



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Print media and egalitarianism in 1960s Eswatini: *Izwi lama Swazi* and the columnist ‘Kadebona’

Joel Cabrita

Stanford University, Stanford CA, USA
Email: jcabrita@stanford.edu

Abstract

From 1950 to 1963, a columnist named ‘Kadebona’ (The Experienced One) published regular pieces in *Izwi lama Swazi* (The Voice of the Swazi), the vernacular newspaper of the British protectorate of Swaziland (now named Eswatini). Although lacking definitive evidence, it is probable that Kadebona was John J. Nquku, a leading political figure of colonial Eswatini. Kadebona’s 300-plus columns positioned themselves as meeting places for the embryonic Swati nation. In contrast to the closed-door discussions of those in power, Kadebona’s columns styled themselves as transparent platforms for a give-and-take debate among emaSwati (as residents of Eswatini were called). Kadebona not only ‘spoke’ via his columns; he also expected replies on the part of the nation. His column was a space available to all, ‘where the rich and the poor, and where leaders and their followers, all meet’. In a period of debate over the future of the independent Swati nation, Kadebona’s columns encouraged all emaSwati to shape their country, and allowed all perspectives audibility via the column and ‘Letters to the Editor’. At the same time, however, there were distinct limits to the egalitarian public summoned through these articles. While Kadebona encouraged all emaSwati regardless of rank or class to speak up, he was far less welcoming towards other voices, including women and youths. This article provides an introduction to these fraught columns, a small sample of which are presented here, both in their isiZulu original and in English translation (siSwati – the language spoken by emaSwati – had no authorized written form well into the 1960s; instead, the South African isiZulu was used for written communication). In what follows, I provide *Izwi lama Swazi*’s history, discuss the emergence of Kadebona as a columnist in the 1950s, and comment on some of his key concerns.

Résumé

De 1950 à 1963, un chroniqueur nommé « Kadebona » (le Clairvoyant) a publié régulièrement des articles dans *Izwi lama Swazi* (La voix du Swazi), le journal vernaculaire du protectorat britannique du Swaziland (aujourd’hui appelé Eswatini). Malgré l’absence de preuves définitives, il est probable que Kadebona était John J. Nquku, une figure politique de premier plan de l’Eswatini colonial. Les plus de 300 colonnes de Kadebona se posaient comme des lieux de rencontre de la nation Swati embryonnaire. Contrairement aux discussions à huis clos du pouvoir, les colonnes de Kadebona se présentaient comme des plateformes d’échange

© The Author(s), 2024. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the International African Institute. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

transparentes entre emaSwati (le nom donné aux habitants d'Eswatini). Kadebona ne se contenait pas de « parler » dans ses chroniques ; il attendait aussi des réponses de la part de la nation. Sa chronique était un espace accessible à tous, « où les riches et les pauvres, les dirigeants et les partisans, se rencontrent ». Dans une période de débat sur l'avenir de la nation swati indépendante, les chroniques de Kadebona encourageaient tous les emaSwati à façonner leur pays et permettaient de donner voix à tous les points de vue à travers la chronique et les « Lettres à l'éditeur ». Dans le même temps, cependant, des limites distinctes s'imposaient au public égalitaire auquel ces articles faisaient appel. Alors que Kadebona encourageait tous les emaSwati, quel que soit leur rang ou leur classe, à s'exprimer, il se montrait beaucoup moins accueillant envers certaines voix, notamment celles des femmes et des jeunes. Cet article fournit une introduction à ces chroniques et en présente un échantillon dans la langue isiZulu d'origine et dans la traduction anglaise (le siSwati, la langue parlée par les emaSwati, n'avait aucune forme écrite autorisée jusque dans les années 1960 ; la langue utilisée alors pour la communication était l'isiZulu sud-africain). L'auteur retrace ensuite l'histoire de l'*Izwi lama Swazi*, discute de l'émergence de Kadebona comme chroniqueur dans les années 1950 et commente certaines de ses préoccupations principales.

Resumo

Entre 1950 e 1963, um colunista chamado 'Kadebona' (O clarividente) publicou regularmente artigos no *Izwi lama Swazi* (*A Voz dos Suazis*), o jornal em língua vernácula do protetorado britânico da Suazilândia (atualmente chamado Eswatini). Embora não existam provas definitivas, é provável que Kadebona fosse John J. Nquku, uma figura política importante da Eswatini colonial. As mais de 300 colunas de Kadebona posicionavam-se como pontos de encontro da embrionária nação Swati. Em contraste com as discussões à porta fechada dos detentores do poder, as colunas de Kadebona apresentavam-se como plataformas transparentes para um debate entre os emaSwati (como eram chamados os residentes de Essuatíni). Kadebona não só 'falava' através das suas colunas, como também esperava respostas por parte da nação. A sua coluna era um espaço disponível para todos, 'onde se encontram os ricos e os pobres, os líderes e os seus seguidores'. Num período de debate sobre o futuro da nação Swati independente, as colunas de Kadebona encorajavam todos os emaSwati a moldar o seu país e permitiam a audibilidade de todas as perspectivas através da coluna e das 'Cartas ao editor'. Ao mesmo tempo, porém, havia limites distintos para o público igualitário convocado através destes artigos. Enquanto Kadebona encorajava todos os emaSwati, independentemente da sua posição ou classe, a falar, era muito menos recetivo a outras vozes, incluindo mulheres e jovens. Este artigo fornece uma introdução a estas colunas, uma pequena amostra das quais é aqui apresentada, tanto no seu original isiZulu como na tradução inglesa (o siSwati – a língua falada pelos emaSwati – não tinha uma forma escrita autorizada até à década de 1960; em vez disso, o isiZulu sul-africano era utilizado para a comunicação escrita). De seguida, apresento a história do *Izwi lama Swazi*, discuto o aparecimento de Kadebona como colunista na década de 1950 e comento algumas das suas principais preocupações.

From 1950 to 1963, a columnist named 'Kadebona' (The Experienced One) published regular pieces in *Izwi lama Swazi* (The Voice of the Swazi), the vernacular newspaper of the British protectorate of Swaziland (now named Eswatini). Although lacking definitive evidence, it is probable that Kadebona was John J. Nquku, a leading political

figure of colonial Eswatini. Kadebona's 300-plus columns positioned themselves as meeting places for the embryonic Swati nation. In contrast to the closed-door discussions of those in power, Kadebona's columns styled themselves as transparent platforms for a give-and-take debate among emaSwati (as residents of Eswatini were called). Kadebona not only 'spoke' via his columns; he also expected replies on the part of the nation. His column was a space available to all; 'where the rich and the poor, and where leaders and their followers, all meet'. In a period of debate over the future of the independent Swati nation, Kadebona's columns encouraged all emaSwati to shape their country, and allowed all perspectives audibility via the column and 'Letters to the Editor'. At the same time, however, there were distinct limits to the egalitarian public summoned through these articles. While Kadebona encouraged all emaSwati regardless of rank or class to speak up, he was far less welcoming towards other voices, including women and youths. This article provides an introduction to these fraught columns, a small sample of which are presented here, both in their isiZulu original and in English translation (siSwati – the language spoken by emaSwati – had no authorized written form well into the 1960s; instead, the South African isiZulu was used for written communication). In what follows, I provide *Izwi lama Swazi's* history, discuss the emergence of Kadebona as a columnist in the 1950s, and comment on some of his key concerns.¹

There is a recent proliferation of research into newspapers in Africa (e.g. Peterson *et al.* 2016). Yet there is surprisingly little on the newspaper column, a genre that dominated African periodical publications in the twentieth century (although see Sandwith 2019; Newell 2016; Ogola 2005). We have little understanding of how the column – a short opinion piece widely ranging in tone, encompassing both serious reflection and satirical humour – created new forms of addressivity, generated moral norms and did distinctive social work. Yet as Corinne Sandwith's study of the columns of South African writer R. R. R. Dhlomo exhorts us, we should 'approach the newspaper – and the newspaper column – as texts in their own right, as sites of discursive performance and invention rather than merely repositories of historical or literary gems' (Sandwith 2019: 105). As with Dhlomo's columns, Kadebona's writing called into question established structures of power – both the aristocratic hierarchies of Swati society and the colonial state. While a newspaper like *Izwi* has been dismissed as a prop of the white state, Kadebona's columns show that a white-owned newspaper could nonetheless achieve subversive political work (Mthembu 2020: 31). This political work passed under officialdom's radar. Kadebona's devices were word, mood, style and rhetoric rather than political protest – techniques of resistance unrecognizable to British censors.

Yet while Sandwith identifies malleability and idiosyncrasy as the column's key features, in Kadebona's case, the writer invested in transparency, illumination and clarity. Eschewing the values of rank that characterized Swati society, Kadebona's columns addressed readers as equals, hailing them as peers rather than superiors or juniors. Premised on the assumption of fraternity (and simultaneously riven by contradictions and exclusions), Kadebona's columns sought to be engines of egalitarianism, creating in the newspaper a space for more transparent forms of

¹ Supplementary material is available with the online version of this article, comprising an annotated version of *Izwi lama Swazi* columns translated from isiZulu into English.

politicking. Clearly written columns could be read by all, regardless of birth rank, and all could respond and debate their meaning in 'Letters to the Editor'. We might also think of Hlonipha Mokoena's discussion of the South African newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal*, in a somewhat earlier period. Mokoena argues that the periodical convened a new form of public – *ibandla* (the congregation or gathering) – predicated upon Christianity and education rather than hereditary demarcations (Mokoena 2011). In like fashion, Kadebona's columns presented themselves to the country's reading public as a crucible for a new Swati community, unblemished by older hierarchies of royalty and seniority – yet most definitely marked by prejudices of gender and age.

History of *Izwi lama Swazi*

Izwi lama Swazi was founded in 1934 as the publication of the Swaziland Progressive Association (SPA). The organization's name reflected its mission-educated members' identification with Christianity, education and 'civilization' against the hierarchies of both the colonial state and traditional society. The SPA's precepts affirmed 'the essential dignity of every human being irrespective of race, colour, or creed' (Kuper 1978: 103). Membership was 'open to any person of adult age and of good character'.² Its official language was English, and meetings focused on bolstering the Christian middle classes against racist discrimination.³ Subsidized by the British and written in the South African language of isiZulu, *Izwi* was formed to give voice to the aspirations of this new middle class whom colonial officials viewed as a bulwark against more radical political views. Yet reflecting the struggles of the SPA – largely due to the miniscule size of the Christian intelligentsia – *Izwi* ran for only six months in 1934 before folding due to costs. Its largest sale was thirty-five issues; average sales were twenty copies per issue.⁴

World War Two marked a turning point for the Swati intelligentsia. John J. Nquku was key to the revival of the SPA. Born in 1899 in Natal, South Africa, Nquku was part of the small community of isiZulu Christian Africans. As was typical for his generation of converts, education was highly prized, and thus the young Nquku attended school in Pietermaritzburg and later trained as a teacher. By 1930, Nquku was appointed 'Supervisor of Native Education' in the British Protectorate of Swaziland, the first Black teacher to hold this post. (Nquku was not alone in being an educated South African to be appointed to a government post in Eswatini – another factor that explains the dominance of written isiZulu in this period.) Nquku's role was to oversee the syllabi for Eswatini's Black schools, print school registers and manage the publication of school regulations. His responsibilities meant he roamed over the country by 'foot, bicycle, horseback, and motorcycle'.

Yet despite Nquku's aspirations, racial discrimination dogged him, a predicament shared by all educated Black protectorate residents. Nquku resented his measly salary (far below what a white counterpart would have received). In 1940, 'due to the ill treatment he received', Nquku resigned from government employment. He was

² *Times of Swaziland*, 14 May 1936.

³ *Times of Swaziland*, 14 May 1940.

⁴ *Times of Swaziland*, 27 October 1949.

shortly co-opted by Eswatini's paramount chief, Sobhuza II, as adviser on education (Cabrita 2018). Yet cash shortages continued to dog Nquku; he 'was an unpaid servant of the nation'. Nquku supplemented his income by operating a taxi service from his home in Msunduzi outside the capital city of Mbabane, noted for its lively political and cultural scene. In 1942, Nquku was elected president of the SPA, a position he held for twenty years.⁵

Under Nquku's leadership, the SPA entered a newly radical phase. Nquku protested about Black disenfranchisement in the protectorate, arguing emaSwati's participation in World War Two justified their increased autonomy from Britain.⁶ In the words of Nquku, 'the SPA has called the government's attention to the disabilities under which they suffered, they asked for abolition of the color bar, scrapping of all discriminatory enactments . . . [they] protested against all unchristian injustice inflicted on them as human beings'.⁷ The Atlantic Charter of 1941 – advocating global sovereign self-determination – allowed Nquku and the SPA to protest against segregationist South Africa's designs upon Eswatini, lambasting the 'dreaded nightmare of incorporation into the Union . . . aborigines will lose sovereignty over their country, a thing in my opinion against the Atlantic Charter which promises protection for all nations especially the small and weak ones'.⁸

In 1946, Nquku announced his intention to 're-edit the newspaper *Izwi lama Swazi* which has been temporarily suspended for some time'. The editor and proprietor would be himself, suggesting that this was an enterprise into which he would sink his personal funds.⁹ Lacking a printing press in Eswatini, Nquku engaged one D. Motseme in Natal to print the quarterly publication.¹⁰ In March 1947, the first issue of the revived *Izwi* appeared, selling for 3 pence. The tone of *Izwi*'s first issue was militant. Nquku cast the newspaper as the conduit of political expression. The press was mouthpiece, whip and water for the parched: the 'mouthpiece of our people . . . the Press is the great whip to put right the injustices and disabilities that we have long suffered. Africans thirst for a paper of their own which will express the African point of view undiluted.' The absence of a vernacular press 'had been a great drawback and our views in matters affecting us have been stifled too long'. Linking the resurrection of *Izwi* to the arrival of locomotive transport in 1946, Nquku claimed that *Izwi* would allow Africans 'to blow out the steam that had no outlet and was almost bursting our engine'. The first issue was vocal about the Swati progressive class's dissatisfaction, indexing its growing radicalism: '[E]verywhere the Whites are seeking to increase their hold upon the continent and the Blacks are becoming less submissive to this domination.' Nquku's remit was colonized peoples of the global South: he looked to

⁵ Nquku's self-authored 'biography' was self-published on the occasion of his seventieth birthday celebration in 1969. UCLA Archives, Hilda Kuper Papers, Box 38, 'John June Nquku of Swaziland – his life on the 70th birthday celebration'.

⁶ *Times of Swaziland*, 4 September 1941.

⁷ *Times of Swaziland*, 25 November 1948.

⁸ *Times of Swaziland*, 4 July 1946.

⁹ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume III, Nquku to Government Secretary, Mbabane, 21 October 1946.

¹⁰ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume III, Memo from J. J. Nquku, 5 February 1947.

India as a newly independent colony while declaring solidarity with South Africa – ‘[W]e know that we of the black race are not properly treated in the Union.’¹¹

The colonial government’s response was immediate. Officials clocked the critical tone, directing inflammatory passages be transcribed, translated and circulated among administrators. In May 1947, one official noted that, although ‘there has been only one issue of the *Izwi* so far, in my view it shows every sign of becoming a “true extremist publication”’. The involvement of Nquku did not help matters, given his reputation as an ‘agitator’: ‘[H]is background is well known here.’¹² Contradicting Nquku’s own claims to have retired, this official claimed that he was in fact dismissed for being ‘unsuitable’.¹³ Yet in seeking to neutralize this publication, officials sought to maintain the illusion that they were not restricting the press. Nor did they want to relinquish the valuable aspects of a vernacular periodical, perceiving *Izwi*’s value for disseminating propaganda. As one official wrote, ‘[T]he idea is to encourage a paper sufficiently unofficial and critical of the Government at times to be read by the African, yet to keep the power to prevent that paper from becoming an extremist publication.’¹⁴

In walking this line between censorship and liberalism, officials allied with a South African company called Bantu Press. Bantu Press had been founded in 1932 by the South African businessman Bertram Paver, an advertising salesman who recognized that there was a Black middle-class market for locally manufactured goods. Along these lines, he perceived the utility of a Black press ‘as a magnificent medium for advertisers to tap this market’ (Couzens *n.d.*: 24). By 1945, Bantu Press had acquired ten weekly Black newspapers and twelve non-newspaper periodicals, making up nearly all Black publications in South Africa, Bechuanaland and Basutoland (Switzer 1997: 190–1). While some of these publications were profitable, many were not. Paver thus worked closely with colonial officials to subsidize the publications, both commerce and government recognizing the value of a politically docile vernacular press.

In 1947, the Eswatini government made plans for *Izwi* to be acquired by Bantu Press. For officials, a Bantu Press-owned publication would convey that *Izwi* was not government-controlled nor subject to censorship: ‘[T]he publication will be the property of Bantu Press, who will control its editorial policy. We feel this is important since it can then honestly be said of the publication that it is independent of government control.’ At the same time, the involvement of Bantu Press would guarantee a conservative tone satisfying the government’s other goal: ‘[E]qually important, however, is that the publication should reflect the aims of the Government.’¹⁵ From Paver’s perspective, the colonial government provided financing for a paper that would initially be unprofitable. Collaboration with

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume III, Government Secretary Memo, 19 May 1947.

¹³ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume III, Secretariat, Mbabane, to A. G. T. Chaplin, 6 May 1947.

¹⁴ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume I, High Commissioner’s Office, Cape Town, to Beetham, Secretariat, Mbabane, 14 May 1947.

¹⁵ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume I, B. Paver to E. B. Beetham, Secretariat, Mbabane, 8 October 1948.

British officials would supply a distribution network via local district commissioners as well as content procured by correspondents via officials.

Given Nquku's financial worries, the offer of purchase was hard to refuse.¹⁶ And the circulation of the revived *Izwi* was still low. In 1948, Nquku informed colonial officials that a mere 250 copies were published quarterly, with about seventy paid-up subscribers; the rest of the copies were purchased at 3 pence a copy. There were no advertisements. This could not have been profitable, given that the cost of production was £17 per year.¹⁷ Nquku requested a price of £100 for the publication. The government rejected paying this outright, although it did agree to payments in instalments as the circulation of the paper rose (it is unlikely Nquku ever received more than £40 for the paper, given sustained low purchases).¹⁸

Yet while relinquishing his financial obligations, Nquku sought to maintain editorial control. Only thus could he ensure that 'the *Izwi* should remain a free paper and not Government controlled or suppressed'. But the government informed Nquku that he would relinquish all editorial rights, although they did concede to a small monthly fee as a 'contributor'.¹⁹ The first issue of the new quarterly *Izwi* appeared in September 1949; by April 1950, it was appearing on a monthly basis with a circulation of 3,000 copies, in receipt of a monthly £35 subsidy from the colonial government. Fulfilling Paver's wishes, 25 per cent of the paper consisted of advertisements.²⁰

In the years following the sale, Nquku invested his energies elsewhere, perhaps realizing that his ability to influence editorial direction was indeed limited. By 1955, Nquku had started a new paper, one published by a Mbabane press and released by the SPA. This was *The Swazilander*, named in isiZulu as *uNgwane*. (By the 1950s, the print media was still dominated by isiZulu, although debates around the necessity of a dedicated siSwati orthography emerged around now (Cabrita and Sukati forthcoming).) Its tone was robustly anti-colonial, provocatively displaying on its masthead an alternative chronology of Eswatini, naming Sobhuza as 'King', on equal footing with the British King George. The paper pleaded for 'democracy not dictatorship, freedom not serfdom', and spoke for the interests of Nquku's elite class: '[T]he position of the progressive non-European Swazilander must be recognized and made secure,' since 'there has been no channel through which they could express themselves freely' – surely a slight to *Izwi*. Financial insecurity threaded through even this first issue, with Nquku stating that success 'will depend entirely on the support received ... we earnestly hope the response will be immediate and generous'.²¹ Nquku's worries were well founded; the newspaper did not survive beyond a few issues.

¹⁶ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume III, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume 1, no. 1, March 1947.

¹⁷ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume I, E. B. Beetham, Secretariat, Mbabane, to B. Paver, 15 March 1948.

¹⁸ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume I, J. Nquku to Dumbrell, 22 April 1949; Dumbrell to Paver, 11 June 1949.

¹⁹ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume I, J. Nquku to Dumbrell, 22 April 1949; Dumbrell to Paver, 11 June 1949; Paver to Beetham, 2 March 1949.

²⁰ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume I, Beetham to Paver, 27 February 1950; Chief Secretary to the High Commissioner, Cape Town, 27 February 1950.

²¹ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume II, *The Swazilander* 'Ungwane', Volume 1, no. 1, April 1955.

In the absence of his own print platform, Nquku turned afresh to *Izwi*. Possibly still on the government's payroll as a contributor, from 1950 Nquku began to author a regular column. By this decade, as the above account makes clear, *Izwi* certainly was a tool of the government. But Nquku's innovations with his column meant that it became much more. In total, nearly 350 columns authored by Nquku were published by *Izwi* from 1950 to 1963 (*Izwi* would close in 1963). A prolific columnist, Nquku used *Izwi* to conjure up a new political community – one that critiqued colonial rule, but also the hierarchies of Swati society.

Kadebona

Nquku wrote using the pseudonymous name of 'Kadebona' – isiZulu for The Experienced One.²² Nquku is not explicitly named in any of Kadebona's columns, yet all signs point to Kadebona being Nquku. The columns covered religion, politics, gender, sexuality, marriage, the traditional order, relations with colonial Britain, and the prospect of independence for Eswatini from Britain. These are all topics Nquku cared deeply about (admittedly interests he would have shared with other Progressives). Second, the increased frequency of Kadebona's column after 1955 lines up with the period when *The Swazilander* collapsed. In the early 1950s, yearly occurrences of the column were in the single-digit figures. In 1957, the number of Kadebona columns jumped dramatically (twenty-seven Kadebona columns were published that year), and the number grew over the coming years. With the closure of *The Swazilander*, Nquku may well have turned to *Izwi* as an outlet for his political views. Third, the peak years of Kadebona's column coincided with the height of Nquku's political career. A five-year period between 1958 and 1963 saw the yearly appearances of Kadebona's column in *Izwi* ranging from forty-two to sixty-four.

Finally, the scant biographical information we have for Kadebona (through the occasional personal reference in his columns) matches what we know to be true of Nquku. Kadebona was a member of the country's Black intelligentsia, a married man of means (owning a house), highly educated, and fluent in English, isiZulu and siSwati. (Kadebona's columns were written largely in isiZulu, although the odd English word as well as traces of embryonic written siSwati were also evident.) Like Nquku, Kadebona lived in Msunduzi, in the hills above Mbabane. There was simply – to my knowledge – not an individual in mid-century Eswatini who matched Kadebona's erudition, politics, elite class and home-owning status other than Nquku.

What prompted Kadebona's journalism? By the late 1950s, sharp divisions were crystallizing within Swati society. Black opposition to colonial rule was relatively unified. Kadebona wrote of emaSwati's desire to throw off colonial rule (a column of 1961 lamented 'we are being treated like children, our words are not being heard'²³). Yet emaSwati were divided regarding the direction of independent Eswatini. On the one hand, there were the Progressives, represented by figures such as Nquku. This group stood for the adoption of parliamentary democracy. This meant universal franchise and the educated middle-class elite as post-independence leaders. On the

²² Literally, 'an experienced person who has survived many precarious situations'. My thanks to Pihwo Mnyandu of Howard University for assistance with this translation.

²³ Kadebona, 'The problem with the money', *Izwi lama Swazi*, 15 April 1961.

other hand, there was Sobhuza II and his traditionalist advisers, exemplified by the Swazi National Council. This group leaned into a version of Swati culture that stressed aristocracy and rank (a view that had undergone a renaissance since the 1930s). In the traditionalists' reading, hereditary privilege guaranteed political power – leaders were born, not made via education and Christianity – and commoners 'naturally' sat beneath traditional elites.

By the late 1950s, tensions between the Progressives and the traditionalists came to a head. These tensions had been brewing for decades. Britain's indirect rule methods meant that Sobhuza had been their preferred interlocutor, with Nquku and the Progressives frequently complaining to colonial officials that they were excluded from decision making. In 1953, Nquku wrote to the government, asking 'how will rapid progress be made when the enlightened members of our community are being ignored? This applies the brake to African progress and disrupts friendly relations between the Government and the Swaziland intelligentsia.'²⁴ Sobhuza himself had long regarded Progressives with suspicion, worried that educated *emaSwati* might work against Swati institutions. He also feared that the SPA might be 'taken over' by the educated South Africans employed by the government (a reflection of the small number of educated *emaSwati*) – literate 'foreigners' with little loyalty to the hereditary Swati monarch (Kuper 1978: 103–4). In 1960, the split occurred between Sobhuza and the Progressives. Nquku – one of the educated foreigners Sobhuza feared – transformed the SPA into the country's first political party, the Swaziland Progressive Party. Progressives argued that Sobhuza should be relegated to a constitutional monarch and sought to muzzle the powerful Swazi National Council. In this reformed Eswatini, educated Progressives would be the rightful leaders of the people. Hereditary Swati politics would be brought in line with popular will.

Befitting Nquku's investment in Western-style education, it is appropriate that print was his medium for articulating this egalitarian vision. From the late 1950s, Kadebona's columns became occasions for Nquku to attack hierarchy and rank as the constitutive principles of Swati society. While he prudently avoided criticizing Sobhuza himself (although a column of 1963 entitled 'The king has spoken' came perilously close),²⁵ the Swazi National Council was a frequent target. Kadebona styled the Council as closed to public scrutiny, demanding to know 'why are meetings that involve the public not advertised in the paper so that people may attend?'²⁶ (Here, as throughout his columns, the 'paper' is invoked as a democratic dispenser of openly accessible information.) Kadebona called for 'greater transparency from the Swaziland National Council', demanding that it eschew 'secretiveness' and use *Izwi* to 'publish the work of its committees each month'.²⁷

Elsewhere, Kadebona criticized the Swazi National Council for its alienation from the nation's people, arguing that it was far from a representative organization: 'Nowadays the Council is just being called a Who's Who because they never meet with

²⁴ Eswatini National Archives, Lobamba, file no. 3111, *Izwi lama Swazi*, Volume II, Nquku to Government Secretary, Mbabane, 2 November 1953.

²⁵ Kadebona, 'The king has spoken' (*Ingwenyama Ikhulumile*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 30 November 1963.

²⁶ Kadebona, 'Whispers' (*Zokuhleba*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 29 April 1961, p. 11.

²⁷ Kadebona, 'Leaders must tell the nations about their efforts' (*Abaholi Abazise Isizwe Ngemizamo Abayenzayo Iketango Lingajubeki*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 1 October 1960.

the nation ... the truth is that they do not stand for all Swazis.²⁸ More strongly, a column of 1960 maintained that the Council was 'where people's requests are crushed'.²⁹ Kadebona accused the Council of self-serving corruption, and of capitalizing on its political influence. Kadebona critiqued the unjust consequences of a society categorized by rank, dividing people into haves and have-nots, 'fathers' and 'sons'. A column of 1962 inquired whether there was a need for 'chiefs to be starting businesses and competing with ordinary folk ... if the fathers who are in charge have the businesses, then what opportunities will the sons have?'³⁰

While the Swazi National Council was an obvious target, Kadebona also railed against other hierarchical institutions of Swati society. Traditional healers – *tinyanga* and *tangoma* – were important legitimators of the monarchy, lending support to the king's claim to be the nation's rainmaker-in-chief. Their profession was similarly shaped by gradations of power. They operated on the assumption that they possessed esoteric knowledge that ordinary people had no access to. As with the National Council, Kadebona accused traditional healers of leveraging secrecy as a mode of power: 'They have come to believe that the horn [where medicine is stored] has something powerful in it ... [that] wearing the horn makes you an awe-inspiring and fearful figure ... they go around pretending as if they are the only ones who are to be feared.'³¹ These healers discouraged independent thinking among clients, preferring deference: '[E]ven if you are suspicious of the contents of the medicine, because you do not know what has been put inside it, you will be made to drink it ... when you try to question this, you are mocked and told "this isn't the way it's done"' (see article excerpted below).³² Traditional healers would not be the only instance of 'custom' attacked by Kadebona. In a 1962 article advocating the abolition of bridal wealth payments (*lobola*) for brides, Kadebona mused that 'even though we love our culture, for some of us it is frustrating'.³³ (Kadebona's frustration with *lobola* did not mean that he opposed marriage; the article on marriage excerpted here maintains that unmarried partners living together was a sin.)

Kadebona made similar criticisms of other stratifications. A group of evangelical Christians known as Zionists were prominent in Eswatini. Faith-healing Zionists were largely rural, uneducated, traditionalist and lower-income. Where Progressives saw Christianity as the faith of the elite, Zionists saw Christianity as the weapon of the marginalized, empowering those looked down upon by the schooled elite – the 'wisdom of this world is foolishness to God'.³⁴ By the 1950s, Zionists also enjoyed a

²⁸ Kadebona, 'The Swazi Council must be set up' (*Alakhiwe Ibandla lakangwane*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 2 July 1960, p. 2.

²⁹ Kadebona, 'Kadebona discussed the complaints at conferences that were held earlier' (*UKadebona Ukhanyisa Izikhalo Zabambhizinisi Abakade Benomhlangano*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 23 July 1960.

³⁰ Kadebona, 'Chiefs are building businesses' (*Izikhulu Zakha Amabhizinisi*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 22 December 1962.

³¹ Kadebona, 'Traditional healers and their medicines' (*Izinyanga Nemithi Yazo*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 26 January 1963, p. 9 (included in this article).

³² Kadebona, 'Our traditional healers' (*Izinyanga Zakithi*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 2 October 1963, p. 10. See also 'Traditional healers and their medicines' (included in this article).

³³ Kadebona, 'The time has come to do away with *lobola*' (*Sifikile Isikhathi Sokufa Kwelobolo*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 13 January 1962, p. 13. See also 'Marrying yourself off and *lobolo*' (*Ukuzendisa Namalobolo*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 19 January 1963 (included in this article).

³⁴ 1 Corinthians 3.19.

close relationship with Sobhuza. They received his patronage during conflict with British officials and missionaries. In return, they styled the institution of Swati kingship as divinely ordained, scriptural hierarchies mapping onto worldly rank. Indeed, Zionist culture mirrored the status obsessions of Swati society, investing in prophets who exercised absolute power over their congregations – and also bringing to mind the authoritarian figure of *inyanga* or *sangoma*, upon whom some Zionist prophets modelled their own careers.

Kadebona found much to criticize here. His columns frequently attacked Zionists for insufficiently cleaving to ‘civilized’ Christianity. Instead, he accused them of corrupting biblical faith by importing indigenous religion: ‘[M]ixing together traditional beliefs with the Word is ruining the truth of God.’ Where Zionist ministers appealed to their divine calling, Kadebona maintained that religious leadership should be premised on education, a democratic uplift open to all. Uneducated Zionist ministers should ‘be sent straight to Bible School, so that the Word can be properly clarified to them’.³⁵ Kadebona argued against the intricate hierarchies of the Zionist church – stratified between layers of prophets, presidents and supervisors – as unbiblical (‘one wonders if these positions of Presidents and Superintendents are even in the Holy Scriptures?’³⁶). He argued that the serpentine hierarchies of Zionist churches confused believers, throwing them into uncertainty about the fundamentals of Christianity, with so many different individuals making claim upon their loyalty:

One is left wondering which Cross this is. Do they mean the wooden cross? Or the brass crosses that the Bishops, the Presidents, and the Presidents’ wives carry? Or the gold crosses with flowers and birds upon them and lots of little crosses? [common for Zionist prophets to use] Which cross are they talking about?³⁷

More constructively, Kadebona’s column also allowed for new forms of national authority to emerge. There was, of course, ‘Kadebona’ himself. As Stephanie Newell has shown for the Gold Coast, pseudonyms emerged amid urbanization, the growth of a literate middle class, the indignities of colonial rule, and the reinvention of gendered and sexual norms. Fictive names became ways to imagine new kinds of selfhood (Newell 2013; Sandwith 2019: 106). Much the same could be said for Nquku’s fictitious self, which allowed him to position himself – a commoner with no familial links to the monarchy as well as a foreigner – as an authoritative voice: ‘The Experienced One’. In the print world of *Izwi*, ordinary people (or in any case, those who did not hail from traditionalist circles; it would be hard to argue for the ‘ordinariness’ of the educated Nquku) could speak with equal gravitas to royals.

³⁵ Kadebona, ‘An evangelist says it is possible to prophecy on behalf of the Lord’ (*Umdali Uyabhekelwa Kusho Umvangeli*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 11 February 1961, p. 3. For further recommendations that ministers attend Bible school, see ‘Pastors should read the word of God so they do not spread doubt’ (*Abafunde Isibhalo Abashumayeli Ukuze Bangangabazi*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 2 July 1960, p. 3.

³⁶ Kadebona, ‘Why are churches spreading?’ (*Andiswa Yini Emabandla Enkolo Na?*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 8 June 1963.

³⁷ Kadebona, ‘Wrestling with the cross’ (*uMgqiqomgqiqo we Siphambano*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 7 December 1963.

Stamping each column with the moniker of Kadebona reiterated Nquku's presence, and his authority.

Kadebona positioned himself as a moral guide, exhorting the Swati people to better conduct themselves (his Christian values shining through here) and to national progress. Multiple columns mused on the qualities needed by progressive leaders who would guide the emaSwati people to independent nationhood.³⁸ Kadebona dispensed wisdom in pithy exhortations: 'young man, your child support is needed' or 'focus on the good, go slowly on the bad'. Yet eschewing 'traditionalism', Kadebona's exhortations conceived of progress in a modernizing Western mode. A column of 1961 instructed the nation that 'we need to build in a new way, we can no longer use grass like our traditional Swazi huts. We must now build with cement, in a hygienic manner.'³⁹ Where he attacked traditionalists as insufficient for the demands of the present day, he provided glowing examples of economic uplift fuelled by Western capitalism. Kadebona wrote several pieces praising the new development of Kwaluseni, a Black residential area outside the city of Manzini: 'basically similar to a town designed in the modern European style ... No doubt about it, this place is civilized!'⁴⁰

Kadebona was nonetheless scathing of the state and private capital-led development projects in 1960s Eswatini, accusing them of allowing only whites to accrue profit: '[P]eople are asking what the country is gaining from whites who are building forestry and sugar cane companies here in Swaziland. What has the country gained if ordinary people do not get what they have worked for, are getting low wages, being fired, not getting enough food?'⁴¹ Kadebona was more approving of Black-led economic enterprise, glowingly listing the foundation of the annual Bambiswano (Cooperation) conference, the emergence of a women's organization called Yakha Ngwane (Build Yourself Up, Swaziland) in the hands of Swati politician and social worker Regina Twala, and the creation of the Swazi Commercial Men's Association.⁴² Several columns discussed the emergence of African-owned bus companies, with Kadebona enthusing that '[the buses] are new, they look good, this shows progress in the country'.⁴³ Other columns argued for the need for emaSwati to form trade unions: '[S]o neglected are the workers in our country that when a worker gets sick they must forego income ... because there is no paid sick leave, even

³⁸ Kadebona, 'If I were a leader' (*Kadebona Nesithembu*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 14 December 1957.

³⁹ Kadebona, 'Plans must be made for the coming change' (*Kufanele Ukuba Inguquko Yenzelwe Amalungiselelo*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 19 August 1961.

⁴⁰ See Kadebona, 'Development at Kwaluseni' (*Intuthuko wase Kwaluseni*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 5 October 1963 (included in this article).

⁴¹ Kadebona, 'What will Swaziland gain from companies?' (*Uzuzani ungwane ngezinkampani*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 19 April 1961, p. 12.

⁴² Kadebona, 'The annual Bambiswano conference' (*Umhlangano wonyaka wobambiswano*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 11 October 1958, p. 2; 'All the news that comes here is from gossipmongers' (*Zonke Izindaba Eziza Kithi Ngabasiki Bebunda*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 9 July 1960, p. 10. See his interview with the founder of the Bambiswano Cooperative: Kadebona, 'Bambiswano Cooperative: an interview with Mgudlu', *Izwi lama Swazi*, 18 May 1957.

⁴³ Kadebona, 'Buses for Swazis are appreciated' (*Kuyabongeka ukusebenza kwamabhasi abansundu*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 11 August 1962.

though their sickness was contracted at work.⁴⁴ Kadebona was all for the emergence of economic activity led by and for the people; equally, he was deeply critical of elites – including white colonials – who accumulated profits at the expense of the ordinary man or woman (his column of 1963 took on Sobhuza himself for accumulating cars from dubious financial sources).⁴⁵

Kadebona's column thus allowed for a new communal entity to emerge, a product of the particular environment of Eswatini in the 1950s and 1960s. This was 'the people', or 'abantu' in isiZulu (also 'abanta kaNgwane', the people of Eswatini) – a term that Kadebona used hundreds of times. In Kadebona's writings, 'the people' became a counterweight to the top-heavy structures of Swati society, invoked multiple times as a source of legitimacy. He disapproved of those who 'mislead the people' (*okuwunga abantu*),⁴⁶ praised those 'people who try to uplift themselves' (*ukuzama ukuzakha kwabantu kulomuzi*),⁴⁷ lauded the rare leader who 'worked for the people' (*bayabalungiselela abantu bakubo*),⁴⁸ and approved of those 'people who respected themselves' (*kubantu abazihloniphayo*)⁴⁹ – yet still disapproved of those churches that succumbed to the will of the people, 'doing as the people like' (*sewenza okuthandwa ngabantu*).⁵⁰ The people might sit above royalty, but God still outranked the people.

Kadebona's column was a venue for *abantu* to debate their views. Indeed, on one occasion, Kadebona dubbed the newspaper a 'community meeting place'.⁵¹ As a public forum, the newspaper was a place where progress was debated and thereby generated; without it, national aspiration would be stifled. In a column of mid-1961, Kadebona asked: '[H]ow can the people progress and their issues be solved by public discussion when no one reports about it in the news? What people complain about on a day-to-day basis must be discussed in public.'⁵² The dyad of reading about and subsequently discussing the doings of your compatriots was constitutive of national identity. And in contrast to the closed-door meetings of the Swazi National Council, his column was where issues of interest were *openly* debated: '[I]t is good that we discuss this matter [in this column] because it is very deep and it is relevant for the whole nation. Let's talk about it and inspect it to see if there is something that can help.'⁵³ Although Nquku's pseudonym suggests a certain self-regard (The Experienced One), in fact he claimed to speak first and foremost for 'the people', arguing that the column was their space, not his. Affirming his representative role, Kadebona frequently used the collective 'we' rather than the singular 'I'. By doing so, he was

⁴⁴ Kadebona, 'Workers should unite in Swaziland' (*Azihlangane Izisebenzi ka Ngwane*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 7 December 1957; see also Kadebona, 'Workers should have representatives' (*Azibe Nabakulumeli Izisebenzi*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 2 November 1957.

⁴⁵ Kadebona, 'The king has spoken' (*Ingwenyama Ikhulumile*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 30 November 1963.

⁴⁶ Kadebona, 'Noah's Ark' (*Umkhumbi ka Noa*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 19 January 1963.

⁴⁷ Kadebona, 'Development at Kwaluseni' (*Intuthuko wase Kwaluseni*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 5 October 1963.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Kadebona, 'Young girls who use skin lightening creams on their faces' (*Izintombi ezineterylene ebusweni*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 9 November 1963.

⁵⁰ Kadebona, 'Wrestling with the cross' (*uMgiqomgiqo we Siphambano*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 7 December 1963.

⁵¹ Kadebona, 'Respect the anointed one' (*UKadebona Nesikhwithi Sasebusika*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 29 March 1958.

⁵² Kadebona, 'What does the news say?' (*Zithini Izindaba?*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 17 June 1961.

⁵³ Kadebona, 'The law protects women' (*Umthetho ovikela amantombazana*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 2 February 1963.

affirming that these were not solely his opinions but also the views of the nation. Where the Swazi National Council failed in representing the people, Kadebona's column promised to do better. In the absence of democratic institutions, the column became the nation's egalitarian forum. Hierarchies of birth and rank meant little in this new meeting place (in a 1961 column, Kadebona bemoaned newspapers that gave prominence to the issues of 'those people who think they are more important ... while regular people's issues remain in the background'⁵⁴). All views were allowed; indeed, the nation *required* that all views be aired. In another column, Kadebona described the newspaper thus:

This newspaper is where the rich and the poor, and where leaders and their followers, all meet. This is why it is pleasing that everyone reads it, as this is where we can all put forward our ideas for building the nation. The newspaper is also where we can speak freely without being told to keep quiet and sit down, just to make way for some person of status to speak.⁵⁵

In this way, the column opened up space for voices other than the columnist's. The column was about give and take, about the exchange of views in a national setting, rather than merely a site for Kadebona to broadcast his wisdom upon a compliant audience. In yet another column, Kadebona appealed for readers to write with their own responses to his columns: 'I ask readers to enlighten us.'⁵⁶ Thus, in 1958, one James Kumalo wrote in with his approval of the column: 'I find it satisfying when I read news that is clear on the cooperative way Kadebona works ... I'm grateful for the work of this writer because it charts the way forward, and I encourage him to keep up the good work of giving us his encouraging message.'⁵⁷ One regular correspondent to *Izwi* ('Vulabevalile', or 'Open That Which Is Closed') agreed that a true reader should be both a recipient *and* a generator of content: 'a reader of the newspaper is the one who contributes the news that they find ... stop being selfish with news that is not known to others. You must report whatever is happening to you in your area.'⁵⁸ Such offerings from readers were greeted with warm acknowledgement from Kadebona, underscoring this mutually supportive dynamic between columnist and the public. In response to a letter from one of his readers (included in the excerpts below), Kadebona warmly replied, 'We have heard you clearly, weKunene' (*Kuzwakele wena weKunene*) (weKunene is an honorific name for Swati people).⁵⁹

Peopled by wise men and legitimated via the opinion of the people, Kadebona presented his column as a place to seek and find enlightenment. It was a space in which secrets were banished by frank debate. Throughout the columns, Kadebona frequently deployed terms suggesting pellucidity, illumination and openness. In one column he asserted: 'I will be clear about what I mean' (*ngizokubeka obala engikushoyo*

⁵⁴ Kadebona, 'What does the news say?' (*Zithini Izindaba?*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 17 June 1961.

⁵⁵ Kadebona, 'Leaders must tell the nation about their efforts, and not break the chain' (*Abaholi Abazise Isizwe Ngemizamo Abayenzayo Iketango Lingajubeki*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 1 October 1960, p. 10.

⁵⁶ Kadebona, 'Noah's Ark' (*Umkhumbi ka Noa*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 19 January 1963.

⁵⁷ James Kumalo, 'Kumalo and Kadebona', *Izwi lama Swazi*, 18 January 1958.

⁵⁸ 'A reader and the news', *Izwi lama Swazi*, 9 April 1960.

⁵⁹ See Kadebona, 'Marrying yourself off and lobolo' (*Ukuzendisa Namalobolo*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 19 January 1963 (included in this article).

nganasilinganiso).⁶⁰ In another, Kadebona approvingly quoted someone else, noting that the speaker ‘wanted to make the matter clear’ to his listeners (*wakhuluma ngalendaba ngoba athanda ukukhanyisela*) – literally, to ‘light up’ the issue.⁶¹ Yet another column praised someone who articulated his views with transparency: ‘I heard someone at the meeting speaking clearly’ (*ngizwile omunye emhlanganweni akhuluma ngokusobala*).⁶² Kadebona’s column was an antidote to a national culture of obscurantism, encouraging readers to air multiple viewpoints and opposing positions.

Kadebona’s columns, however, were riven by contradictions. While he railed against the hierarchies of Swati royalty and white rule, he nonetheless imposed his own constraints upon other groups – notably women and girls. While he saw his column as ushering in an egalitarian age of free expression, he simultaneously bemoaned women’s autonomy throughout the 1960s. Countless columns (including some excerpted here: see ‘Marriage and *lobola*’ of 19 January 1963) positioned Kadebona as a moral arbitrator, urging the nation’s parents to act against supposedly promiscuous girls flocking to towns and taking lovers: ‘what is happening these days with our young women . . . parents, wake up! Find out what is going on. The girls have gone mad, they do just what they like.’⁶³ A column of 1960 (included in the longer online edition) attacked women ‘who don’t respect themselves’ (i.e. who entered into relationships with men before marriage and who moved to towns) for overturning the supposedly natural order of things: ‘[T]hey are a big problem because they are the ones who are supposed to be helping nurture us all. Now, who is going to guide who?’⁶⁴

Kadebona was equally perturbed by the disruption of another gendered social category – older women who tried to regain their youth via skin-lightening creams. While we know much about women’s use of these creams to lighten their appearance, a little mentioned dimension of their use is as an anti-ageing technique (see the excerpt ‘Young women with nylon faces’, 9 November 1963). Kadebona’s columns chastised this practice: ‘But what is bad is for somebody to use these creams in order to present themselves as a young woman, and so to attract the young boys, while they know they have long outgrown that stage of life.’⁶⁵ Skin creams signalled the upsetting of gendered generational hierarchies – elder women trying to regress to the status of youthful girls.

Kadebona lamented the erasure of a further dividing line within society – that of sexual intercourse across racial difference. While he could simultaneously make political arguments for transcending race in favour of egalitarian universalism, in his

⁶⁰ Kadebona, ‘Why are the churches divided?’ (*Ahlukaniswa yini amabandla na?*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 3 August 1963.

⁶¹ Kadebona, ‘You did not expose me’ (*Awungenekelanga Ilanga*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 10 August 1963, no page number.

⁶² Kadebona, ‘The king has spoken’ (*Ingwenyama Ikhulumile*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 30 November 1963.

⁶³ Kadebona, ‘The time has come to do away with *lobola*’ (*Sifikile Isikhathi Sokufa Kwelobolo*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 13 January 1962, p. 13.

⁶⁴ Kadebona, ‘Today’s women rule themselves’ (*Abanamuhla Baziphethe*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 6 August 1960.

⁶⁵ Kadebona, ‘Young women with nylon faces’ (*Izintombi Ezinetyylene Ebusweni*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 9 November 1963; ‘Most girls spend time building their own households’ (*Iningi Lamantombazana Ichitha Isikhathi Sokuzakhela Imizi*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 17 December 1960, p. 3; Kadebona, ‘It is wrong to marry older women’ (*Isiphosiso Ukushada Nenkosikazi Endala*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 14 January 1961, p. 3.

columns he advocated for policing racial boundaries in sexual matters. He attacked young women for relationships with white men – especially Portuguese settlers from Mozambique who came to Eswatini for employment: '[T]here is an awful thing happening where girls are getting into relationships with whites. Is it really love, or is it a way for these girls to get money from the white men?'⁶⁶

Kadebona's columns were thus democratic spaces only for some. In a column entitled 'You did not air my dirty laundry' (*Awungenekelanga iLanga*) (see excerpt below), Kadebona approvingly detailed the behaviour of wives whose husbands were unfaithful to them, yet who had the self-restraint not to engage in public exposure of their spouses – although they knew 'about the shameful things [they] had done'. Other less discerning women, however, wrecked the home by 'making too much noise [which] may attract animals from far away, which can damage the marriage'.⁶⁷ Audibility, speech, putting forward ideas – all these privileges of the column were reserved for men only. Between the lines of Kadebona's proclamations, we need to look for the silences, for things that were not said, and for individuals discouraged from unseemly 'shouting'.

Youth were another silenced constituency. One column lamented that 'youth want to speak for themselves to adults, and yet they forget that they can't speak in just any manner to adults. One must speak carefully when addressing elders.'⁶⁸ One might think here of Nquku's own struggles in 1962 with the Youth League of the Swaziland Progressive Party. When he attempted to dismiss their president, Dumisa Dlamini, Youth League members resisted Nquku's effort to impose his 'authoritarian' will upon them (complaints of Nquku as high-handed can be found in other sources, too).⁶⁹ In this setting, Kadebona's desire that youth should not enjoy the full freedoms of open declamation – 'to speak carefully when addressing elders' – seems both repressive and wistful.

In his last decades, it was Nquku himself who was marginalized. *Izwi* closed for financial non-viability in 1964 and Kadebona's last column was written on 14 December 1963. I have found no evidence that Nquku migrated to the English-language *Times of Swaziland*. Nquku's legacy was further compromised by a fire at his home in 1962 (possibly due to the intra-party feud) which burned his 'papers, including books, files of newspapers and magazines, Bibles and other religious matters'.⁷⁰ In 1964, Sobhuza II made a power grab that ensured his full control of the country upon the departure of the British. The country's political parties (including the Progressives) were silenced by Sobhuza. The richly textured social landscape of the 1960s – marked by a plurality of perspectives, not least in the press – was smoothed over. After 1964, Eswatini's national culture was marked by extreme centralization of power in Sobhuza II.

⁶⁶ Kadebona, 'Swaziland must unite and stop this immorality' (*Ungwane Akahlngane Achithe Lomonakalo*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 18 February 1961, p. 10. See also a column on this topic from the following year: Kadebona, 'Foreign infiltration in Swaziland is not good' (*Indlela Yokungena Kwezizwe Kangwane Ayenelisi*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 30 June 1962.

⁶⁷ Kadebona, 'You did not expose me' (*Awungenekelanga iLanga*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 10 August 1963, no page number.

⁶⁸ Kadebona, 'What does the news say?' (*Zithini Izindaba*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 17 June 1963.

⁶⁹ *Times of Swaziland*, 9 February 1962. See also Kadebona, 'I am barking at my enemies' (*Ngikhonkotha Izitha Nje*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 21 April 1962.

⁷⁰ *Times of Swaziland*, 15 June 1962.

Nquku became increasingly peripheral in national affairs. He gained only a few votes in the pre-independence elections of 1967 and was barred from standing in the elections of 1970 on the xenophobic grounds that 'he could not document his status as a Swazi citizen' (Kuper 1978: 321). There is a certain irony to Nquku's marginalization as a South African, given his own frequent railings over the years at 'foreigners' and those who illicitly took jobs from the emaSwati people.⁷¹ Yet as he dwindled in political standing, he continued his prolific documentary output, including in correspondence with sympathizers and observers of Swati national affairs, both within the country and beyond.⁷² While Nquku could not find newspapers to publish his writings, he turned to the useful – if expensive – device of self-publishing. On his seventieth birthday, in around 1970, he self-published a short (auto)biography. Written in the third person, Nquku was still experimenting with pseudonymous possibilities, enhancing his own standing through positioning his authorial voice as an impartial observer 'objectively' reporting on a man of great note. Nquku's (auto)biography proclaimed himself a patriot of Eswatini who nonetheless defied customary hierarchies ('an individual could live honourably, independently, without being a servant'). Only such an outstandingly independent individual could truly claim to lead his people, the emaSwati:

In the history of Swaziland, [Nquku's] name will go down into the country's records, revered by many, and in the minds of others, his name will remain indelible. He set for others an example that an individual could live honourably, independently without being a servant, and that it is only such a man who can be a leader to defend the cause of his people.⁷³

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S000197202400055X>>.

References

- Cabrita, J. (2018) 'Christian ecumenism, Swazi nationalism, and a unified church for a unified nation', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 44 (2): 283–98.
- Cabrita, J. and T. Sukati (forthcoming) 'Orthographic arguments: language debates in Swati newspapers of the 1950s and 1960s' in K. Barber and S. Newell (eds), *Print Cultures and African Literatures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Couzens, T. (n.d.) 'History of the Black press in South Africa, 1836–1960'. Seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand Institute for Advanced Social Research.
- Kuper, H. (1978) *Sobhuza II Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: the story of a hereditary ruler and his country*. London: Duckworth.
- Mokoena, H. (2011) *Magema Fuze: the making of a Kholwa intellectual*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Mthembu, M. (2020) 'The political and economic history of Swaziland's first indigenous language newspaper, *Izwi lama Swazi*', *African Journalism Studies* 41 (1): 17–34.
- Newell, S. (2013) *The Power to Name: a history of anonymity in colonial West Africa*. Athens OH: Ohio University Press.

⁷¹ Kadebona, 'Foreign infiltration in Swaziland is not good' (*Indlela Yokungena Kwezizwe Kangwane Ayenelisi*), *Izwi lama Swazi*, 30 June 1962.

⁷² E.g. correspondence with Hugh Macmillan; Bengt Sundkler (Uppsala Archives, Bengt Sundkler Papers, John June Nquku folder); Hilda Kuper; UN officials (UN Archives, DAG 5/4.1).

⁷³ Hilda Kuper Papers, UCLA Archives, Box 38.

- Newell, S. (2016) 'From corpse to corpus: the printing of death in colonial West Africa' in D. Peterson, E. Hunter and S. Newell (eds), *African Print Cultures: newspapers and their publics in the twentieth century*. Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Ogola, G. (2005) 'Popular culture and politics: whispers and the dramaturgy of power in Kenya', *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nature, and Culture* 11 (2): 147–60.
- Peterson, D., E. Hunter and S. Newell (2016) *African Print Cultures: newspapers and their publics in the twentieth century*. Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Sandwith, C. (2019) 'Well seasoned talks: the newspaper column and the satirical mode in South African letters', *Social Dynamics* 45 (1): 103–20.
- Switzer, L. (1997) 'Bantu world and the origins of a captive African commercial press' in L. Switzer (ed.), *South Africa's Alternative Press*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Joel Cabrita is Professor of African History at Stanford University and the Susan Ford Dorsey Director of the Center for African Studies. She is also a Senior Research Associate in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Johannesburg. Her most recent book is *Written Out: the silencing of Regina Gelana Twala* (Ohio and Wits University Presses, 2023).

Extracts from *Izwi lama Swazi*, the columns of 'Kadebona'

The following excerpts of Kadebona's columns all date from a single year – 1963. This was a uniquely important year for Nquku, for *Izwi lama Swazi*, and for the country of Eswatini. First, 1963 was a time of significant political pressure for Nquku, both within his own party (as he tried to fend off youthful dissenters for much of this year) and externally (as Sobhuza and his advisers made plans to launch their own political movement, Imbokodvo, that would ultimately defeat Nquku and the Progressives in an election in 1964). It was also a year of unprecedented Swati criticism of the British and British-owned industry; a general strike of May 1963 brought the country to a halt and led to the parachuting in of British Highlander troops to quell the accompanying protests. It was also the final year of both Kadebona and *Izwi lama Swazi* (the newspaper would permanently close in December 1963). By focusing on a selection of columns throughout these momentous twelve months, I hope to offer a thickly textured 'real-time' sense of Kadebona's preoccupations and dreams during a pivotal year for the embryonic Swati nation. A broader cross-section of columns from 1953–62 can be found in the longer online resource available with the supplementary material published with this article at <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S000197202400055X>>.

The translation of these columns from isiZulu into English was done collaboratively by Joel Cabrita and Betty Sibongile Dlamini. Cabrita and Dlamini's collaboration consisted of discussion of linguistic issues but also of broader social and historical questions. The translations then underwent a further round of revisions by Phiwokuhle Mnyandu, Assistant Director of the Center for African Studies, Howard University.

Ukuzendisa namalobolo, 19 January 1963

Ukufunda impendulo kankosazana Vaillethe Motha ethe ukwehluleka kumendo kusemadodeni wona asehluleka ukugqokisa, ukondla kanye nokunganakwa uma inkosikazi igula. Kuzwakele wena weKunene.

Likhona iqiniso elimsulwa kulokho ngoba kukhona amanye amadoda ashaya sengathi akanakinje umuzi oqondene nawo, kube sengathi abheke abantwana kuphela. Kukuphendula nkosazana kulendaba ngizobeka ukuthi ukhuluma ngase bawuthethe umendo, kanti isisusa sodaba lwaba ukuzendisa emadodeni kwentsha ngaphandle kwemvume yabazali.^a

Uthe wena nabakhishwe ngabazali bayalahlekelwa ngumendo, kepha uzamile [wezamile] Ukugwema inkulumo. Uma bekwenzeka ngendlela eyenelisayo nakuwe lokulahlekelwa umendo nakwabakhishwe abazali ngabe ubonile ukuthi umake ungakhishwanga abazali usehlazweni ngempela. Ukwehlulwa umendo enye indaba ngoba osumehlulilo unezindaba eziningi ukuhanyisa ukuthi umehlule kanjani.

Kodwa esiphambene nakho ukuzendisa kwamantombazana anamuhla abanye abathi ukukhiphita okukuhlala nomuntu othandana naye njengomfazi wakhe

^a This is an example of mingling isiZulu and siSwati. 'Ukuphendula' (to respond) is siSwati whereas the rest of the sentence is written in isiZulu. IsiZulu would be 'kukuphendvula'.

ungeyena. Ukugugela emashiceni ngoba bavamile ukugxuma ngelinye ilanga. Kuhle Motha ukubhekisisa okwenzekayo nokumane uzilahlenje ngenxa ngoba ubone abathile behluleka ekwenzeni okuthile.

Izindlela eziningi zokwehluleka emendweni abadala basho baqinisile ukuthi umendo awuthunyelwa gundwane ngoba uya khona ungazi ukuthi lendoda izobelokhu yakuthengela onayiloni nothuphisi nokunyeke noma qa; ukuthi iyokukhokhela kahle yini ekudleni ukwedlula abadizayo noma qa; ukuthi izoba nakho ukubona ukuthi uyatetema noma ugula sibilike manje ukuze ikuthumele esibhedlela noma qa.

Umendo Umdonsiswano

Kuyenzeka ukuthi abanye besifazane bakholiwe ukuthi umadonsiswana ngalokho akufanele abheke nowesifazane ukondliwanje yena enebe phansi kepha naye kufanele elekelele indoda yakhe ngezikhwepha ezilingana namandla akhe kunokubheka ukondliwa nokuthengelwa njengengane ngoba eqinisweni noma indoda ifanele ikwenze lokhu kepha kufanele, ilekelele isandla esizamayo kulomsebenzi.

Kungukwehluleka ukuthi indoda ingakwazi ukondla inkosikazi yayo, ukuyisa esibhedlela lapho igula, nokuyigqokisa kepha uma kuyinkosikazi yayo ngoqobo singakusho lokho, kodwa uma kuyileyo yokuzendisa singathi qa ngoba kusekhona nabanye abazendisile kuyona okwenza yehluleke ukwenza okufaneleyo kubo bonke.

Uma umzali engathandi lapho intombazana izikhethele khona kungabe kulungile yini ukuba lentombazana ibese iyazendisana?

Ukuzendisa kona kusenzo esibi kakhulu nokuba uVaiethe ashaye sengathi kungabe kuncono kona kunokukhalelwa kwezinkomo ezakhishwa indoda.

Kadebona

Marrying yourself off and lobolo, 19 January 1963^b

Miss Vailethe Motha wrote to this paper to argue that the institution of marriage is failing due to men who fail to clothe and feed their wives, and who neglect their wives when they are ill. We have heard you clearly, weKunene.

There is some truth to this. There are indeed some men who act as if they don't care about their home and act as if they are only responsible for the act of reproduction.

Responding to you further, Miss Motha, I would say that you are talking about those women who are already married, meanwhile the source of this problem is actually the young women who marry themselves off to men without parental consent.

You said that even those whose marriages have been blessed by their parents may well end up with failed marriages. But you are avoiding the heart of the issue. If things were done in a satisfactory manner, even in your case, losing your marriage, you would have recognized that if you did not get parental blessing you were going to be in real disgrace. Failing in marriage is another matter altogether because those who

^b Despite the mention of *lobolo* (bride wealth), in fact this column discusses only marriage and the proper behaviour of young men and women before marriage in relation to each other. Dr Mnyandu also notes that the use of the verb *ukuzendisa* (to make yourself marry, specifically applied to women) is crucial to Kadebona's negative portrayal of women who 'marry themselves off' without the consent or involvement of their families.

have failed in marriage have a lot of excuses to give for why their marriages were not successful.

What we are against is for the girls to marry themselves off, what others call cohabiting, to live with your lover as if you were a wife while you are not. This is basically getting old in bachelorhood because they [men] usually jump one day. It is good to closely examine things, Motha, instead of just giving up on yourself because you saw others failing at something.^c

There are many ways of failing in a marriage. The elders rightfully say that marriage has no guarantees because you go there without knowing if this man will buy you any nylons, two-piece suits and other things or not; whether he will continue supporting you beyond those men who pamper their women or not; will he think you are just a cry baby when you are sick or will he help you get to hospital or not?

Marriage is teamwork

Some women forget that marriage is teamwork. A woman is not supposed to just relax and sit down lazily, expecting to be fed by her husband. She also has to help her husband with her own efforts, contributing according to her own abilities, instead of expecting to be supported like a child. While it is a man's duty to support a woman, he who does so is also trying to help and contribute in this way.

A man has failed if he cannot support his wife, take her to the hospital if she is sick, or provide for her clothing, and we can say this if it is his proper wife. But if it is the woman who just married herself off to him, it is a no because there are still other women who have also married themselves off to him, and he cannot take care of them all equally.

If a parent does not like the man whom a girl chooses, is it good for the girl to then marry herself off?

Marrying yourself off is a bad thing, even though Vailethe is pretending that it is actually better than crying over the *lobola* a man pays.^d

Kadebona

Izinyanga nemithi yazo, 26 January 1963

Banangi abalwesabayo uphondo lwenyanga noma kungekho lutho kulo.

Sebangenwa ukholo lokuthi uphondo luhlala nalukhulu noma selungenalolutho, ngangoba ukugaxa izimpondo kukwenza ube nesithunzi kwabanjalo.

Nokho ukujika kwamalanga kujikisa amagugu asale abalbanje, okwakhlo-nishwa sengathi akusanjalo, inyoka sebayibamba ngemsila.

Ukusebenzisa imithi kwezinyanga kweqala kwaba nesithunzi kepha namuhla lesi sithunzi sesiyashabalala.

Lokho kwenziwe ukungazihloniphi kwenziyanga sezishaya sengathi sekwesatswha zona kuphela.

Iqiniso lithi akunjalo ngoba sengathi asanciphile namakhehla ezinyanga ingabe ashonaphi lokhu besithi imithi yazo ingovimbakufa.

^c Dr Mnyandu notes Kadebona's patronizing tone to Vailethe Motha.

^d Dr Mnyandu notes that, after a divorce, the groom's family laments the cows (*lobola*) that they have paid, now seen to be in vain.

Sesiybona ukuthi izimpilondo nezigubhu singathi ziyakuthwala ukufa.

Ubufakazi balokhu ukuthi uma inganga igula ingabe isawethemba umuthi wayo, ihamba iyofuna enye ukuzoyelapha, kodwa ebe izethembile lezikhwama zayo ukuthi omunye zingamsiza.

Kusengathi kumane kuyithemba elingajabhisi lelo.

Kadebona

Traditional healers and their medicines, 26 January 1963

Many people are scared of the traditional healer's horn even if there is nothing to fear.

They have come to believe that the horn has something powerful in it even when there is nothing inside it. Merely wearing the horn makes you an awe-inspiring and fearful figure.

Yet the passing of time has turned our cultural treasures into foolishness; things that were respected no longer are. People are now holding the snake by the tails [the plural 'tails' suggests the extreme danger of those who play with fire – i.e. those who no longer respect traditional medicine].

The traditional healer's medicines were once respected. But today that dignity is disappearing.

This is largely due to the lack of self-respect on the part of these traditional healers. They go around pretending as if they are the only ones who are to be feared.

The truth is that it is not so. Those old traditional healers are fast disappearing, and one wonders where they have gone; after all, we were thinking their medicines would prevent death.

It does look like their horns and their drums attract death.

The evidence of this is when the traditional healer is sick and does not trust their own medicine, but yet they expect these [medicine] bags of theirs to still help another sick person.

It seems like false hope.

Kadebona

Awungenekelanga iLanga, 10 August 1963

Kukhona okulokhu kungalibaleki enhliziyweni yami, nokulokhu kungenza ngifune ukuthi konje eqinisweni isifazane sike sakuzwa, sakucabanga, sagcina kuphi na?

Umuzi wabantu aba-wakhe ngokuhlanganiswa ngumDali, wabantu bonke nokuba mncane, mukhulu, umahliphihliphi, uyacwebezela; iqiniso lithi unezibi zawo.

Akukhoke isibi esibonakala ukuthi sihle, ngoba isibi siyashanyelwa silahlwe ngaphandle.

Leliqiniso linjengalo elithi amakhaya onke anemishanyelo ebhekene nezibi zakhona.

Uma ngikhuluma lendaba ngikhumbula inkulumo eyakhulunywa uMnt'nkosi Lomngeletshane kuMatsapha kukhona abantu abanengi, lapho abonga unkosikazi wakhe uMaMaseko ngokumbekezelela yonke iminyaka bakhile ikhaya labo nakhona emsebenzini wokufundisa athe wawenza iminyaka eminingi, nesezuze kuminyaka emashumi amane.

Wathi uyambonga wakwakhe ukumkhuthaza, ukungamenekeli ilanga lapho ashelela khona, nolwazi analo ngezibi zekhaya.

Ukukhanyisa inkulumo yakhe oweKunene wabekisa ngaloke kwake kwenzekela omunye wesifazane owayehlakula ngasehlathini.

Kwathi ngoba benomntwana wamlalisa phansi kwesihlahla ukuze enze umsebenzi wakhe wokuhlakula ekhululekile.

Nempela wawenza umsebenzi wakhe kahle kepha kwefika isikhathi lapho njengowesifazane waphakamisa amehlo akhe wawabhekisa ngasesihlahleni lapho abelalise umntwana wakhe khona.

Wathi nhla wabona umntwana wakhe adlaliswa imfene, imgenda akhe, naye angakhali ngoba angezwa ubuhlungu ndawo lokhu adlaliswa isilwanyana kanje.

Eqhubeka nenkulumo eyayikhanyisa ukubonga kwakhe ngempatho yowakwakhe wathi lonkosikazi wathi nhla wathola kunje kwakusengathi kunqamuka amathumbu akhe ukubona umntwana wakhe nesilwane asenyanyayo, asesabayo, nasizondayo wasimze wekhuza ngelikhulu izwi, futhi egjijimela kulesilwane; ecabanga ukuyokhulula umntwana wakhe.

Kodwa akamkhululanga, wambulala ngoba isilwane sethuka kakhulu, samdabula Phakathi umntwana besimdaliswa, wafa khona lapho.

Wakhuluma ngalendaba ngoba athanda ukukhanyisela nabanye besifazane ukuthi kuyenzeka ngesinye isikhathi esingalindelwe muntu owsilisa (??) angene ogibeni olungalunganga, nasezandleni ezimbi zenkohlakalo, kodwa uma owesifazane walelokhaya athatha isinyathelo esilukhuni sokwekhuza umhlolo, kuyenzeka kubese kwakheka umonakala ongabe usalungiswa, kanti ngezandla ezinhle, kanye nokubonisa kothando, kukanye nokuyinyonyobela indaba kungenzeka ukuthi igugu lakhe alikhiphe ezandleni ezingalungile, akwazi ukuthokoza ngalo kunokwekhuza ukuze kuzwe okude okwenza amanye amakhaya ahliphike ngenxa yokungaqapheli komame wekhaya.

Yebo kulinqiniso ukuthi abanye ngokungena kulendlela baze bazithulele nje ukuthi lokhu angangixoshi, angondla, ngihlala ezindlini ezakhiwe uyena lo myeni wami, noma ngabe sewudlaliswa imfene enjeni angeze asho lusho uyabuka nje sengathi akaboni kanti uyabona.

Nalona kusabala ukuthi akasenalo uthando sewuzibukela yena kuphela kunokubukela negama elihle lomyeni wakhe.

Kulinqiniso ukuthi kukhona abanumzane asebadlaliswa izimfene emahlathini kuthi amakhosikazi awo azithele ngabandayo, athi sengamahlala khona lawo, akusekho ongakwenza.

Amanye asuke athathe imithwalo ahambe kulelokhaya ukuze indoda ikwazi ukubuyisa lemfene ekhaya kunokuba ibe nayo ehlahlathini, nalokho akulunganga.

Kufanele belulekane kahle, babonisa ngokuthula lapho kuqamuka isitha sithanda ukungena Phakathi kwabo bakwazi ukumelana naso basinqobe.

Ubuqhawe abukho ekudubeni nasekulahleni phansi okuphambi kwakho, kunjalonje abukho nakulabo abathi sekungamahlala khona, kukhona kulabo abalokhu bezama ukwakha ikhaya elihle nelisibonelo esihle, nakwabanye abantu.

Ubuqhawe ukubonisa isibindi ekwenzeni bulungisa ngesikhathi esinzima.

Kulendaba ilowo akazifune ukuthi ume kuphi, akadlaliswa isilwane kungafanele na?

Ubani onokukusiza ngaphandle komuntu okothandayo, okusho ukuthi uma ukhuzwa ngokuthandayo unenhlanhla ufanele umnamethele ngempela ngoba kungekho omunye ozokwelekelela ncono kunaye.

Cophelelani kokuhle kuthi okubi nikuvilaphele ukuze kubekhona impumelelo.

Kadebona

You did not air my dirty laundry, 10 August 1963

There is something big that I can never get out of my heart, which makes me wonder if women have felt or thought it, and what they concluded about it.

A house that people build, having been united by the Creator, is meant to be enjoyed by all people even if it is small, big, messy, shiny; the fact is it will have its own dirt.

No amount of dirt can be seen as beautiful, for dirt is meant to be swept and thrown outside.

This matter reminds me of Prince Lomnegetshane, who, in front of lots of people at Matsapha, thanked his wife, MaMaseko, for being patient with him over many years while they were building a family, and also when he worked as a teacher for almost forty years.

The Prince thanked his wife for encouraging him, for not airing his dirty laundry when he made mistakes, given the knowledge she had about the shameful things he had done.

In order to illuminate his point, the Prince told us a story about what happened to a woman who was weeding near a forest.

The woman laid her baby down under a tree so that she could do her weeding freely.

She did her job very well but the time came when, like the woman she was, she raised her eyes towards the tree where she had laid her baby down.

All of a sudden, the woman saw a baboon playing with her baby. The baboon was throwing the baby up in the air and catching him. The baby was not crying because he did not feel pain being played with by an animal in this way.

Continuing with the story of his gratitude, the Prince said that the woman felt her stomach drop, seeing her baby playing with an animal she so reviled and feared. The woman cried with a loud voice as she raced towards the animal to rescue her baby.

But the woman did not rescue the child. She killed him, because the spooked baboon tore the child into two pieces, killing him right there and then.

The Prince wanted to make it clear that sometimes a man falls into the clutches of wrong things and corruption, but if the woman of that home makes the hard decision to confront the wrongdoer, it happens sometimes that they cause more damage. But with loving advice and quiet exhortation, the wife can in fact rescue her beloved from the claws of this predator and go on to have a wonderful life with her sweetheart. Making too much noise may attract animals from far away, which can damage the marriage.

Of course, it is true that some women who choose the path of quiet exhortation resort to huffy silence. They tell themselves that as long as their husband continues to

feed and house them, they will say nothing. They will just pretend the infidelity is not there, even though they can see it.

This course of action shows that a woman no longer has love for her husband. Instead, she is looking after her own good and not considering the reputation of her husband.

It is true that some men are playing with baboons in the forest and their wives are simply quiet about this shocking state of affairs, telling themselves it is normal behaviour.

Some women simply take their belongings and leave the home so the man can bring the baboon right back home rather than consorting with it in the forest. That is also not right.

A husband and wife need to advise each other well and peacefully on the matter so that when an enemy appears and tries to come between them, they can defeat that enemy.

There is no bravery in giving up and throwing away what is in front of you, nor is bravery normalizing bad behaviour. Bravery is found in those who keep trying to build a marriage that is good and exemplary for others.

Bravery is having the courage to do the right thing during difficult times.

Who else can help you other than the one who truly loves you? Which means if you are being exhorted by someone who loves you, then you are lucky and you must listen. There is no person on earth who will help you better.

Focus on the good and go slowly on the bad so there will be success.

Kadebona

Intuthuko wase Kwaluseni, 5 October 1963

Bengilokhu ngizwa ngendaba, kodwa kuthe unyawo olungeampumulo lwangithwala lwaze wayokungifaka emzini wase Kwaluseni, engingathi mina engisuka kuzindawo ezisakhiwe ngokwesiNgwane esidala, lomuzi ufana nedolobha lesilungu sanamuhla.

Phela ngifike ngesikhathi esihle lapo kulungiswa imigwaqo yalomuzi izindlu zisikelwa kahle njengoba zahlelekeka kahle kwasekusukeninje.

Imigwaqo ithe hlelele kulomuzi, izimoto zabantu bakhona njengoba ngabona ukuthi sekukhona abanangi abanazo, zihamba akhle kahle kulemigwayo.

Impucuko kulendawo ayingabazeki, futhi nebandla lakhona ngendlela elisebenza ngayo awuntuli (SP?) ukuthi lomuzi wakhelwe amadoda, futhi asabazi uBukhosi bawo lapha kaNgwane.

Kukhona nemisebenzi eyakhiweyo ngokwesimanje kulomuzi wase Kwaluseni esekelele lomuzi ngezindlela eziningi.

Ngithole ukuthi bekuliqiniso engakufunda kuleliphepha ukuthi kwakhiwe ibandla kulomuzi eliqinileyo ngoba ngithe ngifika ngezwa abanye bathi sizophuzaphi njengoba notshwala sebuthe bavala ibandla lenu, besho bakhombana.

Phela ngathola ukuthi kanti notshwala sebuthe basekelwa umthetho kulomuzi ukuze kungabi ngukampunzi indla emini, kogdla (SP?) sibhekane uma kungasiko akthunda sibhekene, lapho kungenwa noma kungakuphi, futhi ukhulekelele uma uthanda, kuthi uma ungathandi uzithele ngabandayo nje, kungabi ndabazlutho kubani wakabani okunakeni.

Phela impumelelo enhle emzini, nakho okunemfundiso enhle nakubantwana bawo kwenziwa ukuba lowo muzi uphathwe ngesandla sangasekundla, sekunene.

Nokuba ngithe ngabona ukuthi kulomuzi kwakunamanzi kepha asasha, izimpompi sezingumhlobiso nje, kanye nokuthi abantu bakhona bayahlupeka kakhulu ngamanzi nangezinkuni kodwa ngajabuliswa ukuthi akukho Ndlovu yehlulwa umboko wayo!

Nokuba lizwe limaseko mathathu kodwa iningi labantu balapha kulomuzi bakhuthele ukusebenza njalo ukuziphilisa kanye ngaphandle kwabomahlalela belizweke.

Ukuzama ukuzakha kwabantu kulomuzi kubonakala nangezincingo ezingena kuwo, imiqwaqo emihle, kwakunamanzi amane asayasha noma enziwa ukuba ashe, kunemisebenzi kanti nezindlu abazakhayo abantu balendawo zibiza imali eshisiwe njengoba sekukhona nokuthi namanzi okwakha sebayawathenga, isihlabathi nokunye-ke ongeke mane ukuthole obalanje.

Ngingesho lutho ngabakhi abaziwayo ukuthi basukelwa osibanibani, ayi okantuthunje.

Ngize ngaba nokufisela sengathi nakwezinye izindawo kungangena lolunyawo lwemfundiso nokuba abanye bangasho ukuthi, akukho geza laswela isiyela okukwelizwe nokho nalokho.

Indawo uma iphatheke kahle isale ithandeka njengoba ngize ngafisa sengathi ngingasale ngikhonza kulomuzi nami ukuze ngibe nokuthuthukela phambili empilweni nasekufundeni.

Phela kulomuzi kukhona nezikole ezibalulekileyo, neposi lapho iningi labantu balomuzi banezinombolo zamabhokisi aseposini lase Kwaluseni, okuthi noma kungabonakali okwamanje lapho balima khona abakhe kuwo, kodwa uthole ukuthi bayaphila futhi kahle labantu ngoba izindlela zokulima ziningi.

Nokho kufanele ukuba bazholiswe izingade zabo zokuzitholela imifino, njengobanje ngaze ngancoma sengathi ngabe izitandi zabo azizincane njengoba abonakala manje.

Mabanikwe izindawo ezibalulekile ukwakha izindlu nokulma nganhlanye kunokwethenjiswa amasimu akude nalapho kothatha isikhathi nomanje amadoda aphelele ethembeka ukuthi bayabalungiselela abantu bakubo.

Nginokuthokoza ngoba lokhu engikubhala lapha ilokhu engikubonile kulo leliviki futhi okwethembisa ukuthi kuningi okuhle okuzokwenzeka.

Kadebona

Development at Kwaluseni, 5 October 1963^e

I have been hearing such a lot about Kwaluseni. Eventually, my restless feet led me over there where I went to have a look for myself. It's a place which to me, a person

^e Kwaluseni had long been the African settlement outside the primarily white town of Bremersdorp (renamed Manzini in the early 1960s). By the late 1950s, the growing residential area was slated for increased funding and development by Manzini's town council (also linked to this was the post-war development of industry on the outskirts of Manzini; Kwaluseni's residents supplied much labour to the factories). Kwaluseni also benefited by virtue of its proximity to Lozitha (one of Sobhuza's palaces) and thus was viewed as under royal patronage. A vocal neighbourhood association regularly advocated for Kwaluseni's development, both to the king and to the town council. Kwaluseni was a topic of some debate in the local press, frequently being held up as a poster child for African urban development and positively

from a more traditionally designed place, is basically similar to a town designed in the modern European style.

I arrived at a great time. The town's roads were being constructed and houses were being beautifully maintained.

There are so many roads here as a lot of people have cars. They drive around really nicely on these roads.

No doubt about it, this place is civilized! You cannot doubt that this town was built for people who know their kingdom is here in Swaziland.

There are also modern-style work spaces that were built to support this homestead.

I found that what I had read in the paper was true – that a municipality oversees this strong city. When I first arrived there, I heard some people asking around where they could get a drink, since alcohol consumption is heavily controlled here in Kwaluseni by the municipality.

Yes, I found out that alcohol was managed very carefully in this town. There are certain places where you are allowed to drink alcohol, and it's not something you're allowed to consume wherever and whenever you'd like to. You're not free to do whatever you like. Kwaluseni is all ordered.

Really, a town is a great success where you find order even among the young people who have been taught to handle themselves well.

However, I do see that there was once water at this place but it is no longer available. The taps are just there for decorative purposes. The truth is that people are really struggling to get water and firewood, but it makes me happy to see that the people are rising to the challenges of life.

Most people here are actively working for their living, except for the odd few loafers.

You can also see that Kwaluseni people are attempting to improve themselves by all the telephone cables you can see alongside the beautiful roads. The houses being built by the people are very expensive. There are work spaces. They have to purchase water and sand for building their houses – you can't just get these things for free.

I'll refrain from commenting about those very well-known 'high-class' builders. They are only accessible to the who's who of society – they're out of reach for the ordinary Tom, Dick and Harry from the countryside.

When I see the progress that is taking place in Kwaluseni, I wish other places in Swaziland would emulate their example. Although it's true that there is nothing completely without fault; even good development has its own limitations.

Yet if a place is well maintained, it becomes attractive. Just look, I even wished I could join this Kwaluseni community, so I can better progress in my life and my learning.

In this community, you can find important schools and a post office where most of the people of the town have a numbered Kwaluseni PO box. Even when you don't see any gardens in the community, it is still apparent that these people live quite well for there are many ways to make a living.

compared to less salubrious areas such as Msunduzi, outside Mbabane. See 'Kwaluseni neighbourhood association', *Izwi lama Swazi*, 28 June 1958; 'The development of Kwaluseni', *Izwi lama Swazi*, 18 May 1963.

But it's not entirely clear where people will farm around here. I recommend that people be given space to cultivate their own vegetable gardens and that the plots should not be quite as small as they currently are.

People should farm in a field right next to the house, rather than being promised cultivation ground in faraway fields that would take time to reach. Well, let's trust that those in charge are dividing the plots in the best way.

I am filled with great joy with what I am writing about and what I saw this week, which is a sign of many better things to come.

Kadebona

Izintombi ezinetyerlene ebusweni, 9 November 1963^f

Bazothi sidlala ngabo kanti ibona abathe bathatha lomsebenzi wokuzilutha, kuthi kanti sebadala babelokhu bazishaya sengathi abantwana, izintombi ezisuka phansi, kanti ubuso buyatakaza ukuthi iminyaka isihambile, sebangokade bebona amajingiqiwu alelizwe.

Kuphazamise abanye abafana kakhulu lokhu, kwabonisa empilweni yabo ngoba bangakwazi ukubona ubuso obugqokiswe.

Lamapilidi ebusweni afunani lokhu uziphatha okwentombi wenabo Magunklumba ofihliweyo na?

Singabe sidlala ngabo abakulesigaba kepha bazishaye sengathi abakusibo baso na?

Bathi kanti indlela izobuzwa kubani uma sebabasha bonke na?

Bazilutha bona labo nabo mfana. Ilapho kudaleka khona ukuziphatha kabi ose kuzibonakalisile Phakathi kwesizwe ngabanye kulezintombi zikuphi we mame?

Abanye sebaze baphela namazinyo kufanele ayi ukuthi umonakalo owenzima ngamaswidi nokunya okuwaqeda usemncane.

Ithola izihlathi sezomanje, kepha intibakuguga iselokhu imenze wamhlophe bha ulungile lokhu futhi kuyahlonipheka kubantu abazihloniphayo ngoba wonke uyaguga emhlabeni, kodwa okubi ukuthi bazishaye sengathi bancane ngangoba benze iwozawoza kwabancane ukuba babashele kanti sebayazi ukuthi sebudlulile kuleso sigaba.

Imihlola ukuthi abanye sebaze bafake izingubo ezimfisha, neziveza amadolo kanti asasheshe azwele namakhaza namhlazane angekho.

Kuyini-nje lokhu wesifazane sikithi.

Uma ugcina isigaba sakho uyahlonipheka kodwa uma usuzama ukuphindela ebuntwaneni kanti sewedlula usuke bese uyalutheka.

Ukuthi kanti usugugile ubelokhu ubumbana nodaka njengomntwana kuthatheka sengathi ekhanda aziphelelanga kahle nomake unamahunga.

Kadebona

Young women with nylon faces, 9 November 1963

People will say that we are making a mockery out of them, yet *they* are the ones who are making themselves ridiculous. Although they are old, they are behaving like children, like young girls. But their faces bear witness to the years that have passed, giving away that actually they have been around for quite some time.

^f 'Terylene' is an English word for synthetic polyester textile fabrics, i.e. nylon. This is an instance of Kadebona's mingling of various languages.

This thing has disturbed a few young men who messed up their lives because they could not correctly judge these female faces that were laden in make-up.

What of these wrinkles on your face? You keep on treating yourself like a young woman, yet the truth is that you are hiding Mangunkluma's mother inside of you!⁸

Are we really being mean to these older women? Yet they are the ones who are guilty of behaving as if they are not at the stage they actually are at.

Who can we turn to for words of wisdom when everyone claims to be young?

These women deceive themselves and the boys. This is the root of bad behaviour in our nation.

Some of these women don't even have teeth any more, of course, given their age, and it's not because of eating too many candies and all of those other things that damage your teeth when you are still young.

You find a woman's cheeks that have long dried out and withered up, but then the whitening cream keeps on doing its job and makes the face very white indeed. This isn't necessarily a bad thing and it is respectable. And in this world, everybody will age sooner or later. But what is bad is for somebody to use these creams in order to present themselves as a young woman, and so to attract the young boys, while they know they have long outgrown that stage of life.

It's shameful that many of these women are even donning short dresses, revealing their knees when we all know full well that elderly knees shouldn't be exposed to the cold.

What is this, our fellow women?

If you act your age, then you are respectable. But if you try to return to childhood, then you are just deceiving yourself.

The fact that you are old and yet are playing in the mud just like a child makes me think that something is not quite right in your head.

Kadebona

Ingwenyama ikhulumile, 30 November 1963

Onendlebe, nongathandi ukuzenzisa ngamaqiniso uzwile inkulumo ye Ngwenyama.

Uthintile oka Bhunu lokho abekhulunyelwa kona ngabantu besizwe sama Swazi kanye nelizwe labo.

Ugeze izandla futhi kwamzumela ukuthi kuze kubekhona nje ukuthi angathengisa ngamalungelo nabantu besizwe sakhe athe wasiphatha sethembekile kuye kuminyaka engaphezu kwamashumi amane.

Uthe ayiho imali emhlabeni engamthenga yena nokuba bafika ngemathananana ezigidiwane abompondo kuyizinto ezingeke zamthikimeza ekuphatheni isizwe samaSwazi esinegama elihle emhlabeni naphambi kwezizwe eziningi ngenhlonipho yawo.

Uma ufunda kahle inkulumo yeNgwenyama uyathola ukuthi isethembe kakhulu isizwe samaSwazi, futhi ngiqiniseke ukuthi nayo iNgwenyama iyazi ukuthi isizwe samaSwazi siyethembe kakhulu iNgwenyama.

Nokuba abanye bake bakhulume kalulanje ukuthi se bathengisa ngathi, suke bangayifaki phakathi iNgwenyama.

⁸ A saying to describe a very old, unattractive person.

Mane suke bathanda ukuzwakalisa ubuhlungu babo nakuyo njengoyise nomholi wesizwe.

Njengoba ngizwile omunye emhlanganweni akhuluma ngokusobala kaManzini mhlaka November 19 ngase makethe wathi: Akwazeke kahle ukuthi ibandla lesizwe alonanga lutho futhi liyadingeka kakhulu ukuba libelokhu likhona.

Ingwenyama iyawenza umsebenzi wayo kodwa kukhona abambalwanje abaziwayo ngezithelo zabo ukuthi bathengisa ngesizwe, akuqondanwe nalabo ngoba bangcolisa igama lebandla lesizwe samaSwazi kanti bayincosananje.

Abanye kubo sebenze inkohlakalo enkulu sibabona, sebaze benze sengathi lenkohlakalo yabo ingabakhona nasebukhosini besizwe; kodwa amanzi akahlangani namafutha, kubelokhu kudedelenenje.

Inhlanhla yesizwe samaSwazi ukuthi inkosi yoHlanga inothando oluphelele ngesizwe sayo, kwala noma isiphakanyiselwa phezulu esiqongweni ikhonjiswa konke, yethenjiswa konke uma yenza okuthile, kodwa ithi suka kimi wena onokucabanga ukuthi o 25 emamiliyoni ompondo angasebenza kimi, suka wena ocabanga ukuthi 25 wemaBiliyoni ompondo anokungithenga ngoba kungelutho kuyo, futhi kulula njengephepha elemuku nomoya uma sekucathaniswa nesizwe samaSwazi kuyo.

Sibuhlungu isenzo esingasimeli kahle isizwe kodwa sibe senziwa isithunywa.

Sekuthe kwabonakala ukuthi abanye abayizethenjwa abawenzi umsebenzi wesizwe njengoba bekubhekekile, sebenezinyawo ezimabatha nezandla ezingthembeki, kanye nemilomo ethembisa okuhle kodwa ingenaqiniso, abasethembeki esizweni noma ngabe sebasilethele okuhle kangakanani.

Ngalokho kube nokudingeka ukuthi neSilo sesike sikhanyise ngokwaso ukuthi sithini kulamahemuhemu alokhu ezwakala kumaphepha nakukho ukuvunguzela kwabantu okwazekayo ukuthi akukho intuthuko uma kungekho umlilo.

Inkulumo yeNgwenyama ithe yajabulisa futhi yephula abaningi emlilweni ngoba uma ingaveli inkulumo yayo kanti amahemuhemu maningi kuyase kusiphatha kabi isizwe esilokhu sinethemba eBukhosini baso.

Amahemuhemu agijima kakhulu njengoba kwezakala ngamaveni asithupha kaNgwane avela ngaphandle okungezwakali kahle ukuthi aze atholakala kanjani.

Udaba lwawo lunamahemuhemu amaningi, kudela owazi kahle kungemahemuhemu kuphelanje kodwa kube amaqiniso.

Akudingeki ukuba kukhulunywe ukuthi isithunywa esinokuthenjiswa okuthile, futhi sivume singthembeki kulowo osithumile kanti nabantu bakubo bangeke basethembe ngoba sesithe sabathelela amanzi ngoba abanye sebayokwazi bona ngaye nokungethembeki kwakhe.

Kuphi ukuthokoza ukushiya igama lakho emhlabeni linuka na?

Kuyinjabulo enkulu ukuthi kwabantu: sashiywa indoda emadodeni lapho usuhambile.

Imisebenzi yomuntu ikhuluma noma asangekho kwabaphilayo kulomhlaba.

Ukungethembeki kuthela ithunzi ngisho nakubantwana bakho phakathi kwesizwe ngoba size sibanike amaganyananje ukuthi wokhuluma ubheka kahle ngoba kukhona nomntwana walabo.

Igama elihle lingeke lalinganiswa noma ngabe imali engakakani.

Sibongile nathi umlomo weSilo kulamahemuhemu onakalisa izinhliziyi zabantu.

Kadebona

The King has spoken, 30 November 1963^h

Those with ears, and those not immune to the truth, you have heard the words of the King.

Bhunu's son has referred to what the Swazi people and the whole nation have been saying about him.

The King has washed his hands of all this. He is shocked by how they could even think that he sold the rights of his nation [to the apartheid government], over which he has reigned faithfully for over forty years.ⁱ

The King said there was no money in all the world that could buy him, even if they came to him with billions of pounds. Money would never cause him to mistreat the Swazi nation. They are a people who have a good reputation in the eyes of many other nations because of their upholding the virtue of respect.

If you carefully read the speech of His Majesty, you find that he greatly trusts the Swazi nation, and I'm sure His Majesty also knows that the Swazi nation has great trust in him.

Even though some people are gossiping that the nation has been sold, in fact they don't claim that this is because of the King.

Instead, the people merely want to express their grief and pain to him, as their father and the leader of the nation.

I heard someone talking about this issue at a meeting in Manzini, near the market, on 19 November:^j 'Let it be known that the Swazi National Council has done nothing wrong and there is a great need for it to exist.'^k

^h At first reading, this column seems like a straightforward declaration of patriotic support of Sobhuza. Phrases such as 'the Swazi nation is lucky because the King loves the nation' and the nation 'has always had absolute trust in its King' seem to suggest deference and respect for Sobhuza. However, a more careful reading shows Kadebona making a number of jibes, digs and criticisms of monarchical power. One strategy was to deflect criticism from Sobhuza himself to his royalist advisers (the Swazi National Council): 'It's true that His Majesty is doing his job, but there are a few who are known for their bad deeds.' Kadebona also notes that if Sobhuza had not given a speech refuting the rumours, this would have been 'a disgrace to a nation'. Even more strongly, Kadebona observes that Sobhuza had unexplained cash (he was able to purchase several new cars, for example), thus giving credence to the rumour that he had been bribed by apartheid South Africa. Kadebona's criticism of the King reaches a crescendo by the final lines of the column, where he is going so far as to call the King 'untrustworthy' and to accuse him of bringing 'a dark cloud even onto your children'. All this threatened Sobhuza's 'reputation', leading to 'rumours that are breaking people's hearts'.

ⁱ In September 1963, South African prime minister Hendrick Verwoerd declared South Africa's desire to annex the High Commission Protectorates, including Swaziland, with a view to 'lead[ing] them to independence and economic prosperity far more quickly and more efficiently than Britain' (Potholm 1972: 98). Swazi political parties quickly denounced this as a ploy to extend South Africa's apartheid rule to emaswati. Rumours swirled that Sobhuza had succumbed to the apartheid state's designs upon the country, tempted by a bribe of £25,000 from Verwoerd himself (Kuper 1978: 256–7).

^j Manzini (formerly known as Bremersdorp) was the country's largest city outside of the capital, Mbabane. It had been a commercial trading centre since the late nineteenth century, and it was the country's administrative centre until the 1920s.

^k The Swazi National Council was rumoured to be working in cahoots with Sobhuza as he supposedly negotiated to have the country annexed to South Africa.

It's true that His Majesty is doing his job, but there are a few who are known for their bad deeds of selling out this nation. These people must be dealt with because they tarnish the name of the Swazi nation, meanwhile they are just a minority.¹

Yet we do see that some of them have become very corrupt; in fact, they have even pretended to be part of the royal family. But how can this be so, for water and oil do not mix?

The Swazi nation is lucky because the King loves his nation. Even when he is given praise and is promised everything, he says, 'Get away from me, you who think that £25 million could work for me. Get away, you who think that £25 billion could buy me.' For His Majesty, that amount is like mere paper that can be carried away by the wind, compared to the value of the Swazi nation.

It is a travesty when representatives of the nation fail to represent the nation well as its servants.

It is clear that some of the King's advisers are not doing the work of the nation as we expected of them. These false people have corrupt hands and mouths that promise only good things. They cannot be trusted by the people no matter how much good they seem to have done.

It was therefore necessary that the King himself clarify what he has to say regarding the rumours [that he has been bought by the South African government] that have been circulating in the newspaper and in the gossiping of the people. There is no smoke without fire.

The King's speech on this matter is said to have delighted many. If he had not given it, there would have been many rumours and it would have been a disgrace to a nation that has always had absolute trust in its King.

Rumours were spreading quickly about how the Ngwenyama had six new pickup trucks, and it was not understood with what money they had been purchased.

As you know, this is not rumour. This is fact.^m

Where is your joy in leaving your reputation to and for the world?

It is a great joy for people to say about you after you depart: a man among men has died.

Being untrustworthy brings a dark cloud even onto your children. We even ostracize them and caution each other to watch what we say around them.

A good name cannot be measured, no matter how much money you have.

We thank the mouth of the King for addressing the rumours that are breaking people's hearts.

Kadebona

¹ I am unsure who the 'people' being referred to here are. My guess is that Kadebona might be referring to traditionalist members of the Swazi National Council, perhaps Prince Makhosini Dlamini, future Swazi prime minister, who would subsequently prove receptive to South African overtures in the 1970s (Levin 1997: 167).

^m Kadebona's affirmation that the King did in fact purchase six new vehicles is a not-so-veiled criticism. He seems to be asking: where was this money procured from, if not from South Africa?

References

- Kuper, H. (1978) *Sobhuza II: Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland*. New York NY: Africana Publishing Company.
- Levin, R. (1997) *When the Sleeping Grass Awakens: land and power in Swaziland*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Potholm, C. (1972) *Swaziland: the dynamics of political modernization*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

Cite this article: Cabrita, J. (2024). 'Print media and egalitarianism in 1960s Eswatini: *Izwi lama Swazi* and the columnist "Kadebona"'. *Africa* 94, 499–531. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000197202400055X>