

**'TSHISA, TSHISA' (BURN, BURN): RESISTANCE AGAINST TRIBAL AUTHORITIES IN  
XHALANGA, 1960 - 1963**

By

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## **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The second half of 1960, in particular, has left an indelible mark in the memories of many people who were in Xhalanga at the time. This period could truly be regarded as the climax of resistance in the area that went back to the late nineteenth century. The people of Xhalanga refer to this period as *`tshisa, tshisa'* ('burn, burn') to capture both the form of resistance and the response of the state and its supporters; the phrase indicates the burning of huts of both pro- and anti-government figures in the district.<sup>2</sup> State reaction was brutal. In many ways, the growing militancy of the area's inhabitants, and the violence of the state's actions, reflected a similar mood in the rest of the country. The Sharpeville and Langa shootings in March 1960 and their aftermath made the mood in the early 1960s in South Africa even more electric.

The role that political organisations played in this period deserves attention. Until the late 1950s, political organisations were not prominent in the long history of rural resistance in Xhalanga. The documentation and interviews upon which this paper is based show no evidence of mobilisation by political organisations in the district. Different individuals and personalities came to the fore at various moments of the resistance, but no single leader emerged for any length of time, and nor was there any indication that these individuals were working for political organisations. Quite clearly, resistance in Xhalanga up to the late 1950s was an almost spontaneous response to local issues that were affecting landholders in particular. However, between the late 1950s and early 1960s, organisations such as the AAC and ANC were becoming involved in the district. Resistance in Xhalanga had, by the late 1950s, become more organised and militant. This was despite court actions and deportations.

This paper traces the process of resistance against Tribal Authorities and how the state crushed it. Chief K.D. Matanzima's role in the state's response to opposition will be highlighted. The paper focuses, in some detail, on the role of political organisations in the resistance in particular the policies of the AAC and ANC on rural areas in the reserves, and how they conceived of the land question and the nature of rural society, and how this translated into practice.<sup>3</sup> I conclude this paper by situating the Xhalanga resistance within the wider struggles against tribal authorities and the state's clampdown.

## **Background to the resistance against Tribal Authorities**

The study of the events of the 1940s and the 1950s in the reserves reveals two major phenomena that help our understanding of the revolts of the 1960s: the conservation and control measures of the government

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<sup>1</sup> Paper to be presented to an International Conference on The Eastern Cape: historical legacies and new challenges, East London, South Africa, 27-30 August.

<sup>2</sup> The burning of huts was apparently a popular method of resistance against Tribal Authorities in many rural areas in the former Bantustans (Mbeki 1984). This method was also used in Tsolo against stock thieves (Peires 1999:10).

<sup>3</sup> These two organisations are the ones that are mentioned in documents and interviews.

that was called the *betterment scheme*.<sup>4</sup> These measures were euphemistically referred to in government's circles as development plans. The other phenomenon was the establishment of Tribal Authorities, the main focus of this paper.

### *The Betterment Scheme*

The introduction of the Betterment Scheme from the late 1930s drew angry responses from rural residents. The scheme involved unpopular measures such as the culling and dipping of stock and the castration of scrub bulls and fencing.<sup>5</sup> The people of the Transkei, where the implementation of the scheme was piloted, rejected the scheme. According to Tabata, a leader of the All African Convention (AAC), rural people "saw the scheme as a new Nongqause<sup>6</sup> which would render vast numbers of the people a prey to the vultures of labour, without land, without cattle, without rights of any kind" (Tabata 1950:90). Reporting on events in the Ciskei, a delegate to the Non-European Unity Conference in 1948 announced:

The people are kicking against this Rehabilitation Scheme. But in the fight they find their own headmen and chiefs and the Bhungas ranged against them, as well as the Government officials. In their despair they resorted to violence against the officials who carried out the Government order, failing to understand the real forces against them. ... The people have voluntarily formed Location Committees against their headmen and Bhunga to assert their right to decide how they should own their land".<sup>7</sup>

There was resistance to the Betterment Scheme in parts of the Ciskei and Transkei such as AmaXesibe (Mt Ayliff), Phondoland, Peddie, Middledrift, Debenek (Tabata 1950:92).

Apart from the culling of cattle, which was later dropped when stabilisation was introduced in the mid-1950s, the conservation measures also involved the resettling of rural residents. In the residential areas, the rural people were regrouped into villages, which meant even those whose homesteads were already in the areas demarcated for residential purpose could still be forced to demolish their structures to build according to the plan that fitted regrouping of homesteads into villages. In these circumstances, to refer to these measures in the mid-1950s as stabilisation is, to say the least, paradoxical especially that rural residents were resettled without their consent. Indeed, the measures destabilised a number of rural people.

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<sup>4</sup> The term "Betterment" is used in this chapter loosely to refer to the various conservation measures that the state embarked upon from the 1930s. There were various phases to these measures: betterment (1939-1945); Rehabilitation (1945-1955) and stabilisation when tribal authorities were introduced.

<sup>5</sup> Hammond-Tooke 1968:471

<sup>6</sup> This refers to the cattle-killing episode of 1877 – see Peires 1989.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Tabata 1950:91. IBhunga was a form of rural local government in the reserves that was introduced in terms of the Glen Grey Act of 1894.

However, the immediate cause of rural resistance of the early 1960s in the former Bantustans in the late 1950s and early 1960s was the introduction of Tribal Authorities in terms of the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act.

### **Tribal Authorities**

The Tribal Authorities system of administration and the manner in which it was implemented was cause enough for dissatisfaction, but the fact that the so-called development plan (conservation measures) was part of it rubbed salt to the wound (Evans 1997). A prime objective of the National Party when they came to power in 1948 was to resolve the question of “native administration”, what Hendricks (1990) appropriately refers to as retribalisation, rather than “creating a full-time farming class”. Chiefs and headmen were roped in as the extended arm of the apartheid government and were given greater administrative powers than during the segregation period. Their main function, as Evans puts it, was “to contain and discipline the reserve army of African labour: those Africans prevented by law from departing to the urban areas, the ‘idle or disorderly’ evicted from the urban areas, and the ‘excess labour’ skimmed off the white farming areas” (1997:260; See also Hendricks 1990; 1989).<sup>8</sup> According to Hendricks, “the state’s policy was transformed from a stated commitment to ‘saving the soil’ to an attempt to reinvigorate tribalism in the reserves as a cooptive device bringing African chiefs and headmen into the local machinery of government” (Hendricks 1990:122; also see Mafeje 1963:7).

The involvement of chiefs thoroughly discredited even those who may have enjoyed some degree of legitimacy by virtue of their marginalization. Hammond-Tooke (1975) has argued that some chiefs gained legitimacy among their people for the simple reason that they were not identified with government policies.<sup>9</sup> Those that are often cited as having retained their legitimacy include paramount chiefs Sabata Dalindyebo of abaThembu and Morwamoche Sekhukhune in the Northern Transvaal, now Limpopo (Delius 1996; Lodge 1983). Van Kessel and Oomen have even made an unsubstantiated claim that Sabata “headed the revolt in Tembuland” (Van Kessel and Oomen 1997:563). Some Xhalanga residents and political activists such as Tsotsi (1989) also regarded chief K.D. Matanzima as a “progressive” chief. However, with the introduction of the Bantu Authorities Act, there was little room left for this variation. As paid government agents, they were forced to comply. Victor Poto’s pledge sums up the extent of capitulation:

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<sup>8</sup> To ensure that unemployed Africans were restricted to the reserves, the National Party adopted the Unemployment Labour Preference Policy (ULPP). This policy was meant to serve both as a measure to curb African urbanization and at the same time act as a social and political control over the youth problem (Posel 1991:131).

<sup>9</sup> It is important to bear in mind, though, that the Native Administration Act of 1927 had already undermined the independence of chiefs. For example, the Act provided that the chief or headman carry out orders given “through the Bantu Affairs Commissioner or any other officer of the Government”, on pain of summary dismissal.

I have pledged my loyalty and trust to Dr Verwoerd's government which has brought so many benefits for the enjoyment of the Bantu people (as quoted in Hendricks 1990:48).

What Poto should have pointed out is that it is, as Southall (1983; 1977) indicated, chiefs and civil servants who were the real beneficiaries of apartheid, and not "the Bantu people", particularly rural residents (see also Stultz 1979).

Dalindyebo's case is somewhat different. According to Govan Mbeki, Paramount Chief Dalindyebo had been in a state of continuous conflict with the government over Tribal Authorities. Despite this, though, when the Recess Committee of the Transkei Territorial Authorities, which included Dalindyebo, was required to endorse Bantu Authorities, "all twenty seven members", including, according to Mbeki, "those who during the session were to oppose its major aspects", signed. Paramount chief Dalindyebo was one of those who were to oppose. His reason for signing, as quoted in Mbeki, was given in the form of the following question:

Are you aware that when I was requested to sign I *had* to sign because I am a government man? (Mbeki 1984:58).

Years later, on the issue of self-government, Dalindyebo's position was also equivocal. He initially supported the granting of self-government to the Transkei, but later "changed his mind", not by opposing the concept of "self-government", but by proposing an alternative constitution (Mafeje 1963:12-3). The above clearly demonstrates how difficult it became, even for the most progressive chiefs, not to toe the apartheid line.

Having said this, chiefs did not all relate in the same way to the apartheid system. There were those, such as K.D. Matanzima, who shamelessly collaborated with the apartheid regime. Others, such as Sabata Dalindyebo, were reluctant participants in the apartheid game.<sup>10</sup> Others included Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela. However, both the latter were minor chiefs and it is as leaders of political organisations, and not as traditional authorities, that they won their recognition.<sup>11</sup>

In his recent book, *Sunset at Midday: Latshon' ilang' emini!*, Mbeki (1996) has revisited the question of the role of traditional authorities in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. He was adamant, drawing from his own experiences as a participant in *iBhunga* in the Transkei in the 1940s, that it would not be possible to use the "government's dummy institution to promote the freedom struggle". Mbeki was referring to a debate within the ANC on the role that would be played by chiefs under the Bantu

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<sup>10</sup>Dalindyebo was eventually stripped of his power as paramount chief, prosecuted, and finally hounded out of the country by K.D. Matanzima. He joined the ANC in exile, where he died in 1985. For details of the power struggle between Sabata and Matanzima, see Ntsebeza 2002, chapter 6.

<sup>11</sup> On Albert Luthuli see Luthuli 1965 and Benson 1963

Authorities Act, particularly the role of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi who, at the time, was a member of the ANC. Buthelezi had accepted government appointment as a chief. Some ANC leaders, including chief Albert Luthuli recommended that Buthelezi should be allowed to work “within the system”, the argument being that a friendlier chief to the ANC was better than a “less friendly” one. What Luthuli did not know, though, was that Buthelezi had, like Victor Poto cited above, pledged his loyalty to the government and to “do his best to explain the Bantu Authorities Act to his tribe and to persuade them of its merits” (Mbeki 1996:91). Mzala has quoted Buthelezi as having strongly suggested to the government that the acceptance of the Bantu Authorities Act, the “Bantu Education and other Acts of parliament” be compulsory, arguing that “opposition to it could only be suicidal” (1988:70; see also Mbeki 1996:92).

Contrasting Buthelezi with Luthuli, Mbeki has come to the following conclusion about traditional authorities in the struggle:

This (Buthelezi’s position) is a very different route to that taken by Chief Luthuli himself when, earlier in the decade, he had been forced by the government to choose between holding his position as chief of the Amakholwa in the Stanger district and being president of the ANC. Luthuli had opted for the ANC, becoming the people’s chief, whereas Buthelezi willingly allowed himself to become a government chief (Mbeki 1996:91).

Tribal Authorities were set up even in areas where there were no chiefs, a recognition on the part of the apartheid regime that rural areas were very uneven and not homogeneous. In these areas, Community Authorities, headed by headmen, were established.<sup>12</sup> By making chiefs central in apartheid administration in the rural areas of the former Bantustans, the Bantu Authorities Act thus represented one of the building blocks of apartheid policy of consolidating reserves/Bantustans/homelands. These Bantustans were later to become self-governing, and for some, independent.<sup>13</sup>

However, it is worth noting that magistrates, from the chief magistrate downwards, continued to play a dominant role in the initial stages of apartheid. As Spiegel noted, they were as concerned with administration of agriculture and roads, engineering, health, welfare and education, land allocation and tenure, and the collection of taxes, as they were with local administration of justice (Spiegel 1992:34, see also Hammonde-Tooke 1975).

It is against the above background, particularly the introduction of tribal authorities and their association with the conservation measures of the 1940s and 1950s that the rural resistances of the late 1950s and early 1960s should be viewed. As will be shown below, it was more specifically the coercive modus

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that with time, the term “Tribal Authority” was used as a general term.

<sup>13</sup> None of the Bantustans was recognized as independent countries other than by the apartheid regime that gave birth to them and other Bantustans.

operandi of introducing the Tribal Authorities system and the development plans attached to it that led to the insurrections of between 1960-1963, including Xhalanga.

### **Resistance in Xhalanga: 1960-1963**

#### *Background*

As indicated, the immediate impulse to the struggles of the early 1960s in Thembuland was the introduction of tribal authorities. In the case of Xhalanga, resistance against government policies and structures goes as far back as the introduction of District Councils in late nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> In this regard, the role that chief Kaizer Matanzima played, including his rise to power, warrant some discussion.

#### *Paramount Chief Sabata and Chief K.D. Matanzima: the battle for control of `Emigrant Thembuland`*

The promotion of Kaiser Matanzima (hereafter referred to simply as Matanzima) was critical in his ambition to become the head of the Transkei Territorial Authorities that was established in terms of the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act. His main hurdle was that he was not born in the lineage of the Paramount Chief of abaThembu. The position of Paramount Chief of abaThembu belonged to Dalindyebo Sabata and his descendants. In order to create space for a Paramount Chieftaincy for Matanzima, Thembuland was divided. The area that is referred to as Thembuland comprises the following areas: Umtata, Mqanduli, Xhora (Elliotdale), Engcobo, Xhalanga (Cala), St Marks (Cofimvaba) and Glen Grey (Lady Frere) districts. In the scheme that would make Matanzima a Paramount Chief, the last three of these districts were excised from Thembuland and formed what was known as Emigrant Thembuland and later called Western Tembuland.

The argument for the division of Thembuland was based on the migration of a portion of abaThembu to the Glen Grey areas in the 1830s, hence the term `emigrant Tembus` (*abaThembu bemfuduko*). A question that arose, as early as 1870, was whether the Paramount Chief of abaThembu had jurisdiction over Emigrant Thembuland or not. At the time, the Cape colonial government made it clear that it recognised two separate regions that comprised Thembuland, Thembuland proper (Engcobo, Mqanduli and Umtata) and Emigrant Thembuland (Southeyville/St Marks and Xhalanga). This initially emerged in a cautious but firm reply dated 7 March 1870 from the colonial secretary to the government agent, Warner, following a boundary dispute between Gecelo and Ngangelizwe, the Paramount Chief of Thembuland:

I have submitted to His Excellency the High Commissioner your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> ultimo requesting as to the line of policy which should be observed in respect of the Emigrant

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<sup>14</sup> For details, see Ntsebeza 2002.

Tambookies located in the Transkei Territory, particularly in relation to the attempted authority over them of which there are indications on the part of the Chief Ngangelizwe. His Excellency requests me to inform you, that there can be no objection to your continuing to exercise a wholesome influence and a control over the people in question by all legitimate means, so far as they themselves are prepared to submit to your so doing. As regards Ngangelizwe, that Chief must be well aware that the Government does not recognize the slightest right on his part to exercise authority over Emigrant Tambookies, but while you are authorized to guard against any admission of such pretensions, I am instructed to impress upon you that every care should be taken to avoid in this matter seeking out for causes of offence.<sup>15</sup>

Factions of abaThembu contested the colonial position as outlined above. They argued that the Paramount Chief had jurisdiction over the whole of Thembuland, including Emigrant Thembuland (Tsotsi 1989).

When tribal authorities were introduced, and Matanzima had given his full support for their establishment, the struggle for control of Emigrant Thembuland came up once again. Matanzima was adamant that Emigrant Thembuland was independent and that he was its paramount chief. He had even gone so far as to unilaterally calling himself paramount chief.<sup>16</sup> Although the Chief Magistrates and magistrates initially took Matanzima to task for referring to himself as Paramount chief, it is clear that by June 1956, the Chief Magistrate, at least, was changing his attitude towards Matanzima. In a letter dated 19 June 1956, he assured Matanzima:

In view of the reconciliation between you and Chief Sabata which was discussed at the time of the Bhunga, he (the Secretary for Bantu Affairs) will not take any disciplinary action against you for persisting in calling yourself Chief of the Emigrant Tembus and for failing to attend the Paramount Chief's tribal Court when summoned to do so.<sup>17</sup>

At more or less the same time that the Chief Magistrate showed his bias in favour of Matanzima, he displayed his hostility towards Sabata and began to embrace Matanzima. The Chief Magistrate's open hostility towards Sabata followed a 24 August 1957 meeting of "all the headmen and people of Umtata District" that was held at the Great Place of Sabata at Bumbana, to discuss the "lack of uniformity in the administration of the Proclamation on the Bantu Authorities".<sup>18</sup> Participants at the meeting contested the uneven powers the Paramount Chiefs of Phondoland and Thembuland had:

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<sup>15</sup> NTS, 9037, 269/362(3)A – 271/362.

<sup>16</sup> See Ntsebeza (2002).

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Tsotsi 1989:88

<sup>18</sup> NTS, 9037, 269/362(3)A – 271/362.

Our Paramount Chief is placed in a position of a man who owns sheep, but told not to go to the sheep kraal because he is great and meanwhile the sheep are kraaled with the jackal. In this way he is divorced from his people and we are perfectly convinced that this whole scheme is aimed at killing our chieftainship because our head had been removed from us. By the introduction of the Bantu Authorities we thought that we were going to manage our own affairs with the Paramount Chief as our leader and head.<sup>19</sup>

Following this meeting, the Chief Magistrate embarked on a character assassination of Sabata. In one of his letters, the Chief Magistrate drew a comparison between Sabata and Matanzima:

On the contrary, Mr Pearce and I have done everything in our power to uphold the prestige and authority of a drunken, dissolute, irresponsible young Paramount Chief, particularly against ... Chief Matanzima, an intelligent, well-educated ambitious chief who is doing much for his people.<sup>20</sup>

In another communication, the Chief Magistrate reported on Sabata:

He is unmarried, and spends a great deal of time with a Coloured concubine in Umtata who is alleged to supply him with liquor ... I have found him reasonable and intelligent but very young and irresponsible and mostly concerned with amusing himself and leaving all serious business to his secretary. The latter plays him like a harp for his own ends.<sup>21</sup>

The Chief Magistrate was of the strong opinion that Jackson Nkosiyané, the Secretary of the Paramount Chief, had an undue influence on Sabata: "The Paramount Chief is quite irresponsible and filled with his own sense of importance. He will not make use of the hereditary tribal advisors but relies on Nkosiyané and a few dissolute sycophants who frequent his Great Place".<sup>22</sup>

Sabata's ambiguous stand regarding Tribal Authorities also put him in a vulnerable position, especially in relation to his supporters in Xhalanga. The Chief Magistrate and the Xhalanga Magistrate had brought him to Xhalanga to resolve the deadlock around the resistance against Tribal Authorities. Sabata clearly failed to achieve this goal, and thus dug his own grave as far as the support of the Xhalanga people was concerned. That he did not succeed in his bid is demonstrated in the following remarks of the Chief Magistrate:

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<sup>19</sup> NTS, 9037, 269/362(3)A – 271/362.

<sup>20</sup> NTS, 9037, 269/362(3)A – 271/362. Letter from the Chief Magistrate to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 15 November 1957.

<sup>21</sup> NTS, 9037, 269/362(3)A – 271/362. Letter from the Chief Magistrate to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 12 December 1957.

<sup>22</sup> NTS, 9037, 269/362(3)A – 271/362. Letter from the Chief Magistrate to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 12 December 1957. Some people in Xhalanga have confirmed these perceptions and allegations about Paramount Chief Sabata. In addition, they felt that Sabata could not have matched the educated Matanzima.

The difficult negotiations in regard to Cala (Xalanga) district have been reported to you in full detail and you approved of all action taken by me. At the meetings I held in Cala the Paramount Chief was present at my invitation. On the last occasion I left him with the meeting and asked him to settle the matter. On my return he stated “*ndoyisiwe*” – it has beaten me – so I proceeded to settle the matter to the expressed satisfaction of those present.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from demonising Sabata, the state embarked on two further attempts to marginalise him. Firstly, there was an orchestrated drive to identify ‘agitators’ who were alleged to have led the campaign against Bantu Authorities. This was clearly an attempt to isolate Sabata from his supporters. It was thus not surprising that this witch-hunt culminated in the deportation on 30 May 1958 of the leading members of the anti-Bantu Authorities campaign in Thembuland: Jackson Nkosiyanane, Secretary to the Paramount Chief, Bangilizwe Joyi, Twalimfene Joyi and McGregor Mgolombane.<sup>24</sup>

At more or less the same time, a one-man commission, led by the Under Secretary for Native Affairs, C.B. Young, was set up early in 1958. The Young Commission was supposed to conduct an inquiry on the tensions in Thembuland. Supporters of Sabata submitted another memorandum setting out their position regarding Bantu Authorities in Thembuland. According to Tsotsi, who was a lawyer representing abaThembu, Mr. Young did everything in his power to muzzle the authors of the memorandum.<sup>25</sup> On 11 June 1958, Young held a large meeting of abaThembus in Umtata where he reported the results of the enquiry. Firstly, he announced the deportation of the leaders of abaThembu named above. Secondly, he informed the gathering that Matanzima had been appointed Chief over the whole of the St. Marks and Xhalanga districts. This was clearly a major blow for Sabata and a victory for Matanzima. The latter, together with his brother, George, had submitted their own memorandum, dated 27 December 1957, in which they cited the letter dated 7 March 1870 to the government agent regarding the colonial division of Thembuland.<sup>26</sup> To add insult to injury, Sabata installed Matanzima by placing the traditional robe of office around Matanzima’s shoulders.<sup>27</sup>

In the end, Sabata’s strategy of opposing the apartheid policy of Tribal Authorities by operating within that very system boomeranged. He was merely part of the system, although he demonstrated some ambiguity in the whole drama that was unfolding around him. This seems to confirm Govan Mbeki’s

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<sup>23</sup> NTS, 9037, 269/362(3)A – 271/362. Letter to the Secretary of Native Affairs, dated 15 November 1957.

<sup>24</sup> The deportation orders were lifted on 25 November 1963. NTS, 9037,269/362(3)A – 271/362.

<sup>25</sup> Tsotsi 1989:59

<sup>26</sup> NTS, 9037, 269/362(3)A – 271/362.

<sup>27</sup> Tsotsi has remarked: “How dearly he would have loved to place the noose of a hangman’s rope round his long neck instead! He knew very well that this was wishful thinking; the stark reality was that he was actually assisting in the diminution of his own powers and there was nothing he could do about it” (1989:97). Tsotsi appears to be sympathetic with Sabata’s position in suggesting that there was nothing Sabata could do. However, following Mbeki (1996), if he was a “people’s Chief”, Sabata would have refused, following the lesser Chief Luthuli, to support Tribal Authorities.

(1996) doubts in the ANC debate about the viability of operating within the system. By contrast, when Matanzima accepted Tribal Authorities, he never wavered, becoming a loyal and reliable servant of the apartheid regime. As will be seen in the case of Xhalanga in particular, Matanzima showed determination, decisiveness and indeed, ruthlessness in his collaboration with the government in the implementation of Tribal Authorities.

### **Resistance in the Xhalanga district and *Tshisa, tshisa* (burn, burn): the climax of resistance in Xhalanga**

This section provides a detailed description of events leading to, and the actual incident of, the burning of huts in the second half of 1960s in Xhalanga. These events took place at Emnxé, an area that had a long history of resistance to government policies dating back to the introduction of the District Council in Xhalanga in the late nineteenth century. An analysis of the significance of these developments in the history of resistance and repression in South Africa will be provided in subsequent sections.

It is worth noting that prominent to the struggle in Xhalanga were what I refer to as 'landholders'. The term, as used in this paper, refers to the group of Xhalanga rural residents, mainly loyalists in the colonial 1880-81 Gun War, who, based on the recommendations of the 1883 Thembuland Commission, were granted land on a quitrent title basis.<sup>28</sup> There were two categories of land that were granted for each household - a residential site and a field. The social grouping of 'landholders' must be distinguished from their rural neighbours, who were either tenants on their land, or were allocated unsurveyed residential plots under a permit to occupy (PTO) system, that carried weaker land rights than quitrent.

#### *The build-up to the burning of huts in the second half of 1960*

Matanzima fought hard for the re-imposition of chieftainship in Xhalanga. Attempts to revive chieftainship in Xhalanga should be read against the backdrop that this institution was abolished when the two chiefs of the area, Gecelo and Stokwe, participated on the side of the so-called rebels in the Gun War of 1880-81. In addition, even before the colonialists abolished it in the early 1880s, chieftainship never really established a foothold. The institution in Xhalanga was not only threatened externally by the colonialists through their Magistrates, but was also undermined internally by the 'school people' and 'progressive peasants'. In the period up to the 1950s, chiefs in Xhalanga were, in the words of one informant, "there in name".<sup>29</sup> With the advent of Tribal Authorities, whose legitimacy, according to the apartheid ideology, derived from African 'tradition', Matanzima, in particular, saw an opportunity to prop up chieftainship. Given his longstanding ambition, going back to the 1940s, to control Xhalanga, Matanzima set out to re-impose chieftainship in Xhalanga after a period of over 70 years.

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<sup>28</sup> See Ntsebeza 2002 for details

<sup>29</sup> Interview with H.M. Tsengiwe, Queenstown, 24 January 2001.

Former headman Mazibuko confirmed the prominent role that Matanzima played in the re-imposition of chieftainship in the area when he repeatedly stated in his interview that Matanzima rescued chieftainship in Xhalanga, in particular the chieftainship of amaQwati. According to him:

I can say it that I don't think that without K.D. (Matanzima) the chieftainship here at amaQwathini would have been revived (*ukuba ubukhosi ngebade bema*). Matanzima fought hard for its revival, let us be open about it. AmaQwati were weak, and the educated people were no longer in favour of chieftainship (*Amakhumsha akuthi akasayamkeli lonto yobukhosi*).<sup>30</sup>

The above quotation appears to confirm our argument that chieftainship in Xhalanga was undermined internally by the 'school people'. Matanzima achieved his objective when in March 1958, Gecelo and Stokwe were legally recognised as sub-chiefs<sup>31</sup>, three months before Matanzima was made Paramount Chief of Emigrant Thembuland on 11 June 1958.

However, the consolidation of chiefly power was still not to be smoothly accomplished. An event that was meant to be the culmination of the attempt to revive chieftainship in Xhalanga turned out to be a major demonstration against chieftainship. This event was the introduction of K.D. Matanzima as the Paramount Chief of Emigrant Thembuland, and the installation of Ngonyama Gecelo and Jamangile Stokwe as sub-chiefs of Xhalanga. This occasion was held on 12 August 1958 at Matanzima Secondary School, and was attended by a number of prominent people, including the Chief Magistrate and Magistrates of Xhalanga and St. Marks.<sup>32</sup> Paramount Chief Sabata was again compromised and humiliated by being asked and agreeing to conduct the installation. Although various accounts of what precisely took place at the meeting have been given, there is a common thread that seems to run through them; namely that of opposition to chieftainship by at least some of the attendants. According to the Chief Magistrate, for example, things went out of control when Paramount Chief Sabata told the meeting he was bringing "Chief Matanzima to you". There was "an uproar from about 200 of the crowd of approximately 1500" and "expressions such as 'We don't want him. Take him away. We don't want you either. Go home. We want no chiefs. We want to be under the White man'".<sup>33</sup> The Chief Magistrate created the impression that a minority was responsible for disrupting the meeting. This statement, though, should be taken against the background of claims by interviewees that, as always, Matanzima was accompanied by a large group of horse riding supporters from Cofimvaba.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Interview, Askeaton, 25 January 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/20, Headman: Mbenge Farm. Letter to Cala Magistrate, dated 12 March 1957.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Joe Majija, Umtata, 16 March 2001. According to Ntwana, there were choirs to entertain the crowd and women were busy cooking (Interview, Mochudi, Botswana, 24 March 2000).

<sup>33</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 14 August 1958 (only two days after the event).

<sup>34</sup> For details of this episode, see Ntsebeza 2002.

The above rejection of chieftainship in the area did not discourage Matanzima from interfering in the affairs of Xhalanga. At the same time, the landholders of Emnxe, in particular, continued to resist the interference of Matanzima. A pertinent example was the appointment of a headman at Emnxe. In this regard, the Tribal Authority had, “in consultation with Chief K.D. Matanzima” and without any “direct consultation between the Community Authority and the residents”, appointed former councillor, Solomon Mrwetyana as the acting headman of Emnxe.<sup>35</sup> Headmen continued to play a role in the Tribal Authority system as heads of Administrative Areas. However, under the *Bantu Authorities Act*, they were accountable to the Tribal Authority rather than the Magistrate. Prior to the appointment of Mrwetyana, the Emnxe residents had elected one Jonas Ntungwa as a replacement for the deceased Manzana.<sup>36</sup> They had followed the colonial procedure which, for the most part, they had come to accept. Although the Magistrate made the final appointment, this system allowed adult male rural residents to elect their headman. In almost all cases in Xhalanga, the Magistrate merely endorsed the popular decision.<sup>37</sup> The Xhalanga system differed from areas such as Phondoland, where headmen were appointed from amongst the relatives of chiefs.<sup>38</sup> To the extent that headmen in areas such as Xhalanga were effectively elected until retirement, without periodic elections and a system of recall, this kind of representative democracy was, indeed, limited.

Matanzima and the Magistrate were not happy with the election of Ntungwa, preferring a compliant headman, Mrwetyana, instead. By 1958, Mrwetyana had already shown himself to be a loyal supporter of the government and Matanzima. Not only did the Magistrate confirm this appointment, he indicated that Matanzima would conduct the acting headman’s installation.<sup>39</sup> Clearly, the Emnxe residents expected to be consulted in the appointment. The expectation that they should be consulted should be understood against the background that consultation was a requirement during the colonial period. Matanzima, though, was clearly not committed to this kind of democracy, limited as it was, but preferred appointing headmen without consultation.

Not surprisingly, the move to appoint Mrwetyana as acting headman drew an angry response from the people of Emnxe. They organised a meeting with the Magistrate. At the meeting, held in the Magistrate’s Office, Cala, one Ben Tyeku, spokesperson of an Emnxe delegation, informed the

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<sup>35</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11, headman: Mnxe, part II. Letter from the Magistrate to the Chief Magistrate, dated 8 September 1958. This appointment followed the passing away of headman Manzana on 30 June 1958.

<sup>36</sup> Ntungwa was one of the accused in the case arising out of the disruption of the Chiefs’ installation meeting of the 12 August 1958, discussed above.

<sup>37</sup> The only exception was at Mbenge farm/location which was owned under a quitrent title by chief Gecelo.

<sup>38</sup> Kepe’s current work in Phondoland (2001; 1997) reveals that headmen and sub-headmen in Phondoland continue to be chosen from the relatives of chiefs. They are also referred to as ‘chiefs’.

<sup>39</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11, headman: Mnxe, part II. Letter from the Magistrate to the Chief Magistrate, dated 8 September 1958.

Magistrate that the people of Emnxe wanted the Magistrate “to come out and appoint a headmen”.<sup>40</sup> Tyeku was referring to the system of appointing headmen that they knew, where residents chose their headman. When the Magistrate wanted to know whether the delegation did “not accept the fact that, according to law, the Community Authority must appoint a headman”, Tyeku’s response was that the “location as a whole is against the Community Authority”. The delegation made it clear that they would not accept a headman who “is a supporter of Government measures like stabilisation”.<sup>41</sup>

The Magistrate’s decision not to accede to the demands of the delegation did not make things easy for Mrwetyana at Emnxe. Mrwetyana reported to the Magistrate that “many of the Emnxe people” would not co-operate with him “at all”. It seems, according to the Magistrate, that the mood at Emnxe was militant:

I have discussed the headmanship of Emnxe Location with Arthur Mvinjelwa, Head of the Eqolombeni Community Authority, recently, but when I first mentioned the matter to him some months ago, I could see that he did not relish the task of holding a meeting in that area. Mvinjelwa is one of the best headmen in this District, but he has already been threatened with assault and forced to leave a meeting in which the Emnxe people have been part.<sup>42</sup>

An informant had recalled that there was widespread rumour at Emnxe that, fearing attack, Mrwetyana slept with a revolver under his pillow.<sup>43</sup>

Determined to pursue its policies, the government refused to concede to the wishes of the residents of Emnxe. Instead, the Magistrate recommended that “certain agitators from this District” should be deported. He was responding to the 1956 incident at Emnxe, when the Magistrate at the time was threatened with stoning. The Magistrate argued: “if (the Emnxe people) were prepared to go to such lengths with the Native Commissioner ... they will probably go further when the person concerned is one of their own race”. This “person concerned” was undoubtedly Mrwetyana. The Magistrate made strong suggestions that most of the men, including Jonas Ntungwa, Swelindawo Vena, Mabanga Mboyiya and Ben Tyeku, who were part of the delegation to his office be considered for deportation.<sup>44</sup>

The call by the Magistrate for deportation came at more or less the same time that efforts were made to deport the so-called big four: Ntwana, Nyovane, Tyaliti and Ntamo. What is interesting, though, is the omission of Ntwana from the above list of ‘agitators’, as he also came from Emnxe. It does seem as

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<sup>40</sup> Ben Tyeku fled Emnxe for Basutoland with Abel Ntwana. It has not been possible to establish how the delegation was constituted in interviews and archives.

<sup>41</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11, headman: Mnxe, part II. Minutes of a meeting held on 27 February 1959.

<sup>42</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11, headman: Mnxe, part II. Letter to the Chief Magistrate, dated 29 February 1959.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with H.M. Tsengiwe, Queenstown, 24 January 2001.

<sup>44</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11, headman: Mnxe, part II. Letter dated 29 February 1959. As noted, Ntungwa was one of the accused in the case arising out of the disruption of the 12 August 1958 meeting, as was Vena.

though Ntwana was, at least up to October 1959, either not active, out of Emnxe, or simply keeping a low profile. This probably explains why the Magistrate was later to point out in the 1 August 1959 letter referred to earlier that Ntwana, Nyovane and Ntamo were “quiescent”. Available police reports are also silent about Ntwana’s activities in most of 1959. According to police records, Ntwana became involved in ANC politics from October 1959.<sup>45</sup>

When the Chief Magistrate proposed that Emnxe be “left without a headman at all”, Matanzima objected on the grounds that the people of Emnxe wanted “a puppet of a political movement to be Headman”.<sup>46</sup> Matanzima’s suggestion was that Mrwetyana be the acting headman until the Eqolombeni Community Authority appointed a permanent headman as soon as “political agitation in that location has subsided”. According to him, a number of people “are pleased in having Mrwetyana ... because of his moderate and progressive ideas”.<sup>47</sup>

It is not clear what Matanzima’s grounds were for his assertion that Mrwetyana enjoyed some support. On the contrary, the fact that Matanzima opted for the principle of appointing headmen, without testing the will of the rural people, suggests that in the case of Emnxe, he had a strong sense that Mrwetyana was not popular. Matanzima’s assertion in early 1959 hints that he doubted Mrwetyana’s popular support. In this assertion, Mrwetyana’s support seems to derive from his power over resources, rather his popularity: “Those people who do not want (Mrwetyana) as their headman are not forced to interview him. They must adopt other means, if any, in seeing to their social needs”.<sup>48</sup> Tribal Authorities and their incumbents were not only instruments of direct repression, but also providers of essential services and social needs such as land, water and old age pensions. No other institutions provided these services. In this regard, Tribal Authorities became an inescapable fact of rural life, and even its ardent opponents could not bypass this system. It is this phenomenon of the concentration of power in one authority that Mamdani (1996) metaphorically refers to as a “clenched fist”, leading to a “decentralized despotism”.

The initial repressive response of the government to resistance in Xhalanga, in the form of the deportation of Tyaliti from Manzimahle in August 1959, and police harassment which led Ntwana and Tyeku to take flight, was no deterrent. Instead, the forces of resistance adopted new methods of struggle. For example, meetings became secret and were held at night.<sup>49</sup>

*Tshisa, tshisa* (burn, burn)

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<sup>45</sup> Having not read the archival material at the time I interviewed Ntwana, I did not enquire from him where he was up to October 1959.

<sup>46</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11, headman: Mnxe, part II. Letter to Chief K.D. Matanzima dated 9 March 1959. The political movement Matanzima was referring to would most probably be the AAC. This will be discussed see later in the chapter.

<sup>47</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11, headman: Mnxe, part II. Letter to the Chief Magistrate dated 16 March 1959.

<sup>48</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11, headman: Mnxe, part II. Letter to the Chief Magistrate, dated 16 March 1959.

<sup>49</sup> Interviews from Mlotha, Ntwana, Mlonzi and Mbulawa.

The setting alight of huts in the second half of 1960 was arguably the climax in the long struggle in Xhalanga. A few months before the first huts were burnt, there were rumours that Alex Tikana, one of the accused in the 1958 court case, and his group were “busy preparing young men to take petrol to set the huts and kraals alight of all those people who want chiefs and who are with the Government and Bantu Authorities”.<sup>50</sup> Interviewees who knew him described Tikana as bold, confrontational and militant, and did not rule out that Tikana might have made the threats.

The burning of huts in Xhalanga took place in July and August 1960. The first incident occurred on 16 July 1960, when a store and hut were partially set alight.<sup>51</sup> The store and hut belonged to a supporter of government policies. This suggests that it was those who resisted government’s policies who waged the first attack. The victim, George Kolaniso, stated in his affidavit that the Magistrate and acting headman Mrwetyana had earlier organised meetings that “became disorderly and nearly ended in a fight”.<sup>52</sup> It would appear that Kolanisi is the same person that Mrs Ntwana referred to as Magqeshekati. According to her, the first huts were burnt “in the Mission Area. Red people (*amaqaba*) lived in that area. We heard that the house of Magqeshekati was set on fire. He was a red person, from eMnxé, and belonging to the side of K.D. (Matanzima), abaThembu”.<sup>53</sup> Other incidents of burning the huts of government supporters took place from 14 to 16 August 1960.<sup>54</sup>

The response to the burning of huts of supporters of the government showed that the state would turn a blind eye, perhaps even implicitly support ‘retaliatory measures’, rather than ensure that no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands. According to Mrs. Ntwana, each time the huts of “abaThembu” were set alight, the latter would march to town “as a big group”. According to her: “No one knew what they went to town for”. It appears, though, that these men went to the police to report. For example, on 18 August 1960, the Cala police organised night patrols at Emnxé. Later events, however, suggest that the so-called ‘night patrols’ were a ploy on the part of the state to protect and help supporters of Tribal Authorities when attacking their opponents.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the Magistrate was actively involved in this alliance. Initially reporting that no incidents were reported on the night of the 18<sup>th</sup> August, later, in the same letter, he condoned the attacks on the grounds that “the law-abiding element was preparing to retaliate”.<sup>55</sup> In the

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<sup>50</sup> CMT 3/1484. Affidavit by Johnson Ngqayana of Manzimahle, dated 20 May 1960. Ngqayana stated that he received the information from Tikana.

<sup>51</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter from the Cala Magistrate to the Chief Magistrate, dated 19 August 1960.

<sup>52</sup> CMT 3/1484. Affidavit by George Kolanisi, dated 29/8/60 at 1.30 pm. Mrs. Ntwana has described the mood before the burning of huts as “very tense”.

<sup>53</sup> Interview, Emnxé, 1 April 2000.

<sup>54</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter from the Magistrate to the Chief Magistrate, dated 19 August 1960. The huts belonged to Wilson Mbuqe, Douglas Maneli and George Kolanisi, all of Emnxé location. In his affidavit, Douglas Meneli stated that he was “greatly hated in the location because of my refusal to pay money towards the funds of the “Congress” (see later). Wilson Mbuqe’s hut was burnt for apparently having talked about the people of Emnxé in Matanzima’s court at Qamata.

<sup>55</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter from the Cala Magistrate to the Chief Magistrate, dated 19 August 1960.

same letter, he reported three incidents. These incidents were, first, an attempt to set fire to Wilson Mbuqe's remaining hut; secondly, the murder of Willie Vintwembi Manzana and third, the burning of two huts belonging to Kleintjie Ngamlana. Mbuqe was a supporter of government policies while Manzana and Ngamlana were part of the opposition. The fact that the main victims were opponents of government policies may explain why the Magistrate seemed casual about murder. In fact, he seemed to justify the murder of Manzana as "an act of retaliation for the hut burnings". Seemingly trying to discredit or agitate against Manzana, the Magistrate announced: "I am informed that he was one of the chief agitators and a 'Congress' man in the location. He was also one of a group of men who was convicted here in December 1958, for the part he played in a serious disturbance which broke out at the installation ceremony of Chief Matanzima, at the Matanzima Secondary School in this District. He was strongly opposed to Chief Matanzima and the Bantu Authorities".<sup>56</sup> Of Ngamlana, the Magistrate reported: "Kleintjie Ngamlana is stated to be one of the Congress men, and a reference to him will be found in the second last paragraph of page 2 of Wilson Mbuqe's statement. This burning would therefore also appear to be an act of retaliation".<sup>57</sup>

No arrests were made for the murder of Manzana. Interviewees claimed that very little, if any, attempt was made to conduct an investigation. Informants were adamant that Manzana's neighbours, assisted by Matanzima's supporters from Tsengiwe, were behind the murder. According to informants, two families of abaThembu, emaKhondweni and emaNuneni, flanked Manzana. The attack was apparently launched from the emaKhondweni house. According to Mrs. Ntwana, one of the sons of Manzana "saw the people who were to kill his father. He was a friend of the boys of the neighbour. He saw the spears and assegais that were used, lined along the wall".<sup>58</sup> She also stated that a young couple from emaKhondweni left that night for white farms (*emabhulwini*) and never returned. Her view was that they were scared. Mrs Ntwana also claimed that "the killers left behind a shoe". Rather than protect the victims, informants claimed that the police watched as abaThembu vowed that Manzana would not be buried. This threat should not be given its literal meaning. It must be seen against the background that large crowds of people attend African funerals to show their last respect to the deceased. The enemies of Manzana probably wanted only his family to bury him in order to show that he was not popular. However, funeral arrangements were made, amidst a heavy police presence on the day of the funeral. Although there were no incidents at the funeral, most people did not even wait to eat after returning from the graveside, as they feared attack.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter from the Cala Magistrate to the Chief Magistrate, dated 19 August 1960.

<sup>57</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter dated 19 August 1960. As indicated, I will deal with the role of political organisations in Xhalanga later in this chapter.

<sup>58</sup> Attempts to trace this son were not successful, as they no longer stay in Xhalanga.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Mrs. Ntwana, 1 April 2000. There was apparently, on the same day, an unveiling of the tombstone (*izila*) of one of Matanzima's supporters, Henry Nkunkuma at nearby Tsengiwe. Apparently unaware that there was an unveiling of the tombstone, those attending the Manzana funeral feared that "abaThembu" would attack them.

Ntwana mentioned in his interview that soon after the murder of Manzana, appeals were made to him that he should return. He explained:

When Manzana was killed, people wanted me to come back. I once came back and held a meeting in Cala at night. I was nearly arrested. I was from Lesotho, and I went to give commands as to what people should do.<sup>60</sup> After the meeting, Jongizizwe Dyantyi organised a taxi owned by Willie Rooi. Rooi informed the police. I saw the police as I was approaching the car and ran away with Dyantyi.<sup>61</sup>

This interview seems to corroborate the view that Ntwana was seen in Xhalanga after they fled.

Although no further incidents of setting huts on fire took place after the night of 18 August 1960, people at Emnxe lived in a state of fear. One of the events that left an indelible mark in the minds of both young and old living in Emnxe at the time was the abandoning of houses at night especially after the murder. Mrs. Ntwana's interview sombrely captures the spirit of the time: "People would leave their homes at night and stay in the mountains, and come back during the day to prepare food. It was during the night that these house were burnt ... It was really bad, my child. We did not sleep while in the mountains. We slept during the day, or else at Reverend Ngewu's Mission and the church hall. At least they respected the church".

The tide, it seems, had turned in favour of the supporters of Tribal Authorities, who, of course, enjoyed the support of the state. This was certainly the view of informants, both supporters and opponents of Tribal Authorities. According to Mrs Ntwana, the supporters of Tribal Authorities at Emnxe were reinforced by "Amaqaba from Tsengiwe". One Mandlangisa, whose husband was associated with the supporters of the government, gave accommodation to those government supporters whose huts were burnt.<sup>62</sup> But her grandchildren remembered that they, too, slept in the mountains.<sup>63</sup>

Although by the end of 1960 there was sufficient calm to allow people to go back to their homes, there were sporadic incidents in which threats to set huts alight were made, and pamphlets were distributed. These incidents were not restricted to Emnxe. For example, a "bundle" of pamphlets, *Izwi Lomzi*, dated December 1960, posted from Port Elizabeth to headman Tofile of Manzimahle, denounced chiefs who were collaborators and made a call to "the people" to stand "hand in hand" and fight "Bantu Authorities". It demanded "unmixed FREEDOM".<sup>64</sup> Once again, headman Msengana was singled out, and as before,

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<sup>60</sup> Note the use of giving "commands", as opposed to democratic discussions and consultation.

<sup>61</sup> Interview, Mochudi, Botswana, 24 March 2000.

<sup>62</sup> Mandlangisa explained that her house was regarded as safe, as there was a belief that she had a revolver.

<sup>63</sup> Conversation with Zoleka Ntsebeza, who was 5 years old in 1960.

<sup>64</sup> CMT 3/1484. Attached to a letter from the Magistrate to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, dated 22 December 1960. See also letter dated 19 August 1960.

he held Ntwana liable. On 10 May 1961, a pamphlet purporting to come from “Associations or Organisations of Africa” was sent to one Sampson Mguli. It accused Mguli of being a “murderer of the whole nation”. It went on: “You profess to lead the people in Church affairs yet you betray your own people and your children. ... If these organisations or Associations knew the denomination to which you belong, they would write to such denominations and order you to be excommunicated or expelled because you are a murderer.”<sup>65</sup> Although some people regarded Mguli as a government supporter, Mlotha defended him, claiming that although “Mguli was among the school people who were in favour of Matanzima, we knew that he was on our side. He would attend meetings and report to us”.<sup>66</sup>

But these incidents were few, and far between, and did not capture the attention of ordinary rural residents. The ‘retaliatory measures’ of the state and its supporters, especially the murder of Manzana, seems to have fragmented resistance in Xhalanga. As Mlotha reflected: “It was all well, until that murder. We did not expect that”.

If the murder of Manzana broke the back of resistance, deportation delivered the final blow to the struggles in Xhalanga.

### *Deportation*

Mbeki (1984) has sketched how deportations were, by 1960, widely used against the opponents of the government in many parts of the former Bantustans. In the words of one informant, Sobantu Mlonzi: “That was a punishment those days”.<sup>67</sup> As at July 1960, only Tyaliti had been deported in Xhalanga, although, as we have seen, Matanzima and the Magistrate were making all sorts of pleas to the Chief Magistrate to have more people deported. When it was revealed that the main target, Abel Ntwana, had fled the country around May 1960, Alexander Tikana became the next. We have seen above that on the eve of the burning of huts, Tikana was accused of threatening some people with arson. It is thus not surprising that when huts were burnt in July and August 1960, the Magistrate, Marsberg, and supporters of Tribal Authorities concluded, without proof, that Tikana was responsible.

In his long letter to the Chief Magistrate after the incidents of 18 August, Marsberg described the situation at Emnxe as giving “cause for anxiety”. Along with other Magistrates before him, he depicted Emnxe as “the hub of all the subversion in this District”, adding, incitingly: “The rest of the District watches to see what the subversive element in Emnxe will do next, and whether they will get away with it”. He expressed fears “about signs that are appearing that the existence of Bantu Authorities here is in danger”. Marsberg submitted “the following suggestions”, which he felt “may assist in curbing the

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<sup>65</sup> CMT 3/1484. Attached to a letter from the Cala Magistrate to the Chief Magistrate, dated 18 May 1961.

<sup>66</sup> Interview in Cala, 5 January 2000.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Sobantu Mlonzi, Cala, 8 January 1999.

activities of the `Congress' men and should help restore the confidence of the loyal and law-abiding people in the location”:

Alex Tikana should be deported immediately. This step is strongly supported by the local police. There is no time to be lost in Tikana's case, as the available evidence indicates that he is one of the men behind the hut burnings. ... From time to time, ever since my arrival in Cala in June 1957, I have had trouble with Alex Tikana. ... Up to a short while ago, the indications were that Abel Ntwana was the chief agitator here, but now that Abel Ntwana has fled to Basutoland, Alex Tikana has taken his place.<sup>68</sup>

It is not clear what available evidence Marsberg was referring to.

Although Marsberg had supported the retaliatory measures taken by the supporters of Tribal Authorities on the night of 18 August, he pursued the `legal' route of deportation. Marsberg held the same view that most government officials had that deportations had a deterrent effect. He made a passionate plea that information would have to be “allowed to leak out” about the pending deportation, arguing that,

by doing this, a good number of them will follow the examples of Abel Ntwana and Ben Tyeku and leave the District. I am informed that similar rumours were circulated in Manzimahle Location after the removal of Edward Sineke Tyaliti from that location on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1959, and that, as a result things are quiet there. In the case of Abel Ntwana, it was not long after the Security Branch had searched his kraal that he realised that the time had come for him to remove himself to Basutoland.<sup>69</sup>

Following a process similar to the one pursued with regard to Tyaliti, the Magistrate collected affidavits from the most prominent and loyal supporters of government policies, acting headman Mrwetyana, headmen Msengana and Mvinjelwa, as `evidence' against Tikana. Mrwetyana, who had earlier reported to the Magistrate that Tikana was threatening people with burning their huts, admitted that he did not have proof that Tikana was behind the burning of huts but claimed that he was “quite satisfied that he is the chief danger in the location”. Mrwetyana agitated the government to act “in such a way as to put a stop to the activities of these people”, otherwise, “Bantu Authorities will come to a stop”.<sup>70</sup> Msengana confirmed Mrwetyana's allegations, adding: “I know those men whom he has mentioned. They are all bad men. He omitted a name viz. Willie Manzana, but in any event, I have heard that that man was killed

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<sup>68</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Letter to the Chief Magistrate, dated 19 August 1960.

<sup>69</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Letter dated 19 August 1960.

<sup>70</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Affidavit dated 18/8/60. He listed the following people as working with Tikana: Mbeke Kewana, Kleintjie Ngamlana, Mputa Mgemane, Ntsumpa Mgemane, Josiah Yolo, Makamba Mdlalo, Breden Mdlalo and Makandilili Yakobi.

last night. He should include Eleazor Masoka in that list”.<sup>71</sup> Headman Mvinjelwa described Tikana as “a fluent speaker” who “can easily convince the people not to accept the scheme. Alex Tikana has got a great influence in the Emnxe and surrounding locations and I am certain that should he be deported the spirit of the Anti-Bantu Authorities group will be broken”. Mvinjelwa accused Tikana of being “the brains behind the recent burnings”.<sup>72</sup> Affidavits were also collected from some of the government’s supporters whose huts were burnt. These affidavits resembled those above in tone and content.<sup>73</sup>

Unlike previous occasions, where the Chief Magistrate and/or the Secretary for Native Affairs had insisted on more convincing evidence, the action of the Governor-General this time was swift. On 19 September 1960, exactly a month after most of the affidavits had been made, the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development wrote a letter to the Chief Magistrate in Umtata. In this letter, he advised him of the decision to remove Alex Tikana to the farm ‘Frenchdale’ in the district of Mafeking, in the Province of the Cape of Good Hope. The order was signed on 15 September 1960.<sup>74</sup> This swift action seems to have taken Magistrate Marsberg by surprise. A few days after the order was signed, he was still trying to convince the Chief Magistrate that although things had, “for a week or so”, been quiet at Emnxe, he still felt that “a few deportations from Emnxe Location will assist in bringing these people to their senses”. He recommended: “Perhaps the deportation of Alex Tikana, followed by a mass meeting addressed by you, and personal warnings against known members of the agitator group, will assist”.<sup>75</sup>

On 28 September 1960, Tikana left Cala for Mafeking. But his departure was not without drama. In the presence of “the usual crowd of curious onlookers” that had “collected”, Tikana was, according to Magistrate Marsberg, “defiant, insolent, and non-repentant”. He told the crowd “he would never accept the Headman or a Chief”, and “in the presence of the Police, called on the people present to see to it that, should the Police ever set foot in Emnxe Location, they should be killed”. Tikana apparently told the Magistrate “to instruct acting Headman Mrwetyana, of Emnxe Location, ... that under no circumstances should he ever set foot at Tikana’s kraal during his absence”.<sup>76</sup>

However, having drawn first blood, the forces of resistance at Emnxe were, by the end of 1960, dealt a severe and crippling blow. The deportation of Tyaliti in 1959, the fleeing of Ntwana and Ben Tyeku, the burning of their huts, the murder of Manzana and the banishment of Tikana, all contributed to the defeat. This onslaught was undoubtedly the turning point in the long struggle against segregation and apartheid in Xhalanga. What was at stake for the state was the role of Chief K.D. Matanzima.

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<sup>71</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Affidavit dated 19 August 1960.

<sup>72</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Affidavit dated 29 August 1960.

<sup>73</sup> CMT, 3/1484. See affidavit dated 29/8/60 by Douglas Meneli and Kolaniso.

<sup>74</sup> CMT, 3/1484.

<sup>75</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Letter to Chief Magistrate, dated 18 September 1960.

<sup>76</sup> CMT, 3/1533.

## **Divide and rule – Matanzima style**

For years, Matanzima referred to the people of Xhalanga as *amadyakobi*. This term is presumably a form of the word ‘Jacobins’, denoting the French Revolutionary political group. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines a Jacobin as a “member of radical democratic club established in Paris in 1789 in the old convent of the Jacobins; any extreme radical” (Allen ed. 1991:633). It has not been possible for me to establish why Matanzima used this term in particular.<sup>77</sup> As an educated Chief, with a Bachelor of Arts degree, he most probably had read about the French Revolution and must have related the hostility he received in Xhalanga to the “extremism” of the Jacobins. In many ways this was reflective of the kind of opposition he faced in Xhalanga.

One of Matanzima’s strategies of subjecting the people of Xhalanga to his control was, following his colonial and apartheid masters, that of divide and rule. He created the impression that the people who spearheaded the resistance in Xhalanga were a tiny clique of ‘agitators’, without any meaningful support. This was in essence the message behind his claim that Mrwetyana enjoyed support at Emnxe. On the eve of the burning of huts at Emnxe, Matanzima manipulated and reconstructed the ‘ethnic’ divisions between amaMfengu, generally taken as ‘the school’ people (*amakhumsha*) and abaThembu (popularly referred to as the ‘red people’ or *amaqaba*). He mounted a campaign to insinuate the notion that tensions at Emnxe, in particular, were ‘ethnic’, between amaMfengu and abaThembu.

It is worth noting that these ‘ethnic’ divisions in Xhalanga, as elsewhere, were not static. Formal, Western education, Christianity and urbanisation played a key role in breaking down these divisions. However, although the divisions were blurring, people still talked about a divide along ‘ethnic’ lines. In other words, although the material conditions could have changed in the sense that umThembu married iMfengu, and that *amaqaba* were becoming *amakhumsha*, the divisions remained in the consciousness of the people in Xhalanga. Mrs. Ntwana’s interview brilliantly captures this tension in Xhalanga. Born in Nqamakwe, the place, as she put it, of amaMfengu (*emaMfengwini*), Mrs. Ntwana came to Emnxe in 1955, when she got married. She recalled: “I was surprised when I came here to hear this distinction ... There was this gulf between the two. AmaMfengu did not want their children to marry the children of amaQaba, *although marriages happened among the children of the two groups*. There were tensions when I came here” (my emphasis).<sup>78</sup>

Closely linked to the ‘ethnic’ divide in Xhalanga was the question of social gradation. The residents of Xhalanga were broadly divided between landholders of quitrent titles on the one hand, and the landless

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<sup>77</sup> Attempts to interview Matanzima have not been fruitful. Those close to him are protective of him on the grounds that he is too old to be interviewed. He is about 87 years of age.

<sup>78</sup> Interview, Emnxe, 1 April 2000.

along with PTO holders, the majority of whom had no access to fields for cultivation, on the other hand. These divisions were still evident in the 1950s. According to Abel Ntwana: “The title ruled in Xhalanga. Those who did not have title had nothing to protect them. They lived on the land of the property owners, hence the term, *amalose*. They were like farm labourers or labour tenants”.<sup>79</sup> The majority of the landholders were amaMfengu, while *amalose* and PTOs holders were mainly from abaThembu. That *amalose* changed from a state of landlessness to one of being holders of PTOs does not necessarily mean that class divisions vanished. All it meant was that the divisions were modified. Additionally, the problem of landlessness remained, largely due to an influx of people from commercial farms and natural population growth.

Matanzima capitalised on the fact that the majority of the landholders in Xhalanga were of amaMfengu origin, and the landless were mainly abaThembu. He used the class divide as a basis to mobilise support along ethnic lines. His target group for support was the landless abaThembu. A former headman, Kupe, recalled Matanzima’s words in an effort to rally support among abaThembu: “What would be better would be for you to come to my side so that we drive amaMfengu away. After that, you will get land”.<sup>80</sup> Headman Fani of Cala Reserve also confirmed that Matanzima built his support and support for Tribal Authorities around the land question: “The majority of the people of Cala Reserve accepted the Rehabilitation Scheme hoping that they would get more land”.<sup>81</sup> According to Mrs Ntwana, there were threats, accusations and counter-accusations between abaThembu and amaMfengu: “When there were threats against amaMfengu, the latter responded by saying that abaThembu will be driven back to the ‘boers’ (*emabhulwini*), where they came from. AbaThembu, on the other hand, claimed this was their land, and that they will drive amaMfengu back to *eNgqushwa*, where they belong”.<sup>82</sup> Almost all the interviewees felt that Matanzima succeeded in reviving ethnic divisions that were otherwise blurring. According to Mrs. Ntwana, the ‘school’ and ‘red’ people were residentially “mixed”. Former headman Kupe remarked that they were “living harmoniously with the ‘red people’ and inter-marrying”.

Thus I would argue that Matanzima’s success in dividing the people of Xhalanga and building his support along ethnic lines is doubtful. In the first place, Matanzima’s eminent loyalists, headmen Mvinjelwa and Msengana, the heads of the Eqolombeni and Ehlathini Tribal Authorities respectively, and acting headman Mrwetyana, were amaMfengu. Secondly, Matanzima failed to mobilise meaningful support among the people of Xhalanga and was, in the words of H.M. Tsengiwe, always accompanied by “his

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<sup>79</sup> Interview, Mochudi, Botswana, 26 March 2000. Reiterated in the interview with former headman Kupe, Emnxe, 1 April 2000. It must be pointed out, though, that Ntwana uses “title” in a loose sense. The title he is referring to is a quitrent title, not a freehold title.

<sup>80</sup> Interview, Emnxe, 1 April 2000.

<sup>81</sup> Interview, Cala reserve, 15 March 2000.

<sup>82</sup> *Engqushwa* is the Xhosa name for Peddie. When amaMfengu were refugees under amaGcaleka, and were treated as subjects, the Governor of the Cape, Sir Benjamin D’Urban arranged for their transfer to Peddie in 1835, “hoping that they would become potential military allies and labourers” (Davenport 1986:65).

hordes from Qamata”, whenever he went to Xhalanga.<sup>83</sup> An account by Magistrate Marsberg of a meeting at the Matanzima Secondary School on 17 September 1960, confirms Tsengiwe’s assertion. Soon after the wave of hut burnings and the murder of Manzana at Emnxe, Matanzima held this meeting. According to Marsberg, “the agitator group” was “under the impression that they would be able to indicate, by means of a vote, whether they supported Matanzima or not”. When it turned out that this was not the purpose of the meeting, and the “agitator group” decided to leave, Matanzima flexed his muscle by calling them back “and reminded them that such conduct on their part would result in action being taken against them”. In the event, the group “then resumed their places and remained at the meeting until it ended”.<sup>84</sup> That the group “resumed their places” was not surprising given the pressure to which the forces of resistance were subjected after the murder of Manzana. In addition, and this is the main point here, Matanzima was, as always, accompanied by his supporters from St. Marks, who were brought in three busses. There were also “Police reinforcements from Engcobo, Cofimvaba, Tsomo and Ngqamakwe”, that “stood by as a precautionary measure”. According to the Magistrate: “It was also reported to me that many people present believed that two lorry loads of soldiers had been brought in, and this, too, may have had the effect of keeping the agitator group in order”. Under these circumstances, Marsberg was compelled to conclude, “from enquiries made”, that it seemed “doubtful whether Chief Matanzima’s meeting achieved much success”.<sup>85</sup>

Further evidence that Matanzima did not have support in Xhalanga was shown in the ‘election’ process of a headman at Emnxe on 21 November 1960. When Matanzima appointed acting headman Mrwetyana, he indicated that a permanent headman would be elected when resistance subsided at Emnxe. It would appear that he considered conditions towards the end of 1960 as conducive to an election. A candidate, William Ngamlana, complained in separate letters to the Magistrate and to the Attorney’s Office, Grahamstown, about “a very strange election of the Headman done by Chief K.D. Matanzima”.<sup>86</sup> It would appear that Matanzima characteristically brought with him “a crowd of armed men on horseback”.<sup>87</sup> In the end, the Magistrate dismissed Ngamlana’s appeal as “not clear”.<sup>88</sup> This was irrespective of the fact that the same Magistrate indicated to the Chief Magistrate “that in all probability, no vote was taken” in appointing the headman.<sup>89</sup> Another Ngamlana, Gensil, was eventually “elected” headman.

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<sup>83</sup> Interview, Queenstown, 24 January 2001.

<sup>84</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Letter to Chief Magistrate, dated 22 September 1960.

<sup>85</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Letter dated 22 September 1960.

<sup>86</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11. Letters to the Magistrate and the Attorney General’s Office dated 12 December 1960 and 20 December 1960, respectively.

<sup>87</sup> In the letter to the Magistrate it was estimated that the men were “more or less 200”. Apart from the “very strange election”, William Ngamlana complained that on the same day, Matanzima boasted of “chasing the Emnxe people out of his lands”. Matanzima apparently “authorized his messengers to collect beasts and sheep from William Ngamlana, Ben Tyeku, Mavandla Ntwana and Ntsumpa Mgemana”, after having been found guilty by the “Bantu Qamata Court”.

<sup>88</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11. Letter dated 9 February 1961.

<sup>89</sup> Umtata archives, file 3/27/3/11. Letter dated 6 February 1961.

## **Proclamation 400, the coup de grace**

The above incidents in September and November 1960 show that despite the so-called retaliatory measures of government supporters, including the murder of Manzana, the forces of resistance at Emnxe in particular were still prepared to put up a struggle against Matanzima. The publication of *Proclamation 400* of 1960, however, dealt resistance in Xhalanga, and in the rural areas of the former Bantustans in general, a decisive blow (Mbeki 1984:124). *Proclamation 400* was a draconian measure that provided, amongst other things, for the banning of meetings and banishing of individuals. More significantly for the purposes of this paper, it gave wide-ranging powers to chiefs. For example, it was an offence under the *Proclamation* to treat a chief with contempt. Above all, chiefs were given powers of banishment. Hitherto, the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development had these powers. Not only were chiefs given the power to banish their opponents, they also had the power to demolish the immovable property of their victims. The latter had no recourse to law. A State of Emergency could also be declared in terms of the *Proclamation*. This provision was duly put into effect on 30 November 1960.

Matanzima grabbed the powers the *Proclamation* granted him with alacrity. Barely two months after the publication of the *Proclamation*, on 13 January 1961, he signed a removal order. His victim was Mrs Eugenia Ntwana (hereafter Maradebe, to avoid confusion with Asnath Ntwana), the wife of the exiled Abel Mavandla Ntwana.<sup>90</sup> Maradebe was arguably the first woman to be deported in the district. Despite the fact that Abel Ntwana had already fled, the order was issued to him, his wife and “with her members of her household, livestock and moveable property”. She was to be removed to “Keilands location, District of St. Marks, and to remain there for a unspecified period”. Matanzima also invoked Regulation 12 (1) (b) of the *Proclamation* which granted authority to the Messenger of Matanzima’s Court, “with assistance of the persons accompanying him to demolish any hut or dwelling owned by and occupied by” the Ntwanas.<sup>91</sup> Chief Matanzima had on the same day “convicted and sentenced” Maradebe “on four counts of contempt of Court”. Apparently Maradebe did not pay a fine imposed on her, in which event she was “committed to Gaol in Cala to serve a sentence of three months imprisonment in default of payment of fine”.<sup>92</sup> Given that Maradebe could not meet the terms of the banishment order as a result of her sentence, Matanzima issued another order on 20 February 1961 in which he gave her “thirty days from date this notice is served on you”. By this time, Maradebe had been released from prison.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter from Magistrate Marsberg to the Chief Magistrate, dated 24 February 1961. Ntwana’s shop in Tsengiwe was run by John Ncoko of Tsengiwe Location until January 1961 when Ncoko was asked to stop trading given that the licence for the shop had not been renewed.

<sup>91</sup> CMT 3/1484. Order under the regulations for the administration of the Transkeian Territories, dated 13 January 1961, issued to Abel Mavandla Ntwana and Eugenia Ntwana and signed by K.D. Matanzima, Regional Chief of Emigrant Thembuland.

<sup>92</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter from Cala Bantu Affairs Commissioner to Chief Magistrate, dated 23 January 1961.

<sup>93</sup> CMT 3/1484.

However, before the expiry of the thirty days, she left the country and joined her husband in exile, initially in Lesotho, before they eventually ended up in Botswana.<sup>94</sup>

Abel Ntwana's sister-in-law became another victim of Matanzima. According to Mrs Asnath Ntwana, when Abel Ntwana and his wife left, his sister-in-law was given the responsibility of looking after the house. However, around September 1962, "abaThembu men destroyed the house" of Abel Ntwana. Recalling what happened that day, Mrs Asnath Ntwana said: "Some goods were saved, but others broke. They (the demolishers) were sent by K.D. It was in broad daylight, and in full view of a shocked public".<sup>95</sup> Ntwana's sister-in-law was subsequently deported. There were other casualties, including Matanzima's own supporter, Mawonga Nkunkuma and landholders and owners of stock in Upper Ndwana. They, too, were deported to various parts of the Transkei.

As a final blow, Matanzima used his newly enhanced powers to ensure that his supporters were issued with licences to possess firearms. Headman Robert Msengana of Tsengiwe was the first to apply for a firearm. This was soon after the burning of huts. We will recall that Msengana had reported that anonymous letters threatening him had been sent to him after the first huts were burnt. In recommending his application, Magistrate Marsberg pointed out that "the issue of this licence will serve to indicate to him (Msengana) that the State is prepared to support and protect him in his difficult post". Refusal to issue the licence, Marsberg strongly argued, "could possibly result in his losing his life if attacked and this will undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the progress of Bantu Authorities in this District".<sup>96</sup>

Subsequent applications suggested that the spirit of resistance was beginning to spread beyond eMnxhe. In his letter of application to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner dated 28 January 1961, Waqu, the Secretary of amaQwati Tribal Authority, stated that some councillors "may be killed or burnt to death at any time by local agents of the congress men in big cities".<sup>97</sup> Another applicant, Tofile, the headman of Manzimahle, gave an unsubstantiated claim to the Cala Magistrate, that the deported Edward Tyaliti had escaped from Sibasa and was hiding in Manzimahle. Almost two years later, Tofile told the Magistrate that there were unknown people driving cars inquiring about Sineke Tyaliti's kraal. Tofile wanted his security to be stepped up in the form of more "Home Guards" and more revolvers and bullets. Headman Enoch Mfobo also informed the Cala Magistrate on 14 March 1963: "Things are deteriorating in the location and there is a bad spirit amongst some of the people". He reported that in December 1962 and February 1963, "motor cars from Cape Town started coming into the Location". According to him, the

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<sup>94</sup> Interview with Ntwana, Mochudi, Botswana, 25 March 2000. At the time of the interview in March 2000, Maradebe had passed away in a car accident. Abel Ntwana, who was 81 years at the time of the interview, passed away towards the end of that year, in October.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Mrs. Asnath Ntwana, Emnxhe, 1 April 2000.

<sup>96</sup> CMT 3/1484. Letter dated 29 September 1960.

<sup>97</sup> CMT 3/1484. Waqu cited E. Vumazonke and court interpreter N. Kwelelani as "(A)mong these unfortunate councillors". Waqu also stated that "disguised men" enquired from "school children at Stokwe's Basin" about the "kraals of Councillors E. Kuse and E. Mfobo together with that of a Board-member".

“bad spirit amongst some people” started after he started seeing these cars. Mfobo told the Magistrate that he was afraid to call meetings to discuss this matter “because the agitators might retaliate by killing me”. His recommendation was that the Police should conduct “a 24 hour Road block ... to stop the Cape Town cars which are coming into the Transkei”. Mfobo also requested that he be supplied with “ten more bullets for my Departmental Revolver ... to enable me to practice” and also “be supplied with a Departmental shotgun”.<sup>98</sup> Another supporter of Matanzima, B.B. Mdledle, an educationist at Askeaton, applied for the retention of his firearm.

The initial reaction of the government was to delay or refuse granting licenses to the applicants. When this was brought to the attention of Matanzima, he wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Department of Justice in Pretoria, copied to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Umtata. In the letter, Matanzima protested that the refusal “has come as a great surprise to me in view of the state of unrest caused by POQO and other organisations opposed to the Government”. He pointed out: “Mr Mdledle is one of the men who have rallied around me” and “I cannot see how we can be expected to defend our lives if your Department deprives us of the few arms we possess”. Matanzima further pointed out that “POQO members and their allies are illegally armed as is evidenced by the numerous revolvers found on the persons of those who had travelled all the way from Cape Town to Qamata for an attempt on my life ... The Emigrant Tembus have pledged themselves to fight against any forces that may attack the Republic of South Africa. They will do so side by side with the Republican forces”. In concluding his letter, Matanzima reminded the Secretary “that several applications of the above nature have already been submitted to your Department by loyal subjects from my area and it has surprised me to learn that these applications have been turned down without reasons being given for the refusal”.<sup>99</sup> Informants were of the opinion that it was through Matanzima’s intervention that licenses for firearms were subsequently issued to supporters of government policies. According to Mlotha, resistance declined when Matanzima armed his supporters and was given powers to deport people, emphasising: “People feared deportation”.<sup>100</sup>

### ***Role of political organizations in rural struggles***

Members of various organisations played a significant role in the struggles of the rural people. However, there is need for caution when discussing the role of political organisations in the insurrections in Transkei.<sup>101</sup>

Until the late 1950s, political organisations were not prominent in the long history of rural resistance in Xhalanga. The documentation and interviews upon which this paper is based show no evidence of mobilisation by political organisations in the district. Different individuals and personalities came to the

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<sup>98</sup> Others applied, for example, S.N. Mguli, of Emnxe Location.

<sup>99</sup> CMT, 3/1042.

<sup>100</sup> Interview in Cala, 5 January 2000.

<sup>101</sup> See Ntsebeza’s (2002) unpublished Phd thesis

fore at various moments of the resistance, but no single leader emerged for any length of time, and nor was there any indication that these individuals were working for political organisations. Quite clearly, resistance in Xhalanga up to the late 1950s was an almost spontaneous response to local issues that were affecting landholders in particular. However, between the late 1950s and early 1960s, organisations such as the AAC and ANC were becoming involved in the district.

Until the mid-1930s, the ANC was the main African political organisation. By the 1930s, the organisation was almost moribund. The organisation was particularly weak in the Cape in the 1930s and early 1940s. Bundy has noted that in welcoming a visit by ANC President, Xuma to Port Elizabeth, a correspondent warned: "The AN Congress is almost dead here".<sup>102</sup> With regard to the Transkei, Govan Mbeki had written to Xuma in May 1941: "The Transkei is, to be frank, politically in mid-night slumber".<sup>103</sup>

Unlike the ANC, the AAC developed a clearer policy on the reserves. When it was established in 1935, the AAC focused on the franchise. Things changed when radicals in the Workers' Party took over the AAC in 1943.<sup>104</sup> The Workers' Party was critical of the AAC policy, in particular, its silence on the land question. For them the land question was the heart of South Africa's social struggle. One of its leading figures, Tabata, argued that the reserve policy was premised on the restriction of land to ensure a cheap workforce. Land hunger, then, was for him and the Workers' Party the root of the problem in the reserves.<sup>105</sup> Tabata and the Workers' Party argued that Africans were predominantly a landless peasantry which could be mobilised for social revolution on the issue of land hunger.<sup>106</sup> In the same year, the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) was formed as a united front of 'non-white' organisations. The NEUM based its unity on a principled acceptance of non-collaboration and its Ten Point Programme. This programme linked the land question with South Africa's other socio-economic and political problems.<sup>107</sup>

The Transkei African Voters' Association's (TAVA) adopted a resolution at its annual meeting in December 1942 in favour of a direct vote based on individual franchise. This was one of the early signs of the radicalisation of politics in the Transkei. However, the main development appears to have been the establishment of Transkei Organised Bodies (TOB) in 1943.<sup>108</sup> This body sought to link local groupings and disparate interests into a single, co-ordinated pressure group. Govan Mbeki, one of the leaders of the Youth League, was elected as its first General Secretary.<sup>109</sup> In the second year of its establishment, the

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<sup>102</sup> Bundy 1992:8

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Bundy 1992:9

<sup>104</sup> The Workers' Party was a union of Trotskyists in Cape Town and Johannesburg (Drew 2000:145).

<sup>105</sup> Drew 1991:463

<sup>106</sup> Drew 1991:464

<sup>107</sup> Drew 1991:464

<sup>108</sup> Note that this was the same year that the ANC Youth League and the NEUM were formed.

<sup>109</sup> Bundy 1992:25

TOB was caught up in a national campaign against the pass laws. The TOB was undoubtedly an important instrument for political mobilisation in the Transkei. The activities of the TOB laid a foundation for the resistance to the Betterment and Rehabilitation Schemes in the Transkei from the late 1940s.

In the 1940s the AAC was the dominant political organisation in the countryside of the Transkei. Bundy has cited a number of reasons that the ANC weakened in the Transkei, including the “ANC executive’s loss of enthusiasm for the anti-pass campaign and its vacillations over the boycott” of the election, as well as Tabata’s arrest in 1948 in the Transkei while campaigning against the Betterment Scheme.<sup>110</sup> It is thus not surprising that when reference was made to political organisations in Xhalanga in the late 1950s, the name of the AAC received more attention than that of the ANC.

### *Xhalanga in the late 1950s and the role of political organisations*

Government officials and supporters attributed the disturbances at Matanzima Secondary School on 12 August 1958 directly to the AAC. The Chief Magistrate, who attended the meeting, adamantly declared: “The people who tried to break up the meeting are ... believed to be instigated by the All African Convention whose procedure seems to be, from two or three of my personal experiences, to oppose everything done by the Government and to break up meetings by shouting and howling”.<sup>111</sup> Chief K.D. Matanzima, too, associated the disturbances with the AAC:

I was informed that the men ... are the members of a movement or organisation known as the Parent Association which is affiliated to the All African Convention whose President is Attorney Tsotsi. At the meetings of this Association the Government is attacked together with all those who support the Government. Although this body may be registered as a welfare organisation I strongly recommend, Sir, that its meetings in Cala be prohibited. That the District of Cala (*sic*) be declared closed to the people of the Ciskei”.<sup>112</sup>

Matanzima’s recommendation was clearly an attempt to ban Tsotsi and his articled clerks, R.S. Canca and Digby Koyana. The office of Tsotsi was in Lady Frere, which at the time was part of the Ciskei. Tsotsi was the president of the AAC in the 1950s while his articled clerks were members of the organization. According to Tsotsi, his initial contact with Xhalanga dated back to the mid-1950s, when resistance against the Rehabilitation Scheme and against Matanzima began. He urged that in so far as there was an active political organization in Xhalanga in the mid- to late 1950s, it was the AAC. He claimed that some

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<sup>110</sup> Bundy 1992:37

<sup>111</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria.

<sup>112</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Letter addressed to the Native Commissioner, Cala, dated 27 August 1958. The Ciskei was one of the former Bantustans in the Eastern Cape.

of the key activists, including Ntwana, were members of the AAC. But Tsotsi was quick to point out that it was “the peasants” who “were the driving force”.<sup>113</sup> Tsengiwe also confirmed Tsotsi’s active involvement in Xhalanga. According to him, Tsotsi held his meetings at Emnxé: “I know that Tsotsi was very active (in Xhalanga). I was a member of the AAC. I was a member of SOYA.<sup>114</sup> The AAC issued a pamphlet on revolt at Mnxe”.<sup>115</sup>

Matanzima had every reason to be hostile towards Tsotsi. The two studied together at the University of Fort Hare. Both came from the Transkei and referred to each other as *mkhaya* (home boy). They were close friends. Tsotsi used to stop at Matanzima’s place on his way from court cases in the vicinity of Cofimvaba. Although Matanzima never joined the All African Convention, Tsotsi contends that Matanzima was, especially in the 1940s and early 1950s sympathetic to the AAC.<sup>116</sup> The friendship between them was, according to Tsotsi, “abruptly broken and replaced by a mutual distrust” when Matanzima accepted Tribal Authorities in the mid-1950s. In his letter to Matanzima, dated 13 January 1955, Tsotsi formally terminated the friendship in these terms: “But the political differences between us have become too great to be overlooked, and I owe it to our personal friendship in the past to indicate my change of attitude to you, personally, before I am called upon to attack you publicly” (1989:85-6). Tsotsi’s letter never received a reply.

The association of Abel Ntwana with the activities of the AAC provided further evidence of the influence of the AAC in Xhalanga. Ntwana, it seems, was active in the Xhalanga African Parents Association. According to headman Mvinjelwa, it was “a well known fact that” Ntwana “is a member of the All African Convention. The Xhalanga African Parents Association is affiliated to the All African Convention and is used by the latter organisation to propagate the policy of the latter. Abel Ntwana is the person who fulfils this role at meetings of the Xhalanga African Parents Association and he also goes about the locations spreading the propaganda of the All African Convention, as well as at meetings held in connection with the administration of Native Affairs”.<sup>117</sup> In his affidavit, dated 3 September 1958, the herbalist, David Abraham Wassen Zulu, also declared that Ntwana was “a strong supporter of the All African Convention organisation and I have also heard from reliable sources that he used to belong to the Communist Party whilst it was still in existence and that he had joined the Communist Party some years ago whilst he was still working in Johannesburg”.<sup>118</sup>

Yet despite these descriptions of him, Ntwana denied that he was a member of the AAC. According to him, while he was a migrant worker his political home was the Communist Party of South Africa. As will

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<sup>113</sup> Interview, Durban, 9 February 2000.

<sup>114</sup> Society of Young Africans, established by I.B. Tabata, as the youth wing of the AAC. Interview with Sobantu Mlonzi, Cala, 8 January 1999.

<sup>115</sup> Interview, Queenstown, 24 January 2001.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with W. Tsotsi, Durban, February 2000.

<sup>117</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Affidavit dated 8 September 1958.

<sup>118</sup> CMT, 3/1484.

be seen below, Ntwana disputed the notion that there were any active political organisations in Xhalanga in the period before he fled in mid-1960. This included the ANC. According to him, there were “no political organisations behind the resistance of ordinary people, except individuals like myself. ... There was no Congress there. It was individuals, Makhiwane and myself”.<sup>119</sup> Although not certain about the year, Tsengiwe thought that Ntwana “could have been ANC”.<sup>120</sup> But Tsotsi was very clear that Ntwana was a member of the AAC. If it is true that Ntwana participated in the activities of the AAC affiliated Parents Association in Xhalanga, then Tsotsi’s view would be understandable. Unfortunately, I could not confirm with Ntwana whether he was a member of the Parents Association or not. Ezra Sigwela, a stalwart of the ANC in Xhalanga and currently an ANC Member of Parliament, has suggested that Tsotsi used his position as a lawyer to recruit opponents of government policies in Xhalanga, including Ntwana, to the AAC.<sup>121</sup>

Archival records show a definite shift in Xhalanga from political support for the AAC towards the ANC from the late 1950s. Ntwana personifies this shift. Having been associated with the A.A.C. in 1958, in the records from the end of 1959 Ntwana re-emerged as an activist of the ANC. According to the police, on 10 October 1959, Ntwana attended an executive meeting of the African National Congress held at New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. Delegates from Queenstown and the Transkei also attended. The meeting, it seems, discussed an A.N.C Conference that was to be held in the Transkei at Engcobo on 21-23 October 1959. The police further reported that on 22 October 1959, Ntwana “and three other natives ... held discussions in private”, after which they left “by bus on 23 October 1959”. It was reported that they met Ambrose Mzimkulu Makiwane “who is also an active member of the African National Congress”. Ntwana also attended the annual African National Congress Conference held at Durban on 12-13 December 1959, although he “did not take part in the discussions at this conference”.<sup>122</sup>

The question here, is how does one account for the demise of the influence of the AAC, however limited, and the emergence of the ANC. A widely held perception was that the AAC was essentially an organisation of intellectuals whose primary focus was political analysis, which was often polemical, and without any serious attempt to establish a mass base (see Simons and Simons 1983:546). Some scholars did not regard the AAC as an activist organisation, especially outside the Transkei. Lodge alleges that the activities of the AAC took the form of pamphleteering, holding public meetings and offering legal aid for those who ended up in court (Lodge 1983:87). According to Bundy, “the most important component within” the AAC was the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA). From 1943 to 1948, teachers who were members of the NEUM waged a “bitter and ultimately successful struggle” for control of CATA

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<sup>119</sup> Interview, Mochudi, Botswana, 25 March 2000.

<sup>120</sup> Interview, Queenstown, 24 January 2001.

<sup>121</sup> Interview in Cala, 10 January 2000. See also Loyiso Dingiswayo’s unpublished paper, “The *Tshisa Tshisa*”, at the CALUSA library in Cala. Dingiswayo’s paper takes the form of unstructured notes and reflections, and does not contain any references.

<sup>122</sup> CMT. 3/1484. Letter from the Office of the Security Branch to the Magistrate, Cala, dated 16 February 1960.

(Bundy 1992:36).<sup>123</sup> This suggests that the AAC, aside from the support of teachers, did not have a mass base. Joe Majija, the clerk at nearby Arthur Tsengiwe Training School in 1958, observed that the “political mood in Cala in 1958” did not show any “visible strains of revolution”. He pointed out that “teachers<sup>124</sup> were aware of politics” and were “influenced by Wycliffe Tsotsi and CATA”. In his estimation, “they were a cartel, their politics was professional, not mass based”.<sup>125</sup> According to Sigwela, the AAC failed to win mass support largely because they used “high floating English language” and were “polemical”.<sup>126</sup>

Recently, a former member of SOYA, Sobantu Mlonzi, made the following critical observations about the AAC/Unity Movement:

There was this thing about the Unity Movement and the peasants. I’m not sure how far they organised themselves. I was involved with Mzimkhulu (Mbulawa) and Sisa (Mvambo) here in Cala. We would come here and Mr Ntwana was aware we were progressive, articulate and we were not members of the ANC, but we were sympathetic to peasant organisation around Cala ... This was between 1957 and 1959 ... I don’t know what the peasant movement was trying to achieve.<sup>127</sup> We would be called to these meetings to address them, and then we would leave and they would continue with their business ... It wasn’t kind of organisationally, it was just that when we were progressives, and we were in Cala, there was something that was happening, we wanted to get involved. I was getting conscious that the Unity Movement was not at grass root level, excluding what they did in Phondoland, of which I do not know, but otherwise, it was a paper organisation. If the Unity Movement had been consistent, it should have been part of the earth moving, epoch events, such as 1952, Freedom Charter, Sharpeville and Langa.<sup>128</sup>

While the above criticisms of the AAC are substantially valid, it is important that the activist role that leaders such as Tabata and Tsotsi played in the struggles against the Betterment Scheme should not be forgotten.

The decline of the AAC/Unity Movement in Xhalanga could also be linked to a split within the organisation 1958 especially as it seems to have occurred around the same time. This split happened largely on racial grounds, between the so-called ‘Coloureds’, following Kies and Jaffe, and ‘Africans’,

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<sup>123</sup> Some of these figures were W.M. Tsotsi, A.C. Jordan, N.N. Honono, L.L. Sihlali, R.S. Canca, C.M. Cobus, Mda Mda, V. Hermanus and A.K. Mazwai.

<sup>124</sup> He mentioned V.Nonkonyana, Majija (now a Reverend) and H.M. Tsengiwe.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Majija, Umtata, 16 March 2001.

<sup>126</sup> Interview in Cala, 10 January 2000.

<sup>127</sup> Mlonzi was referring to the resistance of the Xhalanga landholders against the conservation measures.

<sup>128</sup> Interview, Cala, 8 January 1999. A number of former and current members of the Unity Movement expressed similar sentiments in interviews and conversations with me. They include M.Mbulawa, M.P. Giyose, Don Kali and Justice Poswa.

following Tabata.<sup>129</sup> It also was, in some way, linked to the broader issue of the political organisation and mobilisation of rural society. The nature of the rural population in South Africa has eluded both scholars and activists. Scholars such as Chaskalson (1987), drawing on accounts of rural resistance against Betterment, have argued that rural residents, including migrant workers, identified more with the land and the countryside than with the city (see Drew 1991:460). Beinart and Bundy (1987) on the other hand, argue that migrant workers in the 1940s were neither completely proletarianised nor peasants. Hendricks (1990) has characterised rural residents as a “displaced proletariat” given that the apartheid regime gave up, in the 1950s, the project of developing the reserves (by then called Bantustans). Even South African early communists in the International Social League had grappled with the nature of migrant labour. Early communists were intrigued by migrant workers as the latter did not seem to fit the communists’ understanding of a classical proletariat, devoid of any control of the means of production (Ntsebeza 1987; Grossman 1985).

The AAC’s activities in the Transkei in the 1940s and 1950s were informed by its reserve policy adopted when the Workers’ Party gained control of the organisation in the early 1940s.<sup>130</sup> We have seen that according to this policy, the land question was the heart of South Africa’s social struggle and that land hunger was the root of the problem in the reserves. Flowing from this analysis, the majority in the AAC, and Tabata in particular, had concluded that Africans were predominantly a landless peasantry which could be mobilised for social revolution on the issue of land hunger (Drew 1991:464). As Drew has observed, the ANC and CPSA’s Govan Mbeki had also concluded that rural residents were peasants (Drew 1991:466).

That the African population in the 1930s and 1940s was overwhelmingly rural (Drew 2000:146) might have influenced both Tabata and Mbeki to draw their conclusion. However, Drew has criticised Tabata (and by implication Mbeki) on the grounds that the class-consciousness of reserve-dwellers and migrant labourers was far from uniform. According to her, some protested against unemployment, while others fought to retain their meagre holdings of land and cattle, while a thin stratum continued to accumulate larger holdings (1991:461-2). More fundamentally, Drew has argued that the rural population at the time “was in a state of flux because of the migrant labour system”. According to her, the AAC thesis “suffered from an overly quantitative analysis, over-emphasizing the agrarian struggle because the black population was still predominantly rural, and over-emphasizing the role of white labour because of its quantitatively greater role in urban industry. It assumed that political consciousness and aspirations flowed directly from material conditions” (2000:146).

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<sup>129</sup> See Drew (1991) on this ‘split’.

<sup>130</sup> The Workers’ Party was divided on this issue and the policy referred to here is the majority position (see Drew 2000:145).

The turning point, leading to the split in the AAC appears to have been sparked by left-wing critics within the AAC who insisted that the anti-Rehabilitation protests were anti-proletarianisation and hence appealed to the potentially conservative aspiring peasantry (Drew 1991:469). According to Drew, Tabata dismissed the critics, arguing for the need to mobilise people on the basis of their immediate needs and demands, rather than abstract goals. These needs and demands revolved around the right to buy and sell land, one of the demands of the NEUM's Ten Point Programme. Tabata was in favour of this land demand, while Kies argued against it. At the same time, pressure for more militant assistance against Rehabilitation and Bantu Authorities was building up in the reserves. The response of some members of the Workers' Party and NEUM was for continued propaganda and education rather than agitation and mobilisation (Drew 1991:474).

Drew has suggested that there was more to the conflict than just a theoretical disagreement. According to her, a number of individuals within the NEUM began pushing for a more moderate political approach. Apartheid laws such as *the Suppression of Communism Act*, the *Criminal Laws Amendments and Public Safety Acts* and *the Bantu Authorities Act* made propaganda, agitation and organising more and more risky (Drew 1991:476). In Tabata's view, according to Drew, the conflict inside the group was between theoreticians who were not involved in organisation and those engaged in practical grass-roots activity (1991:478). In the final analysis, the Workers' Party sidetracked the demand for arms, leading to a split in 1958 at the December Conference (Drew 1991:480). The impact of the AAC in the rural areas of the former Bantustans suffered another blow when leaders such as Tabata and Tsotsi were forced to flee the country in the early 1960s.

The ANC, by contrast, developed from a weak organisation in the 1930s to a mass based organisation in the late 1950s and early 1960s. An important turning point was the establishment of the ANC Youth League in the early 1940s and its adoption of a programme of action in 1949. This programme was essentially a strategy document rather than setting out social goals (Lodge 1983:69). The 1950s saw the ANC embarking on a number of activities, including the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and other protests. It is also in the 1950s that the Freedom Charter was adopted. Although, as Lodge notes, in the 1950s the ANC was "not a revolutionary organisation" and "did not have a carefully worked out long-term strategy", its greatest strength, compared to the AAC was that it did not avoid "mass action" (1983:77). For this reason, it was possible for ordinary people to relate to it.

Most of the mass based activities of the ANC in the 1950s were in urban areas. However, as protests against Tribal Authorities in the rural areas accelerated, the ANC could no longer ignore these areas. In the case of Xhalanga, according to Sigwela, Mzimkhulu Makiwane was deployed from the University of Fort Hare to play a leadership role and serve as a link between the ANC executive and the struggles of

ordinary people.<sup>131</sup> Makhiwane left for exile when, according to Sigwela and Dingiswayo, Matanzima summoned him to Qamata. Although Tsotsi was dismissive of the role of Makhiwane, claiming that Makhiwane's sister, Thandiwe, "was arguably more active", Mlonzi and Mbulawa credited him for being an ANC activist in the area. Mlonzi thought that Makhiwane was somehow involved in the 1946 Mineworkers strike. Mlonzi and Mbulawa had high regard for the role Ntwana played at Emnxe. Mlonzi saw Ntwana as "broadminded" in the sense that he used to invite them "to some places in Nyalasa and Lufutha" to provide political education to "the peasants".<sup>132</sup> According to Mlonzi, "the ANC was strong at least in the Cala area, because Ntwana was ANC".<sup>133</sup>

Despite the role the AAC and ANC played in Xhalanga as described above, there was general agreement among interviewees, including Tsotsi, that the "peasants"<sup>134</sup> were the driving force behind the resistance in Xhalanga. Again, the resistance of the late 1950s appeared to have been driven by local interests. Ntwana repeatedly told me in interviews and conversations over three days, that it was the ordinary, landholding, stock-owning people of Xhalanga who were behind the resistance. According to him, it was only in the late 1950s or early in 1960, after Ntwana had "led a delegation to a conference that was held in Durban" and "before I left for Lesotho" that they "told the people about the ANC".<sup>135</sup> For his part, Mbulawa averred: "The struggle was sustainable because of the people and what they were struggling for, rather than driven from outside by political organisations. That is why the struggle continued even when Ntwana and others had left".<sup>136</sup>

One of the reasons why there seems to have been a gap between political organisations in Xhalanga, and ordinary rural residents, was the low level of political engagement. This was despite the fact that the AAC prided itself on taking up the peasant and land struggles. While this might have been the case in other parts of the Transkei, it doesn't appear as if this was the case in Xhalanga. Apart from Tsengiwe, most interviewees in Xhalanga remember Tsotsi more as a human rights lawyer than an activist. The pre-occupation of the members of SOYA was largely intellectual and seemed to lack an understanding of the bread and butter issues rural residents were grappling with. The intellectuals were seen as aloof. According to Ntwana, the "peasants" were highly suspicious of educated people, especially professionals who were earning a salary. These professionals did not openly align themselves with the land struggles of the rural areas. Ntwana remembered that when he proposed that their group should invite political activists to provide them with political education and explain what was happening, politically, in South Africa, "the uneducated refused to accept them". Ntwana further explained: "The peasants were very

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<sup>131</sup> Interview, 10 January 2000.

<sup>132</sup> Mbulawa and Ntwana confirmed this in my interviews with them in Botswana.

<sup>133</sup> Although not certain, Mlonzi thought this would be around 1959.

<sup>134</sup> Tsotsi, Mlonzi and Ntwana used the term 'peasants' to describe those to whom I refer as 'landholders' in this study.

<sup>135</sup> This was presumably the conference the police referred to above.

<sup>136</sup> Interview, Pitsane, 25 March 2000.

careful. They believed in me. I was the only educated person who was among them”.<sup>137</sup> When Ntwana succeeded in persuading rural residents to invite intellectuals, the level at which political education was pitched did not address the immediate concerns of rural inhabitants. This gap is evident in Mlonzi’s interview:

Ntwana was broadminded and would call Mzimkhulu (Mbulawa) and myself at night to some places in Nyalasa and Lufutha, from one spot to another spot, because the peasants were secretive. I remember we went into some kind of an underground cave and peasants were there sitting and we started addressing them. We addressed them about the struggle in a generalised fashion and from an educated person’s perspective. They were watching and listening. We spoke in English and I am not sure whether we were making an impression or not, given that we were young. At one stage, when I was introduced as the son of Reverend Mlonzi, one person shouted: *Umfundisi uMlonzi akangongcothoza?* (Is Reverend Mlonzi not a spy?). It was romantic.<sup>138</sup>

The use of English suggests that SOYA members were an elite, and remote from their audience.<sup>139</sup> Mlonzi explained that after giving their input, they would leave the ‘peasants’ to discuss their matters. It would appear from Ntwana’s testimony that discussions were dominated by the need to raise funds to hire lawyers in the event that some of them may be arrested or deported.

The above accounts of Ntwana, Mlonzi and Mbulawa relate mainly to the period before 1960. As already indicated, it is in this year that a number of events took place, both nationally and locally. Events that had a national significance included the Sharpeville and Langa massacres in March 1960, the subsequent banning of the ANC and PAC, and the declaration of a state of emergency. In Xhalanga, the main event was *tshisa, tshisa*.

In sum, to the extent to which political organisations played a role in the events of the 1960s, the ANC appears to have been the most visible. We have seen, however, the term often used was ‘congress’. The use of this term in the context of the early 1960s can be confusing. This confusion is captured in the following statement from acting headman Mrwetyana: “When they talk about the Congress, I do not know which Congress they are referring to, but they tax people 5/- a head for that Congress”.<sup>140</sup> It should be borne in mind that by 1960, there were two main political organisations representing Africans, the ANC and PAC, the latter having been established in 1959. Hardly a year after its establishment, the PAC played a leading role in the Sharpeville and Langa incidents in March 1960 (Lodge 1983; Roux 1964).

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<sup>137</sup> Interview, Mochudi, Botswana, 24 March 2000.

<sup>138</sup> Interview, Cala, 8 January 1999.

<sup>139</sup> According to Mlonzi, English was the language used in their SOYA study groups.

<sup>140</sup> CMT, 3/1484. Affidavit dated 18/8/60.

My assumption here is that 'congress' in the case of Xhalanga referred to the ANC, given that there is no evidence of the active involvement of the PAC in Xhalanga, except, as we have seen, in Matanzima's unsubstantiated claims. As was the case in the late 1950s, archival records and interviews with some of the activists in this period tend to differ concerning the role played by the ANC in the events of the early 1960s. Archival records suggest that the ANC was largely behind the 'agitation', while the activists suggested a more nuanced state of affairs.

My overall position is that the struggles in Xhalanga were, by and large, local responses to specific, local issues that affected one group in particular - the landholders. This, however, does not exclude the possibility that political organisations attempted, with varying degrees of success, to influence things. Neither does it exclude the possibility of outside influences fuelling these essentially local struggles. The role played by migrant workers in Xhalanga in the 1960s seems to show such involvement. An informant, Jama, recalled that as migrant workers in Cape Town, they used to discuss developments at home and liaised with local activists. According to him, they even considered killing the government supporters.<sup>141</sup> Cape Town attracted a number of migrant workers from Emigrant Tembuland. It is in Cape Town that a "Poqo-inspired" plot was hatched to kill Matanzima in 1962 (Lodge 1983:286). The link between migrant workers and the rural struggles in Xhalanga was also evident in the various applications that were made for licences to possess firearms referred to above. We will recall, for example, that Waqu, the Secretary of amaQwati Tribal Authority, stated that that some councillors "may be killed or burnt to death at any time by local agents of the congress men in big cities", and headman Enoch Mfobo claimed that "motor cars from Cape Town started coming into the Location".<sup>142</sup>

## Conclusion

After years of resistance against government's segregationist and apartheid policies, the struggle in Xhalanga reached crisis proportions in the second half of 1960. It took the form of violent action, particularly in the form of setting huts alight and murder. This paper has described in some detail the role of the opponents of Tribal Authorities in this crisis and the state's response. The paper has also considered in some detail the role of political organisations, in particular, the ANC and AAC.

As regards *tshisa-tshisa*, the paper has shown that opponents of government were the first to burn the huts of the government collaborators. There was retaliation, ostensibly from the supporters of the government. The retaliation did not only involve setting the huts of some opposition members alight, but above all, the murder of Manzana, a prominent opponent of Tribal Authorities and chiefs. This paper has argued that these so-called retaliatory measures were encouraged by the state. This meant that the state, in contrast to

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<sup>141</sup> Interview in Cala, 7 March 2001. Jama claimed that he dropped out of these meetings when his father's name was included in the list (*utata wayebandakanywa*). "My father was very close to Mvinjelwa". Mvinjelwa, as seen above, was the headman of Sifonondile and head of the eQolombeni Community Authority.

<sup>142</sup> CMT, 3/1484.

its earlier reservation, was now prepared to openly act outside its legalistic framework. The decisive role that was played by Matanzima, with the aid of the state, in the crackdown on the resistance, has been highlighted. Initially banking on splitting the people of Xhalanga along “ethnic” lines, and building a support base among abaThembu, Matanzima resorted to force once his divide and rule strategy failed. Armed supporters from his district, St. Marks, and police were a characteristic feature of his meetings. The powers he received under *Proclamation 400* gave Matanzima free reign to banish his opponents at will. Under this kind of sustained attack, resistance in Xhalanga had, by 1963, collapsed.

The roles of the ANC and the AAC in Xhalanga in the early 1960s have been assessed. This paper has argued, drawing from the oral evidence of some political activists at the time, that both organisations played a marginal role. The main actors behind the resistance were the landholders and owners of stock of Xhalanga. It has, however, been demonstrated that migrant workers took an active interest in developments at home. A significant number of migrant workers from Xhalanga worked in Cape Town, which, in the early 1960s, was one of the main centres of political opposition against the pass laws in particular and apartheid in general. However, by 1963, opposition to the state was decimated in Xhalanga.

The defeat of resistance in Xhalanga can be seen as one instance of the apartheid government’s ‘cleanup’ operations in the aftermath of the Sharpeville and Langa marches in March 1960. The state’s reaction was swift and fierce. Protesters were killed and arrested. Political organisations such as the ANC and PAC were banned and a State of Emergency declared, followed by waves of arrests and trials throughout the early 1960s (Lodge 1983; Roux 1964). A comparable example of protest followed by ruthless suppression of opposition in the rural areas in the early 1960s, was the Mpondo revolt of 1960.<sup>143</sup> This revolt, which lasted for nine months, was the response of amaMpondo to the introduction of Tribal Authorities. By May 1960, an alternative political authority was on the verge of being established, taking over from the chiefs’ functions of settling land allocation and other disputes (Lodge 1983:279-280)<sup>144</sup>. The first major reaction from the state occurred in June 1960 when the police fired into a crowd of villagers assembled in a valley adjoining the Ngquza hill between Bizana and Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape. About eleven amaMpondo were killed and twenty-three arrested. The reaction of amaMpondo was to call a boycott of traders. The revolt was finally suppressed when *Proclamation 400* was invoked to introduce a State of Emergency in the Transkei. The state brought in the military and heavily armed police (Mbeki 1984:117).

A common feature of the Xhalanga, Mpondo and other rural struggles against Tribal Authorities was, their “parochial” nature (Lodge 1983:290). We have seen in the case of Xhalanga that the organisation

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<sup>143</sup> Mbeki (1984) and Lodge (1983) have sketched other instances of rural revolts from the 1930s up to the early 1960s.

<sup>144</sup> See also Mbeki (1984:116-123).

and leadership against Tribal Authorities were internally and externally weak. Within Xhalanga, the forces of resistance were not co-ordinated so that they could strike together. As we have seen, there was no integration of strategy, for example, between political organisations and the rural residents, and later between migrant workers and rural residents. The strategies seemed to have been ad hoc. We have also seen that intellectuals in the AAC were far from being “organic intellectuals”. According to Gramsci: “The mode of being of the new (organic) intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, ‘permanent persuader’ and not just simple orator” (Gramsci 1971:10, see also Bundy 1992:2). Externally, there is little evidence of links between the urban and rural struggles in this period. The limited role of migrant workers in Xhalanga did not fill in this gap. At best, migrant workers seemed to be exiles, carving strategies for rural battles in the cities. As Lodge has correctly pointed out, at this stage, the migrant workers identified themselves as “peasants”, rather than as a full-fledged proletariat (1983:290). Faced with the organised, vicious machine of the apartheid regime, it was almost inevitable that the forces of resistance would, as they did, succumb.

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