane, Chief Mfanawenkosi Maseko, Chief Mlimi Maziya, Robert Mabila and Prince Gabheni.<sup>371</sup> Gloria Dlukula<sup>372</sup> noted that the list of *Liqoqo* members came as a surprise as some of Sobhuza II's advisors were excluded while others who were included did not merit selection.<sup>373</sup> Their tenure lent credence to such reservations. It was not long before the actions and responses of the newly empowered *Liqoqo* rocked the foundations upon which Swazi royalty was established. To the horror of many, tradition and traditional institutions were seemingly overruled and sidelined. A *coup d'état* and the declaration of a constitutional monarchy were widely feared, as members of the *Liqoqo* consolidated their newly found power. It was not long before the survival of the monarchy and the country led so ably by King Sobhuza II were at stake.

The period between 1982 and 1986 proved to be a time of intrigue, speculation and uncertainty. Many feared that Crown Prince Makhosetive (he was crowned King Mswati III in April 1986) would never come to rule as the cards were stacked against the survival of the monarchy. Prince Makhosetive was one of King Sobhuza's youngest sons born to *Inkhosikati* La Thwala in April 1968. The three-year wait for the installation of King Mswati III proved to be a lengthy one fraught with doubt and political instability.<sup>374</sup> Opposition was snuffed out while the introduction

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<sup>370</sup> Interview with Parks Mangena, Mbabane, 26 August 2009.

<sup>371</sup> Mlamali 'Battle of the Swazi Princes', *Africa Now*, No 25, May 1983, p 38.

<sup>372</sup> G Dlukula, 'The Vanishing Power of the Swazi Monarchy', *Pace*, Nov 1983, p 20. There was widespread speculation that Sobhuza's appointees had been substituted in the aftermath of his death.

<sup>373</sup> The 1982 Decree provided that appointments to the *Liqoqo* would be based on merit. See The King's Proclamation Decree 1982, Section 4 b.

<sup>374</sup> LA Picard, 'Traditionalism in Swaziland', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 2, No 1/ 2, October 1984, p 296.

of 60-day detention did much to silence the opposition. It was not long before a culture of fear pervaded the entire kingdom.<sup>375</sup> Throughout that time the *Liqoqo* insisted that it was acting to protect the interests of the monarchy and to ensure that it survived.<sup>376</sup>

The feud between Prince Mabandla and *Liqoqo* members like Mfanasibili Dlamini<sup>377</sup> and George Msibi deepened with both sides attempting to undermine the other. Indeed Prince Mfanasibili possessed a rare combination of qualities that enabled him to accrue a great deal of power.<sup>378</sup> Such characteristics included 'high birth, keen intelligence, a fighting spirit and a lively ambition'.<sup>379</sup> He also had a reputation for being confrontational, ruthless, vindictive<sup>380</sup> and callous<sup>381</sup> and was feared and distrusted by some.<sup>382</sup> Surprisingly Prince Mabandla had largely been excluded from the ceremonies surrounding the burial of Sobhuza II and the succession of the new regent.<sup>383</sup> Perhaps it was an attempt to isolate him and to limit his influence. However, the Prime Minister was not cowed or intimidated, if anything he sought to limit the power of the *Liqoqo*. There was speculation<sup>384</sup> that the Prime Minister tried to sideline Polycarp Dlamini, Minister of Justice, by appointing him ambassador to the United States.<sup>385</sup> However the move was rejected by the *Liqoqo* and RV Dlamini, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Prince Mabandla's confrontations with the *Liqoqo* led to the belief that he was moving away from the traditionalist stable and wished to accommodate modernists. Meanwhile the *Liqoqo* made use of intimidatory tactics placing an armed guard outside the Prime Minister's residence

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<sup>375</sup> The culture of fear, suspicion and acquiescence is discussed in 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 51.

<sup>376</sup> Prince Mfanasibili expressed these sentiments when addressing a group of chiefs in 1985. See *The Swazi Observer*, 14 February 1985, p 1.

<sup>377</sup> Schoeman wrote that there was no love lost between Prince Mfanasibili and Mabandla and that King Sobhuza II frequently needed to make peace between them. See Schoeman, 'Swaziland: The Monarchy at Work', *Africa Insight*, Vol 16, No 3, 1986, p 38.

<sup>378</sup> C Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1983-1984*, Vol XVI, p 858.

<sup>379</sup> Schoeman, 'Swaziland: The Monarchy at Work', *Africa Insight*, Vol 16, No 3, 1986, p 38.

<sup>380</sup> Interview with Bheki Makhubu, Mbabane, 5 May 2008

<sup>381</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 19 June 1987, p 1.

<sup>382</sup> S Ellis, 'Swaziland: King's Gambit', *Africa Confidential*, 1986, p 6. Prince Mfanasibili's personal characteristics are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>383</sup> Centro de Estudos Africanos, 'The Current Political Situation in Swaziland,' p 5.

<sup>384</sup> Rumour played a strong role in Swaziland during the *Liqoqo* era. It is discussed in more depth in Chapter One.

<sup>385</sup> Legum, 'The Royal Drama in Swaziland', p 5. See also Matsebula, *A History of Swaziland*, p 302.

and road blocks in Mbabane.<sup>386</sup> Perhaps the most macabre incident revolved around the killing of a leopard on the Prime Minister's property which may have been regarded as a bad omen. Mabandla recognised that he was faced with an untenable situation; he realised that he was being manoeuvred into a corner. While he enjoyed good rapport with the *Indlovukazi*, he did not have her unwavering support as she was constantly under pressure from members of the royal family. He also enjoyed support from sectors of the general populace and senior police officers,<sup>387</sup> though it was not enough to enable him to withstand the onslaught that was coming. It became increasingly evident that there could not be a triumvirate of power in one country; one or more parties had to give way.

Matters came to a head when members of the *Liqoqo* persuaded *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe that Prince Mabandla was plotting to overthrow the monarchy, though this was untrue. What had transpired was that members of the *Liqoqo* had intercepted a 'clandestine speech'<sup>388</sup> that Prince Mabandla had prepared for *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe. The speech was to be presented at the opening of Parliament by the Queen Regent. It was alleged that the Prime Minister wanted to limit the powers of the *Liqoqo* and accommodate modernists within the Government. The original speech never made it to Parliament another contradictory one penned by the *Liqoqo* was presented by Siphetshe Dlamini, Minister of Education. The Prime Minister was mysteriously absent at the opening of Parliament.<sup>389</sup> One respondent who saw the controversial speech disagreed and argued that it contained nothing contentious. 'Prince Mabandla's greatest sin was that he referred to the *Liqoqo* as an advisory council.'<sup>390</sup> The plot thickened as the original speech reached the Swaziland Broadcasting Services and was aired on the same evening.<sup>391</sup> While the *Liqoqo* was provoked by the publication of the controversial speech, Mabandla seized his chance to weaken and divide the *Liqoqo*. He ordered the Attorney General Makandza to institute charges of

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<sup>386</sup> Mbingo mentioned this during an interview in Mbabane on 7 May 2007. It is also mentioned in Centro de Estudos Africanos, 'The Current Political Situation in Swaziland', p 5.

<sup>387</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, 1985, p 54. Police support for Prince Mabandla is also mentioned in Picard, 'Traditionalism in Swaziland', p 296.

<sup>388</sup> Prince Mfanasibili described Mabandla's speech as clandestine arguing that Prince Mabandla subverted the authority of the monarchy. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 15 April 1983, p 1, 16.

<sup>389</sup> Mabandla was under siege at Egogoweni along with journalists and employees of the Swaziland Broadcasting Services. Interview with anonymous respondent took place on 31 July 2008 in Mbabane.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>391</sup> The interception of the parliamentary speech and subsequent developments are discussed in Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza II', p 11 and 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 52.

sedition against Prince Mfanasibili and George Msibi on the grounds that they had attempted to intimidate the Head of State. Opposing bail, he sought to subpoena *Liqoqo* members to give evidence against Prince Mfanasibili and George Msibi.<sup>392</sup> In hindsight it would appear that Prince Mabandla overplayed his hand.

While Mabandla may have acted with the best of intentions, he unwittingly took on the might of the Swazi monarchy. His actions challenged the integrity of one of the most important institutions of the traditional state left behind by Sobhuza II. This became clear in his approach to the land question. Land had been a burning issue during Sobhuza II's reign as he campaigned to regain land lost to concessionaries during King Bhunu's reign (1889-1899). Much of that land fell under the KaNgwane homeland and the Ngwavuma area which formed part of Natal. Although Sobhuza II wished to reunify all Swazis,<sup>393</sup> Prince Mabandla was opposed to the proposed integration believing that it would lead to problems for Swaziland.<sup>394</sup> He felt that the reincorporation of KaNgwane would impose great economic burdens on the kingdom. Furthermore he maintained that the consent of Swazis in KaNgwane should be secured.<sup>395</sup> Although he was opposed to the integration of KaNgwane into Swaziland<sup>396</sup> and tended to accommodate modernists, he certainly could not be regarded as a radical determined to destabilise Swaziland or bring about a national revolution. Yet instituting charges of sedition against two *Liqoqo* members amounted to an attack on the monarchy that caused him to lose the support he had previously enjoyed from key figures such as Prince Gabheni.<sup>397</sup>

The *Indlovukazi* was not immune; indeed she was in a dilemma caught between the might of the *Liqoqo* and the Prime Minister.<sup>398</sup> Failure to take action against Prince Mabandla would incur the wrath of royalists and the probable demise of the royal family in Swaziland. Yet taking action could only cement the power of the *Liqoqo* and create further problems for herself and the royal family in the future. George Msibi alluded to the pressures placed on the *Indlovukazi* when he

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<sup>392</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 55-56.

<sup>393</sup> J Daniel & M Stephen, 'Historical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Swaziland', p189.

<sup>394</sup> Mabandla argued against the reincorporation of KaNgwane before the King and Cabinet in June 1982. 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 52.

<sup>395</sup> Legum, 'The Royal Drama in Swaziland', *Third World Reports*, December 1983, p 4.

<sup>396</sup> See 'Swaziland Being Duped', *The Star*, 15 July 1982, p 7.

<sup>397</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 52.

<sup>398</sup> Mlamali, 'Battle of the Swazi Princes', *Africa Now*, No 25, 1983, p 35.

said, 'I don't think they threatened her. I don't think it came to that.'<sup>399</sup> However Robert Davies, Dan O'Meara and Siphon Dlamini point out that forces within the monarchy pressurised *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe.<sup>400</sup> According to Almon Mbingo,<sup>401</sup> members of the royal family begged and pleaded with her to oust Prince Mabandla. Some of them slept outside the Palace to drive home their point.<sup>402</sup> Royal sources indicated that members of the royal family informed the *Indlovukazi* that they would no longer regard her as their mother because she did not have their interests at heart.<sup>403</sup>

Prince Mabandla was dismissed<sup>404</sup> from the post of Prime Minister eight months after Sobhuza II's death and all charges against Prince Mfanisibili and George Msibi were dropped.<sup>405</sup> Later on Prince Mabandla was accused of abusing his power, attempting to gain authority over the army and attempting to divert Swaziland from the political path formulated by the late king.<sup>406</sup> In August 1983 the *Liqoqo* asked 'what greater treason has ever been committed by a Prime Minister in the entire history of civilised mankind?'<sup>407</sup> Prince Mabandla fled the country to settle in distant Mafikeng in the Bophuthatswana "homeland" under President Lucas Mangope.<sup>408</sup> A local newspaper captioned his departure with the headline 'Mabandla's *Surprise* SA Visit'. His timely decision probably saved him from a spell in prison given the spate of arrests that were still to come. Yet it would appear that while Mabandla may have experienced small victories, the *Liqoqo* ultimately won the war when it mattered most.

The *Liqoqo* members rationalised their decision maintaining that they had no choice but to act against Prince Mabandla in order to safeguard Sobhuza II's legacy. They argued that they could not allow the traditional system to be 'swept aside by the irresponsible actions of a few

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<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, p 33.

<sup>400</sup> Davies, O 'Meara & Dlamini, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 55.

<sup>401</sup> Almon Mbingo was a long time politician who served in many capacities in the Public Sector and worked with King Sobhuza II.

<sup>402</sup> Interview with Almon Mbingo held in Mbabane on 22 May 2007.

<sup>403</sup> *Drum*, May 1983, p 29.

<sup>404</sup> Prince Mabandla was dismissed in terms of Section 71 of the Establishment of Parliament Order 1973. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 21 March 1983, p1.

<sup>405</sup> Davies, O 'Meara & Dlamini, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 55.

<sup>406</sup> G Dlukula, 'The Vanishing Power of the Swazi Monarchy', *Pace*, November 1983, p 20.

<sup>407</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 10 August 1983, pp1-5.

<sup>408</sup> Interestingly Prince Sozisa's son, Prince Mangaliso joined Mabandla in Mafikeng.

politically disgruntled saboteurs.<sup>409</sup> While Mabandla's sudden dismissal may have been received with dissatisfaction,<sup>410</sup> it did not lead to mass action. In the words of one activist, Winnie Mkhonta, 'the nation was submissive and stifled'.<sup>411</sup> Under such circumstances it was not surprising that public opposition was muted. Levin noted that British and American diplomats criticised the manner in which Mabandla was removed leading the *Liqoqo* to pressurise Britain to recall its High Commissioner.<sup>412</sup> The writing appeared to be on the wall. One arm of the triumvirate had been successfully neutralised. The remaining branches were pitched against each other. The *Liqoqo* had already demonstrated its ability to manipulate the *Indlovukazi*. She was faced with the daunting task of standing up to the might and influence of sixteen members of the *Liqoqo*. While she was generally regarded as shrewd and intelligent, one has to take into account that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe did not have the benefit of much education or a long career in politics. It could be argued that once the *Liqoqo* had savoured the first taste of real power, the temptation to expand on it would prove to be too great.

The *Liqoqo* shrewdly selected Prince Mabandla's successor. Prince Bhekimpi Dlamini was a tried and tested conservative who had close ties with royalty and the army. He was a veteran of Swazi politics and one of the first executive members of the *Imbokodvo* National Movement. He served as Deputy Minister in a number of departments including the Ministry of Local Administration and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office.<sup>413</sup> Louis Picard noted that he had formerly been in the executive of the *Liqoqo* and was regarded as a member of the old guard.<sup>414</sup> He was also a passionate advocate of the KaNgwane land deal with South Africa.<sup>415</sup> His selection was self-serving in that the *Liqoqo* knew that he was malleable and willing to adhere to its directives<sup>416</sup> and accept the reduced status of the Cabinet.<sup>417</sup>

<sup>409</sup> Dlukula, 'The Vanishing Power of the Swazi Monarchy', *Pace*, November 1983, p 20. See also *The Times of Swaziland*, 10 August, 1983, pp 2-3 where a pamphlet from the *Liqoqo* Secretariat was reprinted in a special edition.

<sup>410</sup> Dlukula, 'The Vanishing Power of the Swazi Monarchy', *Pace*, November 1983, p 20.

<sup>411</sup> Winnie Mkhonta was interviewed in Mbabane 29 May 2007.

<sup>412</sup> Levin, 'When the Sleeping Grass Awakens', p 152.

<sup>413</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 7 October 1983, p 16.

<sup>414</sup> Picard, 'Traditionalism in Swaziland', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 2, No 1/ 2, October 1984, p 295.

<sup>415</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 53.

<sup>416</sup> S Ellis, 'Swaziland: Of Princes, Money and Land', *Africa Confidential*, 1984, p 5 refers to the pressure the *Liqoqo* placed on Prince Bhekimpi.

<sup>417</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 59.



During his tenure Prince Bhekimpi frequently defended the *Liqoqo* calling on those with gripes to come forward publicly. He is famous for coining the phrase *buhhihhihi* to describe those who murmured about political issues behind closed doors instead of coming out into the open.<sup>418</sup> He argued that people should leave political issues to the elders of the nation. He is also remembered for advocating the *ekhaya* policy whereby he appealed to Swazis to stay in the rural areas and to curb migration towards urban centres. This move may have been motivated by the fact that much of the opposition emanated from urban residents who tended to be more educated and vociferous than rural residents who lived on Swazi Nation Land and subject to local chiefs. At the same time the *Liqoqo* began purging the civil service.<sup>419</sup> As chairman of the Civil Service Board, Prince Mfanisibili was ideally placed to ensure that *Liqoqo* sympathisers occupied key offices. Such actions paved the way for what could be regarded as the biggest controversy in the history of modern Swaziland.

Having successfully ousted Prince Mabandla, the *Liqoqo* was emboldened enough to set its sights on *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe. Prince Mfanisibili publicly inquired, ‘Your Majesty....who is trying to overthrow the Royal House?’ Such queries were followed by utterances like ‘Such people should be moved out of *this* [my emphasis] House’ and ‘Just who and where are the owners of *this* House?’<sup>420</sup> Dzeliwe may have found it difficult to cope with Mfanisibili’s statements as Bheki Makhubu argued that she was ‘uneducated, illiterate, easily swayed and susceptible to influence.’<sup>421</sup> Her support of the former Prime Minister and her reluctance to dismiss him placed her on a dangerous footing with the *Liqoqo*. Apart from Prince Gabheni, she enjoyed little favour among the powerful group

Parliamentary elections in 1983 provided the catalyst for the final showdown between the remaining arms of the triumvirate. Previously King Sobhuza II had overseen the selection of nominated members and prepared the list of potential parliamentarians. The Head of State should carry out the task. By this time the *Liqoqo* had effectively grabbed power in the country, though it had not won the support of the population at large.

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<sup>418</sup> See Chapter One for further discussion on the role of rumour and speculation during the *Liqoqo* era

<sup>419</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 152.

<sup>420</sup> Prince Mfanisibili addressed local media upon his release. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 22 March, 1983, pp 1, 16.

<sup>421</sup> Interview with Bheki Makhubu. Mbabane, 5 May 2008.



The *Liqoqo* moved quickly presenting *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe with a document that transferred her powers to the Authorised Person. That move empowered the Authorised Person to sign documents instead of the *Indlovukazi*. The document, written in English, had been prepared by a South African lawyer.<sup>422</sup> *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe refused to sign the document on the grounds that she was not well versed in English or legal terminology. Furthermore, she threatened to dismiss the *Liqoqo* and opted to seek the assistance of Arthur Khoza, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture. Khoza was a trusted advisor and interpreter for Sobhuza II.<sup>423</sup> Acting on his advice she did not append her signature to the document.<sup>424</sup> Undeterred the *Liqoqo* published a Gazette<sup>425</sup> relieving her of her post and announced Queen Ntombi Thwala as her successor. Parks Mangena noted that La Thwala had been a housemaid to La Masuku, King Sobhuza's favourite wife when she first joined royal circles.<sup>426</sup> Alan Booth also questioned her 'relatively low pedigree'.<sup>427</sup>

Prince Bhekimpi justified the *Liqoqo's* action arguing that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe was being wrongly influenced by elements bent on destroying the good name of the country.<sup>428</sup> Later on Prince Mfanisibili argued that it was common knowledge according to Swazi Law and Custom that the *Indlovukazi* is always the mother of the king, therefore Ntombi Thwala was the rightful *Indlovukazi*.<sup>429</sup> Legally the new Gazette was compromised in that it was signed by the Authorised Person and not by the Head of State. Furthermore, tradition had been conveniently bypassed; the *Indlovukazi's* role as Head of State only ends when a new king has been installed.<sup>430</sup> *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe was alive and well and unwilling to disappear into the

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<sup>422</sup> Mfanisibili has close ties with Yussuf Patel, a South African lawyer. Patel had been struck off the role for fraudulent activities in South Africa. He practised law in Swaziland though he was never admitted to the Bar. See C Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Country from which Justice has Disappeared', *Africa Contemporary Record 1984-1985*, Vol XVII, p 842.

<sup>423</sup> *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe may have consulted Arthur Khoza due to his links with Sobhuza II and also because he was a seasoned politician who had at one time been the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Justice. See Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1983-1984*, Vol XV11, p 857. He remained in government service until his death in 2006

<sup>424</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, pp 58-59.

<sup>425</sup> See *The Swaziland Government Gazette*, No. 59, 9 August 1983.

<sup>426</sup> Interview with Parks Mangena, Mbabane, 26 August 2009.

<sup>427</sup> Booth, *Historical Dictionary of Swaziland*, p 16.

<sup>428</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 30 August 1983, p 16.

<sup>429</sup> *Swazi Observer*, 21 May 2006, p 17. Prince Mfanisibili writes a weekly column in the Sunday edition of *The Times of Swaziland*.

<sup>430</sup> Esterhuizen, 'The Legacy of Sobhuza II', *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984, p 5.

background without a fight. Prince Gabheni, a direct son of Sobhuza II, influential member of the royal family, *Liqoqo* member and Minister of Home Affairs, lent his support for *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe against the dismissal.<sup>431</sup> Richard Levin noted that public opposition to Dzeliwe's removal began to crystallise around Prince Gabheni. Furthermore, Gabheni's attempts to organise a mass meeting for Dzeliwe at Lobamba and a live broadcast to the nation were scuppered by the *Liqoqo*.<sup>432</sup> Indeed some circles maintained that Dzeliwe planned to replace Crown Prince Makhosetive with Gabheni in a plot reminiscent of that which saw Mbandzeni become king in 1874.<sup>433</sup> The stage for the final showdown was well and truly set.

*Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe displayed strength and determination. She retaliated with a much publicised law suit challenging the legality of the Gazette. The case was held in the High Court before Chief Justice Nathan. *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe pointed out that the *Liqoqo* had no legal powers to dismiss her. Furthermore tradition dictated that she should remain regent until the heir to the throne was officially installed as king. Chief Justice Nathan's pending judgement was overtaken by the publication of yet another Gazette proclaiming that the Court lacked jurisdiction to decide on matters involving Swazi Law and Custom. With a few months remaining before his retirement, Chief Justice Nathan opted to accept the terms of the latest gazette and the case came to a premature end.<sup>434</sup> *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe's lawyer, Douglas Lukhele<sup>435</sup> and her advisor, Arthur Khoza, were placed under arrest. The decision was not well received on the streets where it was viewed as an 'outrageous perversion of custom.'<sup>436</sup> Suspicions of interference in the justice system appeared justified when Minister of Justice, Polycarp Dlamini, announced that 'the judges sought my opinion'. He went on to suggest that 'the general public is getting confused including the members of the legal profession.'<sup>437</sup> The *Liqoqo*'s dismissal of Prince Mabandla

<sup>431</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, pp 53, 61.

<sup>432</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 153-154.

<sup>433</sup> J Mzizi, *Man of Conscience: The Life and Times of Albert Heshane Shabangu*, pp 66-67. Albert Shabangu was President of the banned Swaziland National Association of Teachers that was banned in 1977. He spent a lifetime in politics. In the aftermath of the *Liqoqo* era he rose to the position of Minister and served as Deputy Prime Minister before his death.

<sup>434</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 53.

<sup>435</sup> Douglas Lukhele was a Harvard educated Swazi lawyer. He became the first Swazi Attorney-General and High Court Judge. He resigned from the latter post 1980 saying: 'The Swazi Government should learn to respect the rule of law.' See C Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', p 856. See also *The Times of Swaziland*, 25 August, 1983, pp 1, 16.

<sup>436</sup> Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1983-1984, Vol XV11, p 856.

<sup>437</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 1 September 1983, pp 1, 3.

and *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe and the court's failure to bring the *Liqoqo* into line may have lent credence to perceptions that the *Liqoqo* was omnipotent and untouchable.

For the first time public reaction and opposition became visible. Public dissatisfaction with the *Liqoqo* and resentment emanating from the removal of *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe and Prince Mabandla culminated in unprecedented institutional and general unrest.<sup>438</sup> Students at the University of Swaziland mobilised and staged numerous protest marches in Mbabane and Manzini. Chief Dambuza Lukhele boldly attempted to mobilise chiefs to denounce the *Indlovukazi's* removal from office.<sup>439</sup> People who had cowed in the past refused to allow the Swazi tradition to be perverted. It would appear that the *Liqoqo* was caught off guard by the politicisation and mobilisation of the general public that culminated in the founding of The People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) in July 1983. Mario Masuku explained that some members were influenced by 'the winds of change in other parts of Africa', while other established close ties with ANC members at the University of Swaziland.<sup>440</sup> PUDEMO infiltrated schools and colleges spreading the call for democracy. Waves of anti-government pamphlets were circulated by the organisation.<sup>441</sup> Anti-*Liqoqo* slogans began to appear in urban centres. Passivity and resignation were replaced by demands for change and action. One editorial proposed: 'The best thing that can be done now is for our fathers to iron out their differences.'<sup>442</sup>

The *Liqoqo* did not engage in dialogue but adopted heavy-handed tactics. Sixty-day detention was introduced, leading about twenty people to spending six months in prison.<sup>443</sup> A new law on sedition was enacted providing for prison sentences of up to twenty years. Two princes, Central Bank employees, a cabinet minister and Prince Gabheni's wife were detained. Later ten PUDEMO members were charged with sedition. Their treason trial eventually took place in 1989 but all the accused were found innocent of treason and freed.<sup>444</sup> Prince Gabheni was dismissed

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<sup>438</sup> Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Contemporary Record, 1983-1984*, Vol XV11, p 857.

<sup>439</sup> R Levin, '*Hegemony and Crisis: Royal Power in Transition*', p 194.

<sup>440</sup> Interview with Mario Masuku, Mbabane, 14 August 2007.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>442</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 1 September 1983, p 4.

<sup>443</sup> Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1983-1984*, Vol XV11, p 857.

<sup>444</sup> The treason trial eventually took place in 1989 where all the accused were found innocent of treason and freed. Interview with Mario Masuku, Mbabane, June 2007.

from the Cabinet and the *Liqoqo*.<sup>445</sup> His attempts to summon the nation to a meeting addressed by *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe invoked the ire of the Prime Minister and the *Liqoqo*. Prince Gabheni was ostensibly discarded for opposing Dzeliwe's dismissal, yet the real motivation may have been based on speculation that he held aspirations to the throne.<sup>446</sup>

The split in royal circles was reflected in the armed forces. While the army appeared to support the *Liqoqo*, the police force seemed to be divided.<sup>447</sup> One notable incident occurred when the police took a stand refusing to arrest Prince Gabheni in accordance with an order from the Prime Minister, Prince Bhekimpi. Davies, O' Meara and Vilane argued that the response was unique in that it was the only occasion on which the security forces failed to carry out an order from the authorities of the day.<sup>448</sup> Years later Prince Mfanasibili confirmed the view that the police supported *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe. He reported that after her deposition, *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe sought military intervention from South African President, PW Botha, to forcibly remove *Indlovukazi* Ntombi from the throne. The princes who alerted the Prime Minister about *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe's intentions found themselves imprisoned. They claimed that Assistant Police Commissioner Sotja Dlamini<sup>449</sup> accused them of being sell-outs. They charged that the entire episode had been master-minded at Police Headquarters in Mbabane.<sup>450</sup>

While the *Liqoqo* claimed to be passionate advocates of tradition, the convenient departure from traditional practices continued. Queen Ntombi Thwala, mother of the designated heir, initially refused to assume her new post citing the three year mourning period required by custom.<sup>451</sup> Ntombi Thwala also insisted that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe should hand over the insignia of her office voluntarily. The *Liqoqo* responded by terminating her mourning period<sup>452</sup> and persuading her to accept the regency. Ntombi's assumption of the regency before her son was installed as king constituted a glaring deviation from traditional practice. She took office without *Indlovukazi*

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<sup>445</sup> The *Liqoqo*'s actions after the removal of *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe are discussed in 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 54.

<sup>446</sup> Interviews with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 11 August 2008 and Parks Mangena, Mbabane 29 July 2008.

<sup>447</sup> Legum, 'The Royal Drama in Swaziland', *Third World Reports*, December 1983, p 2.

<sup>448</sup> Davies *et al*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 59.

<sup>449</sup> Sotja Dlamini later succeeded Prince Bhekimpi as Prime Minister of Swaziland.

<sup>450</sup> These events are recorded by Prince Mfanasibili in an article that was published by *The Swazi Observer* on 22 May 1986, p 17.

<sup>451</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 54.

<sup>452</sup> Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1983-1984, Vol XV11, p 856.

Dzeliwe's symbols of office as Dzeliwe refused to hand them over. Alternative ones were conveniently secured and presented to the new queen.<sup>453</sup> Interestingly, Ntombi signed the decree that Dzeliwe had opposed so adamantly. However, some press reports at the time suggest that she took the step under duress from Prince Mfanasibili.<sup>454</sup> This further reduced the *Indlovukazi's* powers and made her largely a figure head while the Authorised Person, Prince Sozisa, was in effect the regent.<sup>455</sup>

After *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe's removal from the public eye, Prime Minister Bhekimpi boldly claimed that Ntombi's coronation was in accordance with custom. He warned: 'nobody shall ask anything, everything shall be got from the elders.'<sup>456</sup> Years later Prince Mfanasibili claimed that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe was easily manipulated into adopting an attitude to the effect that, since *Indlovukazi* Ntombi and herself were both King Sobhuza's wives, there was no reason why Ntombi should not assume her position.<sup>457</sup> *Indlovukazi* Ntombi was an interesting choice that helped to shift the balance of power in Prince Mfanasibili's direction, as his mother was also a Thwala. Prince Mfanasibili and Queen Ntombi were close relatives; this enabled him to exert a great deal of influence over the new Regent.<sup>458</sup> *Indlovukazi* Ntombi was in a difficult position in that she assumed the regency in a manner which made her susceptible to *Liqoqo* pressure. Daniel and Vilane argued that his shrewd move enabled Prince Mfanasibili 'to consolidate control of both the royal house and the *Liqoqo*'.<sup>459</sup>

In an attempt to reassure the general population *Umtfwana* (Crown Prince/Heir Apparent) Makhosetive returned to Swaziland from Sherbourne School in England and was officially introduced to the nation as the king in waiting on 10 August 1983.<sup>460</sup> His introduction was important in that it was in accordance with traditional custom whereby it served to legitimate the

<sup>453</sup> Prince Bhekimpi announced that the new *Indlovukazi* had been crowned with a python's skin headband instead of *litulu* (red feather cap) and a special crown. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 7 September 1983, pp 1-5.

<sup>454</sup> *Drum* reported that those who were present during the signing witnessed the *Indlovukazi's* nervousness. See *Drum*, Aug 1984, p 14.

<sup>455</sup> Centro de Estudos Africanos, 'Continuing Political Infighting in Swaziland', *Southern African Dossier*, p 2.

<sup>456</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 31 August 1983, p 10.

<sup>457</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 21 May 2006, p 17.

<sup>458</sup> Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1983-1984*, Vol XV11, p 859.

<sup>459</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 60.

<sup>460</sup> Prince Bhekimpi introduced *Umtfwana*, Prince Makhosetive in a television and radio broadcast. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 11 August 1983, p 1.

heir's selection. While Swazis may have been surprised with the news, there had been no mention of King Sobhuza II's successor since his death in August 1982. It was widely believed that Prince Mfanasibili regarded himself as rightful heir to the throne.<sup>461</sup> In light of that, his public approval of Prince Makhosetive was highly significant. The *Liqoqo's* decision to introduce the future king has been viewed as an attempt to legitimate Prince Makhosetive's selection.<sup>462</sup> The future king was still a minor; the nation would have to wait a few years for his installation. Furthermore, it could help to silence the opposition giving the *Liqoqo* greater latitude. In the meantime the *Liqoqo* was well placed to run the country and tighten its hold on power.

In the midst of a repressive, tense atmosphere, the stage was finally set for parliamentary elections. Force and persuasion were used to get Swazis to the polls. Chiefs proved to be no exception as they were summoned to a *Libandla* meeting, where they were ordered to publicly declare their support for *Indlovukazi* Ntombi or face the consequences.<sup>463</sup> Dambuzo Lukhele was the lone chief who refused to pledge his allegiance to *Indlovukazi* Ntombi.<sup>464</sup> Thereafter chiefs threatened that boycotters would lose their land in the various chiefdoms while the police and army staged road blocks throughout the country subjecting travellers to body and car searches.<sup>465</sup> On Election Day, 28 October 1983, government transport ferried voters to the polls resulting in a high voter turnout.<sup>466</sup> Many felt compelled to participate and vote. Of course the unique nature of *Tinkhundla* elections should be taken into account. It was an electoral system whereby voters elect members to an electoral college who in turn select future parliamentarians. Some argued that the *Tinkhundla* system was a vehicle used to bridge the modern parliamentary system and the traditional chiefdoms.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> One royal faction maintained that Prince Mfanasibili's father should have succeeded Bhunu instead of Sobhuza II. See Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Country from which Justice has Disappeared', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1984-1985*, Vol XV11, p 838-839.

<sup>462</sup> Prince Makhosetive was crowned King Mswati III in April 1986.

<sup>463</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 64.

<sup>464</sup> Refer to Chapter Five where Lukhele's act was rewarded by King Mswati III.

<sup>465</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 54. Also discussed by M Sihlongonyane, 'The Invisible Hand of the Royal Family in the Political Dynamics of Swaziland', *African and Asian Studies*, Vol 2, No 2, 2003, pp 168-169.

<sup>466</sup> There was some dispute in this regard as local papers claimed a high turnout that appeared to be contradicted by South African newspapers like the *Rand Daily Mail*. See *The Swazi Observer*, 29 October 1983.

<sup>467</sup> Sihlongonyane, 'The Invisible Hand of the Royal Family in the Political Dynamics of Swaziland', *African and Asian Studies*, Vol 2, No 2, 2003, p 168. The country is divided into a total of 55 *Tinkhundla*.



The *Liqogo* wielded enormous power, in that it had the right to identify potential parliamentarians in addition to selecting a limited number of members to both the House of Assembly and the Senate. It would also select the future Prime Minister. A cabinet would then be named by the Prime Minister, after consultation with the *Liqogo*. This system enabled the *Liqogo* to exert a great deal of influence over such appointments. Many believed that the new cabinet would be purged and that only three former cabinet members would be retained.<sup>468</sup> Indeed former *Liqogo* strongman Sishayi Nxumalo found himself transferred from his position at *Tibiyo* into the prestigious, though less powerful role of Minister of Finance.<sup>469</sup> The Authorised Person was granted power to dismiss civil servants leading to speculation that the civil service would also be purged.<sup>470</sup>

An initial period of calm followed *Indlovukazi* Ntombi's enthronement. Having neutralised all opponents, the members turned on each other in the pursuit of individual power and prosperity. Rumours of rifts and squabbles within royal circles began to circulate in March 1984. The following month Prince Mfanisibili revealed that a *coup* plot had been foiled. Blame was placed on a group referred to as the 'Gang of Four'.<sup>471</sup> Later on it emerged that Sishayi Nxumalo (former Chairman of *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane*), Richard Dlamini (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Martin Mdziniso (MP) and Prince Dumisa Dlamini comprised the Gang of Four. They were charged with attempting to force the Authorised Person to sign a Government Gazette dismissing Prince Bhekimpi and Polycarp Dlamini, the new General Manager of *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane*.<sup>472</sup> The Chief Inspector of Police, Titus Msibi and the Army Commander, Colonel Mangomeni Ndzimandze were dismissed at the same time.<sup>473</sup> Other documents dismissing Prince Mfanisibili and George Msibi were also allegedly signed by Prince Sozisa.<sup>474</sup> The Authorised Person found himself out of a job for allegedly appending his signature to the documents presented by the

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<sup>468</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 54.

<sup>469</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 60.

<sup>470</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 61.

<sup>471</sup> Legum 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1983-1984*, Vol XV11, pp 860- 861.

<sup>472</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 60.

<sup>473</sup> S. Ellis, 'Swaziland: Royal Flush', *Africa Confidential*, 1985, p 5.

<sup>474</sup> S Ellis, 'Swaziland: Of Princes, Money and Land', *Africa Confidential*, 1984, p 5.



Gang of Four. Apparently the *coup* plotters desired to reinstate Sishayi Nxumalo as the managing director of *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* and Dumisa Dlamini as Fund Manager.<sup>475</sup>

The general populace greeted the news with a large degree of scepticism. In an unprecedented move Prince Dumisa<sup>476</sup> (a Swazi citizen and member of the royal family) was escorted to the airport and told to leave the country.<sup>477</sup> Prince Dumisa, a former manager of *Tibiyo* and Secretary General of the pre-independence Swaziland Progressive Party, was responsible for organising a series of strikes during the 1960s after which King Sobhuza II forced him into exile. He returned to Swaziland after Sobhuza II's death and subsequently aligned himself with Sishayi Nxumalo. Sishayi Nxumalo retaliated by uncovering and publicising a string of allegations against Mfanasibili and members of the *Liqoqo*. The revelation of a multi-million Rand fraud scandal against the Southern African Common Customs Revenue (SACU) pool<sup>478</sup> (also known as the Liberty Investment Fraud)<sup>479</sup> blew the stage wide open. Matters were compounded by the discovery of large-scale corruption in the chemical industry. It was also reported that seven *Liqoqo* members including Mfanasibili, George Msibi and AK Hlophe had received double salaries for a period of eighteen months.<sup>480</sup> The public was disgruntled and called for change realising that the *Liqoqo* could bring the country to its knees.

As opposition became more vocal, striking students at the University of Swaziland were declared to be overly interested in political philosophies. Twenty-one students and two staff members were forced out of the campus. PUDEMO became increasingly vocal calling for unity amongst the groups opposed to Mfanasibili's regime. Meanwhile the Swaziland Liberation Front was formed in London<sup>481</sup> with the aim of protecting the monarchy and ensuring that Prince Makhosetive was crowned. Probably one of the most shocking incidents involved Sobhuza II's

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<sup>475</sup> Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Country from which Justice has Disappeared', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1984-1985*, Vol XV11, pp 840-841.

<sup>476</sup> Dumisa Dlamini has been the leader of one of the post independent opposition parties. He returned from self-imposed exile after Sobhuza's death. See Ellis, 'Swaziland: Of Princes, Money and Land', *Africa Confidential*, 1984, p 5.

<sup>477</sup> In one interview Prince Dumisa claimed that he was virtually deported because the Prime Minister and Prince Mfanasibili wanted him out of the way. See *Drum*, August 1984, p 14.

<sup>478</sup> Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana shared revenue from the Customs Union.

<sup>479</sup> Centro de Estudos Africanos, 'Continuing Political Infighting in Swaziland', p 6.

<sup>480</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis: Royal Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 60.

<sup>481</sup> Booth noted that the Swaziland Liberation Front was short lived. See Booth, *Historical Dictionary of Swaziland*, p 66.

wives staging an illegal protest march to Parliament.<sup>482</sup> They voiced the thoughts of many when they accused the *Liqoqo* of distorting custom. Furthermore, they levelled claims of corruption against Prince Mfanasibili and George Msibi. They also called for Sishayi Nxumalo, the police and army chiefs to be released from prison. This move underlined the severity of the political situation in the country. Traditionally *Emakhosikati* (king's wives) remained secluded in royal residences and did not engage in demonstrations or voice their opinions publicly. Daniel and Vilane revealed that the *Emakhosikati* had the support of their sons and Crown Prince Makhosetive. They challenged the Prime Minister to arrest them in accordance with the latest decree.<sup>483</sup> There was no response from the ruling clique. While there may have been a perception that the *Liqoqo* was in total control, behind the scenes actions such as the aforementioned indicate that the *Liqoqo's* support was wavering. Indeed opponents' voices appeared to be surfacing on all fronts.<sup>484</sup>

Concerns about the *Liqoqo* regime were not limited to events within Swaziland. Swaziland was increasingly viewed as 'pro South African and anti-ANC'.<sup>485</sup> Prince Bhekimpi advocated closer ties with the apartheid state,<sup>486</sup> denounced the ANC<sup>487</sup> and vowed that ANC bandits would be brought to book.<sup>488</sup> A campaign to expel ANC cadres was launched. Some accepted 'voluntary deportation'<sup>489</sup> as South African agents began commando raids on Swazi soil. Such incursions did not result in protests from the Swazi government, as would have been the norm with other states.<sup>490</sup> The signing of the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique in March 1984 legitimated Swaziland's earlier pact with South Africa.<sup>491</sup> One reporter suggested that South Africa was attempting to create 'a total cordon sanitaire' around the country.<sup>492</sup> The reality

<sup>482</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis: Royal Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, pp 60-61.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, p 61.

<sup>484</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 164.

<sup>485</sup> Ellis, 'Swaziland: King's Gambit', *Africa Confidential*, 1986, p 7.

<sup>486</sup> *The Argus*, 11 May 1984, p 2.

<sup>487</sup> Ellis, 'Swaziland: King's Gambit', *Africa Confidential*, 1986, p 6.

<sup>488</sup> *The Financial Mail*, 27 April 1984, p 49.

<sup>489</sup> PH Bischoff, 'Swaziland: A Small State in International Affairs', *Africa Spectrum*, Vol 21, No 2, 1992, p 186.

<sup>490</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 63.

<sup>491</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 171. See also *Pretoria News*, 2 April 1984, p 5.

<sup>492</sup> *The Eastern Province Herald*, 4 April 1984, p 14. By this time South Africa was also talking to Botswana about mutual security. See *The Evening Post*, 6 March 1984, p 8. See also Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 168.

was that neighbouring states like Zimbabwe and Lesotho would be major stumbling blocks to such aspirations.<sup>493</sup>

Swazis became more alarmed as Swazi-South African ties shifted gear at the end of 1984. Both countries formalised the relationship and agreed to establish trade missions at a time when South Africa was an international pariah subjected to virtual diplomatic isolation having little representation outside its borders.<sup>494</sup> Despite Swazi denials the South African Trade Mission did not limit itself to trade issues, opting to carry out the functions of a consulate. Sceptics maintained that Mbabane was an intelligence outpost in Pretoria's war against the ANC.<sup>495</sup> Such fears appeared well grounded as Sterban noted, 'Trade between South Africa and Swaziland will look after itself but we can also look after other developments.'<sup>496</sup> In May 1984 all ANC members were asked to leave the country and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees was requested to assist with the resettlement process.<sup>497</sup> Swaziland isolated itself further opposing the imposition of international sanctions against South Africa.

It was time for royalty to make a move and to restore the status quo that had seen Swazi royalty firmly in power during King Sobhuza II's reign. With the backing and support of the royal family the *Liqoqo's* reign was abruptly concluded, with the release of an Extraordinary Government Gazette, in October 1985 when the *Indlovukazi* dismissed Prince Mfanasibili and George Msibi along with henchmen like Chief Fernandez,<sup>498</sup> Yussuf Patel<sup>499</sup> and Police Chief Majaji Simelane. With the unwavering support of the royal family and the general populace, royal rule was once again firmly asserted and legitimised<sup>500</sup> in Swaziland.

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<sup>493</sup> Unlike Swaziland, frontline states such as Lesotho and Botswana refused to sign agreements or exchange trade missions. The Sotho authorities protected ANC operatives ensuring that they did not fall into the hands of the South African security forces. See Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 168.

<sup>494</sup> In December 1984 South African diplomatic representation was limited to Malawi. See *Pretoria News*, 2 April 1984, p 5.

<sup>495</sup> Ellis, 'Swaziland: King's Gambit', *Africa Confidential*, 1986, p 7.

<sup>496</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 173. See also Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, pp 64-65.

<sup>497</sup> Legum, 'Kingdom of Swaziland: A Stormy Period in the Post Sobhuza Era', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1983-1984*, Vol XV11, *Africa Contemporary Record, 1983-1984*, Vol XV11, p 863. See also *The Sunday Mirror*, 29 July 1984, p 7.

<sup>498</sup> Chief Fernandez was a millionaire Nigerian chief who became a Roving Ambassador during the *Liqoqo* era. His appointment was rescinded after public outcry that he was not a Swazi citizen.

<sup>499</sup> It is widely believed that Patel drafted most of the decrees and transfers instituted by the *Liqoqo*.

<sup>500</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 164-165.

There can be little doubt that the *Liqoqo* were agents of change and conflict in Swaziland. *Liqoqo* members attempted to usurp royal power, relegating traditional principles and practices in the process. They overstepped the mark and found themselves surrounded by opponents. The *Liqoqo* did not enjoy the support of the masses and burnt bridges on all fronts. Royalty distanced itself from the clique, members failed to support each other and Swaziland's regional standing was compromised. The final straw arrived in December 1985 when the *Indlovukazi* firmly changed the status of the *Liqoqo* reducing it to a Council of State and transferring many of its powers and functions to the regency.<sup>501</sup> Against all expectations the coronation of Crown Prince Makhosetive was moved forward and a date was set for April 1986. It would appear that the *Liqoqo* had come full circle returning to its traditional role as an advisory body. However the installation of King Mswati III would do little to address the concerns of the general public who were still stifled and deprived of the right to political participation.

The *Liqoqo* assumed a new mantle after the death of Sobhuza II. While it claimed to act in the interests of preserving the status quo, its actions appeared contradictory. It neutralised the Prime Minister and reduced the *Indlovukazi's* stature, while manoeuvring itself into a seemingly unassailable position. The years 1982-1986 were certainly controversial years witnessing not only change but the championing of new causes. Yet questions linger as historians like Daniels, Levin and Sihlongonyane examine Swazi politics during the *Liqoqo* years. Could it be characterised as primarily a clash between modern and traditional forces? Were the main players motivated by personal agendas such as greed and avarice? Did the prevailing climate in the country lend itself to chaos and confusion? If so, what motivated the *Liqoqo* to act so vehemently? Such queries deserve consideration and examination, to pave the way towards a better understanding of the era and its influence on Swazi citizens and their political participation in Swaziland.

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<sup>501</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Royal Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 62.

## Chapter Five

### Buhhihhihi and the Triumph of the Elders

Few would disagree with the assertion that the death of King Sobhuza II heralded difficult times and political instability in Swaziland.<sup>502</sup> The events of 1983-1988 had a profound and lasting impact both on Swazi royalty and society. While the *Liqoqo* (Council that advises the king) attempted to fill the vacuum left behind by the long-reigning monarch, it stirred a hornet's nest that was to prove difficult to bring under control. As the *Liqoqo* increased its power base and expanded its sphere of influence, the actions of its members brought the traditional institution into disrepute. Its actions ultimately threatened the legitimacy of the royal institutions established and left behind by King Sobhuza II.

For many Swazis, the *Liqoqo* era (1982-1988) will always be synonymous with suspicion and conflict along with a culture of fear and threats.<sup>503</sup> Elements of this culture still prevail a quarter of a century later as people are reluctant to discuss events of the time. Most official records from the *Liqoqo* era have been sealed for a thirty-year period at the National Archives. Prince Mfanasibili suggested that such actions were an attempt by royalty and those in power to ensure that the truth was not divulged.<sup>504</sup> Yet there is a need to understand the post-Sobhuza years so that they can take their rightful place in the annals of Swazi history. Many questions revolve around the era and the actions of the *Liqoqo* members at the time. Could they be rationalised as the outcome of designing a constitution that essentially revolved around King Sobhuza II? Was it brought about by permitting the *Liqoqo* to convert into a political entity that eventually succeeded in monopolising political power?<sup>505</sup> Could it be characterised as a struggle between traditional and modernist factions?<sup>506</sup> Was it an individual clamour for power,<sup>507</sup> position<sup>508</sup> and financial gain in the interregnum, or was there perhaps another explanation?

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<sup>502</sup> Richard Levin discusses the power struggles between the various factions seeking executive power. He identifies eight main confrontations. See R Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 149-166.

<sup>503</sup> Daniel and Vilane describe the 1980s as traumatic years in Swaziland. See J Daniel & J Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 54. Parks Mangena also mentioned this during an interview on 29 July 2008. One respondent referred to the dark days of the *Liqoqo* era. Interview conducted in Mbabane on 31 July 2008.

<sup>504</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, 11 August 2008.

<sup>505</sup> H Macmillan raised these points in Macmillan, 'Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 666.

<sup>506</sup> Centro de Estudos Africanos, 'The Current Political Situation in Swaziland', p 5.

<sup>507</sup> RH Davies, D O'Meara & S Dlamini, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 48-51. See also 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 51.

King Sobhuza II's lengthy six-decade reign to a large extent sowed the seeds for speculation and uncertainty.<sup>509</sup> Long before the king died, questions about the future of Swaziland were raised. Would any one individual be competent enough to fill the aging monarch's shoes and successfully maintain his legacy?<sup>510</sup> The lengthy and intricate succession process only served to compound matters. At the time of King Sobhuza II's death no successor had officially been earmarked.<sup>511</sup> The decision was apparently left in the hands of the *Liqunga* (Council of Senior Princes) and senior members of the royal family. Yet one respondent<sup>512</sup> refuted such arguments noting that the aging king had indicated his choice. The respondent recalled that during his latter years, King Sobhuza frequently insisted that Prince Makhosetive (crowned King Mswati III in April 1986) should accompany him to official functions. On one such occasion at Ntfontjeni the aging monarch called a *Libandla* (council comprised of chiefs, community leaders and adult males) meeting of all senior chiefs in the Hhohho region and introduced Prince Makhosetive to them. While there may well have been hints and speculation<sup>513</sup> nothing was confirmed by Sobhuza II. Given the large number of King Sobhuza II's progeny, it is not surprising that factions emerged within the monarchy. In such situations it is natural that there would have been those who secretly harboured aspirations to the kingship<sup>514</sup> and the supreme power that went with it.<sup>515</sup> Looking at the history of royal succession in Swaziland, Levin identified two common characteristics: conflicting personalities and a struggle over executive power. One cannot deny that both variables reemerged and posed problems in the aftermath of Sobhuza II's death.

Did King Sobhuza II lay the foundations that produced an all powerful *Liqoqo* in 1982?<sup>516</sup> He certainly left behind an autocratic state whereby he enjoyed supreme power over all aspects of

<sup>508</sup> 'The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle', *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 54.

<sup>509</sup> C Potholm, *The Dynamics of Political Modernization*, pp 132-133.

<sup>510</sup> J Viecele, 'Swaziland After Sobhuza: Stability or Crisis' *A Journal of Africanist Opinion*, Vol X11, No 3, Fall/Winter 1982, pp 56-62.

<sup>511</sup> There have been suggestions that King Sobhuza II told royal insiders that the name of the new king would be located in a trunk box containing a list of names. The name of the new king would emerge when Swazi traditional succession rules had been applied. At the time Prince Makhosetive was the youngest son of Sobhuza II. Bheki Makhubu interviewed in Mbabane on 5 May 2008.

<sup>512</sup> Interview with anonymous respondent, Mbabane, 31 July 2008.

<sup>513</sup> One respondent argued that Sobhuza's actions towards Makhosetive were sufficient to indicate that he was the chosen successor. Anonymous interview took place in Mbabane on 31 July 2008.

<sup>514</sup> Interview with Parks Mangena, Mbabane, 29 July 2008.

<sup>515</sup> There have been suggestions that Prince Mfanasibili and Prince Gabheni held such aspirations though there has been no conclusive confirmation of such hopes by either man. However Prince Mfanasibili pointed a finger at Prince Gabheni during an interview with the author in Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>516</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 148.



the country. The veteran monarch played a significant role in establishing a subservient population<sup>517</sup> and the conditions, which the *Liqoqo* could utilise to increase the scope of its operations far beyond its traditional role. Sobhuza II crafted a political system that revolved around tradition and perpetuated traditional institutions such as the monarchy<sup>518</sup>, the *Liqoqo* and *Tinkhundla*. He set up royal companies like *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* and *Tisuka Taka Ngwane*. He succeeded in establishing strong political and economic power bases in addition to maintaining and strengthening royal hegemony via the manipulation of land allocation, ritual, national identity, tradition and culture. John Marvin expressed it well when he noted that Sobhuza was more than a nominal head of government. His power was so immense that it was unparalleled among hereditary monarchs in modern times.<sup>519</sup>

Sobhuza II was revered and viewed as a patriarch who acted in the best interests of his people. Once he declared: ‘A good leader is one who leads his followers away from disaster.’<sup>520</sup> Perhaps such sentiments formed the basis for action taken against detractors in the post-independence era. Jackie Vieceleli noted that King Sobhuza II eliminated all organised opposition in the country.<sup>521</sup> Disillusioned trade unionists were subjected to violence and autocratic responses from the monarchy.<sup>522</sup> Those who persistently refused to cooperate with the system were disciplined. Politicians like Thomas Ngwenya<sup>523</sup> and Prince Dumisa<sup>524</sup> were considered ‘undesirable’ persons and deported.<sup>525</sup> Prince Dumisa later claimed: ‘They were just getting me out of the way.’<sup>526</sup> One

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<sup>517</sup> A recent editorial suggested that little has changed in twenty-first century Swaziland as people choose to suffer in silence rather than confronting problems and seeking solutions. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 18 July 2008, p 24.

<sup>518</sup> AR Booth, *Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 69.

<sup>519</sup> J Marvin, ‘King Sobhuza II of Swaziland’, *Optima*, June 1983, p 95.

<sup>520</sup> MML Shongwe, *The Future and Destiny of Swaziland Rest in the Hands and Sanity of her People Themselves*. See the foreword written by Prince Mabandla.

<sup>521</sup> Vieceleli, ‘Swaziland After Sobhuza: Stability or Crisis’, *A Journal of Africanist Opinion*, Vol X11, No 3, Fall/Winter 1982, p 61.

<sup>522</sup> Sobhuza II’s dislike and strong discouragement of trade union activities is discussed in I Winter, ‘The Post Colonial State and the Forces and Relations of Production in Swaziland’, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol 9, 1976, p 38.

<sup>523</sup> It is interesting to note that Ngwenya had actually campaigned in the same constituency as Prince Mfanisibili during the 1972 elections and won Mfanisibili’s parliamentary seat. Ngwenya’s deportation is also discussed by Vieceleli, ‘Swaziland After Sobhuza: Stability or Crisis’, *A Journal of Africanist Opinion*, Vol X11, No 3, Fall/Winter 1982, p 59.

<sup>524</sup> Prince Dumisa was a trade union activist who led a major strike in Big Bend during the 1960s. He was subsequently deported under police escort to London. See ‘The Upheavals Behind the Throne’, *Drum*, August 1984, p 14. Prince Dumisa died in the United Kingdom and his body was returned to Swaziland for burial. Interview with Parks Mangena, Mbabane, 29 July 2008.

<sup>525</sup> S Schoeman, ‘Swaziland: A Modern Monarchy’, *Africa Insight*, Vol16, No 3, 1986, p 174. Thomas Ngwenya was a member of the Ngwane National Liberation Congress. He won a Parliamentary seat during the 1972 elections. His



enduring characteristic of the Swazi monarchy has been its ability to snuff out dissension. It was a tool that proved useful to the *Liqoqo* and Mswati III.

Richard Levin proposed that the constitutional upgrading of the *Liqoqo* in 1982 constituted a prescription for the power struggles that followed.<sup>527</sup> Sobhuza II ruled Swaziland with a firm hand. His desire to maintain control over the country meant that he was reluctant to delegate authority.<sup>528</sup> Everything revolved around him during his lifetime. Such sentiments were evident in the wording of the 1973 Decree where the king referred to, ‘my subjects’, ‘my people’, ‘my cabinet ministers’, and ‘my armed forces’.<sup>529</sup> He made full use of the tremendous power he had accrued over the years ensuring that members of government, parliament and high-ranking officials were loyal to the monarchy.<sup>530</sup> Political activist Mphandlana Shongwe insisted: ‘The government belongs to the king and the buck stops with him.’<sup>531</sup> Swazis were accustomed to being ruled by a paternalistic king whom many perceived as a benevolent father.<sup>532</sup> Few saw reason for complaint. The king supplied them with land and appeared to have their best interests at heart; hence they accepted the status quo. There is little doubt that King Sobhuza II established the conditions needed to entrench the *Liqoqo* after his death.<sup>533</sup>

Sobhuza’s death left a nation in mourning and one that abdicated the business of running the country to *labadzala* (elders). Given the absence of overt opposition since 1973, it is not surprising that the new-look *Liqoqo* was initially accepted by the general populace. Even the shocking removal of Prince Mabandla failed to jolt the nation into action, although there may have been murmurs behind the scenes.<sup>534</sup> Perhaps the biggest question revolved around Sobhuza II’s failure to specify the relationship between the *Liqoqo* and the cabinet, although there was

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success did not go down well with King Sobhuza II who declared him an illegal immigrant and had him deported from Swaziland.

<sup>526</sup> ‘The Upheavals Behind the Throne,’ *Drum*, August 1984, p 14.

<sup>527</sup> R Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 235.

<sup>528</sup> Interview with Bheki Makhubu, Mbabane, 5 May 2008.

<sup>529</sup> Proclamation to the Nation, 17 April 1973. See Introduction, Sections 2 and 3.

<sup>530</sup> In June 1987 King Mswati III recognised Chief Dambuzo Lukhele’s loyalty during the *Liqoqo* years and declared that if Lukhele continued to be loyal to the monarchy good fortune would follow. See *The Times of Swaziland*, 22 June 1987, p 1, 16.

<sup>531</sup> *The Nation*, July 2008, p 50. Mphandlana Shongwe was a member of the Swaziland Youth Congress (SWAYOCO), a student protest movement that was aligned to PUDEMO. See AM, Kanduza, ‘Intellectuals in Swazi Politics’, Du-Pont *et al.*, *Transformation and Public Policy in Swaziland*, p 62.

<sup>532</sup> ‘The Post Sobhuza Power Struggle’, *Africa Report*, Vol 29, No 1, Jan-Feb 1984, p 51.

<sup>533</sup> *The Nation*, July 2008, p 51.

<sup>534</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 152.

speculation that the king died before putting everything in place.<sup>535</sup> Bheki Makhubu pointed out that there were startling contrasts between the appointments of the *Liqoqo* and Prince Mabandla. The latter was officially appointed Prime Minister and introduced to the nation by King Sobhuza II at the Royal Cattle Byre in Lobamba.<sup>536</sup> The same cannot be said of the new-look *Liqoqo*. Little fanfare accompanied the unveiling of the *Liqoqo* in a Government Gazette on 25 August 1982.<sup>537</sup> Interestingly the announcement took place before Sobhuza II's funeral.<sup>538</sup> Members were sworn in a month later at Lozitha palace.<sup>539</sup> If the *Liqoqo* was senior to the cabinet and *Indlovukazi*, (Queen Mother) why weren't the members introduced to the nation at the Royal Kraal in accordance with established practice and tradition? Such incidents could only fuel questions about the credibility of the *Liqoqo* and Sobhuza's plans for the traditional body.

Establishing a power base was one of the greatest challenges facing the *Liqoqo* in August 1982. Just as King Sobhuza had been all powerful in his lifetime, the *Liqoqo* wasted little time in emulating the late king. The *Liqoqo* did not shy away from controversy; instead challenges were confronted head on incurring the wrath of the general public. When *Liqoqo* members challenged the fibre of the monarchy removing *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe, dissenters were galvanised into action, becoming more widespread and vociferous.<sup>540</sup> Yet even then the *Liqoqo* succeeded in bringing the country into compliance unleashing a combination of brute force and threats. It is not surprising that a peace-loving nation unaccustomed to war or rebellion cowered away from the intimidatory tactics employed by the *Liqoqo*. Joshua Mzizi noted: 'the future of Swaziland looked bleak and uncertain.'<sup>541</sup> In such circumstances the general populace was suppressed, adopted a low profile and opted to get on with their daily lives. Their reticence played into the *Liqoqo*'s hands enabling it to use the political quagmire to its own advantage while it entrenched itself for the long haul.

The *Liqoqo*'s early success and survival could be attributed to the fact that it was adept at dealing with misgivings and discontent among the general population. Prince Mfanasibili, Prince

<sup>535</sup> Interview with Bheki Makhubu, Mbabane, 5 May 2008,

<sup>536</sup> All important national announcements and appointments take place in the Royal Kraal at Lobamba. Indeed King Mswati III was introduced to the nation at the same venue shortly after his coronation.

<sup>537</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 26 August 1982, p 1.

<sup>538</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 15 March 1988, p 8.

<sup>539</sup> B Makhubu, 'Prince Mfanasibili: The Liqoqo Strongman', (unpublished manuscript) p 136.

<sup>540</sup> G Dlukula, 'The Vanishing Power of the Swazi Monarchy', *Pace*, November 1983, p 23.

<sup>541</sup> J Mzizi, *Man of Conscience: The Life History of Albert Heshane Shabangu*, p 65.

Bhekimpi and others successfully employed a number of tactics. They frequently patronised the public and resorted to platitudes that portrayed them as the guardians of the nation. On one occasion Prince Bhekimpi advised: ‘You just wait and leave everything to *Emalangen* (Dlamini family) who will fix everything.’<sup>542</sup> Earlier on he had counseled people who desired to know what was happening, to enquire from those in authority<sup>543</sup> (presumably he was referring to the royal family). Prince Bhekimpi believed that the nation should be made to understand that the matter was for the elders. ‘No Tom, Dick or Harry should discuss it because they would not understand all its ramifications.’<sup>544</sup>

Like Sobhuza II, the *Liqoqo* members were not daunted by adverse public opinion. Instead they spewed vitriol and instituted stern action against detractors. Prince Bhekimpi boldly declared: ‘We won’t be intimidated by any people’;<sup>545</sup> ‘We will not tolerate dark corner meetings.’<sup>546</sup> Interestingly *Indlovukazi* Ntombi resorted to quoting scripture proclaiming, ‘When the wicked and my enemies came upon me to eat my flesh, they stumbled and fell.’<sup>547</sup> In June 1984 Prince Bhekimpi regretted having to mete out punishment to the people while noting that ‘punishing them does not correct the situation.’<sup>548</sup> Such messages left little doubt as to who was in charge of the country and led to *Liqoqo* members like Prince Mfanasibili being viewed as ‘tyrants’.<sup>549</sup>

As the *Liqoqo* gained power, it did not always limit itself to stern warnings and threats. When words failed to produce the desired results the *Liqoqo* took action. Mario Masuku noted that the People’s United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) members like Jabulani Matsebula, Gabriel Mkhumane and Lucky Vilakati were forced to flee the country.<sup>550</sup> Demonstrators protesting the removal of *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe received little sympathy and had to cope with the harsh reaction of the armed forces. The *Liqoqo* succeeded in bringing the entire system into disrepute, invoking the disapproval of the nation. With the aid of hindsight it is evident that the system that was so

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<sup>542</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 10 October 1983.

<sup>543</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 30 August 1983, p 16.

<sup>544</sup> Mzizi, *Man of Conscience*, p66.

<sup>545</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 27 July 1984, p 1.

<sup>546</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 11 April 1984, p 1.

<sup>547</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 29 April 1985, p 1.

<sup>548</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 2 June 1984, p 4.

<sup>549</sup> Makhubu, ‘Prince Mfanasibili’, p 120.

<sup>550</sup> Some PUDEMO members who fled Swaziland during the *Liqoqo* era still reside in Europe and Australia. Interview with Mario Masuku, Mbabane, 14 August 2007.

dear to the aging monarch's heart also became the architect of widespread instability during the post-Sobhuza II era.

Protecting King Sobhuza II's legacy quickly became the mantra of *Liqoqo* members. Prince Mfanasibili and Prime Minister Prince Bhekimpi frequently claimed that they were acting in the interests of the monarchy ensuring that it did not succumb to the ploys of modernists.<sup>551</sup> While the traditionalist-modernist debate appeared to be the most obvious explanation, historians remain divided about such explanations. Traditionalists were viewed as those who supported the continuation of royalty and the policies of King Sobhuza II. Prince Mfanasibili regarded himself as the leader of the traditionalist faction. He enjoyed support from Prince Mfanawenkosi Maseko, George Msibi, RV Dlamini,<sup>552</sup> Polycarp Dlamini and members of the royal family. In essence the traditionalists wished to retain the status quo which saw Swazi royals reaping the fruits of state organisations like *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane*. Prince Mfanasibili, himself a prominent member of the royal line, urged Swazis to stand behind the *Liqoqo* in its efforts to protect the country from undesirable influences. Alan Booth maintained that the post-Sobhuza upheavals were fuelled by a power struggle between the traditional and progressive factions<sup>553</sup> while Richard Levin<sup>554</sup> refuted such explanations. Similarly Robert Davies, Dan O'Meara and Sipho Dlamini maintained that the post-Sobhuza struggles were not based on ideological differences.<sup>555</sup>

The progressives (also referred to as modernists) occupied the other end of the pendulum desiring to lead Swaziland towards a more democratic state of affairs than had previously been the case. Some progressives advocated the introduction of a constitutional monarchy, similar to Lesotho.<sup>556</sup> Prominent modernists included Prince Mabandla, Prince Gabheni, and Ben Nsibandze, the Deputy Prime Minister. In the *Liqoqo's* world view, Prince Mabandla was regarded as a progressive because he had advocated for change within the kingdom. His actions

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<sup>551</sup> Prince Mfanasibili has steadfastly argued that he always acted to protect the monarchy and to ensure that Prince Makhosetive was crowned. Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>552</sup> King Mswati III married RV Dlamini's daughter, *Inkhosikati* La Ngangaza, a few years after his accession to the throne. Both RV Dlamini and Polycarp Dlamini were cabinet members.

<sup>553</sup> Booth, *Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*, p 130.

<sup>554</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 146. See also Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 48.

<sup>555</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 48.

<sup>556</sup> Almon Mbingo pointed out that the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Lesotho was a source of serious concern for King Sobhuza II.

and resilience attracted concerted attention from the *Liqoqo*.<sup>557</sup> Prince Mabandla was joined by the incumbent *Indlovukazi* who appeared to support his policies. Although *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe was a key member of the royal family, having been personally selected by the late king, she did not appear to fit the mould crafted by the *Liqoqo*.<sup>558</sup> Not only did she sideline the *Liqoqo* and veer towards Prince Mabandla, she made enemies in the traditionalist camp. Prince Mfanasibili believed that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe had taken one of the princes 'into her stomach'<sup>559</sup> (made him her son), the prince in question being Prince Gabheni. He maintained that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe's aim was to see Prince Gabheni crowned king while Prince Makhosetive languished in exile.<sup>560</sup>

While there may have been significant differences between the traditionalists and modernists, there is little basis for the argument that such disagreements and factions culminated in the *Liqoqo*'s struggle for power after King Sobhuza II's death. Hence the struggle cannot be characterised as an ideological one.<sup>561</sup> Prince Mfanasibili concurred with such arguments and emphasised that the majority of people wanted a traditional monarchy.<sup>562</sup> Members of the progressive camp, demonstrators and university students, supported the monarchy. Even PUDEMO supported the monarchy, although they advocated a constitutional one.<sup>563</sup> Objections were grounded in the *Liqoqo*'s apparent disrespect and disregard for traditional institutions. This became apparent with the forced removal of *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe and the *Liqoqo*'s subsequent demands that chiefs pledge loyalty to *Indlovukazi* Ntombi.<sup>564</sup> While the modernists may have been dissatisfied with the political climate in the country, it had not reached the stage where they

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<sup>557</sup> Prince Mfanasibili maintained that Prince Mabandla wanted nothing to do with the *Liqoqo*. This led the former to become very suspicious of Prince Mabandla's motives long before the showdown that culminated in Mabandla's sacking from the post of Prime Minister. Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 11 August 2008.

<sup>558</sup> Mfanasibili believed that the *Indlovukazi* was unsuited for her post as she was illiterate and easily influenced by those around her. Interview with Bheki Makhubu, Mbabane, 5 May 2008. It is also important to note that all the women who were appointed *Indlovukazi* during Sobhuza's reign came from the Ndwandwe clan. Dzeliwe was unique coming from the Shongwe clan. See H Kuper, *Sobhuza II*, p 349.

<sup>559</sup> Mzizi, *Man of Conscience*, p 67. Prince Mfanasibili also referred to this during an interview with the author, Manzini, 11 August 2008.

<sup>560</sup> Makhubu, 'Prince Mfanasibili' p 150. See also Mzizi, *Man of Conscience*, p 67 where Mfanasibili voiced the fear that Prince Makhosetive would be forced to become a refugee in England.

<sup>561</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 48. Parks Mangena and Prince Mfanasibili expressed similar views. Interview with Parks Mangena, Mbabane, 29 July 2008; Mfanasibili, Manzini, 11 August 2008.

<sup>562</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 11 August 2008.

<sup>563</sup> Interview with Mario Masuku, 14 August 2007.

<sup>564</sup> *The Swazi Observer*, 14 February 1985, pp 1, 6.

sought fundamental change. For many, the monarchy represented the essence of Swaziland, hence it should be preserved.<sup>565</sup>

The Swazi royal family may have unwittingly exacerbated the circumstances that entrenched the post-Sobhuza II *Liqoqo*. Friction and disagreements within the royal family were commonplace during the *Liqoqo* era as factions manoeuvred themselves within the bastions of power. Prince Mfanasibili featured prominently in such squabbles. Swazis were warned to beware of ‘contenders for the throne’.<sup>566</sup> There was widespread belief that Prince Mfanasibili used his position and power within the *Liqoqo* to revive his father’s claim to the throne. Controversy has always surrounded the position of Prince Makhosikhosi, Prince Mfanasibili’s father and King Sobhuza II’s step-brother. Some Swazis maintain that Prince Mfanasibili’s father was the rightful heir to King Bhunu’s throne. Parks Mangena suggested that King Sobhuza’s favourable treatment of Prince Mfanasibili showed that he recognised Prince Mfanasibili as Makhosikhosi’s heir. ‘Why would Sobhuza create a ministerial post especially for Prince Mfanasibili after he had lost the 1972 elections?’<sup>567</sup> A move towards Prince Mfanasibili would have ensured that illegitimate claims may have been corrected. However, Prince Mfanasibili has vigorously denied such speculation, arguing that he had no desire to occupy the throne. ‘It would be like having an intimate relationship with my mother. That type of talk is all a smear campaign.’<sup>568</sup>

Yet Prince Mfanasibili was a central figure in the machinations within royal circles and inside the *Liqoqo*. He was viewed as ‘an opportunist’ who curried favour among royalty.<sup>569</sup> One has to acknowledge his close ties with King Sobhuza II who educated him and put him on the road to political success. Prince Mfanasibili argued that his mission emerged during a conversation between himself and the king, in the presence of Prince Mhlaba and Princess Tfofi in 1980. He recalled the king’s words: ‘Mfanasibili, you are going to separate my dogs when they are fighting for a bone without meat.’<sup>570</sup> Mfanasibili recalled that he balked at the suggestion that

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<sup>565</sup> Interview with anonymous respondent, Mbabane, 31 July 2008.

<sup>566</sup> Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 153. The Prime Minister, Prince Bhekimpi, made a number of statements warning Swazis to toe the line lest they be seen as unSwazi or trouble makers. *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 August 1983, p 4.

<sup>567</sup> Interview with Parks Mangena, Mbabane, 29 July 2008.

<sup>568</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 11 August 2008.

<sup>569</sup> Interview with Mario Masuku, Mbabane, 14 August 2007.

<sup>570</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.



he would keep the peace within the royal family. King Sobhuza refused to accept Mfanasibili's protestations of youth and lack of rank within his family. Mfanasibili claimed that he had no option but to submit to the king's command. He said 'I drew strength from Sobhuza's order.'<sup>571</sup>

Although Prince Mfanasibili has frequently been cast as the villain of the *Liqoqo* era, he has steadfastly protested his innocence in the palace intrigues that became part and parcel of the era. He believed that he was a guardian of the monarchy,<sup>572</sup> in accordance with King Sobhuza's wishes and commission. He has consistently maintained that his<sup>573</sup> actions were founded on the belief that Crown Prince Makhosetive's coronation was under threat. He argued that Prince Gabheni featured prominently in a number of events that invoked suspicion and ire within the *Liqoqo*. Mfanasibili summed it up quite graphically saying: 'He looked hungry, my instincts told me that he was up to something.'<sup>574</sup> Yet while Mfanasibili may perceive himself as the guardian of the monarch, King Mswati's refusal to meet him over the past twenty three years certainly queries the veracity of such claims.

Prince Mfanasibili's view was that Prince Gabheni was in cahoots with *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe. Prince Gabheni was a son of Sobhuza II who entered the public eye when he was elected to Parliament as an *Imbokodvo National Movement* candidate in 1968 and again in 1972. In 1978 Sobhuza appointed him Minister of Home Affairs. Legum wrote that 'as Sobhuza's health declined Gabheni became his chief personal representative and spokesperson.'<sup>575</sup> Mfanasibili argued that his suspicion regarding Prince Gabheni emanated from a decision to educate Crown Prince Makhosetive overseas. Mfanasibili failed to understand why the *Liqoqo* was excluded from that decision-making process.<sup>576</sup> He recalled that *Liqoqo* members were taken aback when Prince Gabheni failed to inform them that he would accompany the Crown Prince to England.

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<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>572</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 52.

<sup>573</sup> Mfanasibili conceded that he has never been given an audience with King Mswati III since his coronation in 1986. He expressed disappointment that he has never been accorded an opportunity to explain his side of events, despite his efforts to save the monarchy. Interview with Prince Mfanasibili was held in Manzini on 11 August 2008.

<sup>574</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>575</sup> AR Booth, *Historical Dictionary of Swaziland*, p 67.

<sup>576</sup> Bheki Makhubu, 'Prince Mfanasibili', p 90. Despite Mfanasibili's claims in this regard, it has not been possible to verify his allegations.



Prince Gabheni's later visit to the Crown Prince in England with *Inyanga* Nhlavana Maseko, a traditional doctor, further stoked the embers of suspicion.<sup>577</sup>

There was also rumour of a secret elite army unit, made up of police and soldiers.<sup>578</sup> The plot thickened during a subsequent graduation ceremony where Prince Gabheni, delegated by *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe, allegedly contravened royal protocol by standing on the royal dais while the national anthem was played. Perhaps it was an innocent *faux pas*. Maybe he harboured aspirations for the kingship? Was it a calculated display of his intentions? Whatever his intentions, the alarm bells sounded loud and clear for Prince Mfanasibili.<sup>579</sup> Mfanasibili recalled his misgiving saying: 'The mamba was crawling and wanted to hit.'<sup>580</sup>

Prince Mfanasibili further cited a bizarre encounter during a meeting attended by himself, Princess Mnengwase (King Sobhuza II's sister), Prince Mahhomu, Bishop Mncina (Head of the Swaziland League of Churches), an Indian prophet and a prince (widely believed to be Prince Gabheni) at the latter's residence. The prophet reported that he had been sent by royal ancestors to advise the *Indlovukazi* to select another candidate for the throne as 'Prince Makhosetive carried bad karma.'<sup>581</sup> Though Prince Mfanasibili was not convinced by the prophet's message, he observed that it was clear that *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe was aware of the contents and awaited feedback from the meeting in question. Such incidents lent credence to Mfanasibili's concerns about the motivations of *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe and Prince Gabheni. Having considered the evidence at hand, Prince Mfanasibili concluded that Prince Gabheni had thrown his support behind those who had no desire to see Prince Makhosetive on the throne.<sup>582</sup>

Some historians have maintained that the events of 1983-1994 were motivated by the personal greed and avarice of the key players.<sup>583</sup> Mfanasibili's response to such claims was 'Absolute

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<sup>577</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 11 August 2008.

<sup>578</sup> Prince Mfanasibili believed that the elite unit received support from the British High Commissioner, Desmond Kerr. Mfanasibili claimed that the *Liqoqo* subsequently asked Kerr to leave the country. Kerr's departure was announced in *The Times of Swaziland*, 12 April 1983, p 16.

<sup>579</sup> Mfanasibili's claims in this regard have not been substantiated or independently verified. Hence they have to be viewed purely as allegations.

<sup>580</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>581</sup> Makhubu, 'Prince Mfanasibili', p 105. See also *The Times of Swaziland*, 11 Jan 2009, p 19 in which Prince Mfanasibili writes a weekly column.

<sup>582</sup> Prince Mfanasibili discusses his suspicions relating to Prince Gabheni in Makhubu, 'Prince Mfanasibili', pp 104-106.

<sup>583</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 51.

nonsense!’<sup>584</sup> One PUDEMO activist sought to differ and summed up the motivations of the *Liqoqo* members as personal ambition and greed under the guise of tradition. ‘Tradition was used to back up misbehaviour.’<sup>585</sup> Mayoyo Dlamini echoed such sentiments and argued that ‘culture must not be used for selfish interests.’<sup>586</sup> Richard Levin, Robert Davies, Dan O’Meara and Siphon Dlamini believed that the problems of the post- Sobhuza years were rooted in a power scramble by factions and individuals.<sup>587</sup> Yet one has to question what Prince Mfanasibili and his colleagues had to gain. Prince Mfanasibili had a long and distinguished career in politics having become a member of the Swaziland National Council at the age of twenty-three<sup>588</sup> and a Cabinet Minister at the age of twenty-eight. During his political career he was a member of the *Imbokodvo* National Movement; he also served as Minister of Local Administration and Minister of Commerce and Cooperatives. Sobhuza II appointed him to the Board of Ubombo Ranches, the Main Committee of *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* and the Swaziland Law Revision and Development Commission. In the early 1980s he was elected President of the Swaziland National Football Association and the Chairman of The Swaziland Commercial Amadoda (organisation that controls and regulates public transport in Swaziland). King Sobhuza also appointed him Chairman of the Civil Service Board in 1981.<sup>589</sup>

One could argue that Prince Mfanasibili had ample opportunity to enrich himself during his lengthy career in public service. Yet detractors counter such speculation arguing that he became greedy for supreme power and influence. Bheki Makhubu, for example, noted that after the appointment of Prince Bhekimpi, Prince Mfanasibili became the most powerful person in the country.<sup>590</sup> Such assertions appear to hold weight when one takes the customs scandal and the double payment of *Liqoqo* members into account. He was even dubbed ‘the newsmaker of the 1980s’.<sup>591</sup> Mfanasibili steadfastly disputed such assertions claiming that Prince Sozisa and the *Liqoqo* approached him to take over the vacant Prime Minister’s post after Prince Mabandla’s departure. In his words he declined the appointment saying: ‘Let us appoint someone else and I

<sup>584</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>585</sup> Interview with Mario Masuku, Mbabane, 14 August 2007. See also Macmillan, ‘Swaziland: Decolonisation and the Triumph of Tradition’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 4, 1985, p 666.

<sup>586</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 9 August 2009, p 18.

<sup>587</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 51. See also Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, pp 146-148.

<sup>588</sup> Schoeman, ‘Swaziland: The Monarchy at Work’, *Africa Insight*, Vol 16, No 3, 1986, p 38.

<sup>589</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>590</sup> Makhubu, ‘Prince Mfanasibili’, p 150.

<sup>591</sup> *The Times of Swaziland*, 15 March 1988, p 8.

will watch to see who the real enemy is.’<sup>592</sup> He ended saying: ‘No one got medals for stopping me from taking power!’<sup>593</sup>

The disputes of the *Liqoqo* era have been presented as a power struggle within the ruling elite.<sup>594</sup> In the words of Parks Mangena: ‘The fight was between themselves.’<sup>595</sup> *Tibiyo Taka Ngwane* was at the nexus of the feud. The establishment and expansion of *Tibiyo*’s activities over the years had ‘served as the principal vehicle for capital accumulation by elements within the Swazi governing royalist alliance’ in the period since independence.<sup>596</sup> *Liqoqo* members were among those who allied themselves with *Tibiyo* and established close links with South African business which had managed to replace British investment and dominate the Swazi economy.<sup>597</sup>

John Daniel argued that *Tibiyo* had enabled Swazi royalty to transform itself into the embryo of a national bourgeoisie.<sup>598</sup> Over the years *Tibiyo*’s activities ensured that Swaziland became a capitalist state that enabled the royal family not only to finance itself but to entrench royal hegemony. In August 1984, *Tibiyo* was characterised as ‘a giant unsurpassed by any other’.<sup>599</sup> Opponents of the ruling elite favoured a reduction of *Tibiyo*’s monopoly and demanded greater transparency. The *Liqoqo*’s success in removing Prince Mabandla and *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe opened the way for *Tibiyo* to gain and consolidate control over state institutions including parliament and cabinet.<sup>600</sup>

Sishayi Nxumalo, the Managing Director of *Tibiyo* was one of the main characters in the power struggle surrounding *Tibiyo*. In some circles it was believed that Sobhuza II established *Tibiyo* upon the advice of Sishayi Nxumalo. The latter is credited with solidifying *Tibiyo*, although he also accrued personal wealth and power in the process. Under Nxumalo’s leadership *Tibiyo* established links between Swazi royalty and foreign capital, initially British then South

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<sup>592</sup> Makhubu, ‘Prince Mfanasibili’, p 117.

<sup>593</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Mbabane, 11 August 2008.

<sup>594</sup> Davies *et al.*, *The Kingdom of Swaziland*, p 51.

<sup>595</sup> Interview with Parks Mangena, Mbabane, 29 July 2008.

<sup>596</sup> Centro de Estudos Africanos, ‘Continuing Political Infighting in Swaziland’, p 2.

<sup>597</sup> Daniel, *Destabilisation: Swaziland and South Africa’s Regional Strategy*, p 9.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, p 10.

<sup>599</sup> *The Swazi Observer, Supplement*, 24 August 1984, p 12.

<sup>600</sup> Centro de Estudos Africanos, ‘Continuing Political Infighting in Swaziland’, p 2.

African.<sup>601</sup> Prince Mfanasibili regarded Sishayi Nxumalo with suspicion, maintaining that he exhibited limited commitment to preserving the monarchy.<sup>602</sup>

John Daniel and Johnson Vilane highlighted Nxumalo's humble origins. Unlike Prince Mfanasibili he did not have aristocratic blood or close ties within the royal family. During the early 1960s he was an active opponent of King Sobhuza II's political party, the *Imbokdvo* National Movement. Before independence Nxumalo formed the Swaziland Democratic Party and campaigned against the royal party. After independence he reassessed his position, joining and becoming an active member of the *Imbokdvo* National Movement. He was subsequently appointed Minister of Industry, Mines and Tourism. Joining the independence cabinet, he networked widely in the field of international finance, making contacts that would prove very beneficial later on.<sup>603</sup> Some would question Nxumalo's turn around.<sup>604</sup> Was it possible that an anti-royalist would undergo such a radical metamorphosis switching from opposition politics to 'developing a vehicle for royalist comprador accumulation?'<sup>605</sup> One cannot deny that Nxumalo used *Tibiyo* to advance his career. The question that may have bothered Prince Mfanasibili was whether Nxumalo would utilise *Tibiyo* and its resources to advance his own political agenda. Nxumalo's support of Prince Gabheni and *Indlovukazi* Dzeliwe<sup>606</sup> further exacerbated the situation. Evidently he posed a threat that needed to be neutralised.

After the 1983 elections Nxumalo had been appointed Minister of Finance, without relinquishing his post at *Tibiyo*. Nxumalo embraced his new appointment. It is believed that he used his new position to secure a loan from the African Development Bank.<sup>607</sup> Prior to that government had refused to authorise such loans as *Tibiyo* was an independent organisation free of government control. One respondent noted: 'Nxumalo knew how to play his cards. He was not going to stand

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<sup>601</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 59.

<sup>602</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>603</sup> Booth, *Historical Dictionary of Swaziland*, pp 228-231.

<sup>604</sup> Prince Mfanasibili was deeply suspicious of Nxumalo's move alleging that Nxumalo was one of the conspirators who did not want Prince Makhosetive crowned king. This was discussed during an interview with Prince Mfanasibili in Manzini on 4 July 2008.

<sup>605</sup> Daniel & Vilane, 'Swaziland: Political Crisis, Regional Dilemma', *Review of African Political Economy*, No 35, 1986, p 59

<sup>606</sup> Booth pointed out that the period between Sobhuza's death and the installation of King Mswati 111 was a politically volatile and dangerous time for Nxumalo. See Booth, *Historical Dictionary of Swaziland*, p 230.

<sup>607</sup> This was achieved by declaring that *Tibiyo* was a national development agency. See Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 159.

for the *Liqoqo*'s games.<sup>608</sup> Nxumalo's reign at *Tibiyo* came to an abrupt end in February 1984 when 'he was chopped'<sup>609</sup> and replaced by Polycarp Dlamini, the former Minister of Justice.<sup>610</sup> This move rankled Nxumalo and led to a show down with Prince Mfanasibili.

Nxumalo resented Prince Mfanasibili and blamed him for his removal from his seat of power in *Tibiyo*. Yet 'he was not afraid to take on *Liqoqo* members.'<sup>611</sup> The feud between the two men culminated in a series of corruption allegations that would prove to be the final straw for the Swazi public. Both parties curried public approval with revelations of large-scale fraud within the Swaziland Chemical Industries and the Customs Union in addition to a *coup* plot where Nxumalo implicated Prince Sozisa, the Authorised Person. The publicity did neither party any favours, revealing a litany of transgressions including fraud, dishonesty and treason. Matters degenerated as both parties sought vindication. *Liqoqo* attempts to sidestep legal action incurred public fury leading to the incarceration of Nxumalo as well as the police and army chiefs. The saga came full circle as Nxumalo and his co-accused were released in mid 1985, just as Prince Mfanasibili's faction was arrested and placed on trial. Nxumalo survived the *Liqoqo*, proved his resilience and continued to play a prominent role in Swazi politics rising to the post of Deputy Prime Minister by the mid-1990s.<sup>612</sup>

Regional politics also proved to be a source of concern for the Swazi authorities. Alternative political ideologies emerging in the region were regarded as a challenge to the traditionalist mould established by King Sobhuza II and perpetuated by the *Liqoqo*. ANC ideologies were no exception as they stood in stark contrast to the archaic Swazi system. Likewise Mozambican independence and the proximity of its socialist ideology also became a source of serious concern for Swazi authorities.<sup>613</sup> The anxiety of the Swazi leadership dovetailed with the concerns of the National Party government in South Africa which wanted to forestall the emergence of a Black

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<sup>608</sup> Interview with anonymous respondent, Mbabane, 31 July 2008.

<sup>609</sup> Interview with Prince Mfanasibili, Manzini, 4 July 2008.

<sup>610</sup> Polycarp Dlamini had close ties with *Liqoqo* members having introduced them and worked with them after the death of Sobhuza II. He was also at the center of suggestions that he had substituted Sobhuza's candidates with his own.

<sup>611</sup> Interview with anonymous respondent, Mbabane, 31 July 2008.

<sup>612</sup> Booth, *The Historical Dictionary of Swaziland*, p 230.

<sup>613</sup> J Crush, 'The Parameters of Independence in Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Affairs*, January 1979, p 62.

Nationalist power on its door step.<sup>614</sup> Forster and Nsibande believed that the alliance highlighted the similarities in that both power groups were afraid of being swept out of power by forces perceived to uphold a world view diametrically opposed to their own.<sup>615</sup> Such fears were not limited to the *Liqoqo* but also surfaced during King Sobhuza II's reign. Almon Mbingo recalled how the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Lesotho greatly perturbed the Swazi king. He concluded that Sobhuza II feared that similar developments would spell the end of the monarchy in Swaziland.<sup>616</sup>

Between 1986 and 1988 a series of events allowed the Swazi monarchy and those traditionalists who supported it to control and tame the *Liqoqo* rebels. The Council was restored to its traditional role. The first of these events was the announcement of Ntombi Thwala as Queen Mother and the installation of Prince Makhosetive as King Mswati III. He soon replaced Prime Minister Bhekimpi with Sotja Dlamini while systematic purging was ongoing. Obed Mfana Dlamini replaced Sotja Dlamini in July 1989.<sup>617</sup> Obed Dlamini traced royal connections to Prince Somcuba, a son of Sobhuza I. Somcuba fought his brother Mswati II for the throne.<sup>618</sup> In addition to his *royal* connections, a number of circumstances favoured Obed Dlamini in the late 1980s. He had worked in the banking sector. That experience would prove useful in promoting relations between private capital and royal capital at *Tibiyo* and *Tisuka*. Obed Dlamini was also widely respected in the labour movement for his contributions in founding The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions in 1984.<sup>619</sup> Thus Obed Dlamini had good potential to promote ties with private capital and to mobilise popular support amongst workers and related social groups. In 1988 some known subversives including Prince Mfanasibili and the Commissioner of Police, Majaji Simelane, were detained. It is not known why Prince Bhekimpi was not amongst the detainees. Mfanasibili was eventually charged and imprisoned for treason.<sup>620</sup> Thus the royalists had struck back, regained the monarchy and were firmly in control by 1989. It took them another eighteen years to fashion the *Liqoqo* in a new constitution.

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<sup>614</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p 6. See also Levin, *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens*, p 168.

<sup>615</sup> Forster & Nsibande, *Swaziland: Contemporary Social and Economic Issues*, p 6.

<sup>616</sup> Interview with Almon Mbingo, Mbabane, 7 May 2007.

<sup>617</sup> M Doro, 'Young Lion Faces Great Challenges', *Africa Contemporary Record 1989-1990*, Vol 22, pp 61.

<sup>618</sup> H Kuper, *A History of Swaziland*, pp 38, 44.

<sup>619</sup> M Doro, 'Young Lion Faces Great Challenges', *Africa Contemporary Record 1989-1990*, Vol 22, p 662.

<sup>620</sup> *Ibid.*, p 663.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion

The *Liqoqo* era constituted the core of this dissertation. It has acknowledged the fundamental transition of the *Liqoqo* as it emerged from relative obscurity during King Sobhuza II's reign to newly defined heights in 1982. While its speedy transformation may have raised eyebrows, it was nothing in comparison to the storms that erupted during its relatively brief tenure in the halls of power. What has become evident is that the basis for the aberration was firmly rooted in the social and political fabric of the country. The initial desire to hone in on the controversial era proved unwise in that it tackled the resulting problems in isolation and without the benefit of historical perspective. Tradition, culture, the monarchy and a people's acceptance and reverence of all that was 'Swazi' proved to be indisputable components that paved the way for the *Liqoqo*'s emergence, rise to supreme power and ultimately its downfall.

It would be foolhardy to explain the events of *Liqoqo* years in the absence of King Sobhuza II. He shrewdly sculpted a kingdom that was founded on tradition and rooted in the monarchy. While the content of such traditions evolved, the basis remained the same. Everything that was Swazi revolved around a monarchy that controlled and directed events in the country. Sobhuza II was the main architect and conductor of all things Swazi for over sixty years. To challenge any aspect of the system amounted to an affront. The system efficiently spewed out such detractors while nurturing loyalists to the cause. Sobhuza's death may have removed the main player but it did not undermine the strength of his creation.

The presence of opposition forces is a fact of life in politics, whether legal or stifled. One could argue that if the people of Swaziland had opposed the introduction of the 1973 Decree, and adhered to the provisions of the Independence Constitution, Sobhuza II would not have been able to manoeuvre himself into the all powerful position he occupied during the final decade of his reign. Possibly that would have forced him to embrace some form of democracy and led Swaziland down a different path both before and after his death.

Yet the fact remains that while *Liqoqo* members may have been motivated by diverse factors ranging from a desire to protect the monarchy, susceptibility to external political pressures and



internal royal manoeuvres, a thirst for power, privilege and wealth, the opportunities were created by Sobhuza II. Sometimes it is easy to fall into the trap of apportioning blame to those nearest the crises while absolving those who created the conditions in the first place. During Sobhuza II's reign it was commonplace to say that 'big changes would not occur in his lifetime but after his death anything might happen.'<sup>621</sup> Sobhuza II and history disproved the first half of the assertion. One could argue that the second half bore fruit beyond the wildest dreams of many Swazis. Yet Sobhuza's well planned and executed legacy has endured beyond the man himself enabling his brand of traditionalism to reign supreme into the twenty-first century.

While this dissertation focused on King Sobhuza II and the role his reign played in *Liqoqo* crises after his death, it also opened up further areas of study. The turbulent *Liqoqo* era may be etched on the minds of those who were at its epicenter during the 1980s yet the aftershocks still reverberate in Swaziland to this day. The seeds of discontent that had been sown during the *Liqoqo* years sprouted and led to unparalleled civic protest during the 1990s. The resurgence of trade unions and opposition groups along with increasingly vocal demands for democracy and a constitutional review have tested the mettle and resolve of the monarchy. Having weathered numerous tests at the end of the twentieth century and the dawn of a new century, the monarchy's reaction appears to suggest that while new brooms may raise old dust,<sup>622</sup> cosmetic changes no longer satisfy an increasingly demanding and dissatisfied populace. Undoubtedly King Mswati III's Swaziland will provide fruitful and fascinating questions for historians, anthropologists and social scientists for the foreseeable future.

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<sup>621</sup> J Marvin, 'King Sobhuza II of Swaziland', *Transition*, No 47, 1975, p 96.

<sup>622</sup> C Legum, 'New Broom in the Palace Raises Old Dust', *Africa Contemporary Record, 1987-1988*, Vol 20 p 811.

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## Swazi Royal Lineage Since 1815

<u>King</u>	<u>Reign</u>
Sobhuza I	1815-1836
Mswati II	1840-1868
Mbandzeni	1875-1889
Bhunu	1894-1899
Sobhuza II	1921-1982
Mswati III	1986 to date

Source: The Legacy of Sobhuza II, *Africa Insight*, Vol 14, No 1, 1984.

# THE 1968 CONSTITUTION OF SWAZILAND

protected state of Swaziland under section 128 of the former Constitution and any reference in this Chapter to a citizen by naturalisation shall include a reference to a citizen by naturalisation shall include a reference to any person who is a citizen by virtue of section 20 and acquired citizenship of the former protected state of Swaziland under section 129 of the former Constitution.

(3) For the purposes of this Chapter, a person born aboard a registered aircraft, or aboard an unregistered aircraft of the Government of any country, shall be deemed to have been born in the place in which the aircraft was registered or, as the case may be, in that country.

(4) Any reference in this Chapter to the national status or domicile of the father of a person at the time of that person's birth shall, in relation to a person born after the death of his father, be construed as a reference to the national status or domicile of the father at the time of the father's death; and where that death occurred before 6th September 1968 such a reference to the national status shall be construed as a reference to the national status the father of a person would have had if he had died on 6th September 1968.

#### CHAPTER IV

#### THE MONARCHY

##### *The office of King.*

28. (1) The King of Swaziland is the Head of State.

(2) The King shall do all things that belong to his office in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and of all other laws for the time being in force.

##### *Succession to the throne of Swaziland.*

29. When an announcement is made to the Swazi nation in accordance with Swazi law and custom that the office of King is vacant by reason of the death of the holder thereof or any other cause, such person as, in accordance with Swazi law and custom, is declared to be King shall become King.

##### *The Regent.*

30. (1) Until the King has been installed, that is to say, until he has publicly assumed the functions and responsibilities of King in accordance with Swazi law and custom, or during any period when he is by reason of absence from Swaziland or any other cause unable to perform the functions of his office, those functions shall be performed, save as otherwise provided in this section, by the Ndlovukazi acting as Regent.

(2) If the Regent is unable for any reason to perform the functions of such office, a person shall be authorised, in accordance with Swazi law and custom (hereinafter referred to as "an authorised person"), to perform on her behalf her functions under subsection (1).

##### *The King's emoluments and Civil List.*

31. (1) The King shall be paid such emoluments and shall have such Civil List as may be prescribed by Act of Parliament.

(2) The emoluments of the King and his Civil List shall be a charge on and paid out of the Consolidated Fund and shall not be reduced during the King's continuance in office.

##### *Remuneration of Regent and of authorised person.*

32. (1) The Ndlovukazi shall, in respect of any period during which she acts as Regent, be entitled to such remuneration as may be prescribed by Act of Parliament.



(2) An authorised person shall be entitled to such remuneration as may be prescribed by Act of Parliament.

(3) Any remuneration prescribed under subsection (1) or (2) shall be a charge on and paid out of the Consolidated Fund and shall not be reduced during the Ndlovukazi's continuance in office as Regent or, as the case may be, during the period in which an authorised person is acting under section 30(2).

*Immunities of King and Ndlovukazi.*

33. (1) The King shall be entitled to immunity from taxation in respect of his emoluments and Civil List, all income accruing to him in his private capacity and all property owned by him in his private capacity.

(2) The Ndlovukazi shall be entitled to immunity from taxation in respect of her emoluments or any income accruing to her in her private capacity and all property owned by her in her private capacity.

(3) The King and the Ndlovukazi shall be entitled to immunity from compulsory acquisition of all property owned by them in their private capacities.

*Immunities of authorised person.*

34. An authorised person shall be entitled to immunity from taxation in respect of any remuneration to which he is entitled under section 32, and all income accruing to him in his private capacity during any period in which he is performing on behalf of the Ndlovukazi her functions as Regent, and, in so far as the taxation relates to the period concerned, all property owned by him in his private capacity.

*Protection of King and of Ndlovukazi in respect of legal proceedings.*

35. (1) Whilst any person holds the office of King, he shall be entitled to immunity from suit and legal process in any civil cause in respect of all things done or omitted to be done by him in his private capacity, to immunity from criminal proceedings in respect of all things done or omitted to be done by him either in his official capacity or in his private capacity and to immunity from being summoned to appear as a witness in any civil or criminal proceeding.

(2) The Ndlovukazi shall be entitled to immunity from suit and legal process in any civil cause in respect of all things done or omitted to be done by her in her private capacity, to immunity from criminal proceedings in respect of all things done or omitted to be done by her in her official capacity or in her private capacity and to immunity from being summoned to appear as a witness in any civil or criminal proceedings.

(3) Where provision is made by law limiting the time within which proceedings of any description may be brought against any person, the period during which that person has held the office of King or Ndlovukazi shall not be taken into account in calculating the period of time prescribed by that law which determines whether any such proceedings as are mentioned in subsection (1) or (2), as the case may be, may be brought against that person.

(4) For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that any right, interest or function vested in the Nggwenyama in relation to Swazi nation land or minerals or mineral oils in Swaziland is so vested in him, in his capacity as Nggwenyama, and not as King or in his private capacity.

*Oaths by King, etc.*

36. (1) The King shall, at his installation as King, take and subscribe the oath for the due execution of his office which is set out in Schedule 2.

(2) The Ndllovukazi shall, before commencing to act as Regent, take and subscribe the oath of allegiance and the oath for the due execution of the office of Regent which are set out in Schedule 2.

(3) The oaths referred to in the foregoing provisions of this section shall be administered to the King or the Ndllovukazi by the Chief Justice (or, in the absence of the Chief Justice, by a judge of the Court of Appeal or some other judge of the High Court) in the presence of such of the judges of the Court of Appeal, such of the other judges, if any, of the High Court and such Ministers of the Government as are able to attend.

## CHAPTER V

### PARLIAMENT

#### PART I

##### *Composition of Parliament*

##### *Establishment of Parliament.*

37. There shall be a Parliament which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Assembly.

##### *Composition of Senate.*

38. (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Senate shall consist of twelve members (in this Constitution referred to as "Senators") who shall be elected or appointed in accordance with this section.

(2) If any person who is not a Senator is elected to be President or Deputy President of the Senate he shall, by virtue of holding the office of President or Deputy President, as the case may be, be a member of the Senate in addition to the twelve members aforesaid.

(3) Six Senators shall be elected by the members of the House of Assembly entitled to vote in the manner prescribed by section 39.

(4) The remaining six Senators shall be appointed by the King, acting in his discretion, in accordance with subsection (5).

(5) The Senators appointed by the King shall be persons who, in the opinion of the King after consultation with such bodies as he may consider appropriate, —

(a) are able by reason of their special knowledge or practical experience to represent economic, social or cultural interests not already adequately represented in Parliament; or

(b) are, by reason of their particular merit, able to contribute substantially to the good government of Swaziland.

(6) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the power of the King to appoint six Senators shall not be so exercised as to deny a majority in the Senate to the party or coalition of parties which is in the majority in the House of Assembly and, accordingly, that power shall be exercised after the election of the Senators referred to in subsection (3).

##### *Method of election of Senators.*

39. The Senators elected by the members of the House of Assembly shall be elected, in such manner as may be prescribed by or under any law, in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

##### *Composition of House of Assembly.*

40. (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, the House of Assembly shall consist of twenty-four elected members, six nominated members and the Attorney-General.



*Attorney-General.*

91. (1) There shall be an Attorney-General whose office shall be a public office.

(2) The Attorney-General shall be the principal legal adviser to the Government of Swaziland and, for the due performance of his duties, entitled to be provided with all papers which are available to the members of the Cabinet or any committee thereof; and he shall have such other functions as may be conferred on him by this Constitution or any other law.

(3) The Attorney-General may, whenever requested so to do advise the King on any matter of law relating to any function vested in the King by this Constitution or any other law.

(4) The Attorney-General shall have power in any case in which he considers it desirable so to do —

- (a) to institute and undertake criminal proceedings against any person before any court (other than a court-martial) in respect of any offence alleged to have been committed by that person;
- (b) to take over and continue any such criminal proceedings that have been instituted or undertaken by any other person or authority; and
- (c) to discontinue at any stage before judgment is delivered any such criminal proceedings instituted or undertaken by himself or any other person or authority.

(5) The powers conferred on the Attorney-General by subsection (4)(b) and (c) of this section shall be vested in him to the exclusion of any other person or authority:

Provided that, where any other person or authority has instituted criminal proceedings, nothing in this subsection shall prevent the withdrawal of those proceedings by or at the instance of that person or authority and with the leave of the court.

(6) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (5) the powers of the Attorney-General under subsection (4) may be exercised by him in person or by officers subordinate to him acting in accordance with his general or special instructions.

(7) For the purposes of this section, any appeal from any judgment in any criminal proceedings before any court, or any case stated or question of law reserved for the purpose of any such proceedings, to any other court shall be deemed to be part of those proceedings:

Provided that the power conferred on the Attorney-General by subsection (4)(c) shall not be exercised in relation to any appeal by a person convicted in any criminal proceedings or to any case stated or question of law reserved at the instance of such a person.

(8) In the exercise of the functions vested in him by subsection (4), the Attorney-General shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority.

*Prerogative of Mercy.*

92. (1) The King may —

- (a) grant to any person convicted of any offence under the law of Swaziland a pardon, either free or subject to lawful conditions;
- (b) grant to any person a respite, either indefinite or for a specified period, of the execution of any punishment imposed on that person for such an offence;
- (c) substitute a less severe form of punishment for any punishment imposed on any person for such an offence; and
- (d) remit the whole or part of any punishment imposed on any person for such an offence or of any penalty or forfeiture otherwise due to the Government on account of such an offence.

- (2) There shall be a Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy which shall consist of—
- (a) three Ministers appointed by the King, acting in his discretion, one of whom shall be appointed by the King, acting as aforesaid, to be the chairman; and
  - (b) the Attorney-General.
- (3) An appointed member of the Committee shall vacate his seat on the Committee—
- (a) at the expiration of the term of his appointment (if any) specified in the instrument of his appointment;
  - (b) if his appointment is revoked by the King, acting in his discretion; or
  - (c) if he ceases to be a Minister.
- (4) In the exercise of the powers conferred upon him by subsection (1), the King shall act in accordance with the advice of the Committee.
- (5) The Committee shall not be summoned except by the authority of the chairman.
- (6) The chairman or, in his absence, such member of the Committee as the chairman may designate in that behalf shall preside at meetings of the Committee.
- (7) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Committee shall regulate its own procedure.
- (8) The Committee may act notwithstanding any vacancy in its membership or the absence of any member, and the validity of the transaction of business by the Committee shall not be affected by the fact that some person who was not entitled to do so took part in the proceedings.
- (9) Whenever any person has been sentenced to death by any court in Swaziland other than a court-martial, the chairman shall cause a report on the case by the judge who presided at the trial (or, if a report cannot be obtained from that judge, a report on the case by the Chief Justice), together with such other information derived from the record of the case or elsewhere as he may require, to be taken into consideration at meeting of the Committee so that the Committee may advise the King whether or not to exercise his powers under subsection (1) in that case.
- (10) The provisions of this section shall not apply in relation to any conviction by a court established under a law of a country other than Swaziland that has jurisdiction in Swaziland in pursuance of arrangements made between the Government of Swaziland and another Government or an international organisation relating to the presence in Swaziland of members of the armed forces of that other country or in relation to any punishment imposed in respect of any such conviction or any penalty or forfeiture resulting from any such conviction.
- (11) Nothing in this section shall be construed as precluding an Act of Parliament from making provision of general application under which any sentence of imprisonment shall be reduced if such conditions (being conditions relating to good behaviour by the person on whom the sentence was imposed whilst serving that sentence) as are prescribed are fulfilled.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LAND AND MINERALS

#### *Power to dispose of Government land.*

93. Subject to the provisions of any law for the time being in force in Swaziland, the Government may exercise all rights of ownership over Government land accorded by law including the power to make grants, leases or other dispositions, subject to such rights and interests and to such conditions as the Government may think fit.

*Swazi nation land.*

94. (1) All land which is vested in the Nggwenyama in trust for the Swazi nation shall continue so to vest subject to the provisions of this Constitution and to subsisting rights and interests which before 6th September 1968 have been granted to, or recognised as vested in, any person.

(2) The Nggwenyama in Libandla may exercise all rights of ownership over such land including the power to make grants, leases or other dispositions, subject to such rights and interests and to such conditions as he may think fit:

Provided that no right to mortgage such land shall be exercisable save and except by a mortgage registered against land acquired by purchase or grant.

(3) The rights and the powers conferred upon the Nggwenyama in Libandla by this section shall be subject to the provisions of any law for the time being in force in Swaziland but no such law shall operate to vest those rights or that power in any other person or authority.

(4) For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that Swazi nation land is subject to compulsory acquisition for public purposes under the law for the time being in force relating to the compulsory acquisition of land for such purposes.

*Minerals and mineral oils.*

95. (1) All minerals and mineral oils in, under or upon any land in Swaziland shall continue to vest in the Nggwenyama in trust for the Swazi nation, subject to any subsisting rights and interests which, before 6th September 1968, by or under any Order of Her Britannic Majesty in Council or any other law in force in Swaziland, or otherwise, have been granted to or recognised as vested in any other person.

(2) The Nggwenyama may make grants, leases or other dispositions conferring rights or interests in respect of minerals or mineral oils in Swaziland, but the Nggwenyama shall not exercise any such power except after consultation with the Minerals Committee established by subsection (3).

(3) There shall be a Minerals Committee which shall consist of not less than four nor more than six persons who shall be appointed by the Nggwenyama in Libandla.

(4) Such member of the Minerals Committee as the Nggwenyama, acting in his discretion, may designate in that behalf shall be chairman of the committee.

(5) The Minerals Committee shall not be summoned except upon the authority of the Nggwenyama.

(6) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Minerals Committee may regulate its own procedure.

*Interpretation.*

96. In this Chapter "Nggwenyama in Libandla" means the Nggwenyama acting in accordance with the advice of his Libandla.

CHAPTER IX  
THE JUDICATURE

PART I

*The High Court*

*Establishment of High Court.*

97. (1) There shall be a High Court for Swaziland and subject to the provisions of this Chapter, the judges of the High Court shall be the Chief Justice and such number of puisne judges as may be prescribed.



*Remuneration of certain officers.*

131. (1) There shall be paid to the holders of the offices to which this section applies such salaries and such allowances as may be prescribed.

(2) The salaries and any allowances payable to the holders of the offices to which this section applies shall be a charge on and paid out of the Consolidated Fund.

(3) The salary payable to the holder of any office to which this section applies and his terms of office, other than allowances which, under the law for the time being in force relating to pensions, are not taken into account in computing pensions, shall not be altered to his disadvantage after his appointment.

(4) Where a person's salary or terms of office depend upon his option, the salary or terms for which he opts shall, for the purposes of subsection (3), be deemed to be more advantageous to him than any others for which he might have opted.

(5) This section applies to the offices of judge of the High Court, judge of the Court of Appeal, appointed member of the Judicial Service Commission, member of the Public Service Commission, Attorney-General and Director of Audit.

*Public debt.*

132. (1) All debt charges for which Swaziland is liable shall be a charge on and paid out of the Consolidated Fund.

(2) For the purposes of this section debt charges include interest, sinking fund charges, the repayment or amortisation of debt and all expenditure in connection with the raising of loans on the security of the revenues of Swaziland or the Consolidated Fund and on the service and redemption of debt thereby created.

*Director of Audit.*

133. (1) There shall be a Director of Audit, whose office shall be a public office.

(2) The public accounts of Swaziland and of all officers, courts and authorities of the Government shall be audited and reported on by the Director of Audit and for that purpose the Director of Audit or any person authorised by him in that behalf shall have access to all books, records, reports and other documents relating to those accounts:

Provided that, if it is so provided by any law in the case of any body corporate directly established by law, the accounts of that body corporate shall be audited and reported on by such person as may be specified by or under that law.

(3) The Director of Audit shall submit his reports to the Minister responsible for finance, who shall cause them to be laid before both chambers.

(4) In the exercise of his functions under this Constitution the Director of Audit shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority.

## CHAPTER XII

## ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

*Mode of altering this Constitution.*

134. (1) This Constitution shall not be altered except in the following manner —

(a) the alteration shall be initiated by the introduction of a bill, expressly providing that the Constitution shall be so altered, in a joint sitting of the Senate and the House of Assembly summoned for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 1;

(b) after the bill has been introduced in a joint sitting it shall be published in the *Gazette* and no further proceedings shall be taken on the bill in Parliament until the prescribed period has elapsed;

- (c) if, after the prescribed period has elapsed, the bill is passed at a joint sitting of the Senate and the House of Assembly it shall, subject to paragraphs (e) and (f), be submitted to the King for assent;
- (d) for the purpose of paragraph (c), if a bill contains provision for altering any of the specially entrenched provisions or entrenched provisions of this Constitution, the bill shall not be passed at a joint sitting of the Senate and the House of Assembly unless it is supported on its final reading by the votes of not less than three-quarters of all the members of both those chambers;
- (e) if the bill as passed at the joint sitting contains provision for altering any of the specially entrenched provisions of this Constitution that provision shall be submitted to a referendum, held in such manner as may be prescribed by Act of Parliament, at which every person who at the time when the referendum is held would be entitled to vote at an election of elected members of the House of Assembly but no other person is entitled to vote; and unless that provision is approved on the referendum by not less than two-thirds of all the votes validly cast on that referendum the bill shall not be submitted to the King for assent;
- (f) when a bill to alter this Constitution is submitted to the King for assent it shall be accompanied by a certificate under the hand of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Assembly that the provisions of paragraphs (a), (b) and (d) have been complied with and when a referendum has been held by a certificate of the officer in charge of the referendum stating the result of the referendum.
- (2) A bill to alter this Constitution shall lapse —
- (a) if it is not submitted for assent at the date of the conclusion of the next session of Parliament after the session in which it is introduced;
- (b) if on any reading of the bill in a joint sitting it is not passed; or
- (c) if, having been submitted to a referendum in accordance with subsection (1)(e), it is not approved in the manner provided by that subsection.
- (3) In this section —
- (a) references to any of the provisions of this Constitution include references to any law that amends or replaces that provision; and
- (b) references to the alteration of this Constitution or, as the case may be, to altering any provision include references —
- (i) to revoking it with or without re-enactment thereof or the making of different provision in lieu thereof;
- (ii) to modifying it, whether by omitting or amending any of its provisions or inserting additional provisions in it or otherwise; or
- (iii) to suspending its operation for any period or terminating any such suspension.
- (4) In this section —
- “entrenched provisions”, means any of the provisions of this Constitution specified in Part II of Schedule 4;
- “prescribed period”, in relation to any bill containing provision to alter the entrenched



*Swazi nation land.*

94. (1) All land which is vested in the Nggwenyama in trust for the Swazi nation shall continue so to vest subject to the provisions of this Constitution and to subsisting rights and interests which before 6th September 1968 have been granted to, or recognised as vested in, any person.

(2) The Nggwenyama in Libandla may exercise all rights of ownership over such land including the power to make grants, leases or other dispositions, subject to such rights and interests and to such conditions as he may think fit:

Provided that no right to mortgage such land shall be exercisable save and except by a mortgage registered against land acquired by purchase or grant.

(3) The rights and the powers conferred upon the Nggwenyama in Libandla by this section shall be subject to the provisions of any law for the time being in force in Swaziland but no such law shall operate to vest those rights or that power in any other person or authority.

(4) For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that Swazi nation land is subject to compulsory acquisition for public purposes under the law for the time being in force relating to the compulsory acquisition of land for such purposes.

*Minerals and mineral oils.*

95. (1) All minerals and mineral oils in, under or upon any land in Swaziland shall continue to vest in the Nggwenyama in trust for the Swazi nation, subject to any subsisting rights and interests which, before 6th September 1968, by or under any Order of Her Britannic Majesty in Council or any other law in force in Swaziland, or otherwise, have been granted to or recognised as vested in any other person.

(2) The Nggwenyama may make grants, leases or other dispositions conferring rights or interests in respect of minerals or mineral oils in Swaziland, but the Nggwenyama shall not exercise any such power except after consultation with the Minerals Committee established by subsection (3).

(3) There shall be a Minerals Committee which shall consist of not less than four nor more than six persons who shall be appointed by the Nggwenyama in Libandla.

(4) Such member of the Minerals Committee as the Nggwenyama, acting in his discretion, may designate in that behalf shall be chairman of the committee.

(5) The Minerals Committee shall not be summoned except upon the authority of the Nggwenyama.

(6) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Minerals Committee may regulate its own procedure.

*Interpretation.*

96. In this Chapter "Nggwenyama in Libandla" means the Nggwenyama acting in accordance with the advice of his Libandla.

## CHAPTER IX

## THE JUDICATURE

## PART I

*The High Court**Establishment of High Court.*

97. (1) There shall be a High Court for Swaziland and subject to the provisions of this Chapter, the judges of the High Court shall be the Chief Justice and such number of puisne judges as may be prescribed.



SWAZILAND  
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE  
EXTRAORDINARY

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VOL. XI]

MBABANE, Tuesday, April 17th., 1973.

[No. 578.

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PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY



PROCLAMATION BY HIS MAJESTY KING SOBHUZA II

For purposes of general information the full text of the King's Proclamation made before the Nation on the 12th April, 1973 is hereby published.

D. COHEN  
*Attorney-General.*

Mbabane,  
16th April, 1973.

PROCLAMATION

TO ALL MY SUBJECTS — CITIZENS OF SWAZILAND

1. WHEREAS the House of Assembly and the Senate have passed the resolutions which have just been read to us.
2. AND WHEREAS I have given grave consideration to the extremely serious situation which has now arisen in our country and have come to the following conclusions:
  - (a) that the Constitution has indeed failed to provide the machinery for good government and for the maintenance of peace and order;
  - (b) that the Constitution is indeed the cause of growing unrest, insecurity, dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in our country and an impediment to free and progressive development in all spheres of life;
  - (c) that 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 methods of political activity; increasingly this element engenders hostility, bitterness and unrest in our peaceful society;
  - (d) that there is no constitutional way of effecting the necessary amendments to the Constitution; the method prescribed by the constitution itself is wholly impracticable and will bring about that disorder which any constitution is meant to inhibit;
  - (e) that I and all my people heartily desire at long last, after a long constitutional struggle, to achieve full freedom and independence under a constitution

3. Now THEREFORE I, SOBHUZA II, King of Swaziland, hereby declare that, in collaboration with my Cabinet Ministers and supported by the whole nation, I have assumed supreme power in the Kingdom of Swaziland and that all Legislative, Executive and Judicial power is vested in myself and shall, for the meantime, be exercised in collaboration with a Council constituted by my Cabinet Ministers. I further declare that, to ensure the continued maintenance of peace, order and good government, my Armed Forces in conjunction with the Swaziland Royal Police have been posted to all strategic places and have taken charge of all government places and all public services. I further declare that I, in collaboration with my Cabinet Ministers, hereby decree that:—

- a. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland which commenced on the 6th September, 1968, is hereby repealed;
- b. All laws with the exception of the Constitution hereby repealed, shall continue to operate with full force and effect and shall be construed with such modifications, adaptations, qualifications and exceptions as may be necessary to bring them into conformity with this and ensuing decrees.

I will now call upon the Attorney-General, Mr. David Cohen, to read out further decrees designed to provide for the continuance of administration, essential services and normal life in our country.

THE KING IN COLLABORATION WITH HIS COUNCIL DECREES THAT:—

1. All Judges and other Judicial Officers, Government Officials, Public Servants, Members of the Police Force, the Prison Service and Armed Forces shall continue in office and shall be deemed to have been validly appointed. They shall carry out their duties and shall be entitled on the existing basis to their remuneration;
2. For a period of six months from date hereof, the King-in-Council may, whenever they deem it necessary in the public interest, order the detention of any person subject to any conditions they may impose for any period of time not exceeding sixty days in respect of any one order. Any person released after such detention may again be detained as often as it may be deemed necessary in the Public interest. No Court shall have power to enquire into or make any order in connection with any such detention;
3. Chapter IV of the repealed Constitution, with the exception of Sections 28, 31, 32, and 36, shall again come into force.
4. All persons who at the date hereof held office as Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister, Minister of State, Assistant Minister, Secretary to the Cabinet and Attorney-General in terms of Chapter VII of the repealed constitution shall continue in office at the discretion of the King. They shall continue to carry out their duties and functions (subject to such modifications as may be necessary as a result of this decree) and shall be responsible to the King;
5. The Attorney General shall again have the powers and duties vested in him in terms of Chapter VII Section 91(1), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) and (8) of the repealed Constitution and the provisions of Section 119, 120 and Section 100 of Chapter IX of the repealed Constitution shall again apply to the Office of Attorney General.
6. Save as hereinafter set out, Chapter VIII of the repealed Constitution shall again come into force.

- (b) The words "to the provisions of this Constitution and "shall be deleted from Section 94(1);
7. Parts 1 and 2 of Chapter IX and Sections 138, 139, 140 and 141 of Chapter XIII of the repealed Constitution shall again operate with full force and effect and shall be construed with such modifications, adaptations, qualifications and exceptions as may be necessary to bring them into conformity with this and ensuing decrees. The Judicial Service Commission is abolished and parts 1 and 2 of the said Chapter IX shall be construed as if there is no reference in them to the Judicial Service Commission;
  8. Chapter XI of the repealed Constitution shall again come into force and shall be construed with such modifications, adaptations, qualifications and exceptions as may be necessary to bring it into conformity with this and ensuing decrees. In particular any reference to the House of Assembly or both chambers or the procedures for enacting financial legislation shall be interpreted as references to the King-in-Council and/or decrees issued by the King as the context requires.
  9. Until further notice, all persons who have lost office as a result of the repeal of the Constitution, including all members of the Senate and the House of Assembly, shall be entitled to receive the emoluments which they would have received but for the repeal of the Constitution.
  10. Section 135 of the repealed Constitution shall again come into force subject, however, to the deletion of the introductory words "save as otherwise provided in this Constitution";
  11. All political parties and similar bodies that cultivate and bring about disturbances and ill-feelings within the Nations are hereby dissolved and prohibited.
  12. 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.
  13. 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.

Thus done and signed at Lobamba, this 12th day of April, 1973.

SOBHUZA II  
King of Swaziland.

The Government Printer, Mbabane.

THE REGIONAL COUNCILS ORDER, 1978

*Date of commencement: 12th October, 1978.*

*Date of Assent: 9th October, 1978.*

*A King's Order-in-Council to provide for the establishment of four Regional Councils in Swaziland and to prescribe their functions.*

*Short title.*

- I. This King's Order-in-Council may be cited as The Regional Councils Order, 1978.

*Interpretation.*

2. Unless the context otherwise requires —

“Administrator” means the Regional Administrator appointed under section 8;

“Districts” means the districts as set out in Schedule 1 to the General Administration Act, No. 11 of 1905, as amended from time to time under the provisions of section 6 of such Act;

“Electoral College” (Repealed K.O-I-C. 1/1992.)

“Inkhundla” means an Inkhundla established by and under an Order of the King;

“Minister” means the Minister determined by the King;

“Regional Council” means a Regional Council established under section 3.

*Establishment of Regional Councils.*

3. There is hereby established four Regional Councils, being one Regional Council in respect of each District.

*Composition of Regional Councils.*

4. (1) (Repealed K.O-I-C. 1/1992.)

- (2) (Repealed K.O-I-C. 1/1992.)

(3) In the event of a vacancy in a Regional Council caused by death, ill-health, resignation, or by any other reason, the Inkhundla concerned shall appoint a person to serve in his place.

(ISSUE 2)



(4) There shall be appointed to each Regional Council such officers and staff as the Minister may in consultation with each Regional Administrator decide upon, and such officers and staff shall be officers in the public service.

*Function of Regional Councils.*

5. (1) The duties and functions of Regional Councils shall be to —
- (a) co-ordinate national and economic activities at District level;
  - (b) implement national and government policies and projects at District and Tinkhundla level;
  - (c) through the Indvuna Yetinkhundla liaise with the Swazi National Council in all matters of policy affecting Swazi law and custom;
  - (d) report through the Indvuna Yetinkhundla to the Government and the Swazi National Council on all decisions arrived at by the Tinkhundla in their Districts;
  - (e) through the Indvuna Yetinkhundla keep the Government and the Swazi National Council informed of all major economic or political activities taking place within their Districts;
  - (f) initiate and identify priority projects and the needs of the people residing in their Districts in accordance with National developments plans;
  - (g) maintain close contact with the Indvuna Yetinkhundla, and to seek his advice on all matters affecting their District; and
  - (h) generally, do all such things as they may deem fit to uplift the economic, health and educational standards of the residents of their Districts and act so that peace and harmony might prevail throughout Swaziland.
- (2) The duties and functions of Regional Councils may be augmented from time to time by the Cabinet.

*Rules governing Regional Councils.*

6. The Minister shall in consultation with the Regional Administrators formulate such rules for the conduct of the affairs and meetings of Regional Councils as may be agreed upon by them:

Provided that it shall be the responsibility of each Regional Administrator to convene the first meeting of the Regional Council in his District by such means as may be agreed upon with the Minister.

*Remuneration of members of Regional Council.*

7. The remuneration of members of the Regional Councils and any allowances payable to them shall be separately appropriated as a charge on the Consolidated Fund.

*Regional Administrator.*

8. (1) The King, acting in consultation with the Prime Minister, shall appoint a Regional Administrator in respect of each Regional Council who shall have the same rights and privileges as any Deputy Minister but who shall operate under a Ministry to be determined by the King.

(2) The King may at any time remove an Administrator and appoint anyone else in his place.

(3) The Administrator shall preside at all meetings of the Regional Council to which he has been appointed and shall have a casting as well as a deliberative vote:

Provided that if the Administrator is unable to preside at any meeting of the Regional Council the Minister may appoint a member of the Regional Council to preside at such meeting.



KING'S PROCLAMATION NO. 1 OF 1981

WHEREAS the Establishment of the Parliament of Swaziland Order, 1978 empowers the King, *inter alia* to amend the Proclamation to the Nation of the 12th April, 1973:

AND WHEREAS the King in exercise of the powers vested in Him has deemed it necessary to amend the said Proclamation in order to give effect to the Tinkhundla system of government introduced by the Establishment of the Parliament of Swaziland Order, 1978 and the Regional Councils Order, 1978 and to make provision for other matters:

NOW THEREFORE, the King issues the following DECREE:

1. The executive authority of Swaziland shall continue to vest in the King as provided for in section 69 of the Establishment of the Parliament of Swaziland Order, 1978 and in all other laws.

2. The power to appoint the following and other persons shall continue to be exercised, and the tenure of office and other matters relating to such offices shall be, in accordance with the law and practice applicable thereto:

- (a) The Prime Minister;
- (b) Cabinet Ministers;
- (c) Deputy Ministers, Assistant Ministers and Ministers of State;
- (d) the Secretary to Cabinet and Principal Secretaries;
- (e) the Commander of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force;
- (f) the Commissioner of Police;
- (g) the Commissioner of Prisons;
- (h) the Chairman and other members of the Civil Service Board or other similar body;
- (i) Judges of the Court of Appeal and of the High Court;
- (j) the Attorney-General and Deputy Attorney-General;
- (k) the Director of Public Prosecutions;
- (l) Ambassadors, High Commissioners or principal representatives of Swaziland in other countries or on international organizations.

3. The King, as Commander-in-Chief, with the assistance of the Commander of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force, shall control and direct the Defence Force at all times and in accordance with law.

4. All land vested in the King by virtue of paragraph 6 of the Decree contained in the King's Proclamation to the Nation of the 12th April, 1973 shall continue to be so vested in accordance with that paragraph.

5. The King may, by Proclamation in the Gazette, declare a state of emergency in Swaziland and such state of emergency shall continue until the declaration thereof is revoked by the King.

(ISSUE 2)

6. (1) All matters regulated by Swazi law and custom which are set out in Schedule 3 to the repealed Constitution shall continue to be so regulated.

(2) The Swazi National Council, which shall consist of the Nggwenyama, the Ndlovukazi, Bantfwabenkhozi, Chiefs and all adult citizens, shall continue to exercise its functions of advising the Nggwenyama on all matters regulated by Swazi law and custom and shall exercise such functions either in Libandla or in Liqoqo, as the case may be, in accordance with Swazi law and custom.

7. Section 135 of the repealed Constitution (which makes provision for the Swazi National Council) shall continue to be of full force and effect as amended by the King's Proclamation of 12th April, 1973 or by any other law.

8. The establishment of a National Government based on the Tinkhundla system of government under the Regional Councils Order, 1978 and the declaration of Swaziland as a no-party State under the King's Proclamation of the 12th April, 1973 are hereby reaffirmed. The provisions of sections 11 and 12 of the King's Proclamation of the 12th April, 1973, shall not be applicable to the Tinkhundla which are hereby declared and recognised as centres for meetings of the nation.

9. (1) The Department of Establishments shall continue to be under the Prime Minister's Office and shall be responsible for the personnel management of the whole Civil Service and all similar functions relating to the Civil Service.

(2) The Principal Secretary of the Department of Establishments shall be the head of the Civil Service and shall also be the Director of Personnel Management.

10. (1) There shall continue in existence an independent Civil Service Board or similar body established by law and which shall be responsible for the recruitment and appointment to, and promotion and discipline of persons in, the civil service.

(2) The Board or such other body shall liaise with all the Ministers in respect of recruitment policy but will be completely independent of and not subject to any ministerial or political influence in the selection of persons for appointment or promotion or in respect of its disciplinary functions.

11. General Orders and any other regulations governing the entire Civil Service shall be revised, updated and brought into conformity with prevailing circumstances in the Kingdom as soon as possible.

12. This Decree shall be read and construed as one with the King's Proclamation to the Nation of the 12th April, 1973 and shall be deemed to have come into force on the 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1979. Insofar as there may be any conflict or difference between this Decree and the said King's Proclamation to the Nation, the provisions of this Decree shall prevail.

DONE UNDER MY HAND AT LOZITHEHLEZI THIS 9<sup>th</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER, 1981.

SOBHUZA II  
*King of Swaziland*

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## KING'S DECREE NO. 1 OF 1982

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PARLIAMENT OF SWAZILAND ORDER,  
1978

(Order No. 23 of 1978)

## THE KING'S PROCLAMATION (AMENDMENT) DECREE, 1982

(Under Section 80)

In exercise of the powers conferred upon me by section 80 of the Establishment of the Parliament of Swaziland Order, 1978, I, SOBHUZA II, KING OF SWAZILAND, hereby make the following Decree:—

*Short title.*

1. This Decree may be cited as the King's Proclamation (Amendment) Decree, 1982 and shall be read as one with the King's Proclamation to the Nation of the 12th April, 1973 (hereinafter referred to as "the Proclamation").

*Amendment of paragraph 3 of Decree.*

2. Paragraph 3 of the Decree contained in the Proclamation is replaced with the following—

"3. Chapter IV of the repealed Constitution, with the exception of section 36, shall continue to have force subject to the following—

(a) Subsection (2) of section 28 shall be replaced with the following—

"(2) The King may do all things that belong to his office in accordance with Swazi law and custom and any other law".

(b) Section 28 of the repealed Constitution as amended in subsection (2) by this Decree and section 31 of the said Constitution shall be deemed to have remained in force with effect from the 12th April, 1973.

(c) Section 30 of the repealed Constitution is amended by replacing subsection (2) with the following—

"(2) The King or, in the absence of a King, the Likoqo may, at any time appoint, in accordance with Swazi law and custom, a person (hereinafter referred to as "an authorised person") to perform on behalf of the Regent the functions of her office if the Regent is, for any reason, unable to perform those functions."

*Amendment of paragraph 7 of Decree.*

3. (1) Paragraph 7 of the Decree contained in the Proclamation is amended—



- "14. (1). This Proclamation is the supreme law of Swaziland and if any other law is inconsistent with this Proclamation, that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be null and void.
- (2). The King may, by Decree published in the Gazette, amend or repeal this Proclamation.
- (3). Sub-paragraph (1) shall be deemed to have come into force on the 12th April, 1973".

DONE AT LOZITHEHLEZI THIS 18TH DAY OF JUNE 1982.

SOBHUZA II  
KING OF SWAZILAND

The Government Printer, Mbabane

THE KING'S PROCLAMATION (AMENDMENT) DECREE, 1987

(Decree No. 1 of 1987)

In the exercise of the powers vested in me, I, MSWATI III, KING OF SWAZILAND, DESIRE TO BRING CERTAIN aspects of the King's Proclamation to the Nation of the 12th April, 1973 (as amended) in line with Swazi Law and Custom; and

Whereas certain previous amendments of the said Proclamation have been decreed *inter alia* to Defeat the ends of Justice and/or to obstruct the cause of Justice, and are contrary to Swazi Law and Custom; and

Whereas paragraph 14 of the said Proclamation Empowers Me, *Inter Alia*, to amend the said Proclamation; and

Whereas I, in the exercise of the powers vested in me, have Deemed it necessary to amend the said Proclamation;

*Now therefore I hereby Issue the following Decree:*

1. I hereby reaffirm that in terms of Swazi Law and Custom, the King Holds the Supreme power in the Kingdom of Swaziland and as such all Executive, Legislative and Judicial powers vest in the King who may from time to time by Decree Delegate certain powers and functions as he may deem fit.
2. It is furthermore hereby reaffirmed that the King being Commander-in-Chief of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force, is the Supreme Commander of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force and all Armed Forces in the Kingdom of Swaziland.
3. It is furthermore hereby reaffirmed that the King's Proclamation to the Nation dated 12th April, 1973 (as amended from time to time) is the supreme Law of Swaziland and if any other Law is inconsistent with the said Proclamation, that other Law shall to the extent of the inconsistency be null and void.
4. It is furthermore hereby reaffirmed that the King may by Decree published in the Gazette, amend or repeal the said Proclamation.
5. Paragraph 10(2)(b) of the Decree contained in the Proclamation to the Nation of 12th April, 1973 is amended by replacing the definition of "Liqoqo" with the following;

"'Liqoqo' means the King's Advisory Council which shall consist of Members appointed by the King to hold Office at his pleasure in accordance with such terms and conditions, (including emoluments and allowances) as he may determine and whose function it is, to advise the King on all matters of State when requested to do so by the King:

Provided that no person shall be qualified to be member of Liqoqo solely by virtue of his holding another office whether or not such office is established by Law:"

(ISSUE 2)

6. Paragraph 3 of the Decree contained in the Proclamation is amended by replacing subsection (2) of Section 30 of the Repealed Constitution with the following subsection:

“(2) In the event of the Regent, by reason of critical ill-health, being unable to perform the functions of her Office, the King or, in the absence of a King, the Likoqo may in accordance with Swazi Law and Custom appoint a person (hereinafter referred to as the “Authorized Person”) to perform on behalf of the Regent the functions of her Office for the duration of her illness as aforesaid.

For purposes of this sub-section the Regent will only be regarded as being unable to perform the functions of her Office due to critical ill-health after this incapacity has been certified as such by three independent specialist medical Doctors.”

7. Paragraph 14 of the Decree is amended by adding to sub-paragraph (2) the following—

“And he may, notwithstanding section 60 of the Establishment of the Parliament of Swaziland Order, 1978 or any other Law, by Decree make, amend or repeal any Law.”

8. The Regent’s Decree No. 1 of 1983 is hereby declared to be null and void *ab initio* and shall be deemed not to have come into operation and consequently shall be deemed to be of no force and effect.

9. Paragraphs 16, 17 and 18 of the King’s Proclamation to the Nation of the 12th April, 1973 are hereby repealed.

10. This Decree may be cited as the King’s Proclamation (Amendment) Decree, 1987 and shall be read and construed as one with the King’s Proclamation to the Nation of 12th April, 1973.

DONE AT LUDZIDZINI THIS 15TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1987.

MSWATI III  
*King of Swaziland*





**THE CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND  
IN ENGLISH AND SISWATI**

**26 July, 2005**

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<p>(ii) a right of access to a court of law by any person who has an interest in or right over the property;</p> <p>(c) the taking of possession or the acquisition is made under a court order.</p> <p><b>Equality before the law</b> 20. (1) All persons are equal before and under the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and in every other respect and shall enjoy equal protection of the law.</p> <p>(2) For the avoidance of any doubt, a person shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, or social or economic standing, political opinion, age or disability.</p> <p>(3) For the purposes of this section, "discriminate" means to give different treatment to different persons attributable only or mainly to their respective descriptions by gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, birth, tribe, creed or religion, or social or economic standing, political opinion, age or disability.</p> <p>(4) Subject to the provisions of subsection (5) Parliament shall not be competent to enact a law that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect.</p> <p>(5) Nothing in this section shall prevent Parliament from enacting laws that are necessary for implementing policies and programmes aimed at redressing social, economic or educational or other imbalances in society.</p> <p><b>Right to fair hearing</b> 21. (1) In the determination of civil rights and obligations or any criminal charge a person shall be given a fair and speedy public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial court or adjudicating authority established by law.</p> <p>(2) A person who is charged with a criminal offence shall be-</p> <p>(a) presumed to be innocent until that person is proved or has pleaded guilty;</p>	<p>(ii) lowo muntfu lokungeyakhe leyo mphahla unelilungelo lekuya emtsetfweni ngaleyo mphahla yakhe;</p> <p>(c) loko kwemukwa noma kutsatfwa kwemphahla kwentiwa ngesandla semtsetfo.</p> <p><b>Kulingana emtsetfweni</b> 20 (1) Bonkhe bantfu bayalingana embikwemtsetfo kuto tonkhe tinhlangothi kungaba tembusave, temnotfo, tenhlalakahle, tebuve nanoma yini ke kufutsi bayotfola kuvikeleka ngalokulingananko emtsetfweni.</p> <p>(2) Kute kungabikho kungabata, umuntfu akayubandlululwa ngekutsi ubulili buni, uluhlangani, unelibala lelinjani, wekudzabukaphi, usive utalwe kanjani, iyini inkholo yakhe, ume njani kutemnotfo, unambono muni kutepolitiki, mdzabakanganani nekutsi ukhubateke ngandlela yiph</p> <p>(3) Kute kucondzakale kahle kulesicephu, kubandlulula kusho kuphatsa umuntfu ngendlela leyehlukile kuneyalabanye, yena aphaatfwe ngalendlela ngesizatfu sebulili bakhe, luhlanga lwakhe, libala lakhe, kudzabuka noma imvelaphi yakhe, buve bakhe, katalwa kwakhe, inkholo yase simo sakhe kutemnotfo, imibono yakhe kutepoli budzala bakhe noma kukhubateka kwakhe.</p> <p>(4) Ngekulandzela timiso letishiwo sicephu (5) ngentansi, iPhalamende ayiyuba nemandla ekusumtsetfo lobandu-lulako, akukhatsalekile noma mtsetfo ukubeka ebaleniloko kubandlulula nom kuvela ngekuwuhumusha noma kuwusebentisa.</p> <p>(5) Kute kulesicephu lokuyovimbela iPhalamenkutsi ishaye imitsetfo leyokwenta kutsi kusentjokwetincumo taHulumende letincophe kwenta setemnotfo kanye nesetemfundvo kanye naletitintfo emmangweni letingahambi kahle kufezw</p> <p><b>Lilungelo lekuvikeleka ecaleni</b> 21. (1) Ekutekweni kwelicala leliphatselene nenhlalakahle yebantfu noma bugebengu, leloc kuyofuneka litekwe kahle futsi ngesikhatsi lesi litekwa yinkantolo lekhululekile nalengavuni r futsi lesungulwe ngalokusemtsetfweni.</p> <p>(2) Wonkhewonkhe lobekwe licala -</p> <p>(a) uyawutsatfwa ngekutsi akakalenti lelocala limlahle noma lokukanye alivume yena licala;</p>



English Siswati	Siswati
(b) informed as soon as reasonably practicable, in a language which that person understands and in sufficient detail, of the nature of the offence or charge;	(b) uyawatiswa masinyane nje ngelulwimi laluvako, futsi kuchazwe ngalokucacile simo selicala labekwe lona;
(c) entitled to legal representation at the expense of the government in the case of any offence which carries a sentence of death or imprisonment for life;	(c) uyawunikwa ummeli ngetindleko taHulumende ecaleni lelignesigwebo sentsambo noma kudzilikelwa lijele;
(d) given adequate time and facilities for the preparation of the defence;	(d) uyawunikwa sikhatsi lesenele nako konkhelakudzingako kute akwati kutilungiselela kutsetfwa kwalelocala;
(e) permitted to present a defence before the court either directly or through a legal representative chosen by that person;	(e) uyawuvunyelwa kutsi atiphendvulele yena matfupha noma emelwe ngulomunye layotikhetsela yena kulelocala;
(f) afforded facilities to examine in person or by a legal representative the witnesses called by the prosecution and to obtain the attendance of witnesses to testify on behalf of that person on the same conditions as those applying to witnesses called by the prosecution; and	(f) uyawunikwa litfuba lekutsi atihlolele yena ngekwakhe noma atfumele ummeli wakhe bonkhe bofakazi labaletfwe ngumshushisi, futsi uyawunikwa nelitfuba lekutsi aletse bakhe bofakazi, nabo labayowuphatfwa ngekufana nalabo labaletfwe ngumshushisi; futsi
(g) permitted to have, without payment, the assistance of an interpreter if that person cannot understand the language used at the trial.	(g) uyawunikwa, ngaphandle kwekubhadaliswa, umhumushi uma ngabe akalava lulwimi lolukhulunywa enkantolo.
(3) Except with the free consent of the person concerned and for purposes of subsection (2), the trial shall not take place in the absence of that person unless that person acts so as to render the continuance of the proceedings in the presence of that person impracticable and the court has ordered that person to be removed and the trial to proceed in the absence of that person.	(3) Ngaphandle kwalapho ativumela yena umuntfu, nalapho kwentiwa ngekulandzela timiso letiku (2) ngenhla, licala aliyutekwa angekho umbekwacala ngaphandle nangabe lowo muntfu wenta kube lukhuni kutsi kuchubeke kutekwa kwalelocala akhona yena, nenkantolo seyimkhiphele ngephandle lowo muntfu yatsi licala alichubeke kutekwa angekho.
(4) Where a person is tried for any criminal offence, the accused person or person authorised by the accused person shall, if the accused person or person authorised by the accused person so requires and subject to payment of such reasonable fee as may be prescribed by law, be given within a reasonable time after judgment a copy for the use of the accused person of any record of the proceedings made by or on behalf of the court.	(4) Umuntfu lobekatekiswa licala, noma ummeli wakhe, unelilungelo lekutsi, nakatsandza futsi asabhadale leyo madlana lebekwe yinkantolo, anganikwa emva kwesikhatsi lesanele kuphume sigwebo, ikhophi yako konkhe lokwenteke enkantolo kusatsetfwa lelicala.
(5) A person shall not be charged with or held to be guilty of a criminal offence on account of any act or omission that did not, at the time the act or omission took place, constitute an offence.	(5) Akukho umuntfu loyowulahlwa ngelicala uma ngabe loko lakwentile noma langakakwenti bekungesibo bucala ngesikhatsi akwenta noma angakwenti -
(6) A penalty shall not be imposed for any criminal offence that is severer in degree or description than the maximum penalty that might have been imposed for that offence at the time when it was committed.	(6) Akukho umuntfu loyonikwa sigwebo lesingetulu kwaleso labenganikwa sona ngesikhatsi kwenteka lobo bucala.