

THE SWAZI AND LAND PARTITION (1902-1910)

by

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On the annexation of the Transvaal by Her Majesty during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), the affairs of Swaziland were put under the control of the High Commissioner for South Africa, but in May 1901 it was decided that Swaziland should be treated as a dependency of the Transvaal and correspondence relating to the territory was to be dealt with by the Secretary to the Transvaal Administration and, subsequently, from January 1902, by the Secretary for Native Affairs.

On the 25th June 1903 an Order in Council established that the rights and powers of the late South African Republic had, by right of conquest, passed to His Majesty, and further that His Majesty (under and by virtue of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act 1890) had by treaty, capitulation, grant, usage, suffrance and other lawful means, power and jurisdiction in Swaziland. The Governor of the Transvaal was granted all His Majesty's powers and jurisdiction within Swaziland. All revenues collected in respect of Swaziland were to be paid into the Transvaal Treasury and all expenditure incurred under the provisions of the Order in Council was to be paid out of the revenue of the Transvaal. Also, under the provisions of the Swaziland Order in Council of June 1903, the Governor of the Transvaal Colony and the Transvaal Legislature reciprocally legislated for appeals from the Swaziland Courts to be heard by the Supreme Court of the Transvaal. Eventually, on 1st October 1904, Lord Milner, exercising the powers conferred upon him by the Swaziland Order in Council of 25 June 1903, issued the Swaziland Administration Proclamation whereby, inter alia, the laws of the Transvaal were mutatis mutandis, and so far as applicable, declared in force in Swaziland and were to be administered as if that territory were a district of the Transvaal, and all duties imposed on public officials by the laws of the Transvaal were, for Swaziland, to be discharged by the officials discharging similar duties for the Transvaal or by such officials as were specially appointed by the Governor. Swaziland, to all intents and purposes, was well on the way to incorporation by the Transvaal. However, that was not to be, for on 1st December 1906, by Order in Council, His Majesty "disannexed" Swaziland from the Transvaal. Under the terms of this Order in Council the High Commissioner for South Africa was substituted for the Governor of the Transvaal wherever the latter had been mentioned in the Order in Council of 25th June 1903, and certain sections of the 1903 Order with respect to revenue and expenditure were repealed; appeals to the Supreme Court of the Transvaal were

abolished, the revenue and expenditure of the territory were no longer to be controlled by the Transvaal Colonial Treasurer, and, most important of all for the future, the administration of Swaziland was wholly divorced from that of the Transvaal, except that the Registrar of Deeds and the Surveyor General of the Transvaal Colony continued, as a temporary measure, to act in such capacities for Swaziland.

It is from the Order in Council of December 1906 that Swaziland, for all practical purposes, became a British protected state whose legal and constitutional status vis-à-vis the British Crown remained undefined and uncertain until the time of Swazi independence. The confused legal and constitutional position did not, however, unduly worry the British Government, whose officials now addressed themselves to the real government of the country. The new administration was immediately confronted with the nightmarishly confused and delicate subject of the concessionaires and their concessions and what they thought should be done, and the Swazis' view of what should be done.

"The history of the concessions of Swaziland", wrote Sir Francis de Winton in February 1890, "is probably without a parallel. There are many instances where native rulers have given large and important rights to individuals and to corporations, but in Swaziland the late King [Mbandzeni] and his Council have parted not only with all their actual territory but with rights which should only belong to the Government of a country, to a lot of adventurers whose sole object was to make money by them." (1) The concessions were of three kinds, namely: (a) trading concessions, and concessions not connected with the land - "These were of every variety of genuineness and of absurdity. One, for instance, was a concession to grant concessions!" (2); (b) concessions connected with land - agricultural rights, grazing rights, water rights, wood rights, and mineral rights; and (c) (this class consisted of one concession only) the Private Revenue Concession, originally granted in 1889 by King Mbandzeni to one John Harrington in respect of all the King's private revenues. In return the Swazi King received a payment of £12,000 per annum, paid in monthly instalments. This concession (which was duly confirmed by the High Court of Swaziland - the Court which had inquired into the initial legal validity of concessions in 1890-1893) later passed into the hands of the Government of the South African Republic: that Government, because of its desire to control Swaziland in its efforts to gain access to the sea, had accordingly continued to pay the Swazi king his £12,000 per annum in monthly instalments of £1,000, until the outbreak of the Boer War (1899-1902), when payments ceased. On 16th February 1905, however, by Proclamation No. 2, Lord Milner cancelled the Private Revenue Concession and decreed that all rents, royalties, and other revenues paid under it would thenceforth form part of the revenue of Swaziland. The cancellation of this concession subsequently formed the subject of endless correspondence and much bitterness between the Swazi and the Administration, and induced the Swazi to send a deputation to England to protest against the summary and arbitrary action of the High Commissioner. (3)

To deal with the first class of concessions, i.e. the trading monopolies, was comparatively simple. Lord Milner resolved to expropriate them all, and he appointed a Commission - the Swaziland Concessions Commission, under the chairmanship of Johannes Smuts, ex-British Resident in Swaziland - to inquire thoroughly into the values of these concessions and to make recommendations on concessions which offended public morals and ought to be expropriated with or without due compensation. The money to expropriate these concessions was raised by a loan charged on the Swaziland Revenues.

It was the second class of concessions - the concessions connected with land - which, in Lord Selborne's words, gave "infinite anxiety and perplexity".(4)

These concessions were the most numerous, covering practically the whole of Swaziland and overlapping in every direction. R. T. Coryndon, the Resident Commissioner for Swaziland, gave a true and graphic picture of the indescribable confusion when he wrote: "Practically the whole area of the country was covered two, three, or even four deep by concessions of all sizes, for different purposes, and for greatly varying periods. In but very few cases were even the boundaries defined; many of the areas had been subdivided and sold several times, and seldom were the boundaries of the superimposed areas even coterminous. In addition to this, concessions were granted for all lands and minerals previously unallotted, or which, having been allotted, might lapse or become forfeited. Finally, it must be remembered that over these three or four strata of conflicting interests, boundaries, and periods there had to be preserved the natural rights of the Natives to live, move, cultivate, graze and hunt." (5) George Grey, the brother of Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary in the Liberal Government of 1906-1914, and the man appointed "Special Commissioner" to demarcate native reserves in Swaziland in pursuance of the policy of land partition, reinforced Coryndon's picture of the confused tangle of the land situation in Swaziland. Of the thirty-six land concessions he dealt with and which had "defined" registered sub-divisions, only two had had their surveyed plans filed in the Deeds Office in connection with the subdivisions, while "in every other case the sub-divisions are defined by description. These descriptions are generally of a very vague nature; the boundaries are described in connection with unnamed spruits, hills, and rocks and dongas, and by native gardens and kraals which have long since been moved or ceased to exist". (6) Hence the Special Commissioner had found it "quite impossible to recognise from the descriptions the boundaries of these sub-divisions". (7) It is indeed hard to exaggerate, as the Resident Commissioner went on to say in his annual report already cited above, "the complexity and chaos, or the difficulty of arriving at a solution which would preserve to the native his proper rights while securing to the concessionaire some equitable enjoyment of the privileges and rights he had purchased and which had been confirmed to him by responsible Courts". (8) It was imperative that a solution be found to regulate this chaotic state of affairs, which was pregnant with danger should the Swazi quarrel with the concessionaires or the latter quarrel amongst themselves. The administration seized the opportunity to carry out land apportionment as the best solution of the whole problem.

At the root of the problem was the conflict between two diametrically opposed systems of land ownership and usage. The European concessionaires wanted to get freehold title to land they regarded as theirs by means of purchase from King Mbandzeni, while the Swazi did not want to be disturbed in their occupation and ownership of the land which they rightly regarded as absolutely Swazi property - a possession which the European concessionaires had no right to tamper with. The Swazi contention that they owned the land meant that each Swazi man had the right to move his kraal anywhere he chose, to graze his cattle anywhere, to take water from anywhere, to cut wood anywhere and to cultivate any patch of ground. The concessionaires, conveniently forgetting or simply ignoring the fact that the Swazi King had only granted them grazing rights on a rental basis, now desired "to appropriate the best ground for themselves, to stop indiscriminate cultivation, and to displace any natives who are not required for their own purposes". (9) This was the conflict the British Government's representatives were determined to resolve. Sir Godfrey Lagden, in his confidential memorandum already cited, declared: "... it is paramount that a modus vivendi be found which, while not giving them [i.e. the European concessionaires] political ascendancy, maintains their status as white men. If the natives on a land concession reject all reasonable proposals to compromise, the authority of Government should be fully exerted." (10) From these quotations it is evident that whatever solution was finally arrived at, it would be heavily weighted in favour of the European concessionaires despite the fact that Lagden himself condemned the concessions as "iniquitous" and "immoral" commercial dealings whose validation by an established Court (the joint Anglo-Boer Swaziland Court

of 1890-93) was "a lamentable sequel". (11)

Lagden went on to suggest that there should be definite areas into which natives could move at pleasure or by order, the Swazi being given to understand that "the assumption of direct control by His Majesty's Government does not give them the right to settle anywhere at will except on ground reserved into which white people are not admitted". (12) At the same time the Swazi would also have it drilled into their heads that "the parental attitude of His Majesty's Government in taking the country under active protection involves certain obligations, chief of which are implicit obedience to laws and lawful orders". (13) Should the Swazi complain about the difference in treatment between themselves and other Native Protectorates they would be told curtly that it was all due to their own past misdeeds, which had compromised both themselves and the Government in the matter of concessions; or, in Lord Selborne's picturesque language, the Swazi would be told bluntly "that they were reaping only what Umbandine had sown". (14) It was this apparent partisanship of the Swaziland Administration with the concessionaires which made Chief Malunge, a son of the late King Mbandzeni and uncle of Sobhuza II, then the effective Regent of Swaziland, query whom exactly the Government had come to protect, the Swazi or the white concessionaires, and to declare, in the aftermath of the failure of the Swazi Deputation to England to protest against the partition: "We did not know we were killing ourselves by going under the British Government. Now we are in great trouble under the Government we have always longed for." (15)

Already, before he left South Africa, Lord Milner had addressed himself to the concessions problem and had appointed a Commission to go to Swaziland to divide the land concessions in such a way as to give the concessionaires absolute freehold rights over a portion of their land concessions within which all native rights should cease. Milner and his advisers thought that the result of leaving the land concessions untouched would be both disastrous to the natives ultimately and detrimental to the economic development of the country. (16) He foresaw the time when the cattle of the native and the cattle of the white man would be mixed up everywhere, giving rise to endless mutual accusations of cattle rustling; when the cattle of the native would eat the white man's crops; "when the native would go and pitch his kraal exactly on the spot which some white man had chosen for some agricultural experiment", such as the growing of cotton, or, even worse still, when the native would build next door to the white man; when a white man would find a rich lead of tin in the ground covered by a native kraal and commence to work it; when the native and the white man would be quarrelling about the same scanty supply of water. All these considerations had led Milner to the conclusion that the only safety for the native was in the separation of white rights from native rights - in short, land apportionment would guarantee Swazi occupation and ownership of the land. Milner's land apportionment scheme was conceived on the principle that each European concessionaire should retain a part of his land over which the Swazi would no longer have any right at all; in return for this right of freehold and immunity from native interference he was to surrender part of his concession for the exclusive use of the natives. Milner's scheme was designed to cause as little disturbance as possible to the Swazi, as it made no provision to aggregate all the native areas into one large reserve or location. Although this aspect of the policy of partition might have been accepted by the Swazi, however, it stood condemned in the eyes of the concessionaires because it meant the establishment of "a great number of small reserves dotted about the country". (17)

Milner's Commission, whose members went to Swaziland at the time of Lord Selborne's arrival in South Africa to take up the duties of High Commissioner, "provoked much opposition both from the concessionaires and from the natives". (18) The concessionaires denounced the partition policy as "a disagreeable operation", pointing out that the whole value of their concessions would be destroyed if on

each concession were dotted about reserves for the Natives, and they strenuously urged that the policy of the consolidation of the native reserves should be carried much further than had been envisaged by Lord Milner and his Concessions Commission. (19) In fact, the white concessionaire community was split into two distinct groups: first, the owners of mining, commercial and industrial concessions (who were mainly of English origin or had connections with England) who came out in full support of the partition scheme; and, secondly, the owners of land concessions - the graziers and farmers (who were mainly of Boer origin or whose sympathies lay with the Transvaal) - who were openly hostile. (20) The commercial and industrial concessionaires favoured land apportionment because they hoped that the consequent dislocation of native economic and social life and attendant "detrribalization" would mean a convenient and cheap labour supply. The graziers and farmers, on the other hand, feared the loss of their native labour and the profits they were making from "Kaffir farming" as absentee landlords, if the policy of land partition were followed to its logical conclusions. Thus the farmers' group, led by the Electors of the district of Ermelo in the Eastern Transvaal, sent a petition to Lord Selborne in which, inter alia, they stated their preference for the South African system of native locations, urging its adoption in Swaziland. These petitioners doubted whether it would be to the benefit of either the white or the native population of Swaziland to have "innumerable small locations of independent natives scattered throughout the whole of the country, the inhabitants whereof are subject to no restrictions, and whose presence in such close proximity to the whites is feared as a very material danger". (21) Moreover, the Petition went on, "Petitioners, whilst acknowledging that in many cases concessionaires and natives cannot live amicably on the same ground, submit that in very many cases a partition between whites and natives is both unnecessary and not required; and submit that in such cases it is a hardship to both parties to be compelled to divide at neither's desire". (22) The genuineness or otherwise of the Ermelo Electors' concern not to cause hardship to the natives is a matter of individual opinion, but there can be little doubt that Breytenbach (the spokesman of the electors) and his fellow petitioners wanted the status quo to remain unchanged because they hoped that, ultimately, the natives would lose all their rights to land, which would then conveniently and without much fuss be appropriated by the concessionaires. However, the petitioners' contention that the partition was both unnecessary and uncalled for, and irksome as far as the concessionaries and the Swazi were concerned, was, for completely different reasons, supported by Chief Malunge when he stated: "Government think they are stopping the whites and natives quarrelling, but we have been living with them all along without quarrelling... We think the Government should abide by the periods in the documents [i.e. the periods of the duration of the original grants, leases, etc.] as agreed between Mbandzeni and the original grantees and afterwards allow renewal where necessary." (23) The Swazi hoped in this way to regain the land which Mbandzeni had allegedly foolishly alienated, as they expected the Government not to renew the majority of lapsed concessions. (24) Chief Malunge was in fact advocating the adoption of the policy of drift and letting sleeping political dogs lie. Both Lord Milner and his successor, Lord Selborne, had also toyed with the idea. Selborne wondered whether "after all, it might not be better to leave things exactly as they are, to let the concessionaires work out their concessions, which vary from 15 to 100 years, without any attempt to divide the almost indivisible, that is the native rights from the concessionaires' rights". (25)

Certainly the policy of drift was attractive and simple, but in the light of other considerations of Imperial policy in South Africa, which weighed heavily with both Milner and Selborne, such a policy of apparent neglect would ultimately have been dangerously irresponsible. Although these considerations of imperial policy were, strictly speaking, extraneous to Swaziland, they vitally affected the future of Swaziland and were basically the factors that led the Imperial administration to adopt the policy and principle of land partition in Swaziland. The policy of land apportionment in Swaziland dovetailed neatly into Milner's policy of "reconstruction" in the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies

in particular, and in all South Africa in general - a policy whose avowed objective was the ultimate establishment of British supremacy on a firm and permanent basis. For, in Milner's reasoning, British supremacy could not be secure unless it sunk its roots deep into the soil of the South African veldt, and this political desideratum, in Milner's view, could be achieved only by the policy of settling loyal "Britishers" on the land. Milner wanted to insure British supremacy against the grave danger of resembling a pyramid standing on its apex instead of on its base. Lord Milner expounded his views in a booklet entitled "The Settlement in South Africa - on the importance of attracting a Loyal Population to settle upon and to own the land", in which he argued that provided the mistakes of 1881 (at the time of the retrocession of the Transvaal) were not repeated, Britain's role in reconstructing the administrations of the shattered Republics was not impossible as long as she did not create difficulties for herself "by weakness and vacillation and by attempting to conciliate by concessions, instead of mastering by tenacity and strength; combined with consistency and justice ... But however wisely these questions may be settled now, however well these Colonies may be governed in the future, it is the opinion of many well competent to judge, that unless the predominance of the Dutch in the population of the country districts and as the owners of the land [and therefore] of the country, is largely modified if not destroyed the security of England's position in South Africa, and her trust and confidence in it as a loyal and reliable portion of the British Empire will be less than complete". (26) For, unless adequate measures were taken to attract settlers of the right sort to be "the foundation and the strength of permanent British rule in South Africa, then whatever fabric of Government may be reared, will be but built upon the sand". (27) Swaziland had a part to play, howbeit a small one, in this grand strategy of reconstruction and land settlement since it was designated as a "white man's country" and not as a purely native territory like Basutoland or Bechuanaland. Both Milner and his successor, Selborne, thought that "the whites would increase in the country, as they certainly will; that the Transvaal would obtain Responsible Government, as it surely will; that the clamour of the whites in Swaziland to be annexed to the Transvaal would be supported by the Government of the Transvaal; that H.M.G. would be unable to resist the pressure; and that Swaziland would be annexed to the Transvaal without any reserves having been established for the natives, and that in the long run the natives only would suffer from the non-separation of their rights from those of the concessionaires". (28) In the light of these considerations the British Administration felt that it was incumbent upon it to provide the Swazi with land, not because the Swazi were particularly deserving of such provision but because it was an essential part of the process of tidying up the tangled affairs of the country before it was finally handed over to the Transvaal, since the British Administration saw its presence in Swaziland as a temporary one only and was averse to establishing itself permanently as the ruler of Swaziland. (29)

The essential provisions of the land partition as settled between Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner, and R. T. Coryndon, the Resident Commissioner, were contained in the Swaziland Concessions Petition Proclamation of 28 October 1907. (30) The proclamation made provision for the recognition of mineral concessions in their entirety, provided that there was no unreasonable surface disturbance and provided that places of political and historical importance to the Swazi (e.g. graves of Chiefs) were left alone. Holders of concessions the duration of which was for ninety-nine years or more were to have freehold titles issued to them in respect of the land not allotted for the exclusive use of the Swazi. According to Lord Selborne's calculations, out of one hundred and fifty-seven such land concessions, etc., thirty were for periods of thirty years or under. Many were for fifty years or fifty years renewable, ninety-nine years plus the right of renewal, and no less than fifty-two were in perpetuity. Each holder of any land concession - grazing, farming, wood-cutting, etc., was required to surrender without compensation up to one-third of his concession. If more than one-third was taken (in consequence of the suitability of the land for native reserves) compensation would be paid, the cost falling on the

concessionaires. If less than one-third were taken for the Swazi, the difference between the obligatory one-third and the amount actually taken would be sold. If a concessionaire was dissatisfied with what remained of his concession, the High Commissioner would exercise his absolute discretion and expropriate any such concession, the Administration meeting all the cost. Lastly, the Proclamation provided that the land for the Swazis should be "in every respect of a suitable character ... ample to provide not only for their present needs but for reasonable and natural expansion". (31) In the instructions to George Grey, the man chosen to perform the unpleasant task of demarcating the native reserves, the High Commissioner unfolded his plan as regards the native reserves. The Special Commissioner was enjoined to avoid "on the one hand, the evils of undue concentration, and, on the other, those of undue dissemination". (32) The Special Commissioner was to take special care to ensure that the land set apart for the exclusive use of the Swazi should not consist of "very numerous, small portions so dotted over the country as to be everywhere mixed up with the farms of white men. [For if this happened] The opportunities of friction between the natives and whites would be multiplied; the value of the farms of the white men would be greatly diminished; [and] the natives would be largely deprived of that power of freely moving their kraals which they so much value". (33) In short, Special Commissioner Grey was to ensure that the land partition scheme did not defeat its object. Armed with these instructions Commissioner Grey proceeded to Swaziland at the end of 1907.

The political situation in Swaziland was tense, and there was a great deal of excitement. Bunu, the Swazi King, had died in 1899, "a victim to the vices which the boundless wealth of the concession rentals enabled him to indulge to the full". (34) Sobhuza II, his son and heir, was then a boy of about one year, and his grandmother, Labotsibeni, a widow of King Mbandzeni, was the Regent with the respectful title of Ndhlovukati. Although during the Regency the country was supposed to be under the rule of the Swazi Council, the Queen Regent and her son, Chief Malunge, were the effective rulers of Swaziland. By all accounts the Queen Regent was "a woman of extraordinary diplomatic ability and strength of character", who directed "an experienced and capable opposition" to the Administration which, for a time, the Government did not know how to deal with. (35) Even Lord Selborne grudgingly admitted the Queen Regent's ability when, in discussing the advantages and disadvantages of instituting a Swazi National Council on the model of the Basutoland Council, he wrote, *inter alia*: "The Swazis are the most barbarous, the least advanced, the least intelligent and the least reasonable of all the natives living under the tribal system. Civilisation has made practically no progress among them, and at the head of the tribe is the Chief Regent who differs from the tribe in being clever but whose moral standard is even lower than that of its average member. She is supposed to have magical powers in respect of making rain, and the Chiefs and people are in greater personal terror of her than are the Chiefs and people of any other tribe in South Africa of their Paramount Chief ..." (36) Although Lord Selborne's picture of the Queen Regent as a political Moloch devouring all and sundry is indisputably false, it is all the same indicative of the power and authority the Queen Regent wielded, not because she was a ruthless despot (as Selborne thought) but because she was a politically intelligent and capable woman, as Coryndon realized. In discussing "the native character" in his annual report, the Resident Commissioner noted that the Swazi had learnt the art or evil of political intrigue and diplomacy during the years when Swaziland was the happy hunting ground of the concessionaires and when the country was in the grip of an "orgy of bribery and lavish extravagance". (37) During these years of "irresponsibility" a wide section of the Swazi had come into contact with the white concession hunters and adventurers and it was hardly surprising that the general character of the Swazi should have become strongly affected by the character and atmosphere which the white community had brought with it. "For several years the important Chiefs and the large and more intelligent population which always surrounds the chief kraals were brought into contact with large numbers of adventurers and concession hunters ... [most of whom were] men of the

lowest character who employed bribery and all sorts of shameful deception without scruple" and had "allowed the ignorance and cupidity of the native to betray them into transactions of very doubtful character". (38) Thus it was not surprising, said Coryndon, that "the extraordinary education the Swazi had received during these impressionable years should have left some mark upon the national character". (39) One of the major lessons the Swazi Chiefs, and the Queen Regent in particular, had received during the years of their "extraordinary education" was an "extraordinary capacity for intrigue and diplomacy". (40) After the termination of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and the establishment of a full fledged British Administration, the Queen Regent had quickly gathered "all the threads [of Swazi politics] into her own hands" and since then "conducted with conspicuous ability an opposition to the Government so consistent and so strong that more than once actual trouble had been within reasonable distance". (41) It is important to remember that the Queen Regent was no political upstart or novice to Swazi affairs. Her political education was not gained entirely through contact with the seamy side of white civilization. She had taken a prominent part in Swazi affairs ever since the death of King Mbandzeni in October 1889 and during the minority of her son, the late King Bunu. It was largely owing to her influence and intransigence that the Swazi National Council refused to sign the Swaziland Convention of December 1893, and played a leading role in the sending of the first Swazi deputation to England in 1894 to protest against the imposition of Boer rule. (42) Thus past experience of dealings with Europeans - freebooters as well as high-ranking Government officials from the Transvaal and the British High Commissioner - combined with her natural intelligence made the Queen Regent a formidable political figure, for when she spoke she spoke with the voice and authority of one who knew both King Mbandzeni and King Bunu and was determined to safeguard the patrimony of her grandson, Sobhuza II. The Queen Regent was helped in her work by her son, Chief Malunge, who was also a very intelligent and energetic young man, whom the Administration, without any tangible evidence, suspected of harbouring a burning ambition to usurp Sobhuza's throne. (43) The Swazi power nucleus was completed by the remarkable Vilakazi brothers - Josiah and Nehemiah - especially the former, who was the Regent's Secretary and had the difficult task of drawing up protests and petitions to the Administration and of conducting all the Regent's correspondence. Josiah Vilakazi was Swazi, born in Natal and educated at Edendale as a Wesleyan Methodist. He was credited by Marwick with being "very anti-white" and of fostering the suspicion with which the Regent regarded the Administration. And, what was even worse as far as the Administration was concerned, was the fact that "Both Josiah and Nehemiah speak and write English well, and they know the names of all prominent negrophilists in London who are likely to interest themselves in their business", i.e. the Swazis' case against the concessionaires and the land partition. (44) It was these people who wielded effective power in Swaziland and who constituted what the Administration referred to as the "Zombode Party". Coryndon had his finger on the truth when he wrote in a confidential despatch to Lord Selborne on 22 August 1907: "It has become increasingly clear & apparent to me that the three personalities whose influence is together of far greater weight than that of the remainder of the Swazi chiefs combined are the Ndhlovukazi herself, Malunge, the uncle of the boy Sobhuza, and Josiah Vilakazi who is a Swazi by blood but who was born and educated in Natal.... These three have exercised for some years now almost complete control over Swazi native affairs, and their opinion represents the attitude of the nation.... It will not be till their almost complete power is broken that any really national feeling will find expression or that the Administration will be able to deal directly with the Swazi people." (45) Meanwhile, much as the Administration might deplore the Swazi political status quo, they had to deal with the "Zombode Party", for it was that "party" which gave expression to the wishes of the nation and the Administration would have been very unwise to attempt to rule by "diktat" in the face of the organized and well directed opposition of the "Zombode Party". Hence the recourse to the use, wherever possible, of cajolery, diplomacy and compromise, occasionally spiced with firmness and the threat of abandoning the Swazi to their hated neighbours, the Boers of the Transvaal.

Thus the Administration was forced to pursue a policy of festina lente, and in 1906 the situation in Swaziland needed very careful handling if revolt were to be avoided. It was a time to act gently for, as Lagden wrote, "The political Atmosphere has been heavily charged with unrest for some considerable time, and the Swazis have had the credit of being in a rebellious mood. Many of our intelligence reports have indicated that they might give a lead to outbreak, and Swaziland is capable of becoming a storm centre". (46) The situation was politically explosive and the Swazi had real and substantial grievances: the hut tax at £2 a hut was unbearably heavy (although this was later reduced to £1.10s. by Lord Selborne after his September 1906 visit to Swaziland); the Swazi had also suffered grievously from the Rhodesian redwater pest and had lost "almost all their cattle", so that the bulk of the population who had depended on cattle sales to raise money found it "very hard to pay the Hut Tax". (47) The harvests were bad and there were signs of famine throughout the land. Further, the Queen Regent and the Prince Regent, Malunge, and the great chiefs complained that, owing to the action of the Government officials, their authority was being undermined and their subjects no longer respected or obeyed them; and that this want of respect and obedience was being made an excuse for the actions of which they complained. It was "the old story of the wolf and the lamb". (48) Writing on 19 March 1906 to Fox-Bourne, Albert Bremer (after whom Bremersdorp was named, and who posed as a friend of the Swazi in competition with Parsonson) stated in simple words the gravity of the situation: "Prospects in this country are very gloomy, Whites and Native complain very bitter [sic], the latter specially about their money due to them [under the Private Revenue Concession cancelled by Lord Milner's Proclamation of 25 February 1905], and also about the land question, but first of all of the heavy taxes the Govt. demands and which the Nation cannot pay. The crops have been bad for years and this season promised to be a failure again, the greater part of their cattle they have lost through sickness and if the Queen & Nation see that the land is taken from them, that the Government has cancelled their Revenue Concession (by what right nobody knows) and the Queen will not receive any or only a poor subsidy, I do not know how it will end.... The wildest rumours are afloat, and even the Officials admit that the present situation is grave...." (49) Here, indeed, was a good recipe for colonial revolt, for here were ingredients of discontent similar to those which had led to the Shona and Ndebele rebellions in S. Rhodesia in 1896-97, or, nearer home, to the ill-fated Bambatha rising in Zululand and Natal in 1906. Not unnaturally, wild rumours of revolt circulated the country "and it is not improbable that the more far-seeing of the Chiefs recognised this as probably the last opportunity which they would have of organising an effective bid for independence". (50) Unfounded stories were told of a planned general native rising master-minded by that luckless descendant of Cetshwayo, Dinizulu, who was reported to have sent messengers to the Chiefs Ngwanasa of Tongaland, Khama of the Ngwato, Linchwe at Mochudi, to the Paramount Chief of Basutoland, and to the Swazi Queen Regent soliciting their active co-operation in a massive black revolt; and the Swazi were reported to have signified their willingness to join such an uprising. (51) These wild and unsubstantiated rumours were, as one official at the Colonial Office minuted, "a canard"; they are, all the same, a good indication of the restlessness that was prevalent amongst the Swazi.

The Swazi were quite alive to the danger posed by the Concessions Partition Proclamations of both Lord Milner and Lord Selborne, viz. that their very existence as a nation hung in the balance, and the tribe feared being "turned into a congeries of small crowded locations which in process of time will become too small and will become hot beds of misery and disease". (52) The leaders of the nation were determined to prevent this danger. Ever since the issue of Lord Milner's Swaziland Administration Proclamation No. 3 of 1904 the Swazi had protested against the proposal to divide up their country, arguing throughout that King Mbandzeni did not sell the Land but only lent it to the white concessionaires and graziers who were now claiming freehold title to land they had never bought. Emotions ran high, and Chief Malunge at one time demanded from the High Commissioner a strict definition of the words "buy" and "lend", "lease" and

"sale", adding: "Mbandini asked for rent for grazing and minerals and that is now taken as selling land. I do not think that anywhere if a man leases a farm he takes it for his own. While I was in England I was living in a house which belonged to a white man and was paying rent. If I had remained in England would it have become mine? Would the Government come to me and say I had been paying rent and had better take it? All we can say is that our land is being taken from us without reason." (53) And for full measure the Queen Regent added: "Government simply says to the Concessionaires: 'You are right.' ... What I think is being done is that my people are being taken away too.... You are tearing my skirt ... If Mbandini sold land, where did he think his children were going to live?" (54) The Administration had no very convincing answer to these challenging questions, except to blame Mbandzeni's improvidence and to reject the Swazis' demands that all concessions "should be cancelled and annulled in all cases where the concessions depended on a yearly or other rental and which rental has not been paid". (55) Lord Selborne, in an address to a Deputation of Swazi Chiefs sent down to Cape Town to congratulate him on his appointment as High Commissioner, told the Swazi that their wishes would not be granted, and that the Swazi had no right to say they were not getting justice as they were only reaping the fruits of Mbandzeni's recklessness in granting concessions. (56) Lord Selborne also stated, among other things, that the Swazi were British subjects. This was a point which the Swazi strenuously objected to, contending that their "independence" was and had always been guaranteed by the various conventions between Great Britain and the late South African Republic, and that although they were under the protection of the late Republic they were not annexed to it; that although the British Government had succeeded to the position of the late Transvaal Government, the position was not altered, and the rights which the Transvaal Government exercised in Swaziland, and only these, could legally be exercised by the British Government. (57) They claimed, furthermore, that being "allies" of the British Government, and unaffected by the late war (1899-1902), it was unjust and unlawful to treat them as if they were a people whose territory belonged to the Boers, and as such to be treated similarly to the Natives of the Transvaal, who passed by right of conquest of the Transvaal into the possession of the British Government. (58) The Swazi protest raised the grave issue of the confused legal and constitutional status of Swaziland vis à vis Great Britain: Was the British Crown the ultimus haeres in Swaziland or not? The Colonial Office conveniently ignored the complex theoretical issues involved in discussing sovereignty in Swaziland by stating bluntly that the Swazi, by the Convention of 1894, had parted with their cherished "independence", and that, although His Majesty's Government had never annexed Swaziland, the Protectorate status of the country was "of the type which approaches indefinitely near to annexation and the Swazi must be held to have abandoned their unoccupied lands to the Crown in a similar, tho' not precisely identical fashion to Khama, Sebele & Bathoen". (59) The Swazis' argument was theoretically tenable but practically impossible, and the British Administration, with more sense of realism than respect for the niceties of theoretical constitutional practice, decided to ignore the Swazi contention. The Swazi, however, were unimpressed and, getting no justice from the High Commissioner and the Resident Commissioner, they decided to appeal to London.

On the 2nd of May 1907, at a meeting held at Mbabane, the Swazi men of power made known to the Resident Commissioner their wishes to send a deputation to England, and demanded that the Commissioner "give them the road". The initial response of the Administration to this request was one of outright refusal. From the government's point of view, to yield to the Swazis' request for a deputation to England was to set a bad administrative precedent, as there was no knowing that in future the Swazi would not demand deputations to England on any issues they disliked. This would ultimately undermine the rule and authority of the High Commissioner and his subordinates in Swaziland. (60) The High Commissioner therefore strongly urged the Secretary of State for the Colonies to send him "a really stiff reply", which would be communicated to the Swazi Regent and Council as the direct message of the Secretary of State and the King, to the

effect that the decision to partition the land was the King's and that he (the King) was "surprised and displeased that the Chief Regent should question that fact ... that the decision is irrevocable and that there is not the least use in her thinking that a deputation to London could have any effect in repealing or modifying it". (61) The Colonial Office stood full square behind Lord Selborne in his firm stand, basing their reply to Selborne on 16 May 1907 on H. Lucas's minute on Selborne's telegraphic despatch of 13 May: "I think we must back up Lord Selborne strongly. I dare say you [H. W. Just?] remember the Swazis in '95 & their terrible circulus in loquendo. But above all to allow deputations like this is to strike at the root of all stable administration." (62)

Lord Elgin's "really stiff reply" (as desired by Lord Selborne) was communicated to the Swazi at a meeting held at Zombode Royal Kraal on Monday, 3 June 1907. The Swazi were, however, undaunted by the reply, whose only effect was to make them even more determined to send a deputation to England. The Swazi leaders wanted to know why the High Commissioner was so unwilling to take them to the King. Surely, they argued, if the administration had nothing to hide from their superiors they should "give them the road". The Swazi began to suspect that the local officials were refusing them permission to go because they were afraid of being told off by their superiors in London who, the Swazi believed, knew the Swazi had a just cause and wanted to do them justice but were being deliberately misled and thwarted by the obstructionist tactics of the High Commissioner and his local officials, especially the Resident Commissioner, whom the Swazi had nick-named Msindazwe (the man who weighs the earth down, i.e. the oppressor). (63) The administration quickly realized that they were being manoeuvred into an unpleasant position. Reporting on the meeting of 3 June 1907 to the High Commissioner, the Resident Commissioner, Msindazwe, admitted as much when he wrote: "There is no doubt that the Swazi Chiefs have come to attach some considerable importance to a deputation to England, and though I do not think that either the Chiefs or the bulk of the people are much interested in the matter ... I conclude that many of the Chiefs have been for a long time so impressed by interested advisers as to the advantages to be derived from an embassy to England, that should such a visit be prohibited indefinitely, they will be inclined not only to magnify the loss of the probably somewhat vague benefit they hope to secure, but will feel aggrieved at the restriction in their case of a privilege which has been enjoyed within recent years by the smaller Bechuanaland Protectorate Chiefs, by the Matabele, Khama, Lewanika, and lately by what was popularly supposed to be a Basuto deputation." (64) The Resident Commissioner's resolve began to waver and he counselled his superior, Lord Selborne, that "it may be politic while definitely refusing permission for a deputation on this matter [i.e. the Private Revenue Concession and the land partition] which is now disturbing a small but powerful minority of the nation, to hold out some indication that in the not distant future the Government might be prepared, when convinced that the nation had satisfactorily accepted the position brought about by the recent change in their political control, to consider the matter favourably". (65) The Resident Commissioner also expressed in very strong terms his dislike of the Regent and her advisers: "A more intimate acquaintance with affairs in Swaziland", he wrote, "has led me to believe that so long as the almost entire control of their own affairs continues to rest in the hands of the Ndhlovukazi, the present Chief Regent, so long will the most responsible and experienced Chiefs of the Nation be debarred from the exercise of that moderate and conservative policy to which I believe they lean, and so long will the nation be subject to the whims and intrigues of an autocrat who has not only shown herself to be intemperately selfish and ambitious, but who has frequently exhibited a dangerous credulity for the advice of irresponsible and I am afraid at times unscrupulous adventurers - both white and black." (66)

Ironically enough, it was these very disagreeable traits in the Swazi character as enumerated by Resident Commissioner Msindazwe which forced him and his chief to yield their ground ultimately. Lord Selborne did a complete

somersault and came "reluctantly to admit that a Swazi deputation to England seems inevitable and that the wisest course to take is to get the evil over quickly and to draw as much advantage from it as possible". (67) The High Commissioner in fact went even further than the Resident Commissioner was prepared to go, for, whereas the Resident Commissioner had proposed that permission to go to England should be given only after the decision about land partition had been announced and only if the Swazi showed a determination forcibly to resist partition, the High Commissioner decided that it was politically advantageous that permission to send a deputation to London should be granted before and not after the decision about land partition had been announced. "The knowledge that the deputation is going to London", he argued, "will act as a safety valve when the decision about land partition is received". (68) Further, a collateral advantage to the Administration in giving the Swazi permission beforehand to send a deputation to England "about nothing in particular" would exist in the fact that the Administration would avoid the necessity of allowing the Swazi to send a deputation with special reference to the land partition which in their eyes would, if permitted, "certainly wear the aspect of a special visit of appeal" from the decision of the High Commissioner - a possibility which would not make for stable government. (69) Lord Selborne had, in fact, resigned himself to the fact that both himself and the Resident Commissioner had failed to shake the Swazi resolve to go to England. He therefore did as much as any man in his position of power could do to minimize and to undermine the Swazis' victory, informing the Secretary of State, unconvincingly, that he was only allowing the deputation on the strict understanding that the Swazi envoys would not discuss the sore subject of the Private Revenue Concession "or of the land settlement or of any other specific grievance", but would only come to pay their respects to the King and the Secretary of State, "as other native tribes have done in recent years". (70)

On receipt of Selborne's despatch of 17 June 1907 the Colonial Office was very disappointed that the High Commissioner had given way. Sir Francis Hopwood (later Lord Southborough), the Permanent Under Secretary for the Colonies (1907-1911), minuted on the despatch: "I think it a pity that Lord Selborne should have weakened in his opinion against any deputation. How can we secure that a deputation shall be only complimentary? When it arrives every grievance will be put in evidence ..." (71) H. W. Just minuted on the same despatch that if a deputation was inevitable, then it had better come during the Parliamentary winter recess, adding: "But Lord Elgin will, I presume, wish in the first place to represent to Lord Selborne the extreme desirability of avoiding a deputation, if at all possible, to see whether he cannot even now invent some means of doing so." (72) Elgin himself was convinced that there would be "trouble" if the deputation was allowed. He found the arrangement that, if the worst came to pass and the coming of the deputation became the lesser of two evils, the deputation should come during the winter recess "a very meagre protection" in view of the fact that "The Press in the big gooseberry season will welcome a Queen from So[uth] Africa - or even a deputation. And there are always M.Ps. on the warpath" (73) - not to mention the Aborigines Protection Society and the negrophilists. He concurred with the views of his subordinates that since it would be impossible for the Colonial Office to prevent the Swazi from raising the questions to which the High Commissioner objected, i.e. the Private Revenue Concession, Land Partition, and appeals from the Queen Regent's Court to the Resident Commissioner's Court, Lord Selborne should use his powers to stop the deputation from coming to England. This was accordingly done on 14 August 1907. (74)

In a telegraphic despatch in answer to the Colonial Office telegram of 14 August 1907, Lord Selborne stated that it was only "with great reluctance but after full consideration" that he had come to the conclusion that the Swazi deputation should be allowed. The High Commissioner, in fact, admitted that he had failed to "invent some means" of stopping the Swazi, as the Colonial Office would have liked. The Swazi, he said, were fully determined to send the

deputation and were most persistent in the matter; they had again, on 2 August and in writing, formally requested leave to go. "They can only be prevented from going by force", he continued, "and I ask myself can you authorize me to prevent them by force or if you did so authorize me would you be able to persist in your authorization." (75) This clinched the matter. The Colonial Office was loth to sanction the use of force to prevent the Swazi from sending their deputation to England, although such a measure could possibly have been carried successfully into effect since there were still Imperial troops in South Africa. But in the aftermath of the native disturbances in Natal and Zululand (1906) the possibility of yet another native war was too serious to be toyed with. And so, under these circumstances, the Colonial Office acquiesced in Selborne's view that it was politically wise that permission should be given the Swazi to go under the control of the Administration at a time which suited the administration best, rather than that they should go independently and "attached to some private white agent like Bremer and at any time chosen by them". (76) All that the High Commissioner wanted now was to arrange matters in such a way as "to derive as much advantage and as little disadvantage from visit as possible". (77) Lord Selborne admitted that he quite realized the impossibility of preventing the Swazi from raising grievances when in England, but he proposed to impress on them that "however much they may talk there is not the slightest chance of H.M.G. reconsidering decision on any point. I would tell them that if object of deputation is to secure reconsideration of any decision they might as well stay at home ..." since the Secretary of State would only give them the same replies as those given them by the High Commissioner himself and the Resident Commissioner. (78)

The Swazi leaders, however, refused to believe that their deputation would only be a ceremonial visit. At a meeting held at Mbabane on 11 October 1907, Prince Malunge said that it was absurd for the Administration to maintain such a proposition for it was known that "when a deputation is sent ... it is going on a [political] mission", and, in any case, it was superfluous to say that the deputation would be going to pay homage to the King, because the Swazi had already done so in 1894. (79) As far as they were concerned, the deputation was of great national and political importance since they firmly believed, as Marwick commented unsympathetically, "that all the legislation and administration of Swaziland had not the support of the Home Government, and they imagined that it was only necessary for them to say a few words to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to cause a wholesale change". (80) The High Commissioner and his aides therefore did all they could to make sure the Swazi deputation would achieve nothing tangible in London. Such certain failure of the deputation would be "not only a wholesome lesson to them but a severe blow to the influence of the Regent which influence is at present the cause of most of our administrative difficulties". (81) Lord Selborne further speculated that the people would blame the failure of the deputation on the Queen Regent, who had proposed it; the Regent would thus lose a considerable part of her influence with the tribe "with the result that our administrative difficulties will be correspondingly decreased and the prestige of the Government enhanced". (82)

In the event the Swazi deputation, thanks to Selborne's successful efforts to sabotage it, did prove a failure as regards the Swazi demands that the Private Revenue Concession be restored and that the policy of land partition be reversed. While the deputation was away in England on their unsuccessful mission, Special Commissioner George Grey proceeded with his task of partitioning the land. The Commissioner soon found that he was a very unwelcome guest as far as the natives were concerned. The Queen Regent and the Chiefs made their stand clear: they would not lend a willing hand to the work of dispossessing (or, in their view, the robbing of) Sobhuza (and ultimately the Nation itself) of his patrimony. As Chief Malunge said in a clear and lucid but emotionally charged speech: "We know the Partition Commissioner is at work but we have not agreed to it and we are not satisfied. It is Government work and we are not in it ... We only think it

is being done because we are a different race. The land is ours." (83) The Special Commissioner and the Administration were undeterred by these protests. The Commissioner published his report on 29 December 1908. His task had taken him exactly twelve months to the date to complete. Grey's partition made provision for thirty-two Native areas. The actual amount of land allotted to the Swazi was 2420 square miles out of a total area of Swaziland of 6553 square miles - just a little more than a third. Grey himself was confident that he had done his work well and claimed that in demarcating the native reserves he had "necessarily selected the most fertile portions", excluding the most rocky and barren portions. The Commissioner took comfort in the fact that although the Swazi had got roughly about one-third of the surface area of Swaziland, yet, if the whole of Swaziland could be valued from its capacity to produce food and support human life, it would be found that "the value of the portions awarded to the Swazis as native area would be greater in value than the remainder of the country". (84)

The partition may certainly have given the Swazi the most fertile and most valuable land, as the Special Commissioner and the Administration claimed, but that advantage lost its importance because of the overcrowding and overstocking (and the soil erosion) consequent on the removal of the Africans from private land onto the reserves. Moreover, this advantage was practically meaningless to people who did not base their evaluation of the worth of any land on what test-tube chemical analysis might prove was its potential productivity and profitability, but on its vastness in extent. It was hoping for the impossible for the Administration to expect the Swazi to accept the partition in its entirety: the injustice of the land partition was patent to them in the ratios of the area they got ($1/3$) compared to that reserved for the European concessionaires and the Crown ($2/3$) - the greater portion of the latter ratio being empty land from which the Swazi were to be physically removed between 1909 and 1914, in the process of clearing the land for white settlement and the incorporation of Swaziland in the Transvaal, since Swaziland was destined to become a white man's country and not another Basutoland. (85) There can be no doubt that the future settlement and colonization of Swaziland by a thriving white community whose ultimate political and economic interests would lie in the coming "Union of South Africa" constituted the real basic factor that led to the policy of land partition, and not the protection of native rights to land, although this was a very important variation on the major theme of founding a white colony in Swaziland. The "protection of native rights to land" argument was used as a sop to silence the disturbed consciences of the people in the Aborigines Protection Society and all the liberal-sentimentalists and humanitarians in England. It was practical and successful politics to use the humanitarians' own language to disguise the obvious political and economic reality that the Swazi had received less than a square deal in the land partition. And Lord Selborne was adept at this game of successful pretence, employing some very striking language to justify land apportionment. Thus, when addressing the Swazi on the subject on 14 May 1909, the High Commissioner, in self-justification, stated that the land of Swaziland was like "a fair maiden whom Umbandine had married to two men" and that, in his opinion, such a state of affairs was fraught with grave danger for the peaceful government and development of the country. "There could not be two husbands of one wife; and therefore", he declared, "I have done the truest act of kindness for you in dividing the land." (86) The Swazi marvelled at this sort of reasoning: surely it was a very strange kind of justice that gave an equal weight to the claims of both the first and only legitimate "husband" of a "fair maiden" and those of a furtive "lover", and actually reward the "lover" for his successful bid to steal another man's "wife", punishing the "husband" for having been made a cuckold!

No wonder the Swazi found the partition stuck in their throats. They were bitterly disappointed that the High Commissioner had failed to exercise his autocratic power to dismiss all the white concessionaires' claims to land and

cancel all land concessions, thus leaving all Swazi land to the Swazi nation to occupy as a purely native territory on the precedent of Basutoland. The Chiefs refused to have anything to do with land apportionment policy and they put the responsibility for it all on the shoulders of the imperial government's agent, Lord Selborne. Prince Malunge spoke for many when he said to Lord Selborne on 15 May 1909: "The Land has been divided. We have no power to stop the Government or to say do not do this; but all I say now is that the partition is now finished, it is done. The Government know that we did not like this partition ... We have no power, and we cannot feel justified in thanking your Lordship for what has been done because the boy [Sobhuza II] is young yet. When he grows up he may think different and blame us for all that is done, so that with reference to that question we leave the whole question in the hands of your Lordship, and we wash our hands of the whole question." (87) With this the Swazi came to accept the partition as final, but the injustice of the whole apportionment policy had created an undying feeling of bitterness and suspicion against all white people. Sir Alan Pim noted this in his Report on the Financial and Economic Situation of Swaziland in 1932, when he wrote: "The partition following on the unsavoury history of the concessions - a chapter closed by the Privy Council decision of 1926 ... - affected native interests prejudicially in more than one respect. One heritage from this period will long remain a factor of importance in any endeavour to raise the standards of native life - the distrust of the European, which has for its origin the character of the original transactions finally confirmed by the partition. The Swazi believes that his Chiefs neither could nor ever intended to transfer the ownership of the land. The confirmation of the concessions conflicts with this belief and, as a result, he still tends and probably will long continue to tend to regard any proposal, even one for his own improvement, with suspicion, and to seek for some ulterior motive." (88)

The Swazis' political submission to imperial Britain had cost them two-thirds of their land, and the question to be answered now is why, in the face of such provocation, the Swazi, rather than resort to armed confrontation to redress their wrongs, chose political collaboration. Military resistance might perhaps have forced the British authorities to give up the policy of land apportionment and to expropriate forcibly all concessions and physically clear the land of all concessionaires. But, in view of the circumstances then prevailing, such military resistance as the Swazi might have offered would have been a futile though dramatic attempt to strike a blow for independence and die. Such an attempt would have doomed the nation to extinction, since it is almost certain that in the event of an uprising Swaziland would have been rushed by the white South Africans, especially the Boers of the eastern Transvaal, who either owned land themselves in Swaziland as absentee landlords or had close relatives with land interests in Swaziland. And when it is remembered how co-operative white South Africa had been in the brutal suppression of the native disturbances in Natal and Zululand (in 1906), and given further the fact that the imperial authorities' main objective was to found a thriving white colony in Swaziland and have the country incorporated into the Transvaal in the larger Union of South Africa, the future for Swaziland would have been very bleak indeed. The imperial government had shown no determined objection to using imperial troops in quelling the Bambata uprising in Natal and Zululand; some of the troops were still in South Africa, and it is not irresponsible to speculate that the Imperial Government would not have hesitated to use them against the Swazi if an uprising occurred. But over and above all these considerations, and most importantly in my view, the reason why the Swazi eschewed dramatic military confrontation and adopted political collaboration is to be found in the fact that such military confrontation was alien to the Swazi - they had no precedent for such black and white confrontation as had characterized the tragic history of the Xhosa, the Zulu, the Basuto (up to 1881) and the Ndebele. There was a proud historical tradition of lack of armed conflict with either the Boers or the British. In fact, they took special pride in the fact that they had sent contingents to the white people's campaigns against the Pedi of Chief Sekukuni in 1876 and against their

mortal enemy, the Zulu of King Cetshwayo, in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. They summed up their relations with the white man in the following words: "Sobhuza [I] never killed a white man, nor a white man's sheep, nor a white man's Kafir. Umswazi never killed a white man, nor his sheep, nor his Kafir. Ludonga the same and Umbandine the same." (89) Moreover, they did not see much value in discarding the well tried policy of peaceful co-existence now, even though they were being subjected to severe pressures. It is not uncharitable to the Swazi to say that, although they made an impressive show of militarism, Swaziland was not a militarist state like the Zulu State, or the Ndebele State, whose prime raison d'être was warfaring - and, considering what happened to the Zulu and Ndebele, it was a fact of great historical and political importance that Swazi "militarism" always remained an impressive shadow and never became a substantive reality. The Reverend Mr Jackson was speaking the substantial truth when he wrote, in a crudely pungent and unkind characterization of the Swazi: "They are warlike and brave when led by white men, but in domestic life they are lazy and cowardly, as well as filthy ... Had they the power they would be as insolent and oppressive as ever the Zulus were." (90)

The failure of the Swazi [through the deputation] to induce the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the King to redress Swazi grievances and to reverse the land apportionment policies of Lord Selborne and Resident Commissioner "Msindazwe" (Coryndon) should not make us blind to the fact that the Swazi Chiefs had made themselves felt. It is important to remember that the Swazi never really challenged Britain's imperial claim over them and their land, although in using the "independence of the Swazi" argument they gave that impression. This was done precisely to highlight their case and not with a view to cutting themselves loose from the "noose" and "shackles" of British imperialism and colonialism. What the Swazi leaders were fighting for was the forging of a political partnership in which they would concede the role of "senior partner" to the British Administration but reserve to themselves as the "junior partner" the right to scrutinize critically and possibly to veto the more objectionable policies of the "senior partner". This, I think, is the proper and legitimate construction to be put on Marwick's cryptically accurate statement when he wrote to the Colonial Office that "They [i.e. the Swazi Chiefs] are ready and anxious to take all the benefits of protection, but are slow to give anything in return". (91) The desire to be left alone to manage their own internal affairs while the imperial government kept a watchful and benevolent eye and dealt with foreign powers, especially the Boers and the Portuguese, and dealt with all European land grabbers and swindlers (preferably by physically removing them from Swaziland or by making life well nigh impossible for them, as in Basutoland) - this was the greatest wish of the Swazi leaders, not their nominal "sovereign independence", although the latter was a useful device for the forging of the delicate balance of the politics of collaboration. Marwick was certainly right when he wrote to W. T. Stead apropos of the "independence of the Swazi Nation": "You know as well as I do what the 'independence' of a country like Swaziland, situated where it is, would mean, and we have a sufficient object-lesson in the results of Umbandine's 'independence' which are at the bottom of all the trouble to-day." (92) The Swazis' only chance was the "paternal government" of the High Commissioner and his subordinates in Swaziland. The only other practical alternative to that form of government was annexation to the Transvaal - an alternative that the Swazi themselves found so odiously unpleasant as not to merit serious consideration. (93) Thus considerations of national survival and a real fear of dismemberment at the hands of the ever land-hungry Boer farmers and other disreputable land speculators weighed heavily with the Swazi in their adoption of the policy of collaboration, and once they had accepted the situation they tried to draw as much advantage from the bargain as was reasonably possible without impairing the partnership with the Imperial administration. The Swazi leaders, by their skilful manipulation of the cards in the game of political collaboration, ensconced themselves in a position of power from which the Imperial Government could not remove them without causing much political upheaval in the country. Collaborators are very embarrassing political colleagues since they cannot easily

be abandoned or dragooned into submission or abject acceptance of undesirable policies; and, because of their initial "good behaviour", the Swazi leaders - i.e. the Chiefs - came to occupy a position of power with the circle described by the Imperial authorities, which was very much akin to the possession of the powers of political veto. For instance, in 1938, when the Administration wanted to reform the chieftainship system and introduce thoroughgoing political reforms, the Chiefs, aware of their enormous power (and aware also of the fact that the Administration was trying as it were to "fix" the cards of political collaboration in their favour and against the Chiefs) simply blocked the measure and continued to stall until 1945, when a much watered down version of the 1938 reforms was introduced, with negligible results. This, I believe, is the essence of the politics of collaboration the Swazi had embraced: by the politics of collaboration the Swazi successfully defied the Imperial Government's attempts to reform the Swazi political system and to treat the Chiefs as political robots.

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Sources: PRO - CO 417 series; relevant volumes
APS Papers - in Rhodes House Library, Oxford
Lagden Papers - " " " "
Milner Papers - in the Bodleian Library, Oxford
Loch Papers - in Rhodes House Library, Oxford

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Notes

- (1) C.6201, p. 14. "Report on Swaziland" by Sir F. de Winton.
- (2) Mss. Afr. S.209 - Lagden Papers. See letters from Selborne to Elgin, n.d., attached to Lagden's Confidential Memorandum on Swaziland, dated 8 September 1906.
- (3) CO 417/440 - Selborne Tel. No. 61 to Secretary of State, 13 May 1907.
- (4) Mss Afr. S.209 - Lagden Papers. Letter attached to Lagden's Confidential Memo on Swaziland.
- (5) CO 417/457 - Selborne to Crewe, 27 July 1908, forwarding Annual Report of the Resident Commissioner for the Year 1907-08. This Report is also found as Colonial Report No. 596.
- (6) CO 417/469 - Selborne to Crewe, desp. No. 7, 4 January 1909. Enclosure 1: Grey to Selborne, 5 December 1908.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) "Report on Swaziland".
- (9) Mss Afr. S.209 - Lagden Papers. Confidential Memorandum on Swaziland, 8 September 1906.
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Ibid.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Ibid.
- (15) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, 16 March 1908. Enclosure 1: Coryndon to Selborne, 7 March 1908, forwarding minutes of meeting held at Zombode on 6 March 1908.
- (16) Milner Papers, Vol. XXVIII (c). Confidential Print (Proof/4233) - Milner to Lyttelton, 18 January 1904.
- (17) Mss Afr. S.209 - Lagden Papers. Extract of letter from Selborne to Elgin, n.d.
- (18) CO 417/470 - Selborne to Crewe, 14 June 1909; Crewe to Selborne, 14 July 1909.
- (19) Ibid.
- (20) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, 27 January 1908. Sub-enclosure in Enc. 1.
- (21) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, 3 February 1908. Sub-enclosure 1 in Enclosure in this despatch. This perverse fear of native reserves was not a peculiarity of the Electors of Ermelo or of the Transvaal. The following quotation shows how widespread this fear was in South Africa: "More anxiety by far is felt by ministers as to the ultimate result of confirming in perpetuity the barrier against civilisation arising from the nursing of barbarism in immense locations uninfluenced by the presence of Europeans and under very slender supervision ..." CO Confidential Print. African (South) Natal No. 764 - Correspondence re Delimitation of Native Locations in Zululand; p. 116, No. 62. Governor Sir H. McCallum to Lyttelton, Confid. No. 1, 16 February 1905 - Enclosure 2; G. M. Sutton, Prime Minister, to Governor, 15 February 1905.
- (22) Ibid.

- (23) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, 16 March 1908. Enclosure 1: Coryndon to Selborne, 7 March 1908, enclosing minutes of meeting held at Zombode on 6 March 1908.
- (24) CO 417/441 - Selborne to Elgin, 21 October 1907; R. T. Coryndon to Selborne, 12 October 1907, Memorandum of meeting held at Mbabane on 11 October 1907.
- (25) Mss Afr. S.209 - Lagden Papers. Extract of letter (n.d.) from Selborne to Elgin.
- (26) Milner Papers, Vol. XXXII. Miscellaneous Correspondence (D, E, F: 1901-05).
- (27) Ibid.
- (28) Mss Afr. S.209 - Lagden Papers (extract of letter) Selborne to Elgin, n.d.
- (29) CO 417/440 - Selborne to Elgin, 18 May 1907 (esp. minute by Sir Francis Hopwood on this despatch); and especially CO 417/440 - Selborne to Elgin, 15 April 1907, minute by W. S. Churchill: "Lord Selborne ought to be warned not to incur pensionable liabilities on behalf of his Swaziland staff, or to spend money upon buildings, offices etc ... for an administration whose life hangs by rather a slender thread."
- (30) CO 417/441 - Selborne to Elgin, 28 October 1907.
- (31) Ibid.
- (32) CO 417/441 - Selborne to Elgin, 18 November 1907, enclosing Selborne to Grey, 16 November 1907. Also found as CO Print African No. 890.
- (33) Ibid.
- (34) R. T. Coryndon's words in Col. Report No. 596 of 1908.
- (35) Ibid.
- (36) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, Confidential desp. No. 3 of 30 March 1908.
- (37) Colonial Report No. 596.
- (38) Ibid.
- (39) Ibid.
- (40) Ibid.
- (41) Ibid.
- (42) Micro. Afr. 406 - Loch Papers, Vol. II, pp. 185, 242-258.
- (43) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, 16 March 1908; Coryndon to Selborne, 26 February 1908, enclosing A. G. Marwick's Report dated 17 February 1908.
- (44) Ibid.
- (45) CO 417/441 - Selborne to Elgin, Confidential desp. 2nd September 1907, enclosing Coryndon to Selborne, Confidential desp. 22 August 1907.
- (46) Mss Afr. S.209 - Lagden Papers. Confidential Memo of 8 September 1906.
- (47) Ibid. - enclosure Selborne to Elgin, n.d.
- (48) Mss Brit. Emp. S.22 G.186 (AP Society Papers) - J. M. Parsonson to Fox-Bourne, 25 October 1905. Parsonson suspected some of the officials of being agents provocateurs who would be "only too glad if the Swazis could be induced to break out, as they could then be annexed, their country taken, & their existence as a Nation ended". Parsonson to Fox-Bourne, 23 March 1906.
- (49) Mss Brit. Emp. S.22 G.186 - A. Bremer to Fox-Bourne, 19 March 1906.
- (50) Colonial Report No. 596.
- (51) CO 417/428 - Selborne to Elgin, Confidential desp. 9 July 1906, forwarding an Urgent & Confidential desp. from W. Windham, the Transvaal Secretary for Native Affairs, to the Imperial Secretary, 28 May 1906.

- (52) Mss Brit. Emp. S.22 G.186 - Parsonson to Fox-Bourne, 25 October 1905.
- (53) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, 16 March 1908. Enclosure 1: Coryndon to Selborne, 7 March 1908. Chief Malunge was speaking after his return from England, where he had gone as a member of the Swazi deputation to protest against the partition.
- (54) Ibid.
- (55) Mss Brit. Emp. S.22 G.186 - Parsonson to Fox-Bourne, 25 October 1905.
- (56) Ibid.
- (57) Ibid.
- (58) Ibid.
- (59) CO 417/440 - Selborne to Elgin. Telegram 17 August 1907; Minutes by CO officials, especially minute by H. Lambert, 31 August 1907.
- (60) CO 417/440 - Selborne to Elgin. Telegram, 13 May 1907.
- (61) Ibid.
- (62) Ibid. Minute by H. Lucas, 14 May 1907.
- (63) CO 417/470 - Selborne to Crewe, 22 May 1909; Report of interview held at Mbabane on 15 May 1909.
- (64) CO 417/440 - Selborne to Secretary of State for Colonies, 17 June 1907, enclosing R. T. Coryndon to High Commissioner, 6 June 1907.
- (65) Ibid.
- (66) Ibid.
- (67) CO 417/440 - Selborne to Secretary of State for Colonies, 17 June 1907, and enclosure Coryndon to High Commissioner, 6 June 1907.
- (68) Ibid.
- (69) Ibid.
- (70) Ibid.
- (71) Ibid. Minute by Sir F. Hopwood, 3 August 1907.
- (72) Ibid. Minute by H. W. Just, 1 August 1907.
- (73) Ibid. Minute by Elgin, 12 August 1907.
- (74) Ibid. CO to High Commissioner, Telegram 14 August 1907.
- (75) Ibid. High Commissioner to Secretary of State, Telegram 17 August 1907.
- (76) Ibid.
- (77) Ibid.
- (78) Ibid.
- (79) CO 417/441 - Selborne to Elgin, 21 October 1907, enclosing R. T. Coryndon to Selborne, 12 October 1907.
- (80) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, Confidential desp. 16 March 1908. Enclosure 1: Coryndon to Selborne, 26 February 1908, forwarding A. G. Marwick's Report on the Swazi Deputation, dated 17 February 1908.
- (81) CO 417/440 - High Commissioner to Secretary of State, Telegram 17 August 1907.
- (82) CO 417/441 - Selborne to Elgin, 2 September 1907.
- (83) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, 16 March 1908. Enclosure 1: Coryndon to Selborne, 7 March 1908, enclosing a report of meeting held at Mbabane on 6 March 1908. Underlining is mine. (N.B. Chief Malunge was speaking after his return from England.)
- (84) CO 417/469 - Selborne to Crewe, Confidential, 4 January 1909.

- (85) CO 417/470 - Selborne to Crewe, 22 May 1909. Several enclosures. (This is also found as CO Print African No. 927.)
- (86) Ibid.
- (87) Ibid.
- (88) Cmd. 4114 of 1932, p. 19. See also Mss Afr. S.1366 (7) - C. L. Burton Papers - Memorandum dated 21 September 1942 - where Pim's observation found confirmation. Burton wrote: "... In the Course of Native Administration one naturally expects to meet objections to innovations, the native being exceedingly conservative, but with Sobhuza II and his Council suspicion is more deep-rooted than mere conservatism and the main reason for this is the feeling that they have not had a square deal over their land."
- (89) C.9206, No. 26. Milner to Chamberlain, 29 June 1898. Enclosure 1: J. Smuts (HM Consul in Swaziland) to High Commissioner, 17 June 1898.
- (90) C.6201 - Report on Swaziland (by Sir F. de Winton, 1890), p. 20, Annexure "A". De Winton himself wrote: "A good deal has been written and said concerning the Swazis as a people. They appeared to me to differ very little from other African races. The men are lazy, dirty, and untruthful. The women do all the agricultural work ... Taking them as a whole they are a happy, contented, work-hating, wild people, but they are not such a particularly interesting race as some have endeavoured to describe them, and unless kept in order with a firm but just hand would be continually giving trouble." - p. 8 of Report.
- (91) CO 417/456 - Selborne to Elgin, Confidential desp. 16 March 1908. Enclosure 1: Coryndon to High Commissioner, 26 February 1908, enclosing Marwick's Report - Annexure "A" - Marwick to CO, 17 November 1907.
- (92) Ibid.
- (93) Ibid. See also CO Print Afr. No. 897 in CO 417/457, Selborne to Crewe, Confidential desp. 24 August 1908, enclosures; CO 417/469 - Selborne to Crewe, 1 February 1909, enclosures.

