THE MAKING OF ‘LOYALS’ AND ‘REBELS’:

The 1880 Transkei Rebellion and the Subversion of the Chieftaincies of East Griqualand, 1874-1914

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Abstract

In the mid-1870s, influenced by the mineral revolution in southern Africa, the Cape responsible government began to extend colonial rule over the chiefdoms that inhabited the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region. Although white officials initially negotiated with the leadership of these chiefdoms to accept colonial rule and depended heavily on them to implement new laws, ultimately the Cape government aimed to side-line indigenous political systems and replace them with magistrates and headmen. Colonial officials mistakenly equated indigenous political structures with dictatorial chiefs whose followers were subject to their personal ambitions. In fact chiefs were part of a collective leadership and were very aware and influenced by the needs of their adherents. This work is concerned with how the chieftaincies, or indigenous political systems, of the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region responded, survived and adapted in the face of colonialism. The chieftaincies were remarkably resilient despite the political and economic changes brought on by colonialism and capitalism and were able to retain some degree of authority amongst their followers and at times obtain recognition from the colonial state. Interactions between the chieftaincies and the colonial state were complex, fluid and ever evolving. Some leaders of chiefdoms co-operated with colonial authorities, either over particular issues at certain times or more generally over longer periods, and were considered by colonial officials to be 'loyal'. Yet, at other times they resisted the demands and changes being brought on by colonialism and were labelled as 'rebels'. Questions of how the chieftaincies responded to colonial rule were most critical during the Transkei Rebellion of 1880, which is a central focus of this work. Some chieftaincies co-operated with and served with the colonial military forces in order to spare themselves from the economic and social disruption brought on by war and the confiscation of land by the victors. Other chieftaincies took up arms against the colonial state in

an attempt to stop the increasingly unacceptable demands being made of them and to resist the negative changes that colonialism was bringing. Despite their ability to adapt, by the early years of the twentieth century hereditary leaders found themselves increasingly caught between the expectations of their followers and demands made by the colonial administration. Faced with increasing popular criticism, many leaders adapted ambiguous and shifting stances on issues concerning their followers.

Table of Contents

Abstract		ii
Dedication		vi
Abbreviations, Glossary and Comments on Terminology		vii
Acknowledgements		x
Introduction		1
Chapter One:	**The Origins of the Chiefdoms of the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu Region**	27
Chapter Two:	**'The Mild Benign Sway of the British Rule': The Extension of Cape Rule between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers**	55
Chapter Three:	**'Government Deals with its Subjects in its Own Way': The Realities of Colonial Rule**	84
Chapter Four:	**'Easily Managed People': The Basotho Chiefdoms Rebel**	114
Chapter Five:	**'Hearts White towards Government': Loyal Chiefdoms and the Offensive against the Basotho**	143
Chapter Six:	**'The Hand of the White Queen was Killed': The Uprising Spreads to the Mpondomise Chiefdoms**	165
Chapter Seven:	**The Rebellion**	189
Chapter Eight:	**Punishment and Compromise: Indigenous Leaders and the Headmanship System**	212

Chapter Nine: **Strained and Shifting Loyalties: Loyal Chiefdoms and the Crises of Colonialism** 241

Conclusion 268

List of Sources 275

IN MEMORY OF ATHI DUBE

Abbreviations, Glossary and Comments on Terminology

Abbreviations

BNA – Blue-Book for Native Affairs

BPP – British Parliamentary Papers

CMR – Cape Mounted Rifles

CPP - Cape Parliamentary Papers

EGMR – East Griqualand Mounted Rifles

CA – Cape Town Archives

FAMP – Frontier Armed and Mounted Police

PAR – Pietermaritzburg Archives

Glossary

Zulu (Z), Xhosa (X) and Sotho (S), and dialects thereof, are among the languages spoken by the people of the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region. The following words drawn from these languages have been used in this work:[1]

Abakwa Madzikane (Z) – People of Madzikane

Amakholwa (Z/X) – A Christian convert

Igqira (X) – Expert witch finder/ diviner/ healer

Imbizo (Z) – Gathering of people called by a traditional leader

Imbongi (Z/X) – A praise poet

Ingcubhe (X) – A festival celebrating the first harvest of a new season

Igqwira (X) –Sorcerer

Inkosi (Z/X) – Chief or ruler

Inkosi Enkhulu (Z/X) – A great chief

Inyanga (Z) – Doctor/herbalist/ diviner

Iphakathi (Z/X) – Councillor

[1] The definitions are generally drawn from *A Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles* by Rhodes University (http://dsae.co.za).

Isinduna (Z/X) - Headman/ officer responsible for overseeing the affairs of a district made up of a number of villages

Izithebe (X) – Family head

Izithile (X) – A ward

Lobola (Z/X) – Bridewealth

Mabelete (S) – Those who kept their guns

Mafisa (S) – Assigning representatives, often family members, as senior chiefs with the aim of allowing the state to grow

Mateketa – Those who held licenses, i.e. gave in their guns

Mlungu (Z/X) – A white person

Pitso (S) – A gathering or conference of people

Ubuthi (Z/X) – Bewitching matter/ harmful substance

Ukubhaca (Z) – To hide away

Umguyo (X) – War dance

Umhlahlo (X) – Trial by smelling out

Umthakathi (Z/X) – A witch or wizard/ practicing of evil magic

Place Names, Personal Names and Titles

The accepted spellings of a number of place names in the geographical area of study have changed in the last two decades. The two most important are Mthatha instead of Umtata and Mzimkhulu in place of Umzimkulu. I have used the contemporary usage, except in direct quotes, in which case the older spellings have been retained. The names of individuals, generally chiefs, were spelt in numerous ways in colonial documents. The spellings of Mditshwa include Umditchwa and Umditshwa. Mhlontlo appears often as Umhlonhlo or Mhlonthlo. The name of the Sotho chief Makoai has numerous forms in the colonial record, the most common of which was Makwai. Except for in quotes, the accepted spellings Mditshwa, Mhlontlo and Makoai have been used. There is some debate about the titles that should be used when referring to indigenous leaders. Should they be called chiefs, great chiefs or by the English term king? This is not simply a linguistic issue or academic nitpicking. The South Africa constitution recognizes different types of traditional leaders and at the moment there is much legal debate about what

constitutes a chiefdom versus a kingdom. I have used the generally acceptable practice of referring to leaders by their first names, i.e. Victoria rather than Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

Comments on Terminology

I have not changed the language used in any direct quotes as they reflect the context in which they were written and reveal the attitudes and beliefs of those who wrote them. Some of the words used in these quotes are now considered historically inaccurate and offensive. The word *tribe* was widely used by writers until the 1960s to describe African social and political units but has now been discarded as inaccurate and prerogative. There is the nonsensical argument that the word *Kaffir* was originally not offensive. In fact from the tone and the context in which it was written it is clear that most white writers and politicians intended it to be a dismissive term even in the nineteenth century.

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Introduction

On Monday, 17 May 1904, after deliberating for just 25 minutes, a jury of nine white men in Grahamstown found the Mpondomise chief Mhlontlo not guilty of murdering the magistrate Hamilton Hope in October 1880 at Sulenkama, near Qumbu in the Eastern Cape. When the news of the chief's acquittal reached the small town of Kokstad in East Griqualand, a meeting under the auspices of the Farmers' Association was hastily called. It was resolved at the gathering to collect signatures from the white residents of the Transkei for a petition to be presented to the governor, objecting to the chief being allowed to return to Qumbu.[1] The farmers and traders of the Transkei were concerned that Mhlontlo, after 23 years in exile following a rebellion against the Cape colonial government in which he played a prominent part had been suppressed, would gather his former supporters around him and pose a threat to white rule. It is remarkable that the return of an aging chief who was no longer officially recognized by the colonial administration, and whose supporters had been defeated in a military campaign and had much of their land confiscated two decades earlier, would cause such a strong response amongst the white farming community. The fear and frenzy surrounding Mhlontlo's possible return demonstrated the resiliency of the Mpondomise chieftaincy; its remarkable ability to survive, evolve and still retain enough authority to cause after 30 years of colonial rule, concern amongst the white population of the Transkei.

Shula Marks in *Reluctant Rebellion*, a milestone in writings on resistance to colonial rule, argued that traditional society gets carried over and transmuted in the colonial context and provides the precedents for organization in the face of new challenges.[2] This work is concerned particularly with how indigenous political systems, best described as chieftaincies, in the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region responded, survived and were transmuted in the face of colonialism, and how in turn this influenced the ways in which white officials dealt with them. By chieftaincies it is meant the political systems and networks of relations and obligations, and the rituals that underpinned them, which had evolved in the pre-colonial period and which were embodied by the chief. Although the position of chief was hereditary and gave the individual involved some influence, he was part of a collective leadership which included councillors, members of the

[1] *Kokstad Advertiser* 3.6.1904.

[2] S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-1908 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford, 1970), p. xix.

ruling family and prominent homestead heads.[3] He was part of a social and political system which determined his obligations and the roles he fulfilled. The chief and his councillors in turn were influenced in their decisions by the opinions and needs of the members of the chiefdom.

The most notable characteristic of the chieftaincies was their resiliency; their ability to adapt and at times redefine themselves in order to retain their authority within the colonial state and amongst their followers. This adaption went beyond simply ensuring the survival of the chieftaincies but allowed them to influence colonial power.[4] The chiefdoms and colonial state were at odds, at times at war, yet they were unable to disregard each other. The Cape government aimed at undermining and side-lining the chieftaincies, hoping that eventually they would become irrelevant in the colonial world. They developed a plethora of methods to achieve this - they introduced alternate political and legal structures, a new administrative system, confiscated land from chiefdoms, split members of the same chiefdom geographically, threatened and imprisoned chiefs and went to war with them. However, they were dependent on the support of a certain number of chiefs and members of the ruling families to assert their authority and provide manpower in times of conflict, and so they had to compromise and recognize aspects of the established political systems. The chieftaincies in turn had to adapt to the changing conditions brought on by colonialism. In order to obtain recognition from a system that was fundamentally hostile to them, chiefs had to retain some degree of authority amongst their followers, the people over whom the colonial state was attempting to enforce its rule. To achieve this they needed to understand and respond to the transformations that their adherents were experiencing.

From the 1870s onwards the lives of the people living in the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region were being transformed by the dual but linked processes of being incorporated into the colonial state and absorbed into a capitalist economy. By the second half of the nineteenth century state

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[3] While there are examples of individual women serving as regents or leaders, generally the system was patriarchal.

[4] Rachel King has pointed out the necessity to take revisionism beyond discussing the survival, resistance and distinctiveness of colonial subjects to view them as political actors in their own right who exploited, manipulated and influenced colonial power. R. King, 'Voluntary Barbarians of the Maloti-Drakensberg: The Baphuthi Chiefdom, Cattle Raiding, and Colonial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa' (PhD Thesis, Oxford University, 2014), p. 20.

formation was characterized by increasing regulation, albeit at times uneven and fragmentary, of peoples' lives and properties and by the ability of the state to enforce such claims.[5] The paying of the hut tax, control of their movements through the pass system, restrictions on access to land and natural resources and enforced dipping of cattle increasingly became part of the daily lives of many Africans as the century drew to a close. Although the majority of families still lived in rural homesteads and continued to grow crops and keep livestock, which might have given the impression to many observers of an idyllic and unchanging life, the capitalist economy was impacting and transforming society. From the 1880s the migrant labour system became entrenched and the majority of the population found it increasingly difficult to produce sufficient food.[6]

With political and economic changes came new beliefs, ideologies and classes. At the beginning of the 1860s chiefdoms were divided into two groups: the ruling families and commoners. By the 1860s as mission stations were established, a small Christian elite drawn from both within the chiefdoms or newer migrant groups, such as the Mfengu, started to develop. As Christianity and capitalism entrenched itself new groups and class divisions emerged. Beinart and Bundy identify four groups by the 1880s.[7] The Christian elite grew in size and often became private landowners and successful capitalist farmers. Migrant labourers, mainly young men and often Christian converts, emerged. The majority of the population was peasant farmers, the commoners of old. The pre-colonial ruling class - chiefs and their extended families – still held some sway. New economic groups brought new political ideas and alternative leadership to the chiefs. Members of the Mfengu Christian elite, influenced by independent churches, attempted to move beyond narrow ethnic politics in their efforts to resist colonial rule.

How then did chieftaincies retain their authority in this world of the colonial state and capitalist economy which had thrown up new leaders, ideologies and belief systems? Firstly, by co-operating with colonial authorities, either over particular issues at certain times or more generally

[5] C. Crais, *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power and the Political Imagination in South Africa* (Cambridge 2002), p. 7.
[6] W. Beinart & C. Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics & Popular Movements in the Transkei & Eastern Cape, 1890-1930* (London, 1987), p. 2.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 30.

over longer periods. This could take the form of paying hut tax, assisting magistrates in matters such as the taking of the census, accepting positions within the civil service or mobilizing and providing manpower in times of crisis. In the 1960s historians began to highlight that colonial rule had been possible because of the extent of collaboration.[8] Collaboration was seem as the opposite of resistance and judged to be a more rational long-term response.[9] The word 'collaborator' has not been used in this work because it is misleading and emotionally loaded. Beinart and Bundy convincingly argue that the word collaborator should be used cautiously as no group 'expressed unwavering or consistent allegiance to the colonial state' and that perceptions of authority and the value of alliances changed over time.[10] Collaboration also, as they point out, defines political behavior from above. Collaborators were seen as morally and politically capitulating to an exploitive system because it was too strong to resist or offered short term rewards. Co-operation, especially during times of conflict such as the rebellion of 1880, did not only ensure that you retained the favour of the colonial authorities but can be seen as part of the political and culturally acceptable obligations of a chief and his councillors, and assisted in retaining the support of his followers. Historians have recognized that ensuring the allegiance of supporters was a concern in pre-colonial and colonial times for all chiefs and that support was not unqualified or unquestioning.[11] Chiefs served multiple, interconnected roles, which included offering protection to his subjects against external enemies and making sure each subject had sufficient land for their needs. Ensuring land was not lost, gaining cattle and sparing people from the economic collapse and social dislocation that followed conflict was, thus, a way of retaining support.

Questions of how the chieftaincies responded to colonial rule were most critical during the rebellion of 1880, which is a central focus of this work. Chiefs could continue to co-operate and mobilize men to serve with the colonial forces. The colonial state was able to suppress the uprising of 1880 and 1881 in a relatively short period of time because of the men drawn from the Bhaca, Nhlangwini, Xesibe and Hlubi chiefdoms. Not only did chiefs provide manpower but

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[8] *Ibid*, p. 27.
[9] *Ibid*.
[10] *Ibid*, p. 28.
[11] J. Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence* (Johannesburg, 2003), p. 42.

they often served as officers in colonial military regiments and led their men in the field against those chiefdoms which had rebelled. Colonial writers and politicians, as well as later Africanist and black historians, have been uncomfortable about the involvement of black levies in colonial wars of conquest. Colonial politicians were reluctant to arm large numbers of African men, fearing that it would highlight white military weakness and allow them to make demands of the state during or after the conflict. The nature of the regiments in which the black levies fought has received very little attention, although it is clear that they were often more than simply vehicles to mobilize men but were used as a way to reward loyalty through cattle, land and at times wages, and a way for short periods of time to bring within colonial structures potentially problematic power groups.[12]

Followers of chiefs expected them at times to resist colonial rule and the changes it brought. This took on various forms, such as not accepting payment from the state, refusing to assist the magistrate, continuing to try legal cases, attempting to negotiate boundaries with other chiefs, holding ceremonies that reinforced the role of the chief and finally armed rebellion. Rebellion was a risky business for chiefs. There was the real possibility of military defeat, death, exile or imprisonment, yet rebellions could also be a cohesive force within chieftaincies. There is some indication that at times there was popular support for armed resistance, and chiefs who remained loyal were deserted by their followers. During times of conflict chiefs conducted ceremonies to protect and strengthen the community and were thus central to rituals during the rebellion of 1880 and 1881. These rituals were aimed at protecting men physically but also enforced the chief's role as the spiritual protector of his followers. Chiefs took on the military and political roles of rebel leaders fighting an insidious system of which their followers disapproved. In the aftermath of the rebellion the colonial state entrenched their rule and introduced a new administrative system. Yet even in these circumstances chiefs, often after imprisonment or years of exile, returned to reassert the role of the chieftaincy. The Mpondomise chief Mhlontlo, after twenty-three years of exile, returned after his ultimate triumph in a colonial court, with a reputation as a resistor to colonial rule. Colonial authorities excluded him from the

[12] A notable exception is P.S. Thompson's *Black Soldiers of the Queen: The Natal Native Contingent in the Anglo-Zulu War* (Tuscaloosa, 2006).

administration which was to his benefit. He was able to offer alternative leadership to the colonial system or the options offered by Mfengu politicians.

Besides the political and military roles chiefs played by either co-operating or rebelling, there were other ways chiefs were able to enforce their role within society and thus ensure the relevance of indigenous political systems. They played a spiritual role within the chiefdom. They performed religious ceremonies, served as a link between the living and spirits of the dead, protected their people against witchcraft and were the guardians of the sacred objects of the chiefdom. Chiefs played a central role in the finding of witches which if they were not dealt with were detrimental to the wellbeing of the society. From the 1870s onwards colonial officials attempted to stop the smelling out of witches which had the unintended consequences of making it appear to the people as if they were condoning evil practices, while chiefs were viewed as attempting to protect society.

Chiefs were an integral part of the ethnic identities of their followers. Until the 1930s it was generally accepted by historians, anthropologists and colonial officials that Africans lived in 'tribes', made up mostly of members who shared a common ancestor and cultural identity. These tribes were considered to be fixed and primordial. After the Second World War this idea was challenged. Scholars, focusing on the colonial period, argued that ethnic identities are created over time and are flexible.[13] Ethnicity, the cultural identification of a group, may change from generation to generation, and can be redefined in a short period of time.[14] Ethnic identities are crafted by intellectuals who are responsible for defining the cultural characteristics of the group.[15] From the 1980s scholars began to study pre-colonial identities. At present scholars are concerned with ethnic identities on the edges of empires where colonial authority is incomplete and ethnicities are highly contingent.[16] Research on ethnic identities among the chiefdoms between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers is in its infancy, but from the work that has been done, it is clear that people had developed an identity before the arrival of colonial officials.

[13] L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 10-11.
[14] A.G. Morris, 'The Griqua and the Khoikhoi: Biology, Ethnicity and the Construction of Identity', *Kronos* no. 24 (November 1997), p. 107.
[15] Vail, *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, p. 11.
[16] King, 'Voluntary Barbarians of the Maloti-Drakensberg', p. 19.

Magistrates and missionaries would later often over simplify and even distort the role of these identities in people's lives viewing them as fixed and the sole factor in determining loyalties and behavior, and ignoring that individuals embraced multiple identities which revolved around family relations, age, gender and neighbourhoods. However, people did identify themselves as belonging to a certain ethnic group which had a distinct identity. Often central to that sense of identity was the history and the achievements of the chief's ancestors.

Interactions between chieftaincies and the colonial state and within and between chiefdoms were fluid, dynamic and ever-evolving. Individuals and groups might co-operate in one area but not in another, or at a certain time but not at another. The Basotho chiefdoms of Matatiele paid their hut tax and provided levies for colonial officials in the 1870s but rebelled in 1880. The Nhlangwini followers of Sidoyi fled the Colony of Natal in the 1850s after a confrontation there with Theophilus Shepstone and rebuilt their power by aligning themselves with Griqua, yet they served in the field on the colonial side during the rebellion. The Mfengu, who gained more than any other group for co-operating during the rebellion, by the 1890s had turned to independent churches and were leading the resistance against the introduction of the council system. The colonial state in turn was fluid in its response to both those who co-operated and those who rebelled. They negotiated, compromised, adapted aspects of indigenous hierarchies and rituals, rewarded through land and cattle, punished, imprisoned, exiled and at times used brute military force. Even within chiefdoms relations were constantly changing. Mditshwa and Mhlontlo were considered leaders of the rebellion, and the evidence seems to indicate they had support of most of their followers, but after the uprising members of their families served in the colonial civil service. Relations between chiefdoms also changed, with pre-colonial conflicts in certain cases dissolving in the face of the threats from colonial rule but in other situations they continued and even deepened.

The process was contradictory. The official line taken by the Cape government was to undermine chiefs who were seen as barriers to the development and progress colonial rule was supposed to bring, and so magistrates were appointed to take over many of the roles formerly carried out by chiefs. Yet, colonial officials had no option but to enter into agreements with these same men. This contradiction would characterize all dealings that the colonial

administration had with the chieftaincies of the area for decades. The general pattern was for the Cape administration to appoint a resident whose responsibilities it was to negotiate the incorporation of an independent chiefdom, or a number of chiefdoms, into the colonial system. These men could for a number of years function within independent polities that were not subject to the Cape's legal system. Even after treaties had been accepted and signed and resident magistrates appointed the process of chiefdoms being formally and legally incorporated into the Cape administration could take some years and so officials often enforced rules and policies that were not legally recognized by the colony. Colonial officials themselves were aware that they possessed no legal jurisdiction in terms of British law and their legal authority derived from the chiefs. Thus without any legal standing, or often military back up, white officials turned to chiefs to implement the clauses of the initial agreements and later regulations and laws. Even in the years after the rebellion, the colonial government was unable to completely sidetrack or disregard the chieftaincies and included many members of the ruling families and former hierarchies in the new system. The colonial state was unable to disregard the chieftaincies because they continually adapted and redefined themselves as circumstances changed and thus retained their relevance and influence amongst their supporters.

The title of this thesis is The Making of 'Loyals' and 'Rebels'. Colonial officials termed those chiefdoms that co-operated as 'loyals' and those who resisted as 'rebels'. Although these are colonial terms, they have been retained in the title deliberately as it forces us to confront a number of important issues. Who was a loyal and who was a rebel? The events leading up to the Transkei Rebellion and its aftermath demonstrated that loyalty was ambiguous and shifting, determined by changing political realities. Former loyal chiefdoms became rebels and former rebels leaders at times showed loyalty. How was loyalty defined and understood by those on both sides of the conflict? Colonial officials considered adherence to the colonel rules, even if they went against your best interests, as a sign of loyalty. But what of the colonial government? Was the colonial government faithful to what it offered as its commitments and obligations to Africans? African leaders, as well as more insightful colonial officials, would not have understood loyalty as unchanging or without mutual obligations. What were the immediate and long term consequences of loyalty and rebellion? There is evidence that loyals built on the rewards of land, cattle and positions within the colonial civil service to form themselves into a

progressive peasantry and educated elite.[17] The word ‘making’ reinforces the idea that the actions of the state influenced responses of loyalty and rebellion. It could be argued that the actions of the African chiefdoms in 1880 and 1881 cannot be described as a rebellion (or uprising or revolt) as the colonial government was illegitimate and had no jurisdiction to start with. However, if one looks at a more broad definition of the verb ‘rebel’ it can mean to reject or rise against some authority or to show or feel utter repugnance for something, then the events of 1880 and 1881 can be described a rebellion and those involved as rebels.

A Rebellion by Many Names

The conflict of 1880 and 1881 is referred to by a number of names: the Basotho Rebellion, the Mpondomise Rebellion, Hope’s War and more generally as the Gun War or Transkei Rebellion.[18] Many of these names are regional and problematic if used to refer to the uprising in general. The Basotho at Matatiele were the first chiefdoms to rebel south of the Drakensberg but they were not the only groups involved. The Mpondomise were the largest and most powerful chiefdom in the rebellion but again not the only group and so the terms Basotho and Mpondomise Rebellions are inadequate if discussing the uprising beyond these chiefdoms. The Mpondomise went into open rebellion after the murder of the magistrate, Hamilton Hope. Hope gives his name to the rebellion not simply because of his murder, but because of what his death led to - military conflict, a loss of land and cattle and in the view of many Mpondomise unfair treatment by successive white governments. By referring to the uprising as Hope’s War, the Mpondomise squarely place the blame on the magistrate for what transpired. Hope’s treatment of Mhlontlo is often mentioned in Mpondomise accounts as the reason for his murder. The Basotho chiefdoms went into rebellion prior to Hope being killed and his death does not hold the same significance to them or other groups involved, such as the Thembu. The term Gun War comes from the Sotho name for the war. While the attempted disarmament of African men was a significant source of discontent, it was not the only reason people took up arms. The phrase Transkei Rebellion came into use in the 1960s and is the term used in this work as the conflict did involve many of the chiefdoms living between the Kei and Mzimkhulu Rivers, i.e. the Transkei. Although it is a convenient term to use to describe the area in which the uprising took

[17] Beinart & Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa,* p. 9.
[18] M. Rainier, *Madonela: Donald Strachan, Autocrat of Umzimkulu* (Grahamstown, 2003), p. 164.

place, the term Transkei has negative connotations. The term was obviously imposed by the Cape administration, but more importantly it was adopted by the Nationalist government and applied to the homeland or Bantustan established in the 1960s.

The Geographical Focus

The geographical focus of this study is the inland area between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers. It covers parts of what are presently the southern portion of the province of KwaZulu-Natal and the northern portion of the Eastern Cape. There is no one term for this area that is not problematic. From the mid-1800s until the present different people have at various times used a variety of names to refer to the entire area or parts of it. Some Zulu speakers living in the adjoining territory of what is now KwaZulu-Natal referred in the mid-1800s to the area beyond the Mzimkhulu River as the *emaXameni* country, which translates to a place where people 'do not yet have any laws'.[19] In the nineteenth century colonial observers referred to the region by numerous terms, including Faku's Country, Nomansland, East Griqualand or the St John's Territory. In 1844 the governor of the Cape entered into a treaty with Faku, paramount of the Mpondo, recognizing him as the ruler of the territory between the Mzimkhulu and Mthatha Rivers, from the foothills of the Drakensberg down to the coast. Faku, who colonial officials hoped would stabilize the region, in practice only controlled the coastal region and the inland area was inhabited by numerous autonomous chiefdoms, the largest being the Bhaca and Mpondomise. The entire area as mentioned in the treaty was generally referred to by colonial officials, cartographers and travellers as Faku's Country or Faku's Territory.[20] The Bhaca and Mpondomise, who were not only oblivious of the treaty but strongly resisted any attempts by the Mpondo paramounts to assert their authority over them, rejected the term.[21]

The northern part of the territory, which stretched from the Ngele Mountains to the then border of the Colony of Natal, and from the area around Matatiele to the Mzimkhulu River, was

[19] C. de B. Webb & J.B. Webb (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive* (Pietermaritzburg, 1986), vol. 4, pp. 16-17.

[20] Henry Francis Fynn in a map, probably compiled in the 1850s, refers to Faku's Territory. When Bishop Gray travelled through the area in 1850 he referred to it as 'Faku's country'. W.C. Holden's map of Natal compiled in 1852 refers to the area beyond the Mzimkhulu as Faku's Territory.

[21] Blue-Book on Native Affairs (henceforth BNA), G.27-'74, Minutes of Meeting between the Secretary for Native Affairs and the chief Umhlonhlo and his people, 6.3.1874, p. 144.

generally called Nomansland. (Alternate spellings included No-mans-land, No-man's-land and No Man's Land). In 1861 pressure was placed on Faku by Sir George Grey to relinquish the northern part of the territory so that the Griqua could settle in the area. The negotiations were conducted by Walter Currie and the so-called Currie line which redefined the boundary was never accepted by the Mpondo. In 1862 John Scott, lieutenant-governor of Natal, wrote to Sir Philip Wodehouse that 'the term "No Man's Land" had arisen because Chief Faku, after the cession made by him of the territory in question, has never exercised any control over it, while this Government has hitherto been unable to interfere, and thus the territory has remained without paramount rule'.[22] Scott was clear that the term Nomansland had emerged because there was no one central authority, however, some colonial writers used the term to mean that the area was uninhabited.[23]

The Griqua, a people of mixed descent who were being forced off their land around Philippolis by Boer trekkers, settled in Nomansland in 1863. They called their new country *Nieuw Grikwaland* (New Griqualand).[24] White writers and colonial officials referred to the area as New Griqualand, the English translation of the Griqua name, or simply Griqualand.[25] (The term Nomansland also continued to be used for some time after the Griqua had settled in the territory).[26] When the annexation of the Griqua state was gazetted in 1879 the area was referred to as 'Griqualand East.'[27] Colloquially the area became known as East Griqualand.[28] Initially the term East Griqualand was used to describe the area ruled by the Griqua, but as colonial rule was expanded to include the other chiefdoms they were incorporated into East Griqualand, and the term was applied to most of the area from the Mthatha to Mzimkhulu Rivers.

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[22] Cape Parliamentary Papers, (henceforth CPP) G.53-'62, Correspondence Re Settlement of the Country between Bashee and Natal, p. 6.
[23] A.F. Hattersley (ed), *John Shedden Dobie: South African Journal, 1862-6* (Cape Town, 1945), p. 31; BNA G. 27-'74, Report of the Chief Magistrate, Tsitsa, in the St. John's Territory, March 1874, p. 47.
[24] D.F. Van Dyk, 'The Education of the Griquas, Coloureds and Bantu in East Griqualand: A Historical Survey, 1863-1892' (PhD Thesis, University of Orange Free State, 1964), p. 49.
[25] The Reverend William Dower in his letters to the London Missionary Society and his family in Scotland referred to the territory as New Griqualand. Joseph Orpen, the British resident at Gatberg, generally called the territory New Griqualand in his reports and memorandum to Cape Town. H.K. Wilson, Resident Magistrate of Alfred County, drew up a sketch map in 1867 and referred to the area as Griqua Land.
[26] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 302.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.*

Prior to the Mpondomise being accepted as colonial subjects the areas they inhabited, the present Qumbu and Tsolo, were referred to by the British resident Joseph Orpen as the St. John's Territory.[29] The St John's River was the name often used by colonials to refer to the Mzimvubu River. After Orpen resigned his position in 1875 the term St. John's Territory did appear in the Blue-Books but less frequently than before. In 1878 the seven districts were united and the term East Griqualand was applied to the whole territory. After 1879 the term St John's was no longer used.

Until the 1970s Griqualand East, or East Griqualand, was a district of the Transkei Territories. With the introduction of the homeland system, Mount Frere, Mount Ayliff and Mzimkhulu were removed from East Griqualand. The Mount Currie and Matatiele magisterial districts were included in Natal, and officially the term East Griqualand fell away. In this work the term East Griqualand has been used at times instead of the wordier, but perhaps more neutral, Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region.

The Historiography of the Transkei Rebellion

The first accounts of the Transkei Rebellion were written by colonial officials who had often been personally involved in the events they were describing, and missionaries who had worked among the chiefdoms affected by the uprising. White employees of the Native Affairs Department generally blamed disarmament and attempts by chiefs to retain their authority in the face of white rule for the uprising. Charles Brownlee, chief magistrate of East Griqualand during the rebellion, compiled an account of events for a speech delivered in King William's Town. This account was later published, with other papers written by Brownlee, as *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*. Considering that Brownlee influenced the Molteno government's African affairs policy in the 1870s, it is not surprising that when he wrote about the uprising he emphasized that the Cape's 'native policy' was working well and that the bulk of the Africans were contented under colonial rule, and that it was the Peace Preservation or Disarmament Act of 1879 that was the cause of the rebellion.[30] While he considered the Act 'an effectual preventive of war', he felt it could not be practically carried out and that 'any attempt to enforce it would

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[29] BNA, G. 27-'74, Report of the Chief Magistrate, Tsitsa, in the St. John's Territory, March 1874, p. 47.
[30] C.P. Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History* (Durban, 1977), p. 191.

necessarily end in failure'.[31] He was concerned that the enforcement of the act would create a grievance which chiefs, whose influence was on the wane, would exploit to regain their power.[32] Walter Stanford, who had to flee the residency at Engcobo and later served as chief magistrate of the Transkei and minister for native affairs, wrote that the uprising stemmed from dissatisfaction among chiefs over their loss of power as well as their councillors and followers who were deprived of the opportunity to profit by the inflictions of fines and seizure of stock from an accused or convicted person.[33]

Bransby Lewis Key, who established the St Augustine's Mission Station among the Mpondomise in 1865, believed that the immediate cause of the war was the Disarmament Act, but felt there were other causes at work below the surface. He, writing specifically about the motives of the Mpondomise chief Mditshwa, felt that the interference with his people on the part of the magistrate and the colonial involvement in the distribution of land were 'the principal causes of the disastrous war of 1880-1881'.[34] Alan Gibson, who succeeded Key at St Augustine's, wrote the first history that dealt specifically with the uprising, and was also influenced by his work among the Mpondomise, emphasized the unhappiness chiefs felt towards attempts by Mfengu refugees to assert their independence as the main cause of the conflict. The Mfengu, argued Gibson, negotiated with the independent chiefs to settle as clients, but once colonial rule had been introduced, alienated them by going directly to the magistrate.[35]

Opposition politicians and colonial journalists generally blamed disarmament, and in particular its architect Gordon Sprigg, for the uprising. For John X. Merriman, increased taxation, the proposed alienation of land for trading stations and the contemplation of European settlement contributed to the war, but it was disarmament 'which struck the key note'.[36] Merriman was scathing of Sprigg, as were colonial reporters. A correspondent, for example, for the *Natal Witness*, covering the rebellion from Kokstad, described disarmament as a 'rotten policy

[31] *Ibid*.
[32] *Ibid*, p. 192.
[33] J.W. MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1 (Cape Town, 1958), p. 103.
[34] G. Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld: Bransby Lewis Key, Bishop of St. John's, Kaffraria* (London, 1912), p. 70.
[35] A.G.S. Gibson (ed.) *Reminiscences of the Pondomisi War of 1880* (Cape Town, 1900), pp. 11-12.
[36] J.X. Merriman to Editor Graaff-Reinet Advertiser, 2.12.1880 in P. Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman, 1870-1890* (Cape Town, 1960), p. 83.

emanating from a rotten Ministry'.[37] The journalist, concerned about the impact that the rebellion had on white settlers, commented that 'had the "Master" [Sprigg] of the Colony been here, he would have answered those who have and are still suffering (many ruined) from the effects of his policy'. It was, and still is, easy to criticize Sprigg whose arrogance, racism and refusal to listen to the warnings caused great suffering. Among the Basotho Sprigg is still remembered with disdain.[38]

Most of these early writers on the rebellion went beyond cause and effect and referred to it in moral and even spiritual terms in their writings. They often wrote that although the rebellion was destructive, even evil, in the short term, in the long term it led to good as it resulted in the weakening of chiefs who were holding back the development of their people. W.T. Brownlee wrote that good may result from evil, albeit at an enormous sacrifice, as Mhlontlo 'has now been removed by his own mad acts, and under the fostering care of the Government, the people may now live in peace and prosperity, without the constant dread of oppression from Umhlonhlo'.[39] While Brownlee focused on the fostering care of the government, for Gibson this positive change was brought about 'above all through the power of holy lives and Christian examples'.[40]

A common theme that ran through these writings was the idea that the rebellion was part of a wider well-orchestrated attempt to overthrow white rule. Brownlee believed that it was the Sotho King Letsie who was behind the uprising, while Stanford wrote that 'the head of it all' was the Mpondomise chief Mhlontlo.[41] During the uprising negotiations took place between chiefdoms and there were unsuccessful attempts to forge alliances, but overall there is no evidence to substantiate the idea of African polities working together to overthrow white rule.

The Literature of Resistance

In the 1960s as resistance to colonial rule increased and African countries gained their independence, a new generation of Africanist scholars began to focus on how colonialism and

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[37] *Natal Witness* 13.11.1880.
[38] P. Sanders, *The Last of the Queen's Men: A Lesotho Experience* (Johannesburg, 2000), p. 149.
[39] BNA G. 20 -'81, Report on the State of Affairs in the Qumbu District for the Year 1881, p. 86.
[40] Gibson, *Reminiscences of the Pondomisi War of* 1880, p.122.
[41] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 194; MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1, p. 105.

capitalism affected the lives of rural people and wrote about rural uprisings in a different light. None of these works dealt in any great detail specifically with the Transkei Rebellion, but the findings of several works have influenced aspects of the theoretical starting points of this thesis. A number of important ideas emerged from Terrance Ranger's seminal study of the Shona and Ndebele risings of 1896 and 1897 in Southern Rhodesia. Firstly, resistance to colonial rule could not be divorced from the context of African history.[42] The African past, argued Ranger, influenced the reaction to colonial rule. Secondly, there was an ambiguity towards European ideas and technology. While there was a rejection of white mastery, there was a longing to control modern sources of wealth and power.[43] Thirdly, that even though the uprisings were suppressed, they brought about significant changes in the character of white colonial rule.[44]

Shula Marks, who was influenced by Ranger in the writing of her work *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-1908 Disturbances in Natal*, pointed out that to simply see white provocation as the cause for the rebellion blinded one to the complexity of motives and responses possible in colonial society.[45] She too argued that there were positive aspects to resistance and that even apparently unsuccessful rebels generally gain something.[46] She argued that the historian needed to be aware of the nature of indigenous society which was carried over and transmuted in the colonial situation, and which provided the precedents for organization in the face of a new challenge. She added to the debate by arguing that colonial conquest led to the growth of many interest groups among the African population, such as Christians and pagans, peasants and migrant labourers, hereditary leaders, government-appointed headmen and new leaders, all of whom played a part in the resistance to colonial rule.[47] Uprisings were not simply black against white, or colonial government against traditional rulers. Marks importantly points out that the question of non-participation is as relevant as that of participation.[48] Marks later expanded and developed some of these ideas in her work *Ambiguities of Dependence* in South Africa. In this work she expanded on the idea that in colonial societies new classes are fashioned by external agencies

[42] T.O. Ranger: *Revolt in Sothern Rhodesia, 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance* (London, 1967), p. 344.
[43] *Ibid,* p. 353.
[44] *Ibid*, p. 311.
[45] S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, p. xviii.
[46] *Ibid*, p. xx.
[47] *Ibid*, p. xix.
[48] *Ibid*.

before older hierarchies have disappeared. There is a new capitalist mode of production with older forms of production, class and property relations, political authority and ideology.[49] She also points out that the words and actions of individuals are both deliberately and accidentally ambiguous, which arises from their structurally dependent position within the colonial political economy and the colonial state.[50]

Christopher Saunders in his writings on the extension of Cape rule beyond the Kei River argued that the rebellion was the last large–scale armed resistance to colonial rule on the eastern frontier in the nineteenth century and for a time posed a threat to the Cape's position east of the Kei.[51] The rebellion, according to Saunders, caused the Cape 'to lose confidence and to pull back from the work of annexation', and when it later did proceed 'the Cape trod softly'.[52] Most importantly Cape politicians accepted that the Transkei territories should become a reserve to be ruled separately from the colony as a black man's territory, in which no further land would be alienated to whites.[53] Saunders viewed this as a partial victory for Africans in the Transkei and explains, in part, why there was not further armed resistance. Saunders questioned the belief held by colonial writers that the rebellion was an organized plot to overthrow white rule by pointing out the lack of co-operation between the various groups involved.[54]

The most detailed discussion of the area in which they uprising took place was by Beinart and Bundy in *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa.* They were interested in how the two linked processes, the incorporation into the capitalist economy and imposition of colonial rule, affected lives of African people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were particularly concerned with how these processes were translated into patterns of political behaviour. They argue that political thinking and behavior grew out of self-conscious local communities with their own internal dynamic. Relations between state and subjects were influenced by political processes and conflicts whose origin preceded the direct colonial

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[49] S. Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Johannesburg, 1986), p.1.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] C.C. Saunders, 'The Transkeian Rebellion of 1880-81: A Case-Study of Transkeian Resistance to White Control', *South African Historical Journal*, no. 8 (1976), p. 32 &33.
[52] *Ibid*, p. 38.
[53] *Ibid*, p. 39.
[54] C. Saunders, *Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, (Pretoria, 1978), p. 92.

presence, as well as by the particular forms of colonial rule imposed on the Transkei region. While Saunders had argued that the act of rebellion prevented further white settlement and thus in the long term explained in part why there was no further armed uprisings, Beinart and Bundy emphasized that cleavages within local communities inhibited further resistance to the state.

In the 1990s the rebellion became the focus of studies by American academics Sean Redding and Clifton Crais. Both scholars can be described broadly as post modernists who focus on knowledge as a product of specific social and historical contexts, rather than an absolute truth. Redding argued that the rebellion was an attempt to re-establish African sovereignty, but that it was not simply a military assault on colonial forces, but also a political and cultural attack, as the rebels mobilized pre-colonial symbols of African chiefly authority to counteract the symbols and rituals, as well as the material effects of colonial control.[55] She argued that taxation was central to the 1880 revolt and the peace that followed. The hut tax, in her view, was not only an instrument for raising revenue, but an element of state control that also imbued the state with supernatural powers.[56] A belief in the spiritual malevolence of the state was partly responsible for pushing African people and their chiefs to revolt. Redding was also concerned about how African and white participants explained the revolt and subsequent peace to themselves. For Africans who believed in witchcraft and the supernatural powers of the chiefs, their defeat at the hands of the colonial powers created a belief in 'the superior and malevolent supernatural power of the white-controlled state'.[57] This in part explains why there were long periods of acquiescence when African people paid the hut tax. Redding places political symbols and beliefs in the supernatural as part of the process of gaining control and governing but also the process of resisting. Redding importantly points out that that there were often cross-cultural misunderstandings between Africans and white officials. The smelling out of alleged witches, for example, was seen as vital by most Africans for the well-being of the chiefdom, while white officials, who generally misunderstood the practice, saw those involved as charlatans and the practice cruel and unfair.

[55] S. Redding, 'Sorcery and Sovereignty: Taxation, Witchcraft, and Political Symbols in the 1880 Transkeian Rebellion, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2 (June 1996), pp. 249-250.
[56] *Ibid*, p. 257.
[57] *Ibid*, p. 270.

Clifton Crais's work *The Politics of Evil* investigated three themes in African history: cross-cultural contact; the rise of a colonial order and the way people understood and fashioned their world. The first chapter of the book dealt with the death of the magistrate Hamilton Hope which Crais has attempted to re-interpret and in turn South African history more generally. Crais argues that in order to understand the reactions and decisions of Mhlontlo in 1880 historians need to understand the cultural belief systems of the Mpondomise. Only by understanding how Africans give meaning to their world and focusing on the 'centrality of culture' can one understand their actions.[58] Central to the world view of the Mpondomise, argues Crais, was a belief in witchcraft and evil. The Mpondomise considered occult forces to be operating especially powerfully during important political moments, and that this concept shaped their perceptions of Hope's actions which were in turn transferred to their perceptions of the colonial state. Crais argues that it was probable that the Mpondomise believed that Hope had access to magic and control over powerful symbols and rituals.[59] The Mpondomise believed that Hope, and thus the colonial system, was evil and needed to be removed. Hope's death was thus a ritualistic killing.

A number of historians have criticized Crais. Jeff Peires contends that the exercise of magic by no means precludes secular thinking and activity and that the use of magic does not imply recognition of the presence of evil.[60] Peires concludes that there were times that the colonial government was perceived as bewitching black people and there are some indications that black people did perceive colonists as literally evil, but magic and witchcraft were marginal to the political consciousness and political struggles of black people.[61]

Jeff Guy in his work on the Bambatha Rebellion in the Colony of Natal, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion*, contributes two important ideas to studies on resistance to colonial rule: the use of the court system and the misinterpretation of rituals. The war, argues Guy continued for years, no longer in the field, but in the courts. This was not

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[58] C. Crais, 'Peires and the Past', *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 25 (November 1991), p. 239.
[59] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 69.
[60] J. Peires, 'Frankenstein Visits the Eastern Cape', *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 51 (2004), p. 230.
[61] *Ibid*, pp. 235-236.

only to punish those involved, but was part of a wider context to create a deferent African population that recognized without question the supremacy of white authority.[62] Besides the problems with much of the evidence collected, Guy also points out that the accused were treated in terms of their individual culpability when rebellion was a social action.[63] Guy emphasises that rituals were part of every aspect of the rebellion, however, many rituals were misunderstood and seen purely as preparation for war and used to justify floggings, fines and imprisonment.[64]

Writings on Chiefs and Chieftaincies

This thesis at its most basic level is concerned with how indigenous political systems responded to colonialism. The works that have been written on indigenous leaders and the systems of which they were a part have generally been limited in scope and in many cases simply wrong. White writers in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries tended to see chiefs as having great personal power. Much was written about the personalities of particular leaders who were seen to have, for better or worse, influence over the lives of large groups of people. More has been written about the Zulu king Shaka than any other leader and he was incorrectly seen to be responsible for the rise of the Zulu kingdom due to his dictatorial personality and supposed military innovations.[65] Africanist historians of the 1960s and 1970s when writing about nineteenth century leaders portrayed them in a more positive light than earlier writers. The Sotho king Moshoeshoe, for example, was the subject of two well researched and well written biographies which placed his life within a broader political context and emphasized the difficulties and complexities he had to navigate.[66] Scholars at the same time, however, writing about contemporary traditional leaders within the South African context had a very different view of these men who were seen as collaborating with the white government.[67] Their survival during the apartheid era has generally been ascribed to the fact that they were

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[62] J. Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising: War, Law and Ritual in the Zulu Rebellion* (Pietermaritzburg, 2005), p. 124.
[63] *Ibid*, p. 239.
[64] *Ibid*, pp. 221 & 236.
[65] Dan Wylie discusses this in some detail in the preface of his work *Myth of Iron: Shaka in History* (Pietermaritzburg, 2006).
[66] P. Sanders, *Moshoeshoe: Chief of the Sotho* (London, 1975); L. Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786-1870* (Oxford, 1975).
[67] G. Mbeki, *The Peasants Revolt* (Harmondsworth, 1964). See in particular chapter 8 'Chiefs in the Saddle'.

propped up by the regime and because they controlled land administration and allocation at the local level.[68] From the 1980s historians researching the changes taking place amongst the chiefdoms of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region shifted the focus away from the role of individual leaders to look at how economic factors, which were often imposed externally, brought about major political and social transformations.

The prolific anthropologist Hammond-Tooke was the first scholar to study in any detail the actual workings of the chieftaincies of the region in his studies on the Bhaca and Mpondomise chiefdoms which were carried out in the 1950s and 1960s.[69] He pointed out, which now seems obvious but was not always understood at the time, that the power of the chief was limited.[70] He showed that the chief was not simply an individual wielding personal power but functioned within established political structures which determined his role and responsibilities. He also showed how the position of the chief was reinforced by political/spiritual rituals and ceremonies. Jeff Peires in *The House of Phalo* emphasized Xhosa chiefs were constantly preoccupied with the problem of maintaining the loyalty of their followers.[71] He also focused on the obligations chiefs had to their followers. More recently Julia Wells has emphasized the collective nature of traditional leadership, and has pointed out that male historians tended to mistakenly write about political leaders as being motivated by self-centered ambitions to achieve personal power and status.[72] The findings and theories of all these scholars have influenced this work.

This thesis differs from previous works in a number of ways. Firstly, it places indigenous political systems within the context of historical change over a forty year period. By tracing how indigenous political systems responded over time to colonialism, capitalism, Christianity and the great social upheavals caused by the Transkei Rebellion we are able to understand how they survived by constantly adapting to changing circumstances. They retained their significance by negotiating, resisting and at times cooperating with the colonial state. Secondly, this work

[68] L. Ntsebeza, 'Traditional Authorities and Democracy: Are We Back to Apartheid?' in G. Ruiters (ed.), *The Fate of the Eastern Cape: History, Politics and Social Policy* (Pietermaritzburg, 2011), p. 79.
[69] W.D. Hammond-Tooke, *Bhaca Society: A People of the Transkeian Uplands, South Africa* (Cape Town, 1962) and *Command or Consensus: The Development of Transkeian Local Government* (Cape Town, 1975).
[70] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 72.
[71] Peires, *The House of Phalo,* p. 42.
[72] J.C. Wells, *The Return of Makhanda: Exploring the Legend* (Pietermaritzburg, 2012), p. 104.

attempts a broader and more nuanced understanding of indigenous political systems. This goes beyond simply understanding how they functioned, to attempting to unpack the complex response to colonialism by indigenous leaders which was greatly influenced by their obligations to their adherents. It is incorrect to place leaders into broad categories of those who co-operated with colonial state and those who resisted. Relations were shifting and ambiguous. This work attempts to move beyond simply seeing those who co-operated at times being motivated by money and power, as many Africanist scholars argued, or viewing competing belief systems, as the post modernists do, as motivating the resistance to colonial rule.

Approaching Colonial Records: Blue-Books, Commissions and Court Records

For most of the period under discussion, in particular the mid-1870s when the negotiations between chieftaincies and the colonial state were taking place and the late 1870s as the discontent began manifesting itself, we are dependent almost entirely on the reports of magistrates to unravel what transpired. This thesis, like many works on Africa during the colonial period, is heavily reliant on colonial records simply because in most cases they are the only ones available. Historians have generally approached colonial records with the attitude that they are inherently biased but necessary. The famed anthropologist Monica Wilson was of the opinion that Blue-Books were 'suspect' and Jeff Guy has accurately described colonial court records as rich, indispensable but hazardous historical material.[73] Guy calls for the fundamental tasks of historical research to be applied: 'close identification and critical examination of the records and their contextualization'.[74] Premesh Lalu in *The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts* argues that approaching colonial records is not only about bias and objectivity but understanding the complex web of techniques and procedures through which the evidence is produced within the logic of colonial domination.[75] Two important ideas emerge from this work as far as approaching colonial records are concerned: firstly, colonial domination could not have proceeded without the accommodation of the African in the

[73] A. Bank & L.J. Bank (eds.), *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and Her Interpreters* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 286; Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising*, p. 219.
[74] J. Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, 2013), p. 11.
[75] P. Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts* (Cape Town, 2009), p. 37.

narrative, and secondly, colonizers often transformed themselves into the victims rather than perpetrators.[76]

This thesis relies on three kinds of colonial records – Blue-Books, Commissions and Court Records. In June 1873 a resolution was passed in the Cape House of Assembly requiring magistrates to produce annual reports to be published in what was referred to as the Blue-Book on Native Affairs. We know very little about the process of the production of the reports. They often contained accounts of meetings held with chiefs and their councillors on which we now rely heavily to understand the complaints and attitudes of these men. Reports of these meetings were published in English, although they would have been conducted in Xhosa, Zulu or Sotho. A clerk probably took notes of these meetings which were later written up. What his linguistic abilities were and to what extend he understood the nuances and tone of what was transpiring and whether he was able to accurately reflect this we do not know.

Most reports in the Blue-Books are in the form of detailed minutes of meetings and discussions between individual chiefs and particular colonial officials. These records often distort both the process taking place between the chieftaincies and colonial state, as well as the workings of indigenous political systems. The voices of the chiefs do come through clearly in these reports which is beneficial as we attempt to understand their responses to colonial rule, but at times gives the impression that they alone are making decisions when in practice they actually were serving as spokesmen for collective discussions. The fact that the process is collective does come through in the records at times. It is mentioned, for example, that in October 1875 the Bhaca chief Makaula stopped negotiations with colonial officials to consult his councillors. Sadly there are no records of those discussions. Chiefs were quite adamant and vocal about the issues of which they were dissatisfied, such as hut tax, the drawing of boundaries, the undermining of their authority and the attempts to stop the smelling out of witches. These were issues that concerned the councillors and advisors of the chiefdom. However, these are still the voices of the patriarchal rulers of the chiefdoms. We know much less about the attitudes of commoners – male or female. Increasingly scholars have become aware of the people who were excluded from the colonial record. There is a concern with the subaltern, those people who were

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[76] *Ibid*, pp. 37 & 43.

marginalized in the colonial world to such an extent that their experiences and contributions to the historical process were not captured. Colonial and narratives tended to be elitist, focusing on both the white and black ruling class.

From the general belief systems of these chiefdoms and support that they showed the chiefs during and after the uprising we can conclude that many commoners probably shared most of the concerns that were held by the leaders of their chiefdoms. Chiefs and their councillors had to obtain support from their adherents, especially with an issue as serious as taking up arms against a foe, and in certain cases were pushed into rebellion by their supporters. Colonial records often mention chiefs holding meetings in the buildup to the rebellion but we do not know what transpired or how chiefs and their councillors obtained a consensus. We know that not everyone – commoners or members of ruling families – agreed with the decisions to either accept colonial rule, rebel against it or co-operate. Again the dissenters we do know of come from the ruling families. Besides these generalized statements, we are unable to draw any nuanced conclusions about the views of commoners towards colonialism or how they might have differed between genders and age groups or even neighbourhoods.

Besides the Blue-Books, there are numerous government commissions on which we can draw when attempting to understand the responses of chiefs to what was transpiring. An 1872 commission to investigate conditions in Nomansland contains reports of meetings conducted with chiefs, as does an 1883 land commission appointed after the rebellion. The events of the actual uprising and the attitudes and responses, in particular of Mhlontlo and Mditshwa, are described in some detail in the documents collected when both chiefs went on trial. Obviously officials collected evidence that would show the guilt of those being prosecuted and so the bulk of the testimonies came from white magistrates or black policemen and clerks in the employment of the Native Affairs Department. Colonial court records often lack context. While they contain at times minute and helpful details of events such as the death of Hamilton Hope, there is little attempt to understand what led to this point. The colonial system as a whole or the actions of white officials seldom come under close scrutiny.

There are a few published works that attempt to include the African perspective on the uprising. Reverend A.G.S. Gibson's *Reminiscences of the Pondomisi War of 1880* includes accounts by African Christians, generally the Mfengu, in the Qumbu and Tsolo areas. Mpondomise oral traditions of Mhlontlo as a leader appear in historical novels by A.C. Jordan and Zakes Mda.[77] The American academic Harold Scheub recorded in the 1960s an account of Mpondomise history as told by Mdukiswa Tyabashe. Tyabashe, who was 74 years old in 1967, was a respected historian and the *imbongi* or praise poet of the Mpondomise Chief Lutshoto, grandson of Mditshwa.[78] Mhlontlo as a chief and the uprising appear prominently in Tyabashe's account. Tyabashe's account can be described as being oral tradition, i.e. oral history beyond the reach of living memory.[79] Carolyn Hamilton in her work on the early Zulu kingdom argued that oral traditions 'are the arena in which different sets of ideas about the world confront one another and take cognizance of one another', and importantly the oral traditions of one group often developed in response to the oral traditions of other groups.[80] Oral traditions offer an important alternate view to official colonial sources but must be subjected to the same scrutiny as written documents as they too are 'marred by unintentional errors and intentional distortion'.[81]

Chapter Divisions

The main focus of this work is on the period from 1874, when the first chiefdom was persuaded to accept colonial rule, to 1884 when the land commission appointed to redistribute land after the rebellion concluded the enforcement of its recommendations. The first chapter, however, goes back to the 1820s, and at times earlier, and the last two chapters take the narrative to 1914. This work, thus, covers a period of half a century of history. It is consciously constructed around a strong chronological narrative within the context of a historical framework. Scholars have recently become increasingly aware of the problems of 'taking colonialism out of a historical

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[77] A.C. Jordan, *The Wrath of the Ancestors* (Johannesburg, 2004); Z. Mda, *Sometimes There is a Void: Memoirs of an Outsider* (New York, 2012) and *Little Suns* (Cape Town, 2015).
[78] H. Scheub *The Poem in the Story: Music, Poetry, and Narrative* (Wisconsin, 2002), pp. 236-241 and *The Tongue is Fire: South African Storytellers and Apartheid* (Madison, 1996), pp. 254-272.
[79] P.S. Thompson, 'Bhambatha's Family Tree: Oral Evidence, New and Old', *Natalia* no. 38 (2008), p. 50.
[80] C. Hamilton, 'Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom' (M.A. Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), p. 55.
[81] E.A. Eldredge, *Kingdoms and Chiefdoms of Southeastern Africa: Oral Traditions and History* (Rochester, 2015), p. 16.

framework' and writing 'ahistorical history' by focusing on specific incidences from 'different times and places to create apparently consistent historical arguments'.[82] To understand how and why chieftaincies responded to white rule and the shifting and paradoxical nature of their relations with the colonial state, we need to be aware of the changes these chiefdoms experienced over time.

The first four chapters of this work are concerned with the time period leading up to the uprising of 1880/1881. The first chapter sketches the early histories of the chiefdoms and describes how they came to be settled in the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region. The conflicts and relations between the chiefdoms are highlighted as they were carried over and influenced the decisions made by chiefdoms in 1880. Chapter two covers the negotiations between white officials and the Mpondomise and Bhaca leadership, and attempts to understand why indigenous leaders accepted colonial rule and how they believed they would benefit from becoming allies of the Cape government. Chapter three investigates the discontent building amongst the people of the region against colonial rule and how chiefs continued to assert their influence as white magistrates attempted to establish their authority. It also shows the contradictory nature of the interactions between chieftaincies and magistrates. The discontent was heightened, particularly amongst the Basotho chiefdoms of Matatiele, by the introduction of a disarmament policy, the refusal by officials to consider requests by the Basotho at Matatiele to live under a British magistrate and the threats of large-scale land confiscation in Basutoland. The concerns about how the changes being introduced by the colonial government threatened the stability of the chiefdoms led to the uprising in October 1880, as highlighted in chapter four. The uprising amongst the Basotho came as a surprise to many colonial officials who considered the chiefdoms involved as loyal and shows how quickly and even unexpectedly relations between the chiefdoms and the colonial state could change.

Chapters five to seven cover the actual uprising. Chapter five shows how past relations between chiefdoms, coupled with internal political realities as well as potential gains by being an ally of the colonial government during the unfolding conflict, influenced the decision by some chiefdoms to remain loyal to the Cape administration. In late October 1880 the rebellion,

[82] Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone*, p. 11.

perhaps not completely unexpectedly, spread to the Mpondomise chiefdoms and Mhlontlo became regarded as the political and military leader of the rebellion. His relations with the colonial state, in the form of the magistrate, and what the Mpondomise hoped to achieve by taking up arms is the focus of chapter six. Chapter seven details the Mpondomise offensive against the colonial state which took the form of destroying magistracies and attempting to prolong the conflict by forming alliances with other chiefdoms. It is also concerned with the political workings of the Mpondomise chiefdom and demonstrates the role of indigenous leaders in times of military crisis.

The last two chapters explore the three decades after the uprising. Chapter eight shows how the colonial government took advantage of the social upheaval to entrench its rule through a new administrative system based on locations administered by headmen. The state included civil servants who had been loyal in 1880 with indigenous leaders into this system. While the colonial government appointed many members of the pre-colonial political hierarchy, including many members of the ruling families, they excluded Mditshwa and Mhlontlo. Mhlontlo, however, returned to his chiefdom in the early 1900s and reasserted the role of the chieftaincy both against the colonial government and former Mfengu loyalists. The last chapter shows that by the 1890s and early 1900s there were noticeable shifts amongst the Mfengu and Bhaca and Nhlangwini chiefdoms towards colonialism as relations became strained. Three political crises developed in the decades after the uprising amongst the former loyalist chiefdoms and this chapter highlights the role indigenous leaders played in the political dealings of the chiefdoms. It is clear that while they still held some sway they were facing increasing criticism for accepting colonial regulations, and were adopting ambiguous attitudes towards officials and legislation. While the last two chapters seem to cover much longer periods that the preceding chapters, both highlight specific crises during these periods and thus are still quite focused

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Chapter One

The Origins of Chiefdoms of the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu Region

By the 1860s numerous chiefdoms that varied substantially in population size inhabited the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region. The Mpondomise lived at Qumbu and Tsolo where the climate was temperate and the Bhaca and Nhlangwini chiefdoms, originally from KwaZulu-Natal, had settled in the lower lying warmer areas of Mzimkhulu and Mount Frere. In the 1850s smaller chiefdoms from Lesotho began crossing the Drakensberg and moved into the colder districts of Matatiele and Mount Fletcher. It is these chiefdoms and how they responded to colonial rule from the 1870s that is the focus of his work. To understand how these chiefdoms later dealt with the consequences of colonialism, it is necessary to trace in some detail how they came to settle in the region and the nature of the relations that developed between them.

The history of the region until the 1870s can be divided into five phases. Besides small groups of San, until the early years of the nineteenth century the Mpondomise were the only substantial chiefdom to inhabit the area over a long period. From the 1810s to 1820s a number of chiefdoms from what is now KwaZulu-Natal began settling in parts of the inland plateau, and either entered into alliances with the San, absorbed them or pushed them out of the region. By the late 1820s most of these chiefdoms had either returned to Natal or had become subjects of the Mpondo. From the late 1820s to early 1840s the Bhaca and Xesibe chiefdoms were the only major polities from KwaZulu-Natal that remained in the area. The third phase of the region's history is characterized by their relations with the Mpondo and struggle to retain some form of internal cohesion. From the early 1840s to mid-1860s a number of chiefdoms and groups settled in Nomansland from Basutoland and the Colony of Natal, and this fourth phase is defined by the relations between these groups and the larger states that surrounded them. In 1863 the Griqua settled around Kokstad which changed the dynamics of the region substantially until the mid-1870s when the Cape Colony began making its presence felt.

Phase One: The Mpondomise

Although there were Nguni chiefdoms living in the coastal regions of Pondoland by about A.D. 1200 to 1300, they tended to avoid the colder areas along the foothills of the Drakensberg which

were subject to heavy snow storms in the winter months and where the sourveld only provided grazing for part of the year.[1] The area was home, however, to the San and as late as the 1840s there were at least three small bands of Bushmen living in Nomansland.[2] The history of these groups have been dealt with in some detail by John Wright in his work *Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg*, and what is important for this thesis is the early history of the Mpondomise chiefdom which would pay a central role in later events.

According to oral traditions recorded in the 1880s, the Mpondomise originally lived at, or came out of, the Dedesi stream at the source of the Mzimvubu River. Numerous writers, chief among them J.H. Soga, attempted to trace the history of the Mpondomise by compiling the genealogies of the ruling chiefs and describing their gradual migrations, and the conflicts that accompanied them.[3] In both Mpondomise and Mpondo tradition the chiefdoms descend from two twin brothers – Mpondomise and Mpondo – and thus the two groups were supposed to be related and of equal status. According to the praise poet Mdukiswa Tyabashe, 'When Mpondomise went out, he kept close to the Drakensberg Mountains, and when Mpondo went out, he hugged the coast'.[4] The evidence indicates that the Mpondomise had resided at Lotana near the junction of the Tina and Mzimvubu Rivers for a number of centuries.[5] By the 1860s the Mpondomise polity was divided between the adherents of Mhlontlo who inhabited the Qumbu area and his kinsman Mditshwa and his people who lived at Tsolo. There was strong enmity between these two groups that went back at least two generations when Mhlontlo's father was killed at the behest of Mditshwa's father.[6]

Phase Two: The Chiefdoms from KwaZulu-Natal, 1810s-1820s

The first group of chiefdoms moved into the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region from what is now KwaZulu-Natal and were pushed out by political developments and transformations taking place

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[1] C. Dennison, *A History of the Wild Coast* (Ashburton, 2010), p. 6; G. Vernon, *Even the Cows were Amazed: Shipwreck Survivors in South-East Africa, 1552-1782* (Auckland Park, 2013), p. 102.
[2] J.B. Wright, *Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg, 1840-1870: A Study of their Conflict with Stock-keeping Peoples in Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, 1971), p. 126.
[3] Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu*, pp. 334-342.
[4] H. Scheub, *Tongue is Fire: South African Storytellers and Apartheid* (Madison, 1996), p. 228.
[5] 'Historical Sketch of the Pondomise Tribe as taken from "Vete," the son of Umziziba' in F. Brownlee, *The Transkeian Native Territories: Historical Records* (Lovedale, 1923), p 111-112.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 115.

there. From the third quarter of the eighteen century a number of chiefdoms in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region began to expand in size and power. These changes, it seems, were initiated by the rapid expansion of the international trade in ivory at Delagoa Bay.[7] This process resulted in a period of conflict, upheaval and mass migrations in the decades from the 1810s to 1820s and saw a number of displaced chiefdoms moving south in an attempt to reestablish themselves between the Mzimkhulu and Mthatha Rivers.[8] The first major group to move into this area was the Bhele, followed by groups of Chunu under Macingwane and Ngoza's Thembu.[9] Besides a number of smaller fragmented groups, they were later followed by the Nhlangwini of Nombewu, the Memela lead by Mdingi, the Bhaca under the leadership of Madzikane and the Xesibe led by Sinama. Although they were entering relatively sparsely inhabited lands, the area was considered the sphere of interest of the Mpondo who inhabited the coastal regions around the Mzimvubu River under Faku, and across the Mthatha River the Thembu under Ngubengcuka or Vusani.[10] The migrating chiefdoms, as John Wright points out, could either submit themselves to the authority of Faku or Ngubengcuka, confront them in an attempt to establish their dominance or reestablish themselves on the edges of the Mpondo and Thembu spheres of influence.[11] The Thembu under Ngoza were defeated in battle by the Mpondo, and the chiefdom broke up with some members returning to KwaZulu-Natal and others submitting themselves to the Mpondo. The Chunu were defeated by a Zulu force near Ntsikeni Mountain in the early 1820s and the survivors of the chiefdom returned to offer submission to Shaka. The death of Mdingi in 1823 and the return of the Nhlangwini to KwaZulu-Natal in about 1828, meant that until the early 1840s events in the area were dominated by relations between the Bhaca and Mpondo, and also attempts by the Xesibe to assert their independence on the border regions of the Mpondo kingdom.

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[7] J. Wright, 'Political Transformations in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', in C. Hamilton (ed.) *The Mfecane Aftermath* (Johannesburg, 1995), p. 166.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 179.
[9] *Ibid*.
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] *Ibid*, p. 180.

Phase Three: The Bhaca and Xesibe Chiefdoms, c. 1820s-1845

By the late 1820s the Bhaca had emerged as the strongest chiefdom inhabiting the inland region between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers.[12] In the previous two decades Madzikane, the chief of the Zelemu-Wushe who had been living in the region of the Mngeni River near Pietermaritzburg, gathered the remnants of numerous chiefdoms around him, and amalgamated them into a new cultural and political group which would become known as the Bhaca. Madzikane, revered as the father of the nation, led his followers in about 1820 across the Mkhomazi River towards the Creighton district after a skirmish with the Zulu. A few years later, to escape a military force sent by their old foe the Zulu king Shaka, they crossed the Mzimkhulu River and moved southwards, eventually settling on the left bank of the Mzimvubu River between Rode and the Mgano Mountains in what is now the Mount Frere district. In about 1824 the Bhaca were able to repulse a Zulu force at Ntsizwa Mountain. Despite their victory, the Bhaca feared another attack from the Zulu and migrated through the territories of the Mpondomise and Thembu to the Xalanga district. Here in late 1824, the Thembu and Gcaleka joined in an attack against the Bhaca. In the conflict Madzikane was slain and although the Bhaca launched a counter attack and captured large numbers of stock and Thembu women and children, the remnants of the chiefdom returned under the leadership of the regent Ncaphayi to Mount Frere.

Shortly after his return, Ncaphayi moved with his adherents into the territory of the Mpondo paramount Faku to whom he paid tribute. Traditionally the move was seen as being motivated by internal politics within the Bhaca chiefdom after Ncaphayi quarrelled with his brother Dliwakho who moved with a large section of the chiefdom into the domain of the Mpondo. Fearing he might lose the chieftainship, Ncaphayi was forced to follow and pay a 100 head of cattle in tribute to Faku.[13] While internal conflicts probably did contribute to the decision to pay tribute to the Mpondo, the decision needs to be seen as part of the Bhaca's attempt to reestablish themselves after a number of military conflicts and migrations in a relatively short period of time. The survival of the Bhaca chiefdom after the death of Madzikane is often attributed to the

[12] Wright, *Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg*, p. 17.
[13] W.D. Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, (Pretoria, n.d.), p. 42.

ruthless but effective military leadership of Ncaphayi.[14] While he did lead the Bhaca in a number of victories against other chiefdoms, his and his councillors' decision to pay tribute to the Mpondo which ensured a decade of relative stability is probably what contributed to the survival of the chiefdom. Faku accepted the tribute as he was in need of a strong ally against chiefdoms on his borders as well as those who threatened the internal stability of his kingdom. In the 1820s and 1830s the Bhaca became an occasional but important ally of the Mpondo.[15]

In about 1840 the alliance between the Mpondo and Bhaca broke down. There are numerous explanations for why this happened. John Henderson Soga puts it down to conflict over cattle between the two leaders after a raid against the Thembu (possibly in 1838).[16] Bhaca's sources attribute this to Faku's attempts to assert his authority over Ncaphayi's army.[17] Tim Stapleton believes that Faku may have thought it prudent to end the alliance with the Bhaca who had become a target of trekker aggression after claims that Ncaphayi's men were involved in raiding livestock from settler farms.[18] The tensions between the Bhaca and trekkers that were developing in the late 1830s culminated in a raid by the Boers in conjunction with the Nhlangwini in December 1840. Shortly after the conflict with the trekkers the Bhaca moved inland to an area on the border of the Mpondo chiefdom and the Great Place was established at Isilindini. Ncaphayi was killed in 1845 in conflict with his former allies the Mpondo.

The Xesibe, according to the few sources available, had their origins in KwaZulu-Natal in the region of the Thukela River and with the political transformations taking place in that area migrated towards the Mzimvubu River.[19] The chiefdom, under the leadership of Sinama, at a point moved further south fearing raids from Shaka and settled amongst the Thembu near Mthatha. On Sinama's death, Nogula became regent for his nephew Jojo. Under Nogula the chiefdom returned in 1828 to Pondoland and settled about the Msikaba and Zalo Rivers. On their return journey the Xesibe were attacked by the Mpondo, but in alliance with the Bhaca

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[14] *Kokstad Advertiser* 25.6.1907.
[15] T.J. Stapleton, *Faku: Rulership and Colonialism in the Mpondo Kingdom c. 1760-1867* (Waterloo, 2001), p. 18.
[16] J. H. Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu* (Johannesburg, 1930), p. 444.
[17] Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, p. 43.
[18] Stapleton, *Faku*, p. 56.
[19] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, pp. 98-99.

were able repulse them. According to a tradition collected by Charles Brownlee, the attack was to stop the potentially problematic alliance between the Xesibe and Bhaca.[20] The Mpondo were concerned that the Bhaca might use the alliance with the Xesibe to place Jojo, Faku's nephew, on the Mpondo throne.[21] Although the Xesibe beat off the attack, they knew they could not hold off the Mpondo indefinitely. There is some debate about what then transpired. Mpondo accounts insist the Xesibe became a tributary state of the Mpondo kingdom.[22] The Xesibe are adamant they retained their independence.[23] Cattle raids and conflict over land became a feature of relations between the Xesibe and vassal chiefdoms under the Mpondo in what is now the Mount Ayliff district. From the late 1820s to late 1830s the Bhaca shifted their alliance to the Mpondo but in the 1840s renewed relations with the Xesibe. In 1845 Faku was forced to temporarily leave his Great Place and move to Mtsila to be closer to the Xesibe and Bhaca.

Phase Four: The Mthatha-Mzimkhulu Region is Settled, 1840s-1863

In the early 1840s a new phase in the history began as other chiefdoms began settling between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers. These included the Nhlangwini from the Colony of Natal and a number of Sotho-speaking chiefdoms and the Hlubi from Basutoland and the Cape Colony. The Bhaca and Xesibe chiefdoms settled on the periphery of the Mpondo kingdom and inhabited what are now the Mount Ayliff and Mount Frere districts. A scion of the Bhaca and the Nhlangwini chiefdom competed for influence with each other at Mzimkhulu and were often in conflict with authorities from the Colony of Natal. Along the foothills of the Drakensberg in the Matatiele and Mount Fletcher areas the interactions between the various Sotho-speaking chiefdoms and Hlubi were influenced by events in many cases that had taken place in Basutoland before their arrival.

The Periphery of the Mpondo Kingdom

After the death of the Bhaca regent Ncaphayi in 1846 his nephew Mdushane, the heir to the chieftaincy, led a group of his followers back to the Colony of Natal where they would be out of

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[20] *Ibid*, p. 100.
[21] *Ibid*.
[22] 'History of the AmaXesibe since 1840, as narrated by the Pondos', in Brownlee, *The Transkeian Native Territories*, p. 99.
[23] 'Minutes of Conference between J.M. Orpen, British Resident, and the Xesibe Chief Jojo on 24 & 24 April 1874', in Brownlee, *The Transkeian Native Territories*, pp. 102-103.

reach of the Mpondo. A part of the chiefdom remained at Ntabankulu under Ncaphayi's wife Mamjucu and her brother-in-law Diko who acted as regents for Makaula. The Bhaca's closest neighbours, with whom they were at times in conflict, were the Mpondomise. While the Bhaca and Mpondomise were at times at odds, their most formidable foe was the Mpondo who had during the reign of Faku kaNgqunqushe (c. 1820-1867) emerged as the most powerful polity south of the Zulu. The dynamics contributing to the centralization of the Mpondo state have not been studied in the same detail as the area between the Thukela and Mzimkhulu. The movement of groups from Natal towards the Mzimvubu and increasing trade could have been contributing factors to the initial expansion of the Mpondo state.[24] In 1844 Sir Peregrine Maitland, governor of the Cape, entered into a treaty with Faku, recognizing him as the ruler of the territory between the Mzimkhulu and Mthatha Rivers, from the foothills of the Drakensberg down to the coast. The territory at the time of the treaty included the Bhaca, Nhlangwini, Mpondomise and Xesibe chiefdoms over which Faku could not establish effective control.[25] After Faku's death in 1867 the kingdom was weakened when it split between two of his sons. Mqikela, son of the Great House, ruled Eastern Pondoland, while Ndamase, the eldest son of the Right-Hand-House and his father's favourite son, ruled Western Pondoland. Despite the divisions, the Mpondo were still the strongest polity in the region. Faku and his heirs Mqikela and Ndamase considered the Bhaca and Mpondomise who lived on the borders of the kingdom to be their subjects. The Bhaca and Mpondomise in turn either, depending on circumstances, paid a form of tribute to the Mpondo or resisted their attempts to subjugate them.

The conflicts between chiefdoms have been discussed in some detail as they were later exploited by colonial authorities. However, it would be incorrect to see the region existing in an endless state of conflict and chaos over many decades. Conflicts became more frequent in the 1860s as more chiefdoms settled in the area, however, there were periods of political stability. Alliances and agreements often held for some time, and trade between chiefdoms also contributed to economic stability. There were also attempts to resolve tensions and conflicts between chiefdoms through marriages. Marriages amongst ruling houses were not considered a matter between two individuals, and the women involved became important diplomats and ambassadors

[24] Wright, 'Political Transformations in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region', p. 166.
[25] R. Ross, 'The Griqua in the Politics of the Eastern Transkei' in C. Saunders & R. Derricourt (eds.) *Beyond the Cape Frontier* (London, 1974), p. 129.

between chiefdoms.[26] Among Ncaphayi's wives were daughters of the Mpondo paramount Faku and the Nhlangwini chief Nombewu.[27] A number of Ncaphayi's daughters married chiefs: Nokwelapha married the Xesibe chief Jojo, Gabisane married the Mpondo chief Nqwiliso and yet another daughter became the wife of the Nhlangwini chief Sidoyi.[28] Dynastic marriages continued in the next generation with Makaula's daughter Mandiza becoming the great wife of the Thembu king Dalindyebo and another marrying the Mpondomise heir Matiwane.[29]

The Bhaca and Nhlangwini at Mzimkhulu

In the Mzimkhulu area the Bhaca and Nhlangwini were involved in drawn out conflicts over land and political domination. After leaving Isilindini in 1843 the Bhaca under Mdushane emerged as the most powerful of the chiefdoms just south of the border with the Colony of Natal.[30] As his followers lived on either side of the boundary of Natal, Mdushane had to deal with the colonial authorities in Pietermaritzburg. Natal had been formally annexed in 1844 as a district of the Cape, and two years later Theophilus Shepstone, the 29 year old son of a frontier missionary in the Eastern Cape, was appointed Diplomatic Agent and instructed 'to deal with the large native population' in the colony.[31] Shepstone spent his first decade in office focusing on asserting colonial authority in the northern part of Natal by establishing locations for African occupation and enforcing indirect rule through existing chiefs.[32] By the mid-1850s he began shifting his focus to the region south of the Mkhomanzi River. In 1854 Mdushane signed a declaration with Shepstone recognizing him as 'paramount and exclusive chief' who would rule the Bhaca under their own laws and independent of British jurisdiction.[33] Relations soon soured between the Bhaca and the colony. It was reported later in 1854 that Mdushane refused to pay hut tax and that the Bhaca were stealing cattle from the vicinity of Pietermaritzburg, and 'that the practice has lately increased to a serious extent'.[34] In December the Natal colonial government launched

[26] Wells, *The Return of Makhanda*, p. 103.
[27] Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, p.42.
[28] *Ibid*, pp. 43-44.
[29] *Ibid*, p. 47. (Unfortunately the records do not always provide the names of these women).
[30] Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone*, p. 218.
[31] *Ibid*, p. 66.
[32] *Ibid*, p. 253.
[33] *Ibid*, p. 218.
[34] Pietermaritzburg Archives (henceforth PAR), AGO 1/8/2 49A/1854, Colonial Office to Walter Harding re action to be taken against cattle stealing by the Bhaca, 4.12.1854.

a campaign against the Bhaca. According to Jeff Guy in his study of the life of Theophilus Shepstone, the evidence against the Bhaca was non-existent and the expedition against Mdushane amounted to nothing more than a cattle raid.[35]

By the mid-1850s the Nhlangwini, adherents of Fodo kaNombewu and his kinsman Sidoyi kaBaleni, inhabited the Gugwini and Mahobe areas of the present Mzimkhulu district. The Nhlangwini, like their neighbours and foe the Bhaca, had settled in the area from the Colony of Natal. Fodo's father Nombewu had left Natal in the early 1820s in an attempt to escape the turmoil engulfing the area and crossed the Mzimkhulu River, settling on the southern bank of the Mzimvubu River near to Ntabankulu. Here Nombewu and his people came into conflict with the Bhaca under Madzikane. Nombewu died in a skirmish with the Bhaca and his sons, Fodo and Nondabula, returned to Natal in about 1828, settling on the south bank of the mid-Mkhomazi River. By the mid-1840s the Nhlangwini were the dominant chiefdom in the middle reaches of the Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu. Fodo, who developed a reputation as a compulsive fighter, provided 'genet skins, blue-monkey skins, and crane feathers' to the Zulu army.[36] Dingane made Fodo responsible for persuading the people of southern Natal still in hiding to resettle and work the land in order to provide food for the Zulu army on their return from long distance campaigns.[37] Jeff Guy points out that this was 'an attempt to answer the overwhelming challenge that confronted African state structures in the region – control versus distance'.[38] Fodo's relationship with Dingane was, however, ambivalent.[39] Despite acting as a client-chief to Dingane, he also traded and formed alliances with the white traders at Port Natal who were increasingly becoming a threat to the Zulu king. [40] In 1838, after the death of Piet Retief, and while Dingane's army was fighting the Boers in the north, Fodo provided a substantial number of men for a force used by the traders at Port Natal to raid the southern portions of the Zulu kingdom. Fodo subsequently became an ally to the voortrekkers and participated with them in a cattle raid in 1840 against Ncaphayi and the Bhaca.

[35] Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal*, p. 220
[36] *Ibid*, p. 85.
[37] *Ibid*, p. 86.
[38] *Ibid*.
[39] Wylie, *Myth of Iron*, p. 454.
[40] *Ibid*, pp. 453-454.

Fodo fell foul of the Natal colonial authorities towards the end of 1846 when he launched an attack on the Bhaca who were fleeing into Natal to escape conflict with the Mpondo. Fodo's men attacked them as they crossed the Mzimkhulu River, killing a number of men and making off with hundreds of head of cattle. Shepstone, determined to 'to show his authority over a chief well known for his independent history and aggressive qualities', issued warrants on 6 January demanding the return of the stolen cattle and the arrest of those guilty of murder and robbery.[41] Shepstone led a contingent of African troops against Fodo in January. Although the campaign against the chief lasted six weeks, Fodo managed to evade capture. Shepstone represented Fodo's actions as deliberate aggression, however, Jeff Guy argues that 'there is no evidence that Fodo attempted to resist'.[42] Fodo offered cattle in an attempt to stop the conflict and although there were skirmishes amongst Fodo's homesteads they were probably provoked by the presence of Shepstone's troops rather than planned resistance.[43] Fodo eventually did surrender and appeared before the lieutenant governor in August 1847, asking not for the restoration of his position as chief but to be allowed to 'live on the face of the earth'.[44] Although restored to the chieftainship, Fodo, probably in an attempt to put distance between himself and Shepstone in Pietermaritzburg, moved to Mbekabantu in the Highflats area of the upper Mkhomanzi. He eventually moved further south and crossed the colonial boundary, settling in Nomansland at Gugwini, near to the junction of the Ibisi and Mzimkhulu Rivers.

In 1857 Fodo was joined in Nomansland by his relative Sidoyi and his followers. When the British government annexed Natal, Sidoyi was a minor and a regent was serving as chief. He reached his majority in about 1850 and the Nhlangwini requested that that the colonial government recognise him as their chief. Shepstone agreed but made it clear that Sidoyi would hold office under British authority. He developed a reputation, as far as Shepstone was concerned, for overstepping his authority, and having a reckless personality, an idea which was reinforced in the mind of the secretary for native affairs when he became an *inyanga*.[45] Sidoyi alienated the government in March 1857 when he attacked his neighbours, and rivals for some generations, the Memela under

[41] Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone*, p. 103.
[42] *Ibid*, p. 104.
[43] *Ibid*, p. 104.
[44] *Ibid*, p. 105.
[45] PAR, Legislative Council of Natal Document no. 30, 1857.

Mshukangubo kaMdingi. Sidoyi's actions created a crisis for the colonial government in Pietermaritzburg. By launching an unauthorised attack in defiance of the white magistrate, Sidoyi had challenged the authority of the colonial state. Shepstone was in particular concerned with how the smaller and less powerful chiefdoms viewed Sidoyi's actions. The mutilation of Mshukangubo's body was also seen by Shepstone as 'a proclamation of independence'.[46] Shepstone, determined to assert his authority over a powerful chief as he had done a decade earlier against Fodo, mounted a large force against the Nhlangwini. In the ensuing chaos Sidoyi managed to escape the colonial net, eventually crossing the border and settling near his relative Fodo. Many of Sidoyi's people refused to comply with the government's orders and followed him to Nomansland where he 'continued in fact to be the ruler of the tribe'.[47]

The Foothills of the Drakensberg

From the late 1850s onwards groups of people from Lesotho and the Wittebergen Reserve in the Herschel district of the Cape Colony settled along the foothills of the Drakensberg from Matatiele to Maclear. For a succession of Cape governors and high commissioners, Nomansland became a solution to the problems of land shortages and political conflicts developing in the Cape Colony or Lesotho and chiefs and their followers were encouraged to settle in the area. By the late 1860s the Kwena under Nehemiah Moshesh, and later Makoai, inhabited the area between the Mzimvubu and Kinira Rivers; the Hlakoana under Lepheana established themselves north of Matatiele towards Qacha's Nek and the Batlokwa under Lehana and Lelingoana lived between the Tina and Eland's Rivers. In the Mount Fletcher area another group of Kwena under Lebenya and the Hlubi under Zibi and Ludidi were competing for land between the Kinira and Tina Rivers.

In 1858 a group of Kwena under the leadership of Nehemiah Moshesh, son of the Sotho King Moshoeshoe, crossed the Drakensberg from Lesotho and settled at the junction of the Kinira and Mzimvubu Rivers. In early 1857 Nehemiah had been sent by his father to establish a village in the lower Caledon Valley, an area in which stock theft was rife and conflict was developing between Basotho villagers and white farmers. The Free State invasion of Lesotho in March ended Nehemiah's role in the Caledon Valley. In October 1858 he and about 70 of his followers,

[46] Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone*, p. 254.
[47] Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu*, p. 431.

threatened by famine after losing two consecutive harvests, established a settlement on the Kinira River where 'there was plenty of game and food'.[48] Nehemiah's settlement at Matatiele is often seen as an effort by the king's ambitious younger son to establish his own semi-autonomous chiefdom. It is well documented that Nehemiah craved independence from his father and his brother Letsie, however, the settlement at Matatiele should be viewed as part of Moshoeshoe's strategy of *mafisa*, which was assigning representatives, often family members, as senior chiefs and in that way allowing the state to expand.[49] Matatiele was considered part of the national patrimony and Moshoeshoe and his heir Letsie both asserted that their paramountcy extended over Matatiele.[50] Moshoeshoe achieved a number of other objectives by the settlement at Matatiele. The move forestalled an attempt by Letele, the senior Kwena chief, and Lehana, successor to Sekonyela, to establish a rival Sotho state at Matatiele.[51] Moshoeshoe, who was still negotiating a peace treaty with the Free State in 1858, was aware of a potential loss of land in the Caledon Valley, sanctioned Nehemiah's movement into Nomansland as a way of gaining land and compensating for possible losses elsewhere.

Nehemiah and his father both insisted that Faku, who was recognized by the British government as the *de facto* ruler of the territory between the Mzimkhulu and Mthatha Rivers, had ceded the territory below the mountains to the Sotho king in about 1850, and encouraged Moshoeshoe to send one of his family members to occupy the area.[52] By handing over the area to an ally, this could have been an attempt by Faku to keep some form of control over Matatiele without having to divert manpower from the heartland of the kingdom.[53] When Moshoeshoe finally took up Faku's offer in 1858, he insisted that Governor George Grey had sanctioned Nehemiah's movement into the area at a meeting held at Morija in 1858.[54] The Basotho settlement at

[48] Nehemiah Moshesh to the High Commissioner, Wittebergen, 3.3.1859 in G.M. Theal (ed.), *Basutoland Records, 1853-1861*, (London, 1883) vol. 2, p. 517.
[49] King, 'Voluntary Barbarians', p. 145.
[50] J.A. Benyon, 'Basutoland and the High Commission with particular reference to the years 1868-1884: The Changing Nature of the Imperial Government's "Special Responsibility" for the Territory' (D. Phil, University of Oxford, 1968), p. 315.
[51] Ross, 'The Griqua in the Politics of the Eastern Transkei', pp. 131-132.
[52] Conference at Thaba Bosigo on 11 Feb. 1862 to 21st between Moshesh and Messieurs Burnet and Orpen in G.M. Theal (ed.), *Basutoland Records1862-1868*, vol. 3, p. 147.
[53] Stapleton, *Faku*, p. 66.
[54] High Commissioner to Secretary of State of the Colonies, 19.4.1862 in Theal, *Basutoland Records* vol. 3, p. 162.

Matatiele was largely ignored by colonial officials until 1863 when the arrival of the Griqua complicated matters. The Griqua, Nehemiah and government of the Colony of Natal all lay claim to parts of Nomansland. Walter Currie felt that sufficient land could be found for the Griqua and a portion of the area handed over to Natal if Nehemiah and his people were forcibly removed from Matatiele.[55] Sir Philip Wodehouse, the high commissioner, would not sanction such action, fearing 'it would be impolitic and dangerous to attempt the expulsion of Nehemiah against the will of the Tribe, and that we ought rather to yield to his staying where he is'.[56] Wodehouse felt that 'there was therefore no alternative but to make room for Adam Kok at the expense, so to speak, of the Colony of Natal'.[57] The high commissioner was careful to point out to Nehemiah that he could not find any evidence that the British government officially recognized his move to Matatiele and would not admit that Faku had the right to cede the area to Moshoeshoe. However, he was willing 'to leave him undisturbed in the land he now occupies' as long as he 'conducts himself as a faithful friend of the British Government'.[58]

Nehemiah claimed in his 1859 letter to Grey that he was on 'very friendly terms' with his neighbours the Bhaca and Mpondomise, and that he had successfully mediated a truce between the two of them at the request of the Methodist missionary Richard Hulley.[59] This seems unlikely and was probably an attempt to exaggerate his importance as he was still desperate to obtain British approval for his move and reassure the governor that his presence in the Matatiele area would stabilise the region. However, in the latter half of 1860, after claims by Nehemiah that the Mpondomise regent Mbali had stolen cattle from him, he aligned himself with the Bhaca and led an unsuccessful campaign against the Mpondomise. In early 1861 the Mpondomise under Mbali drove their cattle into the foothills of the Drakensberg out of the reach of the Mpondo with whom relations were deteriorating. Faku sent a message to Moshoeshoe encouraging him to capture Mpondomise cattle. The conflict went beyond cattle and was part of the extended campaign Faku waged to assert his authority over the Mpondomise. In the opinion of Joseph Orpen, the colonial official who

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[55] *Ibid*.
[56] *Ibid*, p. 163.
[57] High Commissioner to Secretary of State of the Colonies, 16.6.1862 in Theal, *Basutoland Records* vol. 3, p. 172.
[58] *Ibid*, High Commissioner to Chief Moshesh, 13.5.1862, pp. 165-166.
[59] Nehemiah Moshesh to High Commissioner, Witterbergen, 3.3. 1859 in Theal, *Basutoland Records* vol. 2, p. 518.

investigated the conflict, 'Faku wanted Moshesh to drive Umbali to become Faku's subject instead of being a petty independent Chief.'[60] The Sotho king did not respond to Faku's urging but Nehemiah, with support from his uncle Poshuli and brother Masopha, decided to act against the Mpondomise. This alienated the Bhaca who had been in conflict with the Mpondo for generations and Makaula sent a force of men against Nehemiah who having being warned of the attack burnt his homestead and fled into the Drakensberg. Against Letsie's wishes Poshuli and Masopha continued with their campaign against the Bhaca and Mpondomise. When they arrived at Makaula's homestead it was deserted and so continued against the Mpondomise under the regent Mbali. The Bhaca took advantage of the situation and unsuccessfully attacked the Mpondomise under Mbali. Poshuli returned to Basutoland having lost horses and men.

The escarpment below the Drakensberg was further populated in the early-1860s when the Hlakoana under the leadership of Lepheana and a group of Batlokwa under Lehana, son of Sekonyela, settled in the area as Griqua subjects. Lepheana was an old rival of Moshoeshoe's and accompanied the Griqua on the last part of their trek to Nomansland in response to a dispute with the Sotho king and his son Letsie who attempted to assert control over Lepheana's followers.[61] The Griqua government appointed Lepheana a field cornet, and his sons Sibi, Ramohlakoana, Mosi and Marthinus settled in the Matatiele district where they became allies to the Griqua and served as a foil to Nehemiah.

The Batlokwa chief Sekonyela was an old rival of Moshoeshoe. He was a minor when his father died and his mother Manthatisi, renowned for her military and political leadership, served as regent until Sekonyela's majority. For twenty years he and Moshoeshoe had competed for control of northern Lesotho until the Batlokwa were finally driven out of the Orange River Valley in 1853. He and his adherents who had not shifted their allegiance to Moshoeshoe were eventually given permission by colonial officials to settle in the Wittebergen Reserve. Separated from Lesotho by the Telle River, Wittebergen had been established as a special reserve for

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[60] *Ibid*, Memorandum of information relative to certain warlike operations between the Basutos and Amapondomisi, p. 588.
[61] G. Bardsley, 'Politics and Land in Matatiele 1844-1900: A Report from the Archives', *Social Dynamics* vol. 8 no. 2 (1982), p. 48.

African occupation in 1850 by Harry Smith at the urging of the Methodist missionaries.[62] The reserve was a bi-lateral effort of the Wesleyan missionaries and Cape administration.[63] The missionaries had jurisdiction over the mission and school, while the government-appointed superintendent oversaw legal matters, settlement rights and the collecting of taxes.[64] The Cape administration established the reserve as a way to curb the threat Smith and the Wesleyan missionary William Shepstone saw in the possible collaboration between Moshoeshoe and the Thembu.[65] Cape officials and Wesleyan missionaries hoped that the reserve would serve as a buffer and believed that the small and disjointed groups would be easy to administer. In reality Cape officials battled to control the people of the reserve and turned to Moshoeshoe for assistance.[66] It became a place of refuge at times for chiefdoms fleeing the conflict taking place in Lesotho as Moshoeshoe consolidated his power or during the later wars between the Basotho and the Free State burghers. By the 1860s the civil commissioner at Aliwal North, John Burnet, and the superintendent of the reserve, John Austen, complained that the reserve was overcrowded. They resented the influx of refugees from Lesotho. Burnet felt that granting permission to Sekonyela to settle at Wittebergen was done 'almost with injustice to the inhabitants of the Reserve'.[67] In 1863 Burnet wrote to the high commissioner that 'many of the kraals, or settlements, are actually at present inadequately supplied with pasture lands for their stock'.[68] The commissioner was concerned that migrant labourers would return to the reserve with stock and 'progressively fill up every vacant nook at the disposal of the Superintendent'.[69]

By 1859 Lehana, who had become regent on his father's death in 1856 for the heir Lelingoana, had 465 men, 688 women, 250 boys and 289 girls under his authority.[70] Colonial officials, who were never happy about his presence in the reserve, described his followers as 'a lawless set of

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[62] T. Keegan (ed.), *Moravians in the Eastern Cape 1828-1928: Four Accounts of Moravian Mission Work on the Eastern Cape Frontier* (Cape Town, 2004), p. 68.
[63] King, 'Voluntary Barbarians', p. 162.
[64] *Ibid*.
[65] *Ibid*, p. 159.
[66] *Ibid*, p. 169.
[67] 'Letter of the Civil Commissioner of Aliwal North to the Secretary to the High Commissioner, 12.10.1863' in Theal, *Basutoland Records* vol. 3, p. 238.
[68] *Ibid*.
[69] *Ibid*.
[70] Superintendent of the Wittebergen Native Reserve to the Civil Commissioner of Aliwal North, 30.4.1859 in Theal, *Basutoland Records*, vol. 2, p. 529.

fellows' and encouraged him to relocate to Nomansland.[71] By 1863 Lehana became increasingly concerned about his followers who had been working in the Cape Colony and whose contracts were coming to an end would have to return to an already overcrowded Wittebergen Reserve.[72] In these circumstances, and acting again on a suggestion made by the superintendent of the reserve, he sent a deputation to Adam Kok in July 1863 to make an application to settle in East Griqualand as Griqua subjects. Kok agreed to the request, hoping to have another ally in the Matatiele area to serve as a counter to Nehemiah. They settled in the area from the Tina to Eland's River.

The wars between the Basotho and Free State in mid-1860s and the subsequent occupation of the Caledon Valley drove a considerable number of people into Nomansland, most notably the followers of Makoai, Moshoeshoe's senior cousin. Makoai, who had a reputation as a brave warrior and determined leader who served as one of the king's councillors, was given the responsibility by the aging Moshoeshoe to complete peace negotiations with the British and Free State to conclude the war of 1858.[73] He was responsible in the 1867 war for the defence of the south-western area of the kingdom.[74] Makoai was forced to abandon his mountain stronghold Maboloka in September 1867 after it was stormed by Free State burghers. Makoai and his followers fled eastwards, eventually settling in the vicinity of the present town of Matatiele. Wodehouse consented to Makoai settling between the Mzimvubu and Kinira Rivers under the authority of Adam Kok.

After the war of 1858 a group of Kwena under the leadership of Lebenya left Basutoland and settled in the Wittebergen reserve. Lebenya's grandfather Mohlomi is one of the most venerated of the Kwena chiefs who in later life became a renowned doctor, diviner and rainmaker.[75] Owing largely to the writings of the French missionaries Thomas Arbousset and D.F. Ellenberger, it is widely accepted and believed that Mohlomi identified Moshoeshoe as his heir, despite having many

[71] *Ibid*, p. 527.
[72] *Ibid*, p. 230.
[73] Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds*, p. 247.
[74] G. Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto* (Cape Town, 1950), p. 105.
[75] Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds*, pp. 24-25.

biological sons.[76] By the 1840s Lebenya was living in the vicinity of the Hebron Mission station near Zastron. In 1858 his villages and fields were destroyed by the invading Free State army and he withdrew and later settled in the Wittebergen Reserve. The superintendent of the reserve placed pressure on him to leave and settle in Nomansland.

In 1869 Governor Woodhouse visited East Griqualand from the Cape Colony and was accompanied by the Hlubi Chief Zibi, grandson of Mpangazita, and his followers. Mpangazita had served in the early years of the nineteenth century as an independent chief of the left hand house during the paramountcy of his brother Mtimkhulu.[77] Mtimkhulu was defeated by Matiwane's Ngwane and the Hlubi polity which comprised of numerous semiautonomous chiefdoms split into its constituent parts.[78] Mpangazita attempted to organize resistance against the Ngwane and eventually fled with his followers into Lesotho and was in turn routed by the Ngwane in the Caledon Valley in 1825. Zibi's father Sidinane fled northwards across the Vaal River to the territory of Mzilikaze but later returned to ask for mercy from Matiwane. Zibi, described as literate and urbane, lived for 20 years in the Wittebergen Reserve.[79] As the reserve became more crowded, Governor Wodehouse convinced Zibi to relocate and placed him, with Lebenya, on ground from the Kinira to Tina Rivers. There were already other Hlubi clans living in Nomansland when Zibi arrived. Another section of the Hlubi under Ludidi, a brother to Langalibalele, lived in the mountainous region beyond the Kinira. Lupindo, son of Ludidi's brother Luzipo, also lived beyond the Kinira with his adherents. The Hlubi chief Zibi built his homestead at Zincuka, but soon came into conflict with the Batlokwa chief Lehana who lived on the upper Tinana. Lehana allied himself with the Mpondomise chief Mhlontlo (who insisted Zibi was his subject) and Lebenya, who was supposed to share the land between the Kinira and Tina Rivers, against the Hlubi and in about 1870 launched a campaign against them. After his homestead at Zincuka was attacked and burnt, Zibi fled across the Tina River and was forced to seek protection with Adam Kok. He was granted the Tinana Valley, a third of the land he formerly inhabited.

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[76] *Ibid*, p. 26.
[77] J. Wright & A. Mason, *The Hlubi Chiefdom in Zululand-Natal: A History* (Ladysmith, 1983), p.10.
[78] Wright, 'Political Transformations in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region', p. 168.
[79] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 197; Keegan (ed.), *Moravians in the Eastern Cape*, p. 67.

It is difficult to ascertain with any accuracy the size of these polities in terms of population. According to Walter Currie, the Mpondomise chief Mditshwa in 1861 had 2000 fighting men under his authority. The Bhaca chief Makaula followed with 1000 fighting men. The Xesibe under Jojo and the Mpondomise regent Mbali were both estimated to have 800 men. The numbers drop quite substantially after that with 300 men amongst the Nhlangwini and Hlubi. The Basotho chief Nehemiah only had 50 fighting men, although with support from Basutoland he was able to play an influential role in the area.[80] These numbers should probably be read with some caution, but it is clear that the chiefdoms varied in size from a few hundred to a couple of thousand people. The Mpondomise, although divided, was the largest group in the region (the first census taken in 1873 showed 5 546 Mpondomise), followed by the Bhaca.[81]

Phase Five: The Griqua and the African Chiefdoms of East Griqualand, 1850s-1874

In the 1850s groups of people of mixed descent gradually moved into Nomansland from the Cape Colony. An uprising in the Kat River and a mutiny in the ranks of the Cape Mounted Rifles brought many of these groups into Nomansland. Sir Andries Stockenstrom established the Kat River settlement in 1829 as a measure of frontier defence. It was decided to settle white and people of mixed race in a fertile valley north of Fort Beaufort, on land from which the Xhosa Chief Maqoma had been expelled. At first the settlement prospered but in 1850 many of the Khoi and Coloured inhabitants rebelled against the colonial government. The immediate cause of the rebellion was the destruction in July 1850 (during the winter months) of the huts in the upper Blinkwater area, on the orders of the magistrate. Relations, however, between the inhabitants of Kat River and the colonial government and white settlers had soured over a number of years. Kat River became a dumping ground for people of mixed descent dispossessed elsewhere, which eventually caused overcrowding and insecurity. This, coupled with a series of unsympathetic officials and hostility from local white settlers, led to a breakdown in relations between the inhabitants of the settlement and the colonial government. In 1851 when the Eighth Frontier War broke out many of the residents rebelled against the government. The colonial government crushed the rebellion, killing many of the leaders and exiling others from the colony.

[80] CPP A.12 -'73, W. Currie to George Grey, 29.6.1861, p. 58.

[81] R. Harber, *Gentlemen of Brave Mettle: Life in Early East Griqualand* (Cape Town, 1975), p. 22.

Although the groups who fled or were forced out of the Colony were small in number, they were mounted and well-armed and by forming alliances with Africans made their presence felt in Nomansland. Hans Lochenberg, for example, settled on the upper Tina and was recognized as a chief after gathering Mfengu and Mpondomise adherents around him.[82] He was implicated with the Bhaca and Bushmen in thefts of cattle from Natal. In November 1851 a party of Lochenberg's adherents and Bushmen attacked some of Ncaphayi's widow Mamjucu's homesteads, killing five people and making off with a large number of cattle.[83] By the middle of 1851 H.F. Fynn, the resident with the Mpondo King Faku, was concerned that with a war in progress in the Cape, these men might provoke the smaller chiefdoms against the colonial government and the conflict might spread to Pondoland.[84] Another refugee from Kat River who formed alliances with local chiefdoms was Smith Pommer. He and his followers settled in about 1856 at a mission station called Pearsetown in the Mzimkhulu district. Here he developed alliances with the Nhlangwini chiefs and became embroiled in the politics of the Mzimkhulu area.

In the early 1860s matters were further complicated between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers when large numbers of Griqua settled in parts of Nomansland under their leader *Kaptyn* Adam Kok III. The Griqua are of heterogeneous origin and descend from Khoikhoi, San, slaves, Bantu-speakers and White frontiersmen.[85] They 'emerged' on the northern frontier of the Cape Colony in the eighteenth century where these various groups came into contact with each other.[86] Some of the Khoikhoi segment of the population descended from two groups that were referred to by the Dutch in the 1650s and 1660s as the 'Great Chariguriqua' and the 'Little Chariguriqua'.[87] By the 1670s the name was being replaced by the term Grigriqua.[88] By the mid-1700s remnants of the Grigriqua, as well as slaves and people of mixed descent, became

[82] Wright, *Bushmen Raiders*, p. 118.
[83] *Ibid*, p. 132.
[84] *Ibid*.
[85] M.P. Besten, 'Transformation and Reconstitution of Khoe-San Identities: AAS Le Fleur I, Griqua Identities and Post-Apartheid Koe-San Revivalism, 1894-2004' (PhD Thesis, University of Leiden, 2006), p. 20.
[86] R. Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: A Study in the Development of Stratification in South Africa* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 1.
[87] Besten, 'Transformation and Reconstitution of Khoe-San Identities', p. 21.
[88] *Ibid*.

adherents of Adam Kok I, said to be a former slave, who had received grazing rights to the farm *Stinkfontein* near Piketberg. Kok's followers, regardless of their origins, often adopted the colonial terms Bastaards or Hottentots when referring to themselves.[89] (By the late 1700s the term Grigriqua was no longer in use).[90] Martin Legassick has shown that the word Bastaard not only indicated illegitimate birth but also acquired two other meanings.[91] It denoted children of mixed parentage, particularly white and Khoikhoi, but also slave and Khoikhoi. The term Bastaard also denoted an economic category. The Bastaards tended to gravitate to less menial jobs and became transport riders, day labourers, small farmers and crafts people. The Bastaards at times referred to themselves as 'Swarthy Hollanders'. This emphasized their mixed ancestry and differentiated them from other groups, especially the Khoikhoi.[92] In 1813 the Reverend John Campbell of the London Missionary Society encouraged the Bastaards to change their name to Griqua. Campbell objected to the connotations of Bastaard and after consulting with them found that most of them supposedly descended from a man named Griqua.[93] The term derived from the Chariquriqua from which some of the Bastaards descended. Legassick argues that the change in name indicted a shift from colonial origins to indigenous origins.[94] The Griqua polities and identity that emerged in the early 1800s was a mixture of Khoikhoi indigenous heritage fused with that of cultural elements derived from the Cape Colony.

By the 1850s the Griqua were under increasing pressure from Boers who were encroaching onto their land. From the early years of the nineteenth century Boer farmers living on the Cape frontier would drive their cattle herds across the Orange River into Griqua territory in search of grazing. These forays, normally in times of drought, lasted for a few months. Although they were temporary, they often caused a great deal of damage to Griqua grazing and crops. In 1836 the situation became even more serious when large numbers of Boers from the frontier districts began leaving the colony with the intention of living beyond the Orange River on a permanent basis. At first the Boers' need for land was satisfied by leasing farms from the Griquas at

[89] *Ibid*, p. 24.
[90] *Ibid*.
[91] M. Legassick, 'The Northern Frontier to c. 1840: The rise and decline of the Griqua People' in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (Cape Town, 1989), pp. 370-371.
[92] *Ibid*, p. 371.
[93] Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas*, p. 12.
[94] Legassick, 'The Northern Frontier', p. 382.

Philippolis. However, conflict soon developed between the Griqua and Boers. In 1861, as the situation between the Griqua and Boers became untenable, a group of Griqua under the leadership of Adam Kok III, who had ruled at Philippolis, undertook an epic trek to what was then known as Nomansland in an effort to retain their independence. The trek was encouraged by Governor Grey who hoped the Griqua, who would in principle settle in Nomansland as British subjects, would be a civilizing influence in the area and serve as a barrier between the Mpondo and Basotho. He also saw them as potential allies if war broke out east of the Kei.

The Griqua did not move into a political vacuum and had to assert their authority over the Bhaca and Nhlangwini at Mzimkhulu and Basotho at Matatiele. The incoming Griqua did not attempt to move the African chiefdoms from the areas in which they had settled prior to their arrival. They shrewdly designated them as 'locations' within which the routine running of affairs, including land tenure, remained with African chiefs.[95] Although there was pressure from land-hungry Griquas on African land, Adam Kok, aware of the need to placate the chiefs, contained the pressure.[96] By forming alliances with the Nhlangwini and playing on divisions which developed within the Bhaca chiefdom in the 1860s and 1870s, the Griqua asserted their authority relatively easily over the Mzimkhulu region. The Basotho proved less accepting of Griqua authority and this led to armed conflict in the Matatiele area.

Fodo and Sidoyi, chiefs of the Nhlangwini, both became allies to the Griqua. The Griqua helped Fodo defeat a challenge from his brother Nondabula, who had settled with his adherents in the lower reaches of the Cabane River, and Sidoyi developed a friendship with Smith Pommer who had gained influence in the Griqua state.[97] More importantly the Griqua assisted the Nhlangwini in their long-standing conflict with the Bhaca. The Nhlangwini chiefdom had become fragmented and weakened since Fodo's conflict with the colonial government in 1847. While some of Fodo's followers crossed over the Mzimkhulu River with him, many, including his favourite wife MaSosibo, refused to go with him and remained in Natal.[98] Those who remained

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[95] Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas*, p. 120
[96] *Ibid*.
[97] *Ibid*, p. 118.
[98] P.J.N. Zungu, 'Nhlangwini, A Tekela-Nguni Dialect and its Relationship to "Standard Zulu" and other Nguni Dialects' (M.A. Thesis, University of Natal, 1989), p. 28.

within the colony also became divided, recognizing the authority of numerous members of the family. MaSosibo's son, Mqhakama, became the chief of the Nhlangwini who remained at Mbekabantu with his father's permission. Other members of the chiefdom recognized the authority of two of Fodo's uncles, while two of his brothers were vying to be recognized as chiefs. This led to conflicts within the chiefdom, particularly between the followers of Fodo and those of his uncle Jongwana.[99]

The numerous divisions and internal conflicts left the Nhlangwini vulnerable to the more numerous Bhaca in the Mzimkhulu area. After the lean years of the 1850s, the Nhlangwini from the early 1860s onwards, through their alliance with Smith Pommer and the Griqua government, asserted themselves more strongly against the Bhaca who were weakened by internal divisions. Upon Mdushane's death, his brother Thiba served as regent. The Bhaca initially fared well under Thiba's capable leadership, however, in the early 1870s the cohesion of the chiefdom began to fall apart as an internal power struggle developed between two of Mdushane's sons – Nomtsheketshe and Cijisiwe.[100] Mdushane favoured his son Nomtsheketshe of the right hand house as his heir. Most members of the chiefdom favoured Cijisiwe, son of the great house. After conflict between the two brothers deepened, Mdushane sent Nomtsheketshe to Makaula for protection. Upon Mdushane's death, Nomtsheketshe returned to Mzimkhulu and in about 1867 offered his allegiance to Adam Kok. Backed by his new Griqua allies, Nomtsheketshe pushed Thiba and Cijisiwe across the Mzimkhulu into Natal in June 1869. Nomtsheketshe in turn fell out with the Griqua and left the Mzimkhulu area and settled at Bizana and later Mount Frere. The chieftaincy now fell to Msinghapantsi, a junior half-brother, who the Griqua government installed as chief.[101]

The Basotho under Nehemiah Moshoesh offered the strongest resistance to the Griqua's attempt to establish their authority in Nomansland. When the Griqua settled in Nomansland in 1863 Nehemiah's territory beyond the Mzimvubu River did not come under their authority, and the Kwena lived in relative autonomy. Over the next few years the Basotho and Griqua both complained about stock thefts. In the winter of 1865, after an alleged cattle raid by Nehemiah's

[99] PAR, 1/RMD 3/1/1/1, Resident Magistrate Richmond to Colonial Secretary, 28.6.1855, pp. 46-47.
[100] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 27.
[101] *Ibid*, p. 37.

followers on the Griqua, an armed commando of Kok's men rode to Matatiele, forcing Nehemiah and his followers to retreat into caves in the mountains. Letsie did not provide the expected support from Lesotho and so Nehemiah decided to withdraw from Matatiele. Letsie was engaged in a serious conflict with the Orange Free State and did not have men to spare. Sibling rivalry and jealousy might also have accounted for the lack of support. Nehemiah and his educated brothers disliked Letsie and despised him for being illiterate.[102] Many of Nehemiah's followers remained at Matatiele between the upper Mzimvubu and Kinira Rivers and became nominal 'subjects' of Adam Kok. Although the boundary of the Griqua state had now been pushed to the Drakensberg, Governor Wodehouse still strongly supported the right for the Basotho to remain at Matatiele and made it quite clear that they would not be removed.

Commerce, Christianity and Change

It would be incorrect to see the chiefdoms of the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region living an isolated and unchanging existence. As early as the 1830s traders and missionaries made their presence felt among the chiefdoms of the Eastern Cape, introducing new technology and ideas that were by the 1860s and 1870s beginning to bring about social changes. The two most important commodities introduced to the chiefdoms in the nineteenth century were ploughs and firearms. In 1865 when Bransby Lewis Key first visited the Mpondomise seeking permission to establish a mission station he recorded that fields were still tilled by bits of hard wood and that the few ploughs that were used were old and worn.[103] A decade later one of his successors at St Augustine's, H. Waters, reported that 'the plough is used more than the pick'.[104] From the mid-1870s onwards magistrates among all the chiefdoms reported the wide and frequent use of ploughs.[105] Donald Strachan recorded that by 1876 'the almost universal use of ploughs' in the Mzimkhulu district.[106] By the following year there were an estimated 1230 ploughs in use in the Mzimkhulu, Matatiele and Mount Frere districts.[107] The use of ploughs led to an increase in the

[102] Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds,* p. 257.
[103] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 29.
[104] BNA G.12-'77, Report by H. Waters on the St. Augustine's Mission, 5.1.1877, p. 68.
[105] *Ibid*, Report of the Social and Political Condition of the Bacas under the Chief Makaula 28.12.1876, p. 32.
[106] *Ibid*, Report of the Magistrate of Umzimkulu, 3.1.1877, p. 35.
[107] BNA G.17-'78, Census Return of the Natives in East Griqualand, 1877, p. 72.

acreage under cultivation and bigger harvests. The work of tilling now fell to young men rather than women as it had been previously.[108]

After ploughs, firearms were the most sought-after commodity provided by traders and gun smugglers. Many of the firearms came from the Colony of Natal through a drift on the upper reaches of the Mzimkhulu River despite attempts by the government to stop this lucrative enterprise. The first definite figures regarding the number of firearms in East Griqualand comes from an 1877 census which shows there were 2406 firearms among the Bhaca and Nhlangwini chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu, the Basotho and Hlubi of Matatiele and the followers of Makaula. Members of the chiefdoms of Matatiele owned the highest number of guns, 858, followed by 856 guns owned by the chiefdoms of the Mzimkhulu district.[109] There was probably a great deal more firearms than officially recorded. In the 1860s firearms featured in local conflicts. In 1866 and again in 1867 the Bhaca beat off invasions by large Mpondo forces, in part because of the use of firearms.[110] In the early 1870s, some years before the census, travellers passing through East Griqualand observed that chiefs were not only armed but considered good shots and knowledgeable about firearms. In 1872 when Harry Waters went to mediate with Mhlontlo he found him 'dressed in a tiger's skin and armed with a Winchester rifle'.[111] Phipson, in 1873, observed that Mhlontlo 'was a magnificent shot'.[112] Cunynghame noted that Mhlontlo 'is always accompanied by six followers, excellent shots, and armed with Winchester rifles' and that Makaula was also accompanied by an escort of 'well armed men'.[113]

The Methodist missionary W.H. Garner established the first mission station in Nomansland, Shawbury, in 1839 among the people of the Bhaca chief Ncaphayi. Over the next two decades numerous Christian denominations established mission stations between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers. The Methodists opened a second station at Osborn. The Anglicans built St Augustine's in 1865 among the people of the Mpondomise chief Mditshwa, and in 1870 opened

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[108] *Ibid*, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, 24.1.1878, p. 84.
[109] *Ibid*, Census Return of the Natives in East Griqualand, 1877, p. 72.
[110] Stapleton, *Faku*, p. 131.
[111] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 55.
[112] T.L. Phipson, 'A Trip through Kafirland' in A.M. Lewin Robinson (ed.) *Selected Articles from the Cape Monthly Magazine* (Cape Town, 1978), p. 195.
[113] A.T. Cunynghame, *My Command in South Africa, 1874-1878* (London, 1879), pp. 140 & 142.

the Clydesdale Mission at Mzimkhulu. The Moravian Mission Entumasi was built on a portion of Lebenya's location by Reverend Meyer in 1869 and John Preen of the Paris Evangelical Society established a mission near to the homestead of the Basotho chief Makoai.

Norman Etherington in his research on African Christian communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand concluded that chiefs asked for missionaries to establish stations in their chiefdoms to strengthen their position in relation to powerful neighbours; to improve relations with white authorities and to perform certain welfare services.[114] The chiefs of Nomansland were motivated by the same objectives. The chiefs and their councillors, observed Bransby Key, allowed, or even requested, stations to be established in their domains not out of any desire to become Christians or even see Christianity introduced among their people, but rather for the practical benefits they believed missionaries offered.[115] As the colonial presence became more strongly felt between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers, chiefs often turned to the literate, English-speaking missionaries to assist them in their interactions with the Natal and Cape administrations. Even the German-speaking Moravian missionaries acknowledged that the Hlubi chief Zibi's main motive for requesting a missionary had been that the presence of white men in his chiefdom would provide protection against his enemies and that he would receive preferential treatment from the British government.[116] A number of missionaries served as *de facto* secretaries for chiefs, writing letters and negotiating with colonial officials on their behalf. The Mpondomise chief Mditshwa hoped that 'these white strangers' would be useful to him in establishing communication with the English government.[117] The Methodist missionary Reverend William Garner became intimately involved in Bhaca politics in the 1840s and composed letters on their behalf to Cape authorities. Bransby Key, the Anglican missionary at St Augustine's, and the Methodist missionary Charles White who was stationed at Osborn from 1864 to 1881, played a role in the events leading up to the introduction of colonial rule among the Mpondomise and Bhaca.

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[114] N. Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand* (London, 1978), pp. 48-49.
[115] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 32.
[116] Keegan, *Moravians in the Eastern Cape*, p. 70.
[117] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 33.

Besides making use of the missionaries in their dealings with the colonial governments of Natal and the Cape, chiefs also accepted missionaries for the medical skills they brought and the schools they set up. Some of the missionaries had trained as doctors or developed a reputation for having medical skills. Garner in particular was well known and admired for his medical knowledge. On one occasion Ncaphayi, who was seriously ill, asked for his help. The Bhaca had heard the story about a child who died 'and its soul was in its throat' and that Garner had given him medicine and he lived.[118] All of the mission societies established schools on or near the mission stations. By 1876, 313 children were attending mission schools in the Mount Frere district.[119] The Methodists alone operated six schools with 199 pupils by the late 1870s.[120] Mhlontlo supported the establishment of an institution at Shawbury for the education of girls.[121] Although missionaries often intervened on behalf of the people they worked among and generally the relationship between chief and missionary was good, there were points of conflict. While being prepared to grant land for mission purposes, chiefs still considered the people who lived on mission stations to fall under their authority, while some missionaries and more especially the converts saw the stations as independent entities. Reverend Meyer of the Moravian Mission complained that although Lebenya granted land to the mission, he attempted to dictate by whom it should be occupied.[122] This situation arose after Zibi's followers realized that conversion to Christianity entitled them to live on the station to which Lebenya took exception.

It is not clear how many Africans converted to Christianity prior to the 1870s when mission stations started listing statistics in the Blue-Book for Native Affairs. When the Methodist minister Reverend William Taylor preached at Shawbury in 1866 he estimated that almost 3000 people lived on the station, but only 95 were 'professing Christians'.[123] The *amakholwa*, as Christian converts were known, often exchanged goods with the traders who moved into the area and in that way developed links to the capitalist economy of the Cape Colony. By the 1870s in

[118] J. Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa* (London, 1906), pp. 219-220.
[119] BNA G.12-'77, Report of the Social and Political Condition of the Bacas under the Chief Makaula, 28.12.1876, p. 32.
[120] BNA G.13-'80, Statistics of the Wesleyan Mission in Griqualand East for 1879, p. 88.
[121] S. Clark, *Missionary Memories* (Cape Town, 1927), p. 19.
[122] Harber, *Gentlemen of Brave Mettle*, pp. 23-24.
[123] W. Taylor, *Christian Adventures in South Africa* (New York, 1876), p. 361.

the Mount Frere area the people living around the Osborn Mission Station were selling grain and wool to merchants in the Cape Colony.[124] Christian converts wore western-style clothing and thus stuck out quite obviously from those who had not converted. Those who had not converted referred to them as *Kumsha*, or one who adopts European habits, Black English or *umlungu*.[125] Although by the end of the nineteenth century many chiefs converted, initially they did not show a great interest in Christianity beyond what the missionaries could offer them and their people in terms of medicine, education and as go-betweens with the Cape administration. Zibi was one of the exceptions who through the efforts of the Wesleyan missionaries converted to Christianity a year before settling in Nomansland. However, the Moravian missionary Heinrich Meyer, who started work among the Hlubi in 1869, experienced many difficulties, 'not the least of which was the some-what ambivalent attitude of Zibi'.[126]

By the late 1860s the Mpondomise, divided between Mhlontlo and Mditshwa, and the Bhaca under Makaula had emerged as the biggest and most powerful African polities, excluding the Mpondo, between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers. The Mpondo Paramounts considered both chiefdoms to be under their authority and attempted to subjugate them. At Mzimkhulu the Nhlangwini, after years of deprivation after their conflict with Natal, used their alliance with the Griqua to reassert their authority, particularly against the Bhaca. Those smaller chiefdoms settling at Matatiele, roughly from the Mzimvubu to the Kinira Rivers, did so under the authority of the Griqua *Raad*. The Griqua government was prepared to allow the Hlakoana and Batlokwa to settle in their domain to serve as a counter to Nehemiah Moshesh and his adherents whose settlement at Matatiele was considered part of the Basotho kingdom. The Kwena and Hlubi, living near Mount Fletcher, were in principle British subjects, but Joseph Orpen, later British Resident, pointed out 'it never seems to have struck Government that it had any duty towards these its subjects on this its territory'.[127] The arrival of the Griqua in 1863 added another dynamic to an already complicated situation, although through judicious alliances and open force

[124] BNA G.12-'77, Report of the Social and Political Condition of the Bacas under the Chief Makaula, 28.12.1876, p. 32.
[125] S.A. Bangela, 'The Murder of Mr. Hope', p. 23 and P.M. Lokwe, 'The Experiences of the Catechist and Christians at S. Paul's, Xokongxa', pp. 33 & 37 in Gibson, *Reminiscences of the Pondomisi War of 1880*.
[126] Keegan, *Moravians in the Eastern Cape*, p. 50.
[127] CPP A.12 -'73, Memorandum by Mr Orpen, p. 25.

they relatively easily asserted their authority over the African people of the region. By encouraging groups from Lesotho to settle in the area and then abandoning them, colonial officials unwittingly exacerbated the conflicts brewing in the area. The new arrivals found themselves competing with each other for land and influence, and had to assert their authority against the more established chiefdoms, in particular the Mpondomise who considered the area as their sphere of interest. By the 1840s missionaries and traders started bringing about change to the chiefdoms through the introduction of new ideas and goods. It was, however, only in the 1870s as the Cape colonial government asserted its influence over the area that long-lasting transformations, often with violent consequences, began to take place.

Chapter Two

'The Mild Benign Sway of the British Rule': The Extension of Cape Rule between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers

Until the early 1870s the chiefdoms between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers had by in large been spared from direct colonial interference. This was, however, to change in the early 1870s when the Cape Colony gained 'responsible government' from direct British rule and began to extend its influence beyond the Kei River. Although the proclaimed motivating influence amongst Cape officials for extending colonial rule was border security, it took place at a time of aggressive colonial expansion throughout southern Africa, carried out by both the imperial government and settler administrations in response to an economic transformation of the subcontinent brought on by the discovery of diamonds. In early July 1873 the Cape colonial administration appointed Joseph Orpen resident of Nomansland. By greatly distorting the threat the Mpondo kingdom posed to colonial interests in the area and the instability of the Griqua state, Orpen convinced the administration in Cape Town to move rapidly into East Griqualand. His approach to the Mpondomise and Bhaca was to suggest that becoming colonial subjects would solve the complicated and long-standing internal and external problems by which they were beset. The Mpondomise chiefdom was split between two competing scions, both of which had involved the Mpondo in their conflicts and were searching for alternate allies. The Bhaca chiefdom too faced a potential internal split as well as competition with their neighbours the Mpondo and Mpondomise. When it came to the Griqua, Orpen convinced the Molteno government that their continued independence posed a threat to peace in the region.

Capitalism, Confederation and the Establishment of Colonialism beyond the Kei River

By the late 1850s and early 1860s there were white officials recommending that the territory east of the Kei River be brought under Cape rule.[1] In January 1860 the governor of the Cape, Sir George Grey, wrote to the Colonial Office proposing that the country between the Kei and Natal be 'by degrees, occupied by a mixed European and native population'.[2] Grey believed this would prevent further frontier wars, and 'those native races which have hitherto proved so

[1] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 9.
[2] CPP A.12 -'73, Grey to Colonial Office, January 1860, p. 53.

formidable to us will become a prosperous, orderly, well-conducted population, producing valuable articles of trade and largely consuming our manufactured goods'.[3] In the following year Walter Currie, commandant of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, visited the area beyond the Kei and in his report to Grey also recommended the extension of Cape rule.[4] Currie's recommendations were taken up in the Cape Parliament and in July some members proposed that British authority be established between the Kei and Natal. These proposals and schemes, however, came to nothing as white politicians in the Cape parliament did not believe there were enough benefits to the colony to extend colonial rule beyond the Kei River.

By the early 1870s there was a shift in attitude and an increasing number of imperial and colonial officials, Cape politicians and missionaries came to hold the view that colonial rule should be extended beyond the Kei River. This change in attitude can be understood in terms of a new phase of colonialism in the second half of the nineteenth century. Historians generally divide colonial expansion in southern Africa into two phases. Until the 1850s Dutch, and later British, colonists were responsible for the creation of a rural capitalist economy which was the motor of colonial expansion.[5] During this period imperial officials were reluctant to take on new responsibilities and it was local settler communities that encouraged and on occasions carried out the subjugation and conquest of African polities. However, the discovery of diamonds in the 1860s created a new economic and political environment in which a more 'spirited' colonial expansion took place.[6] The diamond fields provided southern Africa with a source of indigenous capital.[7] The discovery of diamonds resulted in an economic transformation of the sub-continent which accelerated the demand for land and labour. Economic changes in southern Africa coincided and influenced policy shifts in London. Lord Carnarvon was appointed secretary of state for the colonies in the Disraeli government in 1874 and came to believe that in order to achieve security and stability in southern Africa, the various independent states should be amalgamated into one territory under the British flag.[8] This stable, white-dominated

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[3] *Ibid*, p. 54.
[4] *Ibid*, Currie to Grey, 29.6.1861, p. 58.
[5] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 13.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 14.
[7] J. Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The Civil War in Zululand, 1879-1884* (Johannesburg, 1982), p. 45.
[8] Benyon, 'Basutoland and the High Commission', p. 304.

confederation of states would allow for the flow of commodities and labour while reducing the administrative and military costs carried by the British government.[9] For a period of time in the 1870s a 'conjunction' of the interests of imperial officials in London and those of colonial politicians and emerging industrialists took place and together they pushed the idea of confederation.[10]

A central aspect of confederation was the incorporation of African states and chiefdoms into the emerging industrial economy.[11] From 1877 to 1879 the British began a series of military campaigns to break the political power of the remaining independent black states of southern Africa.[12] During this period the British, as John Laband points out, crushed the Ngqika and Gcaleka on the Cape Eastern frontier in 1877-78, subjugated the Griqua, Batlhapling, Prieska amaXhosa, Korana and Khoesan in 1878 in the Northern Border War, invaded the Zulu kingdom in 1879 and ended the independence of the Bapedi in the First and Second Anglo-Pedi Wars of 1878 and 1879. The extension of Cape rule over the chiefdoms of the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region needs to be understood as part of this new phase of colonial expansion initiated by the discovery of diamonds and the confederation policy it produced, although the process was influenced by local dynamics and took on its own particular character.

The 1872 Griffith Commission

At the Cape it fell to the high commissioners, initially Henry Barkly and after March 1877 Bartle Frere, to implement Carnarvon's expansionist policies, and the Colonial Office greatly augmented their powers for this to be achieved.[13] Barkly, who arrived at the Cape at the end of 1870 to take up the position of governor and high commissioner, sent a despatch in September 1871 to Lord Kimberley, the secretary of state for the colonies in London, in which he expressed the view that the territory east of the Kei would inevitably be included in the colony. He stressed, however, that this would be a gradual process and that there 'should be no renewal,

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[9] Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*, p. 45.
[10] J. Benyon, *Proconsul and Paramountcy in South Africa: The High Commission, British Supremacy and the Sub-Continent* (Pietermaritzburg, 1980), p. 142.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] J. Laband, *Zulu Warriors: The Battle for the South African Frontier* (New Haven, 2014), p. 7.
[13] Benyon, 'Basutoland and the High Commission', p. 284.

even on a small scale, of the conflict of Races'.[14] In his despatch to Kimberley, Barkly mentioned that he intended to appoint a commission to investigate boundary disputes in Nomansland. Shortly after compiling the despatch, conflict broke out between the Griqua and the Bhaca under Makaula at Mount Frere. The Griqua, mounted and better armed, defeated the Bhaca after a short but intense campaign and imposed a treaty on Makaula which required him to hand over cattle and cede land to Kok's government. The conflict greatly concerned the Methodist missionaries in Pondoland who were afraid that the Griqua might be trying to expand their territory. William Shepstone, the general superintendent of the Wesleyan missions, petitioned the high commissioner to investigate the political situation in the area. By the late 1860s many missionaries in Nomansland favoured British rule as a way to solve boundary disputes which became more frequent as good land became scarce and as a counter to Griqua influence.[15] The Natal government, too, petitioned the high commissioner to investigate conditions in East Griqualand. A series of cattle raids between Adam Kok's subjects and the Mpondo in 1870 and 1871 resulted in the violation of Natal's territory. The Natal government, which had always considered Nomansland as rightfully belonging to them, used the opportunity to lodge complaints with the high commissioner against the Griqua. On 10 August 1871 Lieutenant Governor Keate penned a despatch to Barkly complaining that the violation of Natal's territory had become so frequent it was unsettling the 'usually peaceful occupation of that country by its native inhabitants'.[16]

Under increasing political pressure, Barkly appointed a commission which consisted of Colonel C.D. Griffith, governor's agent in Basutoland and after whom the commission became known, Colonel Grant, a member of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, and James Ayliff, the son of a well-known Methodist missionary and the magistrate of Wodehouse. Barkly instructed the commissioners to establish a boundary between the Griqua and Mpondo; to decide whether the Bhaca or Griqua were the aggressors in the recent conflict; report on the 'progress and civilization' of the tribes in Nomansland, particularly the Griqua; investigate the general state of affairs in Nomansland and report on what might transpire after Adam Kok's death.[17] They were

[14] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 25.
[15] *Ibid*, p. 23.
[16] CPP A.12 -'73, Keate to Barkly, 10.8.1871, pp. 64-65.
[17] *Ibid*, Instruction to Commission on Kaffrarian Affairs, 11.1.1872, pp. 47-51.

also instructed to establish boundaries between the various chiefdoms. The commissioners began collecting evidence at the Emfundisweni Mission Station at the end of March 1872 and then moved to the Griqua Laager on the slopes of Mount Currie. The commissioners in their report were scathing of the Griqua. They blamed chiefdoms living under Griqua rule for being responsible for the cattle thefts in Pondoland, and described the invasion of Bhaca territory as 'totally unjustifiable'.[18] They concluded that the Griqua had retrogressed since leaving Philippolis and that 'anarchy and confusion' would ensue on Kok's death.[19] They recommended that Griqualand be brought under British rule and magistrates be appointed among the chiefdoms living in the area. Barkly accepted in principle that British magistrates should be appointed 'among the tribes subject to Adam Kok', but did not take any definite action.[20] A central theme of the commission, which would later be taken up by the British resident, Joseph Orpen, was the idea that the Griqua government was weak and incapable of controlling the black chiefdoms that lived within its borders. Two years later, the newly-formed Cape colonial government began to implement the suggestions of the 1872 commission.

'Foes into Friends': Cape Native Policy

By the time the commission's report was tabled the first responsible government at the Cape had taken office in December 1872 under the premiership of Charles Molteno. Molteno was a cautious man by nature who focused on the day-to-day tasks of government, and did not show much interest in expanding the colony's responsibilities beyond its borders.[21] However, Charles Brownlee, who had been appointed the first secretary for native affairs, believed, like Barkly, that in order to maintain peace on the border of the colony, the Cape administration should extend its influence east of the Kei River. Brownlee looked to the system devised by the former Cape governor Sir George Grey 'as the basis of Cape racial policy'.[22] Grey, who served at the Cape from 1854 to 1861, believed that the role of colonialism was to 'civilize' Africans. Three weeks after his arrival, Grey wrote to the Colonial Office explaining how he planned to approach the African chiefdoms beyond the frontier:

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[18] *Ibid*, Commissioners to Colonial Secretary, 9.5.1872, p. 105.
[19] *Ibid*, Commissioners to Colonial Secretary, 14.5.1872, pp. 111& 113.
[20] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 27.
[21] Benyon, 'Basutoland and the High Commission', pp. 285-286.
[22] J. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-7* (Johannesburg, 1989), p. 349.

> The plan I propose to pursue …is to attempt to gain an influence over all the tribes included between the present north-eastern boundary of this Colony and Natal by employing them upon public works which will tend to open up their country; by establishing institutions for the education of their children and the relief of their sick; by introducing among them institutions of a civil character suited to their present condition; and by these and other means to attempt gradually to win them to civilization and Christianity, and thus to change by degrees our at present unconquered and apparently irreclaimable foes into friends who may have common interests with ourselves.[23]

The institutions of a civil character mentioned by Grey referred to schools, hospitals and most importantly, new forms of government. Magistrates would gradually replace chiefs, and so a colonial legal system, greatly more advanced and civilized, in the eyes of Grey, would over time take the place of traditional law.[24] Chiefs would be compensated by a monthly salary, and their role restricted to assisting the magistrate to enforce new regulations and arbitrating in minor civil cases. The racist belief that European legal and cultural systems were more advanced and that African people would over time embrace them underpinned this policy. Capitalism and Christianity were taken for granted to be intimately part of this civilizing policy.

Jeff Peires has documented in *The Dead Will Arise* how Grey ruthlessly and unethically took advantage of the cattle killings of 1856 and 1857 to break the Xhosa and introduce his civilizing policy.[25] While the implementation of Grey's policy produced more foes than friends, his approach to the Xhosa greatly influenced attitudes within the Cape Department of Native Affairs. As secretary for native affairs from 1872, Brownlee, more humane and ethical than Grey, also believed in the idea of civilizing the Xhosa. As the son of a missionary, Noel Mostert has pointed out, Brownlee 'had been brought up surrounded by dedication to the task of converting the Xhosa from 'barbarism' to Christianity, thereby setting them on the road to civilization'.[26]

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[23] Quoted in E.H. Brookes, *White Rule in South Africa, 1830-1910* (Pietermaritzburg, 1974), p. 25.
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, p. 269.
[26] N. Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (London, 1993), p. 942.

Mostert convincingly argues that 'his adjustment to the conviction that firm political control was an essential part of the same process was effortless' and it is therefore not surprising that he envisaged the Cape extending its control beyond the Kei in a slow and cautious process 'without violence and bloodshed'.[27] In an official memorandum Brownlee wrote that the Cape should move across the Kei 'only under circumstances when the peace and tranquility of our borders are endangered by the acts of neighbours'.[28] He was, however, prepared to act for 'weak tribes imploring our protection, and desirous of becoming British subjects'.[29] In a confidential addendum he was more assertive and recommended the government begin extending its influence in the Gatberg area (the present Maclear district).[30]

The actual colonial expansion into Nomansland was carried by white magistrates employed in the Native Affairs Department. Members of the department were aware that the support for colonial expansion beyond the Kei that had emerged in the 1860s amongst settlers had little do with the civilizing mission which Brownlee and other officials believed should underpin official Cape policy. Settler farmers as well as colonial and imperial capitalists were driven by a desire for land and cheap labour and at times propagated the violent conquest of the territories and breaking up of chiefdoms by force. However, many officials believed that if they were given enough leeway in the Transkei, they had the insight into the workings of African political systems and an understanding of the 'Native mind' to implement colonialism so that it brought stability, and at the same time limited the demands of settlers. In practice magistrates often had to impose exploitive legislation and at times conflict developed between officials on one side and settlers and white politicians on the other. Magistrates found it convenient to shift the blame to Cape politicians for the crises that took place as colonialism was implemented while ignoring how the policies they advocated contributed to the discontent.

Partly in response to the 1872 commission's findings, but also influenced by his own belief for the need of a British presence in the Transkei, Brownlee appointed Joseph Orpen in July 1873 as the magistrate at Gatberg. Brownlee's decision to appoint Orpen to Gatberg was strategic. The

[27] Mostert, *Frontiers*, p. 942; Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 38.
[28] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 38.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*

people of Lebenya, Lehana and Zibi, who inhabited the area, had settled there a decade earlier from Lesotho with the permission of Governor Wodehouse and were considered British subjects. Small in size and vulnerable to the larger chiefdoms, they were open to accepting a British resident as a way to protect their interests. Gatberg was also close to the Griqua state, and was strategically placed to serve as an advance for the Cape to extend its influence towards Pondoland. Chiefs Lehana, Lebenya and Zibi were informed in late July that the government had decided 'that in regard to your own best interests, and in the interest of the neighbouring tribes, who for years past have been in constant war with each other, no longer delay should take place in bringing you under British rule'.[31] In the same letter they were informed of Orpen's appointment.

After his arrival on 22 August, Orpen established his first headquarters at Tentkop near the border of Maclear and Mount Fletcher.[32] Orpen styled himself the chief magistrate in the St. John's Territory, although in official correspondence Brownlee referred to him as the resident to Nomansland. Orpen's initial instructions were vague. He was told in his appointment letter, besides exercising 'general superintendence and magisterial functions', that his first duties would be 'to report upon the present numbers and condition of the inhabitants, and state of the country, in order that you may receive further and more definite instructions'.[33] He was also to serve as the medium of communication between the government and the Mpondo, Mpondomise, Xesibe and Bhaca.[34] Orpen in effect was the representative of the Cape government with the people beyond the Mthatha River, and it was his responsibility to extend Cape influence in the area.

Although Brownlee wanted to extend government influence and control in the area to stabilize the frontier, he envisaged a gradual process.[35] He instructed Orpen to restrict himself to showing the chiefs and their people 'a country near them, in which other chiefs and people are considerately treated and well governed, and under our influence exempted from the disorders

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[31] BNA G. 27-'74, Brownlee to Lehana, Lebenya and Zibi, 24.7.1873, p. 66.
[32] After the Mpondomise were accepted as British subjects, Orpen was authorized in April 1874 to move his headquarters to the junction of the Inxu and Tsitsa Rivers.
[33] BNA G. 27-'74, Brownlee to Orpen, 8.7.1873, p. 64.
[34] *Ibid*, p. 65.
[35] *Ibid*.

and wars to which other tribes are constantly exposed'.[36] Having witnessed the benefits of colonial rule to the people living around Gatberg, Brownlee was sure that the other chiefdoms would apply to be received as British subjects and come into the colonial fold. Brownlee made it clear to Orpen that he should 'exercise the utmost caution, and not suggest any course of procedure to the independent tribes without consulting Government; and above all, it is desired that any applications by them should be their spontaneous act entered into by them without any prompting on your part'.[37] Orpen immediately focused his attention on the three most powerful states in the region: the Mpondomise, Griqua and Bhaca.

The Ground was Split: The Mpondomise

When Orpen arrived at Gatberg he found the Mpondomise divided between the followers of Mhlontlo, who inhabited the Qumbu area, and those of his cousin and rival Mditshwa, who lived at Tsolo. The Mpondomise referred to the division as the ground being split.[38] Both men had a reputation for being fierce warriors with forceful personalities. According to Mpondomise tradition, Mbali, who had served as regent for Mhlontlo, was hesitant about handing over the chieftaincy to his nephew. However, Makaula of the Bhaca led, in alliance with other surrounding chiefs, an attack on the Mpondomise in 1858. Mhlontlo, named after the euphorbia tree, was at a circumcision lodge at the time and led the other initiates in a successful attack on the Bhaca, thus securing his position.[39] Mditshwa's father Diko had also died when he was young and his uncle Mabasa served as regent until he was of age to become chief. In 1865 Mditshwa was in the prime of his life, described by Rev Key as 'tall in person, and of commanding manner, he certainly looked a ruler. He was the hero of many a fight, and was followed devotedly by his men'.[40]

There was a strong rivalry between the two cousins which often led to conflict. The best remembered of these conflicts in Mpondomise tradition is known as the War of Pakane in 1870. The confrontation was sparked off when one of Mditshwa's councillors Pakane, who lived at

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[36] *Ibid*.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 27.
[39] Scheub, *Tongue is Fire*, pp. 255-256.
[40] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 32.

Ndzebe, was said to have insulted Mhlontlo.[41] Both Mhlontlo and Mditshwa in turn approached the Cape government and the Mpondo paramounts in search of allies. For at least a decade before Orpen's appointment, Mditshwa had been considering the option of becoming a British subject in an attempt to strengthen his position in his struggles against Mhlontlo. In 1865 the Anglican missionary Reverend Bransby Key approached Mditshwa to obtain permission to establish a mission amongst his followers. Mditshwa agreed, according to Key's biographer Godfrey Callaway, not because he wanted to become a Christian but because he was anxious for British protection, and 'when he saw these white strangers he probably thought that they would be useful to him in establishing communication with the English government, and that they would introduce traders into the country'.[42]

Mditshwa in September 1868, after hearing about the annexation of Basutoland, approached Joseph Warner, British resident in the Transkeian Territory, and indicated that he wished to be put 'entirely under the Government, that he was tired of war, altho' he had never been beaten…and hopes the Governor will henceforth consider him as one of their children'.[43] His request was declined. Mhlontlo too turned to the Cape government in search of a strong ally and made a request to the 1872 commission to be accepted as a British subject. Brownlee was hesitant at this stage to move too quickly and declined Mhlontlo's appeal. Having been rebuffed by the Cape government, Mditshwa then turned to the Mpondo and entered into an alliance with Ndamase who ruled the western portion of his late father's kingdom. In January 1872, Mhlontlo, angered by the agreement Mditshwa had concluded with their mutual foe the Mpondo, commenced hostilities against his cousin.[44]

In May 1872 the members of the Griffith Commission spent a week on the banks of the Tsitsa River near Shawbury attempting unsuccessfully to arrange a truce between the followers of Mhlontlo and Mditshwa. The commissioners reported that Mhlontlo 'voluntarily, and in the most unreserved manner, placed his case in the hands of the Commission', while Mditshwa

[41] N. Mbabama, *King Mhlontlo: The Freedom Warrior* (East London, 2015), p. 23.
[42] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 33.
[43] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkei Territories*, p.24.
[44] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 54.

remained 'obstinate and distrustful'.[45] In July 1873 Mhlontlo approached Mqikela, Faku's heir who ruled eastern Pondoland, and asked him for his protection. The Methodist missionary at Emfundisweni, William Milward, informed the governor on 21 July 1873 that this had been accepted by the customary payment of cattle. Furthermore, Mqikela had called a meeting with Ndamase and Mhlontlo 'to ensure the continuance of peace and concord throughout the whole region'.[46] He informed the government that the meeting would also be attended by the Batlokwa chief Lehana. There seems to have been a certain amount of double dealing taking place and it is difficult to work out exactly what was transpiring. Orpen was informed by his clerk Abner Molefe, a relation of Lehana's, that Mhlontlo had sent cattle to Mqikela 'asking simply for peace'.[47] Mhlontlo would later inform Orpen that he had approached Mqikela on the advice of his missionary for protection, although it was against his will and he did not trust the Mpondo.[48]

Regardless of who initiated the negotiations or what the ultimate aim was, these developments concerned Brownlee who just 18 months earlier had rejected Mhlontlo's request for protection. He became convinced that the Mpondo kings were attempting to regain the territory ceded by Faku to the colonial government. He expressed his fears in a letter written to Orpen on 8 August:

> the policy of the Pondos at present appears to be an absorption of the smaller tribes between Natal and our borders. This extension of power may hereafter prove dangerous and troublesome to us, and even though we were not prepared to recognize Umhlonhlo as a British subject, it would be more satisfactory to us that he should remain as he at present is than that he should become subject to the Pondos.[49]

Brownlee instructed Orpen to induce Mhlontlo to delay, or even back out if possible, of his agreement with the Mpondo while the government reconsidered his earlier appeal for his adherents to become British subjects. Brownlee, hoping to end what he thought was a potentially problematic alliance, sent a letter to Mqikela in early August in which he informed him that the governor was surprised that he was considering Mhlontlo's request as he had made

[45] CPP A.12 -'73, Commissioners to Colonial Secretary, 18.5.1872, p. 122.
[46] BNA G. 27-'74, Milward to Barkly, 21.7.1873, p. 67.
[47] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 23.8.1873, p. 72.
[48] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 9.9.1873, p. 74.
[49] *Ibid*, Brownlee to Orpen, 8.8.1873, p. 67.

the same request to the government which was still considering the issue.[50] Brownlee was also concerned by reports that Lehana and Lebenya, leaders of two smaller chiefdoms living at the foothills of the Drakensberg, had also paid tribute to Mqikela. Orpen was instructed to tell them that the government would not tolerate double dealing and as British subjects 'they can owe allegiance to no one but the Queen of England'.[51]

Orpen, an expansionist and interventionist who believed that the Cape should assert its authority in the territory between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers quickly and decisively, read Brownlee's concerns about the Mpondo well and reinforced them in his missives back to Cape Town. On 10 September he wrote that 'the Pondos, who are very numerous, have lately notified to Government their pretensions not only to the parts allotted to the Pondomisi and Bacas by Government, but also to these districts of which I am magistrate…'[52] Orpen was dramatizing the alliance between Mditshwa and Ndamase to show the possibility of a major shift in the balance of power towards the Mpondo. Orpen also used the conflict between Mhlontlo, Mditshwa and Ndamase, which reached a peak in late August, to demonstrate the dangers of allowing the Mpondo to go unchecked. On Sunday, 24 August, Ndamase and Mditshwa led a force of an estimated two to three thousand men in a joint campaign against Mhlontlo. The invaders were initially successful and captured many head of cattle and horses. Mhlontlo, who retreated at first, pushed back and led small bands of men armed with Winchesters and other rifles in surprise attacks and night raids against his enemies. The Mpondo, foot sore after being on the march for ten days, retreated in the face of Mhlontlo's good shooting and well-thought-out tactical manoeuvres.

Although Mhlontlo held off his enemies with some success, he knew a second attack would follow. He was also aware that some of his followers, tired of the ongoing conflict, were seeking the protection of neighbouring chiefs.[53] Orpen paid him a visit two weeks after the Mpondo withdrawal and informed him of his appointment. According to Orpen, Mhlontlo told him that he was 'simply fighting for his head' and expressed regret for his actions, and that 'he longed as

[50] *Ibid*, Brownlee to Umgikelo, 8.8.1873, p. 68.
[51] *Ibid*, Brownlee to Orpen, 29.8.1873, p. 69.
[52] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 10.9.1873, p. 79.
[53] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 9.9.1873, p. 74.

anxiously as ever to be under Government'.[54] Orpen then came up with his own proposal. He offered to negotiate peace between Mhlontlo and Mditshwa, break the alliances between the Mpondomise and Mpondo factions by offering the Mpondomise potential government protection and then create an alliance between the Mpondomise, Bhaca and Griqua against the Mpondo. This, argued Orpen, would stop the ongoing conflict and curtail the threat of the Mpondo extending their influence into Nomansland. He informed Mhlontlo that if he renewed his formal request to become a British subject, that while the government considered it, 'the Pondos were to be warned that he was under protection'.[55] He presented a similar proposal to Mditshwa, who according to Orpen, reported that he 'went to the Pondos as to a wood for refuge, and because Government left me alone; but I do not see how to get out of that wood till Government takes me out of it'.[56] Mditshwa was hesitant though to break his alliance with Ndamase if the government did not accept him as an ally. By late September Orpen reported that he had arranged a truce between the two Mpondomise chiefs, and that he had begun organizing the Mpondomise, Bhaca and Griqua against the Mpondo.[57] Kok, according to Orpen, placed 600 men at his disposal. By 8 October Orpen confidently informed Brownlee that his measures 'had averted, and will prevent, the renewal of a war really waged for the conquest of British territory'.[58] Two days later he wrote from the Shawbury Mission Station that 'the Amapondo have given up their intention of making war' and 'the crisis is past'.[59] By the 12 October, again writing from Shawbury, Orpen reported that a son and nephew of Ndamase had visited him with a letter promising 'to refrain from molesting Umhlonhlo'.[60]

Orpen's political manoeuvres paid off by late September and early October. On 27 September Brownlee issued a memorandum in which he wrote that although he had not contemplated taking steps so soon, 'there appears to be no alternative but to receive them [Mpondomise] as British subjects'.[61] In October Brownlee informed Orpen that under the present circumstances the only wise course would be to accept the applications for protection made by the Mpondomise leaders

[54] *Ibid*.
[55] *Ibid*, Report of the Chief Magistrate, Tsitsa, in the St. John's Territory March 1874, p. 52.
[56] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 9.9.1873, p. 76.
[57] *Ibid*, Civil Commissioner Kingwilliamstown to Brownlee, 26.9.1873, pp. 81-82.
[58] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 8.10.1873, p. 83.
[59] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 10.10.1873, p. 88.
[60] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 12.10.1873, p. 89.
[61] *Ibid*, Memorandum by Brownlee, 27.9.1873, p. 77.

as if they did not 'Umhlonhlo's tribe would be broken up by the Pondos, and our settlement at the Gatberg would no longer be safe'.[62] This concerned Brownlee who felt that there was no alternative but to accept the Mpondomise as British subjects so that the Mpondo did not take advantage of Mpondomise rivalry to assert their authority in Nomansland.[63] As far as the government was concerned Orpen had acted 'wisely and judiciously'.[64]

There is very little evidence to support Brownlee and Orpen's fear that the Mpondo wished to take back the land that Faku had ceded to the Cape government and then subjugate the smaller chiefdoms or force them out of Nomansland. Ndamase insisted that his recent campaign against Mhlontlo was part of a long-standing conflict of eight or nine years. Rather than attempting to regain territory, he wanted to deal with a man whom he considered a rebellious subject.[65] Mqikela's proposed alliance with Mhlontlo seems to have had more to do with his own dynastic rivalry with Ndamase who he wanted to keep in check rather than to regain territory ceded by his late father. Even Orpen at times contradicts himself when discussing Mpondo motives. At times he emphasized their attempts to impose their authority over the chiefdoms of Nomansland, while in other reports he writes that they were trying to stop Mhlontlo becoming a British subject. In a report, for example, written in March 1875 he wrote that on the day of his arrival he found 'a great part of Her Majesty's territory of twelve years standing was being ravaged by Pondo armies' which 'in league with others to root out a chief Umhlonhlo, who wished to be under our rule, and their intention was to prevent this submission taking place'.[66]

While there is ample documentary evidence to show that the Cape administration's decision to accept the Mpondomise as colonial subjects was motivated by a concern, albeit distorted, that the Mpondo were attempting to impose their authority over Nomansland, there are fewer sources to show what motivated the Mpondomise. According to the Mpondomise historian Mdukiswa Tyabashe, Mhlontlo approached the missionary Bransby Key because he was tired of the continual conflict with Mditshwa and asked the missionary how they could end the fighting.

[62] *Ibid*, G. 27-'74, Brownlee to Orpen, 2.10.1873 p. 78.
[63] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkei Territories*, p. 39.
[64] BNA G. 27-'74, Brownlee to Civil Commissioner Kingwilliamstown, 9.10.1873, p. 83.
[65] *Ibid*, Damas to Orpen, 10.10.1873, p. 90.
[66] BNA G. 21-75, Report of the British Resident in St John's Territory, March 1875, p. 95.

Key advised him to 'ask the Government to come and arbitrate between you'.[67] Mhlontlo himself pointed to the conflict with Mditshwa and the Mpondo as the main motive for seeking colonial protection. He was also aware that the continual skirmishes were taking their toll on his followers, some of whom 'found it necessary to trek away with what remained of their stock'.[68] Discussions with Brownlee took place at the Shawbury Mission Station in the latter part of 1873, and formal notification of their acceptance was made on 22 October. Mhlontlo strove hard to be recognized by the colonial government as the senior chief to Mditshwa. Brownlee skillfully avoided the request, pointing out that the discussions were about the future not the past.[69]

'Daar het jille dit nu': The End of Griqua Independence

Orpen took advantage of internal divisions, and conflict with the Mpondo, to convince Mpondomise leaders to accept colonial rule. His approach to depriving the Griqua of their independence was to convince Cape Town of the need to assume the administration of East Griqualand because the Griqua were a source of instability in the region. Within weeks of his arrival in late August 1873, he had reported to Brownlee that Adam Kok could only muster 140 men and that it 'seems absurd that these should by the will of a few of them form an oligarchy having an independent government on British territory'.[70] He later contradicted himself by saying that Kok was prepared to provide 600 men to go against the Mpondo. In a report written in March 1874, he argued that the Griqua had settled in East Griqualand as British subjects and were thus still under the jurisdiction of the Cape government.[71] In a similar vein to the commission of 1872, Orpen created a picture of East Griqualand as a volatile and corrupt country. He was at pains to point out that Kok had little control over the large number of chieftaincies living in East Griqualand and that this posed a potentially dangerous and explosive situation for the Cape government. He insisted the Griqua administration would not disclose its source of revenue and that no public works had been undertaken. He was also concerned that as Kok had no heir, there was potential for internal conflict when he died. Orpen believed 'that the

[67] Scheub, *Tongue is Fire*, p. 260.
[68] Phipson, 'A Trip through Kafirland' p. 195.
[69] *Ibid*, p. 198.
[70] BNA G. 27-'74, Orpen to Brownlee, 10.9.1873, pp. 79-80.
[71] *Ibid*, Report of the Chief Magistrate, Tsitsa, in the St. John's Territory March 1874, p. 49.

placing of the whole country under Kok's charge under direct Government control could be easily effected without opposition...'[72]

Orpen is correct in saying that little or no money was spent on public works. In 1874 there was not one public building in Kokstad. The only government buildings constructed by the Griqua were the courthouse and jail in Mzimkhulu. He was also correct in pointing out that there was some concern over who would succeed Kok as *Kaptyn*. Kok had no offspring, although there were a number of relatives competing for the *Kaptancy*.[73] Kok had 'adopted' his cousin's eldest son, Adam 'Eta' Kok. Eta lived in the *Kaptyn's* household and was generally treated as the heir apparent. The children of Adam Kok's wife, by Kok's brother and predecessor, were also considered candidates to succeed him. Jan Jood, Mrs Kok's son-in-law, was considered a potential heir, as was Nicholas Waterboer. In the early 1870s there was some concern amongst the Griqua that if Kok died there might be the potential for civil strife.[74]

Some of the statements made by Orpen, however, were simply incorrect. The Griqua had very little trouble asserting their authority over the indigenous people who lived in East Griqualand. Robert Ross has pointed out that the Griqua 'were able to rule Nomansland with remarkably little difficulty'.[75] The Griqua were more formidable than any chiefdom on its own and even in open conflict with the Basotho and Bhaca were victorious. The source and amount of revenue of the Griqua government was not a secret. Until 1870 the Griqua government badly managed its finances. Before 1870 the records were written in poor ungrammatical Dutch, but after 1870, when Charles Brisley, an English trader, took over the secretaryship, there was a decided improvement, with records kept in both Dutch and English. Although there continued to be problems with the collecting and distributing of the revenue and with the records kept, after 1870 it is possible to obtain some idea of annual income and the way in which it was spent. The annual income was approximately £2700.[76] The largest source of income, approximately 43%, was the hut tax levied on all Africans living in East Griqualand and which amounted to £1171

[72] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 10.9.1873, p. 80.
[73] W. Dower, *The Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East* (Pietermaritzburg, 1978), p. 45.
[74] *Ibid*, p. 46.
[75] Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas*, p. 119.
[76] CPP, G. 21-'75, Annexure A 7.11.1874, p. 72.

for 1874.[77] Other sources of income were quit rents, licence fees paid by traders and court fees and fines. Most of the revenue from 1870 to 1874 was used to pay the salaries of government officials. Margaret Rainer has pointed out that Orpen paid little attention to 'the relative social and economic stability of the Griqua regime'.[78]

Many writers, most less biased than Orpen, noted that there were many lapses and problems with the Griqua government. It was not a model of efficiency but it did function more effectively than Orpen claimed. It is not surprising, therefore, that Orpen developed a reputation for being unfairly biased towards the Griqua. Esau du Plooy, the leader of a small independent group of Griqua in the Maclear area, complained bitterly in 1873 that Orpen was 'filling the country up with Kaffirs and Fingoes and leaving but little for the Bastaards'.[79] The London Missionary Society minister at Kokstad, Reverend William Dower, himself at times unfairly critical of the Griqua, wrote 'I do not think I am misjudging Mr Orpen when I say that he did not like the Griquas. Against them he had an unreasonable and invincible prejudice. They were to him evil, and evil continually'.[80]

An uprising in the Colony of Natal at the end of 1873 among the Hlubi provided Orpen with the additional and final 'evidence' he needed against the Griqua. From about 1849 the followers of Langalibalele kaMtimkulu had lived on the foothills of the Drakensberg beneath the peaks of Champagne Castle and Cathkin Peak. The Hlubi had been settled in the area to serve as a buffer between the San, who still lived in the Drakensberg, and the Colony. In 1873 Langalibalele ignored repeated orders by the magistrate to register firearms owned by his people. After refusing to appear before Theophilus Shepstone, the secretary for native affairs in the Colony of Natal, he sent a force consisting of 200 British troops, 300 Natal volunteers and about 6000 African levies at the end of October to arrest Langalibalele. He fled across the Drakensberg into Basutoland and sought refuge with Chief Molapo. Molapo handed Langalibalele over to a

[77] Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas*, p. 120.
[78] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 69.
[79] P. Mitchell & S. Challis (eds), 'A "First" Glimpse into the Maloti Mountains: The Diary of Inspector James Murray Grant's Expedition of 1873-74' in *Southern African Humanities* vol. 20 (December 2008) , p. 409.
[80] Dower, *Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East*, p. 46.

detachment of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police who in turn handed the Chief to officials in Natal in December.

On 16 November, Orpen received a letter written eight days earlier by Theophilus Shepstone, requesting that he intercept Langalibalele who was believed to be making his way to East Griqualand to seek refuge with his kinsman Ludidi.[81] Orpen set out for the Griqua Laager on the slopes of Mount Currie to obtain support from Adam Kok, but stopped on the way to obtain men from Lebenya and Lehana. Orpen pushed on to the Griqua Laager where he arrived on 19 November. Adam Kok had already received word about Langalibalele's flight from the Natal government and had sent small patrols towards Matatiele and was in the process of calling up additional men who Orpen made clear would 'act under his authority'.[82] On 27 November news was received that Langalibalele was not making his way for East Griqualand but was in the Maloti Mountains. In early December, however, Orpen received a message that a detachment of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police was in the vicinity with the intention of crossing Qacha's Nek and pursuing Langalibalele in the Malotis. Orpen recalled Lebenya and Lehena and their men, totalling 325, and joined forces with the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police in the pursuit of Langalibalele, although they never crossed paths with the chief who was captured just as the campaign began.

Orpen's dealings with Kok, over whom he had no authority but insisted his men 'be prepared to act under him', his raising of a levy amongst the men of Lebenya and Lehana and the FAMP's march through East Griqualand, still a sovereign country, were clear signs of a changing dynamic as the Cape government asserted its authority in the region. This was not lost on either the Natal government or the chiefs who lived as subjects of the Griqua *Raad*. The Natal government was always critical of the Griqua and unhappy with their presence on their southern border, but had generally respected their sovereignty and boundaries because they had been settled in the area with the encouragement and consent of the Cape administration. With Orpen's appointment and the events surrounding the pursuit of Langalibalele, Shepstone was aware that

[81] BNA G.27-'74, Shepstone to Orpen, 8.11.1873, p. 107.
[82] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 16.11.1873, p. 106.

he could rely on the support of the Cape authorities, despite past rivalries over the region. In his letter to Orpen informing him of the uprising Shepstone wrote:

> Under these circumstances His Excellency directs me to request that you will take such steps as may appear to you feasible to intercept the fugitives and their cattle, in order that they may be punished for their treacherous and rebellious conduct; and that it may be quite clear to the natives that should any of them rebel against the Government of one portion of Her Majesty's dominions in South Africa they rebel equally against all.[83]

In their dealings with the Griqua *Raad* Natal's attitude had also changed. Orpen noted:

> It is to be remarked that Government authority to call up Kok as a subject in case of war had been exerted for the first time a few weeks before the outbreak, when he was ordered to warn his people to prepare for war with the Pondos.
>
> The Natal Government was informed of this, and in the rebellion immediately requested Kok's co-operation, instead of, as on former occasions, treating him as an independent foreigner and his country as an Alsatia for outlaws.[84]

In late January Orpen wrote a detailed memorandum to Brownlee regarding the Langalibalele campaign. He was now convinced that Langalibalele did actually want to seek refuge in East Griqualand. He did not have much evidence to support this change in opinion beyond the statement that 'it was the universal conviction of the Natal natives and Government that he intended to make his way here'.[85] Orpen wrote that Langalibalele's relatives told him that 'he did not expect but thought to fight and run away from Natal as he had fought and run away from Zululand, this implies a place to run to, and the only one feasible, and apparently not under Government, was Kok's country'.[86] Orpen was concerned of the possibility that 'if the semi-independence of Kok's country continue', Langalibalele's people would make their way to Griqualand and over time regain their strength.[87] He wrote that 'the men must go there, and the women will find them, and it is for Government to consider whether such an amalgamation of

[83] *Ibid*, Shepstone to Orpen, 8.11.1873, p. 107.
[84] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 21.1.1874, p. 122.
[85] *Ibid*, p. 122.
[86] *Ibid*.
[87] *Ibid*, p. 123.

disaffection to Natal, and loosening of all allegiance, is to be encouraged, or how to deal with it'.[88]

Orpen spent May of 1874 in Kokstad conducting meetings with Kok and other government officials, including two white officials - Charles Brisley, the government secretary, and Donald Strachan, the magistrate of Mzimkhulu. Orpen later claimed that during these talks the issue of direct rule had been raised and that Kok had not protested to the Cape assuming the administration of East Griqualand. Orpen went on to say that Strachan and Brisley had informed him that Kok wished 'to resign his office into the hands of the government'.[89] Strachan, however, later claimed that Kok said nothing of the sort and that the discussion revolved around a complaint by Kok that the Cape government did not react to complaints he had made about being raided by his African neighbours. In June 1874 Orpen travelled to Kokstad and met Kok and his council. An angry *Kaptyn* pointed out that since his arrival he had received no protection in his conflict with neighbouring chiefdoms, and demanded to know 'exactly the footing upon which he stands with Government'. If he was a subordinate chief, which is what Orpen was insisting, 'that implied protection'. 'He is sick and tired of relationships which afford him no hold whatever upon Government, and which only bind him'.[90] In a response to Kok's meeting with Orpen, Charles Brownlee dictated a memorandum arguing that 'Adam Kok's prestige with the surrounding tribes was caused by his claim to be a British subject; had it not been for this, and had we repudiated any connection with him, he could not have held his ground in Nomansland'.[91]

Brownlee was concerned by the number of chieftaincies under Griqua rule, some of whom had voluntary accepted the authority of the *Raad* and others who had been placed against their will.[92] He concluded that 'our position in St. John's territory renders it necessary for the general good that the Griquas should also be brought under our rule and authority'.[93] The fate of the Griqua

[88] *Ibid*.
[89] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 64.
[90] BNA G. 21-'75, Extract of Minutes of a Meeting Between J.M. Orpen and the Chief Adam Kok and his Council, 24.6.1874, p. 67.
[91] *Ibid*, Minute of the Secretary for Native Affairs, p. 69.
[92] *Ibid*, p. 70.
[93] *Ibid*.

had been proverbially sealed and all that remained were the formalities. In October Sir Henry Barkly paid an official visit to Natal. On his homeward journey he stopped at Kokstad to discuss annexation with Kok. Barkly arrived in Kokstad early in the evening of 15 October. At about midday a meeting was held with Kok and the *Raad* at the Griqua schoolhouse in which he informed them that the Cape would take direct control of the government. Kok pointed out that he expected this to happen at some stage, but was under the impression 'it would be some years before becoming an accomplished fact'.[94] According to Dower, when Barkly and Orpen were finished 'there was silence, long and painful'. Kok, who had a terrible cold, sat with his head on his hands and elbows on his knees listening. After a few minutes he looked up and said 'Daar het jille dit nu' (There you are now).[95]

The annexation of the Griqua state meant that the chiefdoms of the Mzimkhulu district and those along the foothills of the Drakensberg had become, without consultation, subjects of the Cape government. The Bhaca and most of the Basotho chiefdoms had been unhappy under Griqua rule and hoped to benefit from Cape rule. Not only had the Griqua been allies with the Bhaca's old foe the Nhlangwini, but they had, in the late 1860s, expelled by force three of the Bhaca chiefs - Thiba, Cijisiwe and Nomtsheketshe - from Mzimkhulu. The Griqua had used military power to push the boundary of the state across the Mzimvubu River into the Matatiele area, expelling Nehemiah Moshesh in the process. The Nhlangwini under Fodo and Sidoyi were the Griqua's only ally, and in the years to come their loyalty would be of concern to Cape authorities.

The Bhaca of Makaula

By late 1874 the only major chiefdom in Nomansland that retained its independence was the Bhaca supporters of Chief Makaula. Makaula, who received some education at the Methodist mission Clarkebury, had developed a reputation in his youth as a warrior of renown. Known in his childhood by the name *Silonyana* (the little Wildebeest), and described in the early 1870s as 'a stout silent man, well dressed in dark blue', he became chief in the late 1860s, after his uncle

[94] *Ibid*, Brisley to Government Office, 16.10.1874, p. 73.
[95] Dower, *Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East,* p. 52.

Diko had served as regent for over twenty years.[96] He inherited a number of complex and long-standing issues, which included conflicts with his neighbours over boundaries and a challenge to his authority by a kinsman. Like the Mpondomise chiefs Mhlontlo and Mditshwa, he came to see, encouraged by missionaries and Orpen, the acceptance of colonial rule as a solution to his problems.

By the late 1860s Makaula was struggling to stop the Mpondomise, Mpondo and Griqua from encroaching on to territory that fell under his authority. To his west the Mpondomise under Mhlontlo were increasing in numbers. Makaula came to an agreement with Mhlontlo that the Tina River would serve as the boundary between the two chiefdoms, however, Makaula still battled to prevent the movement of Mpondomise across the river and disputes over cattle thefts soon developed among the people living in the area.[97] Even more threatening for the new chief were the Mpondo to the south-east and his neighbours the Griqua. Relations between the Bhaca and Mpondo were strained and there had been occasional conflicts between the two groups since their alliance broke down in 1840. The conflict culminated in an unsuccessful invasion of the Bhaca chiefdom by the Mpondo in 1866. In August of that year Mqikela led between five and eight thousand men against the Bhaca who, according to Mpondo tradition, lived on Mpondo land but refused to recognize their authority.[98] The Mpondo invasion was initially successful but as they reached Makaula's Great Place, he rallied his men and in intense hand to hand fighting, pushed the invaders back towards the Osborn Mission Station where the residents cut down the retreating Mpondo with musket fire. The campaign, carried out against the wishes of Faku, resulted in a loss of an estimated 500 men. Soon after becoming king in 1867 on the death of his father, Mqikela again launched a campaign against the Bhaca to assert his authority over them. Mqikela advanced into Bhaca territory towards the Great Place at Lutateni with three divisions of his army.[99] The conflict became known as the War of Notinta after the Mpondo general who led one of the divisions. The Bhaca initially retreated to the Mgano Mountains but later gained the upper hand in the conflict and Mqikela withdrew with considerable losses. The conflict opened

[96] Cunynghame, *My Command in South Africa*, p. 142.
[97] A.M. Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhaca From Earliest Times to 1910' (M.A. Thesis, Rhodes University, 1988), pp. 120-121.
[98] Stapleton, *Faku*, p. 117.
[99] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhaca', p. 110.

up old wounds and destabilized the border.[100] Despite successfully repelling the Mpondo on two occasions in two years, on becoming chief in late 1860s Makaula made peace with the Mpondo by paying 1000 head of cattle.[101] After the battle of Notinta, Makaula was encouraged by the Methodist missionary Charles White to request British rule.[102] White was at the station during the War of Notinta and many of the retreating Mpondo warriors took refuge at Osborn. He counted 160 bodies in one valley and sent a dramatic account of what transpired to the superintendent of the Wesleyan Society. White was greatly moved by the loss of life and encouraged Makaula to become a colonial subject and experience the benefits of 'the mild benign sway of the British rule'.[103]

Makaula and his people were the Griqua's closest African neighbours. There had been an ongoing disagreement over a number of years over exactly where the boundary was between the two countries. On the debated land lived a Hlubi cattle thief from Lesotho called Ncukana. Kok insisted that Ncukana lived on the Bhaca side of the boundary and that he and Makaula's followers stole stock from the Griqua. Donald Strachan, however, claimed that Ncukana lived on the Griqua side of the boundary and that the Bhaca were also victims of this cattle thief.[104] Makaula was held responsible by the Griqua *Raad* who demanded that he restrain Ncukana and his cohorts and that all stolen cattle be restored. When Makaula did not comply with these demands, the Griqua *Raad* formally declared war on the Bhaca in September 1871. About 300 burghers, some mounted and many on foot, accompanied by African levies marched on Makaula. The campaign lasted a few weeks before Makaula sued for peace. The Griqua burnt many homes and captured 1 400 cattle, 500 horses and 1 700 sheep. The *Raad* imposed a fine of 700 head of cattle.

Besides dealing with the problems on his borders, Makaula faced a challenge to his authority from his cousin Nomtsheketshe, son of the senior Bhaca chief Mdushane who had moved with a large number of followers to Natal and Mzimkhulu in 1846. Mdushane had nominated Nomtsheketshe as his heir; however, many of his councillors and the regent Thiba favoured his

[100] *Ibid*, p. 113.
[101] Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, p. 45.
[102] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhaca', p. 113.
[103] *Ibid*.
[104] *Kokstad Advertiser* 9.12.1902.

son Cijiswe as the *lobola* for his mother had been paid by the nation, thus making her the great wife. Nomtsheketshe spent his childhood with Makaula at Mount Frere as there was a concern that his life was in danger. Upon reaching manhood, he returned to Mzimkhulu and lay claim to the chieftainship. His uncle Thiba and brother Cijiswe rejected his claims and conflict broke out within the Bhaca ruling house, leading at times to violent clashes. Nomtsheketshe attracted men dissatisfied with Thiba's authoritarian rule, and more importantly became an ally to the Griqua who were tired of the regent's resistance to their authority. The Griqua were reluctant to expel Thiba and his followers because of the resultant loss in hut tax and were satisfied initially to weaken his position by supporting Nomtsheketshe. Donald Strachan, acting as the Griqua magistrate, had attempted to quell the violence by drawing a boundary line between the two parties. In May 1869 thirteen of Thiba's men crossed the boundary line and slaughtered goats belonging to their rivals. Thiba was summoned to explain the actions of his men, but instead led a cattle raid towards the Mzimkhulu Drift and moved beyond Griqua control into the colony of Natal. Nomtsheketshe soon fell into conflict with his Griqua allies. He either allowed or was involved in a number of acts that transgressed Griqua rule, the most serious of which occurred in 1871 when he was implicated in the smelling out his nephew's grandmother who had supposedly caused his illness.[105] As tensions mounted with his former allies, he fled to Pondoland where he was beyond colonial and Griqua law. In March 1873 a formal ceremony was held at which the *Raad* withdrew their recognition of him as chief. He lived for a while near Bizana but in the mid-1870s was settled by Makaula at Mpoza on the west bank of the Mzimvubu River.[106] According to the anthropologist Hammond-Tooke, Makaula 'recognized Nomtsheketshe's precedence in ritual matters' and they reached 'a satisfactory modus vivendi'.[107] He writes that conflict developed when their respective heirs, Mngcisana and Rolobile, both claimed paramountcy.[108] A.M. Makaula, however, in his thesis on the Bhaca argues that Nomtsheketshe soon attempted to assert his seniority over his host. He writes that Nomtsheketshe was a restless and violent man, who soon made use of his senior rank by birth to abuse and embarrass his host Makaula'.[109]

[105] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 35.
[106] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhaca', p. 123.
[107] Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, pp. 10 & 62.
[108] *Ibid*.
[109] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhaca', p. 123.

Makaula appealed for British protection to the 1872 Griffith commission, but his application was rejected by Brownlee who was reluctant to proceed too rapidly into Nomansland.[110] In January 1874 a brother, uncle and councillor of Makaula's approached Orpen and again requested protection on his behalf.[111] He made the new appeal concerned that the colonial government might misunderstand a recent request he had made for a piece of land from Mqikela near the Mnceba River so that Nomtsheketshe could settle there. He was worried that the customary payment of cattle to the Pondo paramount for use of the land might be misunderstood as an attempt to become a Mpondo subject. Brownlee denied the request. In April 1874 Orpen used the refusal by the Mpondomise chief Mhlontlo to allow a census to be taken in his territory to once again push the Bhaca's request. He argued that 'the power of Government could be speedily established here on a broader basis than at present, by the reception and organization of the other tribes, who desire it…those anomalies, which Umhlonhlo and his people observe, and cannot understand, would be removed, and they would feel their relative position more correctly'.[112] In August 1875 Griffith was appointed to head a second Commission to investigate matters in the area. The main purpose of the commission was to look into land grants made after May 1872 by the Griqua *Raad*, however, much of their time and most of their report addressed Nehemiah Moshesh's request that the area between the Kinira and upper Mzimvubu be removed from Griqua control.

In the middle of August 1875 Brownlee encouraged Makaula to approach the commission and renew his application to be placed under the Cape government.[113] When the acting resident, Gladwin, delivered the message to Makaula's Great Place, Nomtsheketshe, described by Gladwin as 'sometimes spoken of as the rival chief', was present and thankful for the message.[114] Makaula and a number of his councillors travelled up to Kokstad and held a meeting on 9 October with the commission. Besides requesting that he be 'taken over', Makaula raised a number of other concerns with the commission. Firstly, he pointed out that there were disputes regarding points in his boundary lines as defined by the 1872 commission. These were between

[110] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 58.
[111] BNA G.27-'74, Orpen to Brownlee, 26.1.1874, p. 96.
[112] *Ibid*, Orpen to Brownlee, 14.4.1874, p. 99.
[113] CPP G. 37-'76, Brownlee to Makaula, 14.8.1875, p. 4.
[114] *Ibid*, Gladwin to Brownlee, 31.8.1875, p. 4.

him and the Mpondo from the Mzimvubu to Tina Rivers; between him and the Mpondomise chief Mhlontlo along the Tina River and the upper boundary between him and Umtemquan, son of the chief Ludidi.[115] Secondly, he was also unhappy that followers of the Ludidi's son Mtengwane lived within his boundaries but did not accept his jurisdiction. He wanted to discuss, thirdly, his cousin Nomtsheketshe who with his adherents had recently settled in the Rode Valley. Lastly, people from East Griqualand had settled on a piece of ground near Mzimvubu Poort without his permission. The commissioners replied that there could not be disputes over his boundaries as they had been clearly defined by the commission. They declined to remove Ludidi's people, but assured the chief that the problem would soon be solved as Ludidi was soon to become a colonial subject as well, and thus they would both be under the same government. They refused to discuss Nomtsheketshe 'who was a man of very bad character'.[116]

The commissioners then presented Makaula with the conditions for being taken over - every person could to take their complaints and suits directly to the magistrate; his people would have to pay tax and the 'smelling out' for witchcraft was forbidden. Makaula requested the commission adjourn so that he could discuss the conditions with his councillors. When he reappeared before the commission on 11 October he requested that a magistrate be appointed especially to deal with the issues concerning the Bhaca. He did not want a magistrate 'acting for another tribe or people'.[117] His only other concern, besides ensuring allowances for his councillors, was the first condition and he enquired whether it would be compulsory that all cases be taken to the magistrate before being brought to him.[118] The commission replied that people could choose 'in any little matters of dispute', but in all criminal cases the magistrate 'was the proper' channel.[119] Eventually Makaula and his councillors accepted the conditions presented to them and the Bhaca too became British subjects.

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[115] *Ibid*, Minutes of Meeting held at Kokstad on 9 October 1875 between Makaula and the Government Commissioners, p. 6.
[116] *Ibid*, p. 9.
[117] Minutes of Meeting held at Kokstad on Monday 11 October 1876 between Makaula and the Government Commissioners, p. 6.
[118] *Ibid*, p. 9.
[119] *Ibid*, p. 10.

The Xesibe and Hlubi

While Orpen established Cape authority over the Mpondomise, Griqua and Bhaca quicker than Brownlee initially intended, the political realities facing the smaller chiefdoms, like the Xesibe and Hlubi, slowed down the process. On the border of the Mpondo kingdom lived the Xesibe, numbering about 4200 people under chief Jojo. The Mpondo insisted that the Xesibe had been 'the children of Faku from olden times' and thus subject to their authority.[120] The Xesibe denied this assertion and insisted they were an independent people. The Mpondo attempts to subjugate the Xesibe often led to conflict. In need of an ally against the Mpondo, Jojo made a request to the 1872 Commission to be accepted as a colonial subject. The government refused as they did not want to alienate the paramount Mqikela. They believed that as 'long as Umqikela is friendly and loyal to the Government, it will be unwise to encourage this movement'.[121] Barkly went a step further and insisted that Jojo recognize Mqikela's authority formally. In November 1874 Donald Strachan accompanied the reluctant Xesibe messengers to the Pondo King and witnessed the payment of eight oxen and two horses in tribute. Mqikela in turn assured Strachan he would treat the Xesibe in a just manner. Conflict between the Xesibe and Mpondo, however, continued.

In January 1874 Orpen took up the Xesibe cause in a memorandum to Brownlee. Unlike the 1872 commission which accepted the Xesibe as Mpondo subjects, Orpen insisted that Jojo was 'an independent chief, and not a dependent of Umgikelo', and that they were 'a small but exceedingly brave tribe' that the 'Pondo had never been able to conquer'.[122] He went on to argue that the Pondo had launched an unprovoked attack against the Xesibe and under the 10th and 13th clause of the Maitland treaty the Xesibe deserved protection. In the 10th clause Faku had agreed as far as possible to avoid 'making war on any of the tribes by whom he is surrounded', while in the 13th 'the rights of all petty chiefs and native tribes who have at any period theretofore resided upon any part of the said territory remain unaltered'.[123] In late April Jojo visited Orpen at his residency and again made a formal request to be taken over. Orpen wrote to Cape Town that his case was strong and urgent and advised speedy action. He also pointed out that Jojo's territory

[120] CPP A.12-'73, Minutes of a Meeting held at Emfundisweni Mission Station, 28.3.1872, p. 77
[121] BNA G.12 –'77,Report of the Chief Magistrate, East Griqualand, 6.1.1877, p. 30.
[122] BNA G.27-'74, Orpen to Brownlee 27.1.1874, p. 98.
[123] Brownlee, *The Transkeian Native Territories*, p. 94.

included copper mines that the Mpondo should be prevented from working.[124] This request again came to nothing. In the late 1870s there was a shift in attitude among colonial officials who went from placating the Mpondo Paramounts, to confronting them and encouraging the smaller border chiefdoms to accept British rule. On 8 July 1878 the Xesibe became British subjects.

As frustrated as the Xesibe were the Hlubi followers of William Nota who lived in the Rode Valley between the Bhaca and Xesibe chiefdoms. The Hlubi had recently settled in the area with the permission of the Mpondo Paramounts, but as the Cape colony began to assert its authority in the area Nota saw an opportunity to shake off his Mpondo overlords by requesting colonial protection. His appeal was also declined and he was obliged to make his peace with Mqikela. Nota had to wait until 1886 when Mqikela, under pressure from the Cape administration, ceded the Rode Valley to the colony for £600.[125]

By the end of 1875 all of the chiefdoms between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers, with the exception of the Xesibe and the Hlubi at Rode, as well as the Griqua state accepted colonial rule or had it imposed on them. By the mid-1870s the high commissioner, officials in the Cape administration, settler politicians and missionaries were all pushing for the expansion of Cape control over the chiefdoms of Nomansland. Confederation, labour for the expanding capitalist economy, land, border security and the belief that colonial rule would bring about an improvement in the lives of African people were all motivations for this expansionist dynamic. Orpen, who was appointed to carry out and justify this new policy, painted a picture of a region in turmoil. He argued, firstly, the Mpondo kingdom was imposing its authority over neighbouring chiefdoms, and, secondly, the weak Griqua administration was unable to control its African subjects. Both claims were exaggerated and distorted. He also justified the Cape presence by insisting that the Mpondomise and Bhaca requested colonial rather than having it imposed on them. The process was more complicated. He negotiated with Mpondomise and Bhaca leaders and assured them that the Cape administration would protect their interests against their neighbours, in particular the Mpondo, and assist them in their internal conflicts. Once the

[124] BNA G.27-'74, Orpen to Brownlee, 30.4.1874, p. 99.
[125] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 2, p. 250.

indigenous leaders had accepted the idea of colonial rule they were then told to make formal requests to be 'taken over'. The impression that was created, and at times accepted in colonial historiography, was that the Cape government had moved into this unstable area at the request of chiefs. Over the next four years the chiefdoms would become aware of 'the full meaning of what white rule entailed'.[126] It soon became apparent that the Cape government was not, despite the reassurances and promises made during negotiations with Mpondomise and Bhaca leaders, an ally. They planned to subjugate the chiefdoms and transform the way of life of their new subjects.

[126] Saunders, 'The Transkeian Rebellion of 1880-81', p. 33.

Chapter Three

'Government deals with its subjects in its own way': The Realities of Colonial Rule

Once the initial discussions and agreements had been concluded between Cape officials and the chiefs and their councillors, colonial rule had to be implemented in the new territory. The establishment of the colonial state between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers was a complex and at times contradictory process. Although the main thrust of Cape colonial policy in the nineteenth century was the gradual undermining of indigenous political structures, in reality officials could not ignore the already established authorities, beliefs and culture of the chiefdoms in the area. In the 1870s officials established colonial rule by cajoling and threatening people, transforming and manipulating existing beliefs and at times compromising with chiefs and commoners alike. As magistrates enforced colonial rule, a number of overlapping areas of conflict emerged. The laying down of boundaries between chiefdoms by colonial officials, the undermining of the authority of chiefs, attempts to stop the punishment of suspected witches, the payment of hut tax and the attempts by migrant groups to use magistrates to their advantage all lead to increasing resentment towards colonial rule, which was exacerbated by drought and the ongoing pre-colonial conflicts. From the mid-1870s to 1880 leaders of the chiefdoms and their followers came to realize that they were facing a system that was far more invasive than they had been led to believe it would be in earlier negotiations, and it became apparent that the colonial government was not an ally. In later years of the 1870s chiefs, particularly Mhlontlo and Mditshwa of the Mpondomise, and their councillors increasingly refused to co-operate with white officials who were challenging their authority and worked to reaffirm their roles as leaders of the chiefdoms.

'I am the only hungry man present': New and Old Boundaries

The basic administrative unit of the colonial state was the magisterial district. Until the late 1870s the colonial administrative structure between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers comprised of seven magistracies acting in relative autonomy to each other. The old Griqua state, referred to as Griqualand East or more commonly East Griqualand, was divided into the Kokstad, Mzimkhulu and Matatiele magisterial districts which were under the authority of a

chief magistrate in Kokstad. In March 1876 Makaula's Bhaca chiefdom became part of the Mount Frere magistracy and was included in East Griqualand. The Gatberg, Qumbu and Tsolo magistracies, formerly part of what Joseph Orpen labelled the St John's Territory, were not subject to the authority of the chief magistrate of East Griqualand and the magistrates in these districts corresponded directly with the secretary for native affairs in Cape Town. In 1878 the seven districts were united into one administrative unit under the authority of the chief magistrate in Kokstad and the term East Griqualand was applied to the whole territory.

The demarcation and surveying of the boundaries of these districts highlighted the vastly different attitudes and approaches to land usage by colonial officials and Africans, and underpinned the belief by Europeans that Africans belonged to 'tribes' that inhabited specific geographical areas. Until the early 1800s the Nguni chiefdoms avoided Nomansland because of the short growing seasons, lack of year-round grazing and the long and harsh winters. Events elsewhere gradually pushed the chiefdoms into the area. These chiefdoms initially moved over fairly long distances in relatively short periods of time but by the mid-1800s, and even earlier in some cases, the era of mass migrations was over. At times households still moved in search of grazing, younger sons establishment new homesteads and older homesteads were abandoned on the death of a patriarch, but generally these chiefdoms, or at least the core, had come to inhabit fixed geographical areas.

The basic economic and social unit of the chiefdom was the homestead which consisted of a male head, his wives, unmarried children and dependents. The homestead would be linked to other homesteads through ties of kinship and neighbourhood.[1] Individuals belonged to a lineage which was a group of people who traced their descent to a specific male ancestor.[2] They were also members of a clan, a group of lineages who believed that through a common clan name and clan praises they shared a common ancestor and were thus related.[3] Many neighbouring homesteads belonged to the same clan, but just as often neighbours were not related but were still tied to each other by numerous social and economic links. They attended ceremonies and social functions at neighbouring homesteads, pastured and herded cattle together and shared

[1] Peires, *The House of Phalo*, p. 9.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] *Ibid*.

grain and meat.[4] Most homesteads in the neighbourhood fell under the authority of the same chief. The chiefdom consisted, thus, of a collection of homesteads linked by ties of kinship, real and imagined, economic and social bonds and political obligations to a chief. The homestead economy, a combination of agriculture and pastoralism, influenced the system of land occupation. People built homesteads facing the sun on the sides of hills, along the top of escarpments and in river valleys.[5] Members of the homesteads cultivated land in fertile river valleys, along river banks or in country which had been cleared of bush, and by the 1880s planted maize, sorghum, beans and various kinds of pumpkins.[6] Besides its fields, each household had a garden near the cattle enclosure which was planted first to provide mealies for the family.[7]

The peripheral areas of the chiefdom tended to be sparsely inhabited and the land used for grazing and in earlier times hunting. There were at times attempts to retain unoccupied areas between the chiefdoms so that 'peace could generally be maintained through judicious distance'.[8] There is evidence that chiefs acknowledged that their authority ended at a point and that of a neighbouring chief's began. When A.T. Cunynghame travelled through Nomansland he met Mhlontlo on the banks of the Tsitsa, but the chief would not go beyond the Tina as this was the territory of the Bhaca.[9] Mhlontlo was honouring an agreement he had reached with Makaula that the Tina River would serve as the boundary between their chiefdoms.[10]

These boundaries, however, were, as Frederick Braun points out, 'impermanent and contingent on short-terms needs and arability'.[11] In the pre-colonial tradition boundaries were generally in a permanent state of flux, and there were multiple overlapping domains on the peripheries of

[4] *Ibid*, p. 10.
[5] Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, p. 7; Peires, *The House of Phalo*, p. 7.
[6] Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, p. 18.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 19.
[8] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 28; L.F. Braun, 'The Cadastre and the Colony: Surveying, Territory, and Legibility in the Creation of South Africa, c. 1860-1913' (PhD Thesis, University of New Jersey, 2008), p. 36.
[9] Cunynghame, *My Command in South Africa*, p. 142.
[10] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhaca', pp. 120-121.
[11] Braun, 'The Cadastre and the Colony', p. 36.

chiefdoms, as well as unadministrated areas.[12] This approach differed greatly from that of colonial officials who wanted to establish fixed boundaries. The notion of the permanent boundary stemmed in part from different cultural views of how land was used. Colonial officials came from a tradition of private landownership with legally defined borders. However, and perhaps more importantly, the idea of fixed boundaries between chiefdoms and later magisterial districts, was influenced by how colonials viewed and believed the African world functioned. Many Europeans believed that all Africans belonged to tribes. People had a sense of belonging to a group with a common history and cultural traits which translated to forms of political loyalty. This differed from the colonial idea of the tribe as a fixed entity reaching back to an unrecorded past and that membership of the tribe determined loyalties and actions. Crais points out that colonial officials 'attempted to organize space on the basis of homogenous tribal designations demarcated by administrative boundaries'.[13] The reality was that before colonialism was established people lived in groups characterized by varying degrees of social and political fluidity.[14] People could shift their political allegiances from a leader they felt was not fulfilling his obligations to a chief who offered greater protection and in the process adapt new cultural practices and identities.

It was the task of the 1872 commission to establish the colonial boundaries between the various chiefdoms, or tribes as they viewed them, which then served as the boundaries of magisterial districts. Using landmarks such as rivers, mountains and wagon tracks the commissioners established fixed boundaries. The Tsitsa River served as the boundary between the Mpondomise followers of Mhlontlo and Mditshwa, and the Tina River became the border between Mhlontlo's Mpondomise and Makaula's Bhaca, who were in turn separated from the Griqua state by the Ngele Mountain range. These unchanging and in many cases alien boundaries soon became a source of conflict between colonial officials and chiefs and commoners alike. The new borders had multiple consequences: people were cut off from access to natural resources such as forests and grazing; chiefs found their followers now under the authority of rival and even subordinate chiefs and chiefs gained subjects whose loyalty lay elsewhere. Zibi complained that the

[12] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 76.
[13] *Ibid*, p. 84.
[14] J.M. De Prada *et al*, *On the Trail of Qing and Orpen* (Johannesburg, 2016), p. 3.

government 'gave me land, so I lived, but Government took it away again. I feel contracted in my stomach. I am the only hungry man present.'[15]

Like Zibi, the Mpondomise chiefs Mditshwa and Mhlontlo and the Bhaca chief Makaula were unhappy about the colonial-constructed boundaries. Mditshwa complained in March 1874 to Brownlee that 'his country under the Drakensberg had been taken away from him'.[16] He was informed that he had never occupied it and that he was now claiming 'sour and comparatively useless country'.[17] In October 1878 at a meeting with the newly-appointed secretary for native affairs, Mditshwa again called for the boundaries between him and Mhlontlo and him and the Gatberg area to be settled.[18] At a meeting on 23 December 1879, the principal topic discussed was the boundary between his district and Gatberg 'which has been a standing grievance with Umditshwa for years past', and although recently defined by a special commission 'but without affording Umditshwa satisfaction'.[19] In August of 1880 he visited the magistrate several times and raised 'important issues'.[20] There are fairly detailed minutes of his meeting of the 23 August at which he clearly expressed his unhappiness about the boundary with Gatberg. Mditshwa complained that Thomson fined a homestead that fell under his authority after spoor of stolen cattle were traced to it.[21]

Attempting to set down boundaries between chiefdoms often pulled colonial officials into long-standing, pre-colonial disagreements and dynastic rivalries. In 1874 Orpen attempted to draw a boundary between the followers of Mhlontlo and Mditshwa. As a precursor a census was held to ascertain the distribution of both men's adherents. Mhlontlo refused to co-operate but Orpen decided to push ahead with the drawing of the line so that people knew where they were to be settled before the next harvest.[22] The Tsitsa River was taken as the general boundary, except for the area around the lower reaches which were included in the Shawbury Mission Station. Both

[15] BNA G.43-'79, Minutes of Meeting between Secretary for Native Affairs and Lebenya, Lehana and Zibi, 11.10.1878, p. 43.
[16] BNA G.27-'74, Umhlonhlo and his people appear before Secretary for Native Affairs, 7.3.1874, p. 146.
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] BNA G. 43-'79, Minutes of Meeting held with Umditshwa's People at Tsolo, 14.10.1878, p. 47.
[19] BNA G.13-'80, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, 6.1.1880, p. 96.
[20] CMK 1/96, Resident Magistrate Tsolo to Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 2.9.1880.
[21] *Ibid*, Minutes of Meeting between Mditshwa and Resident Magistrate of Tsolo, 25.8.1880.
[22] BNA G.27-'74, Orpen to Brownlee, 14.4.1874, p. 99.

chiefs pointed out that their adherents were 'scattered' as far as Tambookieland and Mditshwa claimed that half of his followers were living with Kreli.[23] Both men also claimed some of the same followers. Mhlontlo and his councillors insisted that their claims were based on the fact that Mhlontlo was from the great house and that Mditshwa was both subordinate and a rebel to his authority. Mditshwa in turn denied this and insisted he had 'long been independent' and never Mhlontlo's subordinate.[24] In October 1874 Reverend Adonis addressed the magistrate on Mhlontlo's behalf as the chief was in mourning for a loss of a child. Adonis expressed the chief's unhappiness that the government had given land to the Mpondo which he believed belonged to the Mpondomise. Mhlontlo was unhappy about the boundary which had been drawn with Mditshwa and demanded that 'Umditshwa to be put under him'.[25] He further alienated Orpen when he refused to recall some of his followers who had settled on the far bank of the Tsitsa River.

Chiefs not only cared about where the colonial boundaries were drawn, but how they were negotiated. The Mpondomise, for example, resisted any attempts by the Mpondo to subjugate them, but knew that unless the Mpondo paramounts participated in the process of defining the border between the two polities the outcome would not hold. When Brownlee visited the Transkei Territories in 1874 and raised the issue of the boundary between the Mpondomise and Mpondo, Mhlontlo commented 'Europeans correspond by letter, but in speaking on the land question we should have wished Umqikela present'.[26] Brownlee responded that the 'Government deals with its subjects in its own way. It has fixed certain boundaries for them, one separating them from the Pondos, others separating them from each other, such as those between Lehana, Lebenya and Zibi'.[27] In 1878 Mhlontlo again raised the issue of boundaries between the chiefdoms and pointed out that he, Ndamase, Makaula and Mditshwa all claimed the same ground and they should be called together to talk over the matter and see who had the best

[23] *Ibid*, p. 100.
[24] *Ibid*.
[25] BNA G. 43-'79, Minutes of a Meeting with the Pondomise under Umhlonhlo and the Secretary of Native Affairs, 18.10.1879, p. 52.
[26] BNA G.27-'74, Meeting between Secretary for Native Affairs and Umhlonhlo and his People,6.3.1874, p. 144.
[27] *Ibid*.

claim.[28] The secretary for native affairs rejected the suggestion as he believed each chief would expect the boundary to be settled in his favour and would be dissatisfied if this did not take place.

Trying to enforce the boundaries drawn up by the 1872 commission preoccupied magistrates and turned out to be a difficult and complex process. The general approach was to attempt to get the members of a 'tribe' to live within a magistracy and to limit too much movement from one magistracy to the next through the issuing of passes. Hamilton Hope, magistrate with Mhlontlo, spent the latter part of 1878 and most of the following year trying to get the Mpondo and Mpondomise to move 'within the boundaries of their respective territories' as defined by the 1872 Griffith Commission.[29] Although there were attempts by the people involved to exchange the ground they respectively occupied, Hope refused to consider this option as it would 'establish a very troublesome and dangerous precedent'.[30] The magistrate, through Henry Elliot and his clerk Davis, had to negotiate with the Mpondo king Nqwiliso's ministers to arrange the removal of the inhabitants of 22 villages from Mpondomise territory to Pondoland. While Hope, as the colonial representative, had to ensure that the Mpondomise living in Pondoland moved, he suspected that Mhlontlo might have attempted his own negotiations with the Mpondo with the objective of setting a precedent and would have 'reopened all his old land issues'.[31]

In 1875 colonial authorities resorted to a show of force to enforce the boundary between Makaula and Mhlontlo. Makaula was unhappy that an increasing number of people, loyal to Mhlontlo, were moving into his territory. Blyth marched with 120 members of the FAMP in May 1875 to the Tina River and by threatening military action forced the Mpondomise to acknowledge Makaula's authority by paying him tribute.[32] Makaula pleaded in 1878 for the

[28] G.43-'79, Minutes of a Meeting with the Pondomise under Umhlonhlo and the Secretary of Native Affairs 18.10.1879, p. 52.
[29] CA, CMK 1/94, Resident Magistrate Qumbu to RM, Kokstad, 4.9.1879.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] BNA G.12-'77, Report on the Social and Political Condition of the District of East Griqualand for the Year 1876, 6.1.1877, p. 30.

restoration of land given by the commission of 1872 to Mhlontlo which he felt had previously belonged to the Bhaca.[33]

Chiefs and Commoners

The Mpondomise and Bhaca accepted colonial rule under three seemingly simple conditions: every individual had the right to take their case to a magistrate; a hut tax had to be paid and no one was to be put to death or punished for witchcraft.[34] In reality these conditions underpinned the Cape colonial government's civilizing policy that harked back to the days of Governor George Grey and aimed at dramatically transforming African society. The first condition meant to diminish the role of the chief. For centuries the role of hereditary leaders within African polities has been misunderstood. Colonial writers tended to exaggerate the powers held by chiefs, often describing them as autocrats who held power of life and death over their followers'.[35] Hammond-Tooke, however, was told by an informant that 'even strong chiefs like Mhlontlo never made laws that went against the wishes of the people'.[36] Colonial observers tended to focus on the military and political role of leaders when in reality those roles were much broader and more complex, and embraced the judicial and spiritual welfare of the chiefdom. Julia Wells has pointed out that male historians writing about the history of African chiefdoms often focused on male political leaders who contested power and assumed that such contestations were motivated by self-centered ambitions of individuals who wanted to achieve personal power, rank and status.[37] This approach ignores the subtle nuances of African collective leadership.[38] To fully understand the role of chiefs, and the discontent that followed as the colonial government attempted to undermine their positions, it is necessary to look in some detail at the pre-colonial political structures of the chiefdoms in Nomansland.

In the 1960s the renowned anthropologist W.D. Hammond-Tooke undertook a detailed and comprehensive study of indigenous political structures of the Mpondomise chiefdom going back

[33] BNA G.43-'79, Minutes of a Meeting with the Pondomise under Umhlonhlo and the Secretary of Native Affairs, 18.10.1879, p. 54.
[34] The conditions are found in Brownlee, *The Transkeian Native Territories*, pp. 109-110.
[35] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1, p. 102.
[36] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 67.
[37] Wells, *The Return of Makhanda*, p. 104.
[38] *Ibid*.

to the 1870s.[39] His findings, bearing in mind regional differences, can be applied to the other chiefdoms between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers. The Mpondomise state was under a chief referred to as *inkosi enkulu*. The ruling chief normally married a woman later in life from another ruling family whose *lobola* was paid by his followers. She was designated the great wife and her eldest son was theoretically his father's heir, although there were examples of younger sons or sons from other wives becoming chief. Often the heir was a child when his father died and his mother, an elder brother or uncle served as regent. The dispersed settlements patterns made the decentralization of control essential and the area under the chief's authority was divided into districts under a sub-chief or *inkosi*. The sub-chiefs were usually male relatives of the chief. Each sub-chief had his own court from which an appeal lay to the court of the chief. Fines imposed by sub-chiefs were normally kept, except for serious cases such as homicide and rape, in which cases part of the fine was sent to the capital. The districts were quite large and were divided to make administration easier into smaller units called *izithile*, which could roughly be translated as a ward. The ward was under a headman or *isiduna* who the chief appointed and was a respected man in the community known to be loyal, intelligent and a renowned warrior. They were responsible for allocating residential and arable land, and would have to mobilize men from their wards in times of conflict to gather at the chief's Great Place. The *isiduna* were assisted by the *izithebe*, associations of family heads. The *izithebe* stood structurally between the political system and descent based lineages. Their functions were to allocate beer and meat at feasts. In most of the other chiefdoms this was done according to neighbourhoods.

Chiefs were guided by a council which consisted of close male relatives, as well as commoners who had by their courage in war or skill in debate acquired enough popular influence to be allowed to serve on the council.[40] The process of becoming a councillor (*iphakathi*) was not formalized. There was no official appointment, rather it depended on the performance of duties and the continuous involvement in the chiefdom's affairs. The council was the decision making body of the chiefdom. The council served both a legislative and judicial function, overseeing the day to day administration of the chiefdom and mediating disputes amongst its members. If

[39] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, pp. 50-53.
[40] *Ibid*, p. 65.

matters of particular importance were to be discussed that required consent beyond the council a meeting or *imbizo* would be held attended by respected men of the chiefdom.

Chiefs were aware that if their actions proved unpopular people could look to other close male relatives, including uncles, brothers and sons, to replace them.[41] If the chiefs did not provide the expected security or made unacceptable decisions his subjects could simply move beyond his control. None of the chiefdoms had a standing army as there was in the more centralized Zulu state and so the chief's followers could not be forced stay under his authority against their will, and it was not uncommon for chiefs to accept individuals and groups of people who had left another chiefdom. Jeff Peires points out that amongst the Xhosa 'desertion or the threat of desertion, was the most common and probably most effective means of resistance open to commoners', and as a result Xhosa chiefs were constantly preoccupied with the problem of maintaining the loyalty of their followers.[42] There is some evidence that one of the reasons Mhlontlo requested colonial rule was that many of his followers, worn out by continual conflict with the Mpondo, began migrating away from his domain and the chief found his adherents decreasing in number.[43]

Despite the potential of conflict amongst male members of the ruling family or the possibility of subjects deserting, there was generally a strong cohesion among chiefdoms. Hammond-Tooke argued that political integration was achieved on three levels: kinship, religious and ideological.[44] Marriages were generally conducted between unrelated groups but within the chiefdom thus forging affinal bonds between clans. Beyond the secular obligations to his followers, chiefs also played a spiritual role within the society.[45] This happened in numerous ways: they performed religious ceremonies, served as a link between the living and spirits of the dead, protected their people against witchcraft and were the guardians of the sacred objects of the chiefdom. The chief conducted ceremonies at important times, normally before the harvest or at

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[41] W.D. Hammond-Tooke, *Bhaca Society: A People of the Transkeian Uplands, South Africa* (Cape Town, 1962), p. 205.
[42] Peires, *The House of Phalo,* p. 42.
[43] Phipson, 'A Trip through Kafirland', p. 195.
[44] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 37.
[45] Hammond-Tooke, *Bhaca Society*, p. 174.

times of war, to protect and strengthen the community.[46] These included rainmaking, doctoring of seed before planting, ceremonies before the harvest and the strengthening of men before they went to war. Chiefs were often considered rainmakers, a skill inherited from powerful ancestors.[47] The Bhaca chiefs, for example, would perform a ceremony and 'even if the sky was clear it would rain before you reached home'.[48] Among the Bhaca the chief played a central role in the *Ingcubhe* or First Fruit Festival, a ritual conducted before the harvest began. During the festival medicines, handed down from father to son, would be used to strengthen the army.[49] The chief mediated between the living and the dead. Although each family had its own personal ancestors guiding it, at the level of the chiefdom the unit was influenced by the power of past chiefs. The well-being of the chiefdom depended on the good will of its founding ancestors.[50] Chiefs were an important part of controlling witchcraft within the society. They consulted the witch-finder and gave consent for torture. The 'smelling out' of witches and the 'eating up' of those responsible at times served a political purpose. Contenders for the chieftaincy could be eliminated by allegations of witchcraft and similar allegations could be used in conflicts between high ranking councillors.[51] The chief was the guardian of sacred objects associated with the protection of the chiefdom, such as the axe used to cut meat for the army, spears used for sacrifices to the ancestors and clay pots of medicine.

It was often believed that chiefs had access to potent medicines and had supernatural powers. Madzikane was renowned for his use of medicines to overpower his enemies.[52] These powers were inherited by his descendants.[53] The Mpondomise chief Mhlontlo was also acknowledged as a great specialist in war medicine, a skill inherited from his ancestor Malangana.[54] There are accounts of how both Madzikane and Mhlontlo were placed in pits in which fires were kindled

[46] *Ibid.*
[47] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 48.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] Hammond-Tooke, *Bhaca Society*, p. 174; Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas', pp. 51-52.
[50] Hammond-Tooke, *Bhaca Society*, p. 174.
[51] Peires, *The House of Phalo*, p. 34.
[52] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas, pp. 10-11.; W.C. Scully, *By Veldt and Kopje* (London, 1907), p. 297.
[53] Hammond-Tooke, *Bhaca Society*, p. 174.
[54] Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 154; Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 48.

and emerged unscathed.[55] Clifton Crais emphasizes that the power of chiefs was bound to 'their access to, and control over, magic', which is central to competitive politics.[56] While there is no doubt that chiefs played a vital spiritual role within the chiefdom, one needs to guard against overstating the argument at the expense of the numerous other secular and material obligations a chief had to his supporters. The relationship between the chief and his followers was essentially contractual.[57] The chief was obliged to offer protection to his subjects against external enemies and offences committed by other members of the chiefdom. He made sure each male household head had sufficient land for his needs. He was expected to use his wealth for the welfare of his people. Poor men could ask for cattle to milk for his family and in times of famine the chiefs' grain pits fed the destitute.[58] His followers in turn supported the chief against his enemies, at times performed communal labour and paid various taxes. There are examples of chiefs who, despite their reputations for being specialists in war medicine and renowned military and political leaders, found their followers deserting them as they disapproved of their decisions and actions. Ncaphayi, regent of the Bhaca, was forced to pay tribute to the Mpondo after a large section of the chiefdom followed his brother Dliwakho into the domain of Faku.[59]

Cohesion within a chiefdom was also achieved at an ideological level, argues Hammond-Tooke, through the allegiance to an individual chief and the practicing of specific customs.[60] John Wright has shown that a group identity began developing in the 1830s amongst the supporters of Madzikane. In the 1820s the various disparate groups under Madzikane's leadership had probably referred to themselves as *abakwaMadzikane*, the people of Madzikane.[61] In the 1830s the people, now under Madzikane's son Ncaphayi, began to be called by others and then to call themselves, *amabhaca*. The term, according to A.T. Bryant, was applied to Madzikane's supporters by the Zulu under Dingane after Madzikane's people evaded a Zulu raiding party by hiding in the broken and forested country near the Mzimvubu.[62] The name derived from the verb

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[55] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas', p 10; Jordan, *The Wrath of the Ancestors*, pp. 21-22.
[56] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, pp. 49&50.
[57] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 37.
[58] *Ibid*, p. 59.
[59] Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, p. 42.
[60] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 38.
[61] J. Wright, 'Making identities in the Thukela-Mzimvubu region, c. 1770-c.1940' (unpublished paper), p. 12.
[62] *Ibid*.

ukubhaca, to hide away. Over time the amaBhaca sense of identity was reinforced by the adoption of certain cultural practices. They spoke a specific dialect, practiced facial scarification, had certain hairstyles and developed 'a particular version of the past, which centered on the migrations and heroic deeds of their founder figure, Madzikane'.[63] William Beinart in his study of conflict in Qumbu and 1912 and 1913 concluded that the terms Mpondomise and Mfengu as used by magistrates 'essentially reflected the perceptions of social division held by rural people themselves'.[64] He pointed out that these were not the only forms of identification and that at times anthropologists did not take into consideration the flexibility of ethnic identities and the play between class and culture, however, these categories deserve consideration from historians as this was how people spoke about themselves.[65] This sense of belonging to a group with a unique history and distinct culture contributed to the cohesion of the chiefdom.

'There cannot be two chiefs': Chiefs and Magistrates

The policy of the Cape administration was to gradually undermine the role and influence of the chiefs who were seen as resisting change and exercising arbitrary power.[66] When Mhlontlo objected to his authority being undermined by the magistrate, Brownlee wrote a letter to Orpen in which he made it clear how the administration in Cape Town viewed the role of chiefs:

> I distinctly informed Umhlonhlo and his people what the result was of their becoming British subjects, namely the surrender of their country and authority, and that the authority which the chiefs hereafter should exercise was an authority delegated to them by the Government to act as its agents, and to execute the orders and wishes of Government as indicated to them by you…[67]

With an almost nonexistent administrative structure or even standard policy to deal with the chiefdoms, magistrates initially depended on the goodwill of the chiefs, who believed themselves

[63] *Ibid.*
[64] Beinart & Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu: Rural Consciousness, Ethnicity and Violence in the Colonial Transkei', in *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa* (London, 1987), p. 107.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] BNA G. 17-'78, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, Tsolo, 24.1.1878, p. 85; BNA G.21-'75, Report of the British Resident in St John's Territory, March 1875, p. 95.
[67] BNA G.27-'74, Brownlee to Orpen, 12.5.1874, p. 102.

to be allies with the colonial government rather than subjects.[68] It became apparent, however, to chiefs fairly quickly that magistrates considered them and their followers subjects rather than allies, and that colonial officials were encouraging people to go to the courthouse with their legal issues and conflicts rather than the Great Place. This was a matter of concern to chiefs who had up to that point dealt with most judicial issues regarding their followers, and they soon voiced their unhappiness. When Mhlontlo queried the role of chiefs under the colonial government, Brownlee informed him in April 1874 that 'there cannot be two chiefs and opposite authorities and laws in the same land', and while they did not want to make chiefs 'common men', the 'only authority they now can hold is that delegated to them by Government, to be used under the direction of Government in the maintaining of order'.[69] Lehana in his address to William Ayliff, successor to Brownlee as secretary for native affairs, pointed out that the people were beginning to 'despise' chiefs and that 'Chiefs are no more' because the magistrate was now laying down the law.[70] Makaula, who proved to be a loyal ally in later years, complained to Charles Brownlee, who visited Mount Frere in October 1878, that the government was usurping his powers as even the smallest cases were tried in Kokstad, and the chief wanted to know where he had gone wrong with the government.[71]

The Mpondomise chief Mditshwa was acutely aware of attempts to undermine his authority and was vocal in his objection. When Welsh recommended that headmen be appointed to administer locations 'as a means of gradually undermining the influence of the chief, he reported that Mditshwa 'is so alive to this that he had hitherto successfully opposed any Pondomise headman being appointed'.[72] The chief came into conflict with the magistrate Alex Welsh over his and his sons' authority to hear judicial cases and collect fines, and a standoff developed between chief and magistrate which reached a height in August 1880. In that month Mditshwa's son Bongani tried a case of sheep stealing and fined the Mfengu defendant who then successfully appealed to

[68] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 55.
[69] BNA G.27-'74, Minutes of Meeting between the Secretary for Native Affairs and the Chief Umhlonhlo and his people, 6.3.1874, p. 143.
[70] BNA G.43-'79, Minutes of Meeting between Secretary of Native Affairs and Lebenya, Lehana and Zibi, 11.10.1878, pp. 42-43.
[71] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhaca', p. 147.
[72] BNA G. 17-'78, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, Tsolo, 24.1.1878, p. 85.

the magistrate to have the verdict over turned.[73] Despite the magistrate's decision, Bongani and some of his men went to the defendant's house and forcibly seized 24 sheep. His actions were reported to the magistrate who insisted Mditshwa ensure the sheep be returned. In late August 1880 a man named Edward sued Mditshwa's son Goniwe for having confiscated a bag of grain from him. Goniwe's defense was that while Edward was passing his homestead he had set fire to the grass in the vicinity and so he confiscated the grain as a fine.[74] The magistrate found for Edward and ordered Goniwe to return the grain and fined him twenty shillings with costs. While summing up, the magistrate impressed on Goniwe that he had no authority to try or fine anyone. In response Goniwe walked out of the court. Mditshwa was present and Welsh instructed him to order Goniwe to return and take his place back in court while judgment was delivered. Mditshwa convinced his son to return and Welsh reprimanded him. The magistrate felt that the reprimand and the fine already inflicted 'would sufficiently establish the principle that neither Goniwe or any other son of Umditshwa had judicial authority'.[75]

The anger expressed by chiefs over the undermining of their judicial authority was not simply a case of men fighting to keep their personal authority. Attempts to remove judicial functions away from chiefs and sub-chiefs whittled away their sources of revenue. Fines in the form of livestock or produce were used by chiefs or sub-chiefs to fulfill their material obligations to their adherents. With less livestock at their disposal chiefs found it more difficult to disperse cattle to poorer followers in times of need, and thus a vital link between leaders and their people was eroded.

The missionary Bransby Key, a perceptive and insightful commentator who established the St Augustine's Mission amongst the Mpondomise, was one of the first writers to point out that the Mpondomise and colonial officials had different concepts of the role of government. The magistrate looked on every individual as a British subject but Mditshwa believed that as a chief he should deal with his people and the magistrate with him. Mditshwa, according to Key, used to say, 'I have come in, I know, but I have come in with my people on my back'. Like a mother carrying a child on his back his adherents were responsible to him, and he was responsible for

[73] CA, CMK 1/96, Resident Magistrate of Tsolo to Chief Magistrate Griqualand East, 2.9.1880.
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] *Ibid.*

them.[76] Key gives an example of Mditshwa investigating a case of a young man who shot himself after being accused of witchcraft. While Mditshwa was looking into the incident the police arrested, on the orders of the magistrate, the *igqira* who had made the allegation. An angry Mditshwa expostulated, 'I was inquiring into the matter, and was coming to report it to you, when you acted in this irregular way. I must deal with my people, and you must deal with me'.[77] While the magistrate tried to convince him that these were outdated ideas, or cobweb ideas as Key describes it, the chief stuck to them as they were 'real innate ideas and self-evident truths'.[78]

Chiefs attempted to retain or reassert their authority in the face of colonial rule. This took on various forms, such as not accepting payment from the state, refusing to co-operate with the magistrate, continuing to try legal cases, attempting to negotiate boundaries with other chiefs, holding ceremonies that reinforced the role of the chief and emphasizing their role as the protector of the chiefdom against witchcraft.[79] Mditshwa shrewdly refused to accept his annual subsidy as a way of staving off the idea that he was in the employ of the colonial government. It was only in June 1878, after much discussion, that he accepted it.[80] In April 1874 Orpen reported that Mhlontlo had prevented the taking of the census. Orpen's assistant Liefeldt went with messengers to Mhlontlo's homestead, where they were insulted and spat upon. Mhlontlo rode away and Liefeldt was refused accommodation and food and called an 'umlungo' [Mlungu] and his servants 'amaggevera' [amagqwirha].[81] Although Mhlontlo indicated via letter on 22 April that he wished to apologize, Orpen believed Mhlontlo's defiance would impact on the smaller surrounding chiefdoms who he felt were watching his actions and the government's response. Orpen, who described Mhlontlo as 'of a restless and discontented nature', refused to see him unless the apology to Liefeldt was public, as the insult had been, and that he be accompanied by 12 head of cattle.[82] Brownlee insisted his punishment be known to the other

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[76] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 69
[77] *Ibid*.
[78] *Ibid*.
[79] BNA G.21-'75, Report of the British Resident in St John's Territory, March 1875, p. 95.
[80] BNA G.33-'79, Report of Resident Magistrate with Umditshwa, 10.1.1879, p. 46.
[81] BNA G.27-'74, Orpen to Umhlonhlo, 22.4.1874, p. 101.
[82] *Ibid*.

chiefs.[83] Brownlee, more cautious than Orpen, did not insist that the census continue immediately, except for the area around Shawbury, the Lotana Valley and a strip west of the Tsitsa which did not fall under Mhlontlo's authority. As punishment for the chief's lack of co-operation, Brownlee did not allow Mhlontlo's supporters living in Pondoland, Tambookieland or in Makaula's territory to join him until the government was satisfied that he was penitent.[84] By May Brownlee felt that that regardless of Mhlontlo's actions, 'there will be little difficulty in bringing him to submission'.[85]

Chiefs continued to conduct ceremonies that had their origins in pre-colonial times and which reinforced their role in the chiefdom. The Mpondomise chiefs, for example, would call and oversee a ceremony called the *umguyo* at the beginning of spring, just before the harvest or at times of military conflict. Although the word is translated as a war dance, it was a religious ceremony which took place at the chief's Great Place and at which men were strengthened by medicines administrated by doctors.[86] In January 1879 Mhlontlo held an *umguyo* without informing the magistrate Hamilton Hope. This concerned the magistrate who interviewed the chief and expressed his disapproval. Mhlontlo responded that it was a time-honoured institution and that when he accepted British rule Orpen did not object to the practice continuing.[87] He did, however, apologize for holding the ceremony without the magistrate's permission. While he accepted that the explanation was plausible, Hope intended to be watchful of the chief as he felt the calling of the *umguyo* had coincided with the Gcaleka uprising and that there was a possibility of hostilities spreading to this locality.[88] In September Mhlontlo held another *umguyo* which Hope attended. The older men and Mhlontlo took the opportunity to address the assembled crowd and remind them that they now lived in peace since accepting British rule. Mhlontlo encouraged those present to keep up their self-respect and to stop stealing, fighting and committing adultery.[89] Hope then addressed the crowd. In his report to Kokstad he wrote that 'occasionally a little relaxation of this kind can do no harm', although he did make it clear to

[83] *Ibid*, Brownlee to Orpen, 12.5.1874, p. 103.
[84] *Ibid*.
[85] *Ibid*, p. 102.
[86] 'A Brief History of the Pondomise Tribe as Related by Mabasa' in Brownlee, *Historical Records*, p. 121.
[87] CA, CMK 1/94, Resident Magistrate Qumbu to Chief Magistrate Kokstad, 17.1.1879.
[88] *Ibid*.
[89] *Ibid*, Resident Magistrate Qumbu to Chief Magistrate Kokstad, 19.9.1879.

Mhlontlo 'that the permission given to him on this occasion is not to be taken as precedent and that on no account is he to hold meetings without any express consent'.[90]

The most effective way for chiefs to retain their authority was to show their subjects that they were responsible for the spiritual well-being of the chiefdom through the identification and removal of those practicing witchcraft. In 1874 Orpen dealt with a number of cases in which Mhlontlo and Mditshwa 'smelt out' witches. In July Orpen learnt that while he was away on the Langalibalele expedition in December of 1873 and January 1874 Mhlontlo had strangled a woman for practicing witchcraft. Concerned that his authority had been brought into contempt and determined to relieve Mhlontlo's people 'of the terror they still had of their chief', Orpen publically tried him at his homestead.[91] The resident forced his confession as 'his people dare hardly mention his name in evidence'.[92] Orpen informed Mhlontlo he had forfeited his chieftainship.[93] Orpen fined him 20 head of cattle and handed the final decision regarding his position as chief over to the administration in Cape Town. Orpen also insisted the woman's cattle, which had been seized and distributed, be returned to her family, and fined Mhlontlo's accomplices. Mhlontlo objected to the fine imposed on the men who accompanied him as they were his subjects and it was his responsibility to deal with them. The men delayed in paying and Orpen had them arrested and doubled the fine. In August the government reinstated Mhlontlo, 'their object the security of life and maintenance of law being attained'.[94]

While still dealing with Mhlontlo's case, Orpen heard that Mditshwa had also taken the lives of two people for practicing witchcraft. A riem from Mditshwa's plough oxen was lost and an *umhlahlo* held. An *igqira* accused two men of stealing it with the aid of a baboon, a familiar spirit, and Mditshwa ordered them to be killed. Before Orpen could conclude his investigation, another case of witchcraft occurred involving the chief. A woman charged a man with witchcraft who fled to Mditshwa's homestead. The woman followed him and repeated the allegation in Mditshwa's presence. The accused claimed an *umhlahlo*, or trial by smelling out. Mditshwa,

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[90] *Ibid*.
[91] BNA G.21-75, Report of the British Resident in the St. John's Territory, March 1875, p. 97.
[92] *Ibid*.
[93] *Ibid*, p. 98.
[94] *Ibid*.

whose own case was still pending, declined to be involved but did not inform Orpen of what had transpired. The man and friends and relatives on both sides went to a diviner themselves. He carried out the *umhlahlo* and identified the man as the guilty party. The terrified man subsequently shot himself. Orpen fined the diviner 'and hung up his priest's habiliments of baboon and jackal skins in the court-hut, to scare others'.[95]

Orpen then turned back to the first case involving Mditshwa. The chief, according to Orpen, prevented the police from collecting witnesses and openly said he 'was interfering between him and his people contrary to his understanding with Government'.[96] The chief subsequently left the district without a pass. When the girl who had made the allegations was summoned, her family refused to appear 'as they were Umsitchwa's people', and her brothers threw their assegais at the police.[97] Orpen summoned Mditshwa and these men and in a large meeting charged them with inciting people 'who had now thrown their assegais against the shield of the great place in rebellion'.[98] The magistrate convicted and fined then men. Their weapons and shields were confiscated and hung beside the diviners baboon skins in the court-hut. Mditshwa admitted to leaving the district without a pass but denied any guilt in other respects, insisting the government 'had no right over his people but through him'.[99] Orpen left him for a week and then tried him for murder. Mditshwa paid a fined of 30 head of cattle for his involvement in the murders and five head for denying government authority. In 1877 Mhlontlo confiscated the cattle of a person accused of witchcraft. On this occasion he paid a fine of ten head of cattle which was later increased to 15 for disobedience. He refused to pay the fine.[100]

Although Orpen portrayed his actions as part of his efforts to liberate the Mpondomise from the terror and arbitrary actions of chiefs, even he had to acknowledge that they played an important role in the life of many people and there was 'loyalty to hereditary chiefs, their heroes'.[101] Orpen in his annual report to Cape Town for 1873 included a revealing passage about not only the role

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[95] *Ibid*, p. 98.
[96] *Ibid*, p. 97.
[97] *Ibid*, p. 99.
[98] *Ibid*.
[99] *Ibid*.
[100] BNA, G.17-'78, Report of the Magistrate with Umhlonhlo [n.d.], p. 94.
[101] BNA G.21-75, Report of the British Resident in the St. John's Territory, March 1875, p. 95.

of chiefs but how the colonial system was regarded. For a man who believed so strongly in the benefits of colonial rule and worked so tirelessly to establish it in Nomansland, it was an insightful and honest moment:

> … they like each other better than us, and their chiefs better than us foreign chiefs, as yet, and their ways better than our ways. They go to their chiefs' courts from habit, and they find there something like juries of themselves and they understand each other perfectly and are in no hurry, and everybody can talk, though with great decorum; and being almost their only intellectual exercise, it is pleasant to them. They don't take at once with great avidity to the court of a foreigner, and procedure which is new and strange and off-hand to them.[102]

Taxation

The second condition under which the chiefs accepted colonial rule was that all adult men were required to pay an annual tax of ten shillings in cash on each inhabited domestic dwelling. The hut tax, as it became known, was in practice a tax on wives.[103] In polygamous African culture each wife had her own dwelling as well as a plot of land on which she grew maize, sorghum and vegetables. As far as colonial officials were concerned the hut tax was an equitable way of raising revenue. The more wives a man had, the more wealth he had as each woman in the homestead brought in an income through the cultivation of land. In East Griqualand the hut tax became the principal source of revenue for the colonial government. In 1876 of a total revenue of £2900 7 1, £1382 3 0 came from the hut tax.[104] In 1877 the hut tax was £3670 1 0 out of a total of £6096 17 2.[105] The hut tax in the Mzimkhulu area, where chiefdoms had been paying the hut tax as early as the 1860s when they lived under the authority of the Griqua government, was well paid and in 1879 raised £1,382 10 0 of a total revenue of £1,811 18 7.[106]

The hut tax was unevenly paid among the chiefdoms of the region, with some areas in arrears and others paid in full. The chief magistrate reported that in 1879 the hut tax in the Mzimkhulu,

[102] *Ibid*, pp. 99-100
[103] Redding 'Sorcery and Sovereignty', p. 255.
[104] BNA G.12-'77, Return of Revenue in East Griqualand 1 April to 1 December 1876, pp. 40-41.
[105] BNA G.17-78, Return of Revenue Collected in East Griqualand 1877, pp. 68-69.
[106] BNA G. 13-'80, Report of the Magistrate of Umzimkulu, 6.1. 1880, p. 86.

Matatiele, Gatberg and Mount Frere districts had 'been willingly and cheerfully paid; and has quite come up to the estimates'.[107] He suggested that the tax in those areas be increased from ten to fifteen shillings per annum. However, he reported that 'from the Qumbu and Tsolo districts, that is Umhlonhlo's and Umditshwa's location, very little has yet been paid'.[108] The magistrates who were responsible for enforcing the collection of the tax amongst the Mpondomise were aware of how unpopular it was and initially attempted to deal with the situation relatively sensitively. The hut tax had been discussed between Brownlee and Mhlontlo in 1873 at Shawbury and had been accepted in principle. However, the government said that the tax would be levied in a few months or 'when the people had thoroughly settled down'.[109] Brownlee realized this was an issue that had to be approached judiciously. M.B. Shaw, who was appointed magistrate with Mhlontlo in May 1876, also understood the delicate nature of the issue. He discussed the hut tax at his first meeting with Mhlontlo in June but it was then 'quietly shelved for further consideration'.[110] He reported in January 1877 that no payments had been made, and recommended that considering the distrust created by the dissatisfaction among the Thembus 'it would be injudicious on my part to act precipitately on the subject, as this was a matter quite strange to the Pondomise'.[111] Hope reported in 1879 that 'few, if any, people have paid their tax for 1877 and none for 1878, and even for 1876 many are in arrear'.[112]

The magistrate with Mditshwa reported that for the years from 1877 to March 1880 only £2033-15-0 out of an amount due of £4461-0-0 had been paid. (According to the census there were 2974 huts under Mditshwa's authority). The magistrate had collected £328-5-0 in 1877, £417-10-0 in 1878 and £209-10-0 in 1879.[113] The magistrate reinforced what the chief magistrate had written when he reported that often excuses were made for not paying, such as 'there is war and rumours of war all around us. We may be forced into it. If so, our cattle may be taken, and we had better therefore not pay away our money in taxes till we see what the end of all these things

[107] BNA G. 13-'80, Report of the Chief Magistrate of East Griqualand, 27.1.1880, p. 71.
[108] *Ibid*.
[109] Phipson, 'A Trip through Kafirland', p. 199.
[110] BNA G.12-'77, Report of the Magistrate with Mhlonhlo, January 1877, p. 45.
[111] *Ibid*, p. 48.
[112] BNA G.33-'79, Report of Resident Magistrate with Umhlonhlo, 6.1.1879, p. 53.
[113] CA, CMK 1/96, Approximate Statement of Hut Tax Outstanding in the District of Tsolo, Griqualand East.

we hear of will be'.[114] Alexander Welsh who became magistrate in September 1877 initially was reluctant to enforce the tax because of the conflict with Kreli. However, after correspondence with Brownlee he convened a meeting on 10 November to inform the Mpondomise the tax would be collected on and after 29 November. On the appointed day he addressed a final demand to Mditshwa for payment.[115] Mditshwa's response was vague but on 3 December Mditshwa and about 50 men appeared at the magistrates' office and informed him: 'We have no money. There is no money. We have eaten the money. The shops have no money. The shops are dear. Shopkeepers say on account of the war, there we cannot pay up. We request the magistrate give us time'.[116] Welsh showed some sympathy but insisted a portion of the tax be paid. At the end of January 1878 Welsh reported that a fair amount of tax had come in although the amount was small compared with what was due. Magistrates who had initially been cautious about the enforcing of hut tax became more assertive by 1879. Welsh refused to issue passes to people who had not paid their tax and Hope called upon the Mpondomise to pay all arrears.

The arrears in the Tsolo and Qumbu areas can in part be explained by a drop in agricultural production due to drought. In 1878 harvests in the Transkei had been good, but in the following year a drought set in and by the end of 1879 the country was 'excessively dry' and 'most of the fields uncultivated'.[117] Some crops were sown after the spring rains but were destroyed by grubs, caterpillars and beetles, which were unusually numerous that season.[118] The drought was partly broken by good rains towards the end of December 1879 and although seed was planted early frosts destroyed much of the crop. Magistrate's reports for East Griqualand in 1879 all mention the drought and prospects of food shortages to follow.[119] Clifton Crais argues that political conflict in the nineteenth century coincided with or followed drought.[120] The severe drought of 1879 and 1880 was the worst in living memory. Food shortages created disquiet and

[114] BNA G. 13-'80, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, 6.1.1880, p. 96.
[115] BNA G. 17-'78, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, Tsolo, 24.1.1878, p. 84.
[116] *Ibid*, Minutes of an interview between the Magistrate and Umditshwa on 3.12.1877, p. 89.
[117] BNA G. 13-'80, Report of the Chief Magistrate of East Griqualand, 27.1.1880, p. 71.
[118] *Ibid*.
[119] *Ibid*, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, 6.1.1880, p. 96; BNA G. 13-'80, Report of Magistrate with Umhlonhlo, 7.1.1880, p. 100; BNA G. 17-'78, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, Tsolo, 24.1.1878, p. 84; BNA G.33-'79, Report of the Magistrate at Umzimkulu, 7.1.1879, p. 38.
[120] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 50.

insecurity, made worse by the demands of the colonial government for hut tax. This coincided with the colonial government's attempts to impose its rule on East Griqualand.

The drought alone does not account for the arrears in hut tax. The Bhaca of Mount Frere also suffered from the lack of rain and food shortages but paid the tax. Although Makaula, annoyed by the bad state of the roads, complained that he 'did not see the result of these taxes'.[121] In the Matatiele area the chiefdoms were recovering from severe losses of cattle after raids by Baphuthi thieves as well as the spread of lung-sickness, however, they also paid the hut tax. The Bhaca remained loyal to the colonial government in the coming rebellion, while the Mpondomise rebelled. This implies that the refusal to pay hut tax was a form of political and economic resistance, and a barometer of loyalty. Those chiefdoms which paid the hut tax were more accepting of colonial rule, while those in arrears were not. The anomaly to this conclusion is that some of the chiefdoms of the Matatiele area, in particular Makoai, paid the hut tax but later joined the rebellion. The reluctance to pay the taxes was a sign of discontent but the payment of the tax was not necessarily an indication of loyalty.

An important consequence of the hut tax was that from the mid-1870s increasing numbers of young men became migrant labourers and the chiefdoms were pulled into the capitalist economies of Natal and the Cape. J.H. Garner reported in 1876 that nearly 200 young men left the Mount Frere district for the Cape Colony on a six month contract.[122] Donald Strachan reported that from Mzimkhulu 150 labourers left the area for the public works in the Cape Colony.[123] Because of the high price for provisions, many chose to travel to Natal where they received a lower wage but with provisions. A large number were employed monthly by farmers, traders and transport riders.[124] The magistrate at Matatiele wrote that 187 labourers left for the public works in the Cape, in addition to large numbers who obtained passes to work as farm labourers.[125]

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[121] BNA G. 43-'79, Appendix to Blue-Book on Native Affairs, Meeting of Bhaca People under Makaula and Secretary for Native Affairs, 21.10.1878, p. 58.
[122] BNA G.12-'77, Report of the Social and Political Condition of the Bacas under the Chief Makaula, 28.12.1876, p. 32.
[123] BNA G. 17-'78, Report of the Magistrate at Umzimkulu, 10.1.1878, p. 80.
[124] *Ibid*.
[125] *Ibid*, Report of the Magistrate at Matatiele, 28.12.1877, p. 79.

'They are rejoicing at your words': White and Black Attitudes towards Witchcraft

The third condition agreed to by the leaders of the Mpondomise and Bhaca when negotiating with colonial officials was that attempts to identify and punish people accused of witchcraft would stop. It is necessary to discuss in some detail attitudes to witchcraft in African societies to understand the discontent that later developed as white officials attempted to stop the identification and punishment of witches. There were different categories of 'magic' practice all of which were designed to ensure success and combat misfortune.[126] However, misfortune came from various sources which implied different kinds of magic of which only witchcraft was considered truly evil. Most misfortune was not brought about by witchcraft. An individual could bring misfortune on themselves through moral failings, such as neglecting the ancestors. Misfortune could also be brought on by nature, risky undertakings or external threats such as an invading army.[127] There was, however, misfortune that came specifically from witchcraft. In these cases an expert witch-finder, an *igqira*, would be called in, usually from outside the community, to identify and convict the suspected witch. The person called to identify the witch would have to follow a certain procedure. Firstly, physical evidence in the form of a substance called *ubuthi* (bewitching matter), normally concealed on the accused, would have to be produced. Torture was often used in the process. Chiefs played a central role in finding witches. The process began at the chief's homestead or in his presence and torture could only be used by his consent. This was part of his duties to protect the people of his chiefdom from misfortune.

It was highly prejudicial to the society if witchcraft was not dealt with and so attempts by the colonial government to stop the practice of smelling-out caused great concern. When Mditshwa and his councillors were told of the conditions of colonial rule, according to Orpen, 'the only demur made was to a law against punishing for alleged witchcraft, in which they thoroughly believed'.[128] They were concerned that 'life would not be safe if dealers in the black art were allowed full swing'.[129] One of the councillors at the meeting, with a sweep of his arm, said, 'There are numbers of them sitting round us now and they are rejoicing at your words'.[130]

[126] Peires, 'Frankenstein Visits the Eastern Cape', p. 232.
[127] *Ibid*, p. 233.
[128] BNA G.21-'75, Report of the British Resident in St John's Territory, March 1875, p. 95.
[129] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 57.
[130] *Ibid*.

Mditshwa proposed a compromise that no one be put to death, but that their property be confiscated if they practiced witchcraft.[131] The proposal was rejected. Mditshwa persisted, asking, 'Shall those who commit witchcraft, then, be permitted to go forth in the daylight to destroy us without check or fear of punishment'.[132] Brownlee did not relent, informing them that those people who had been under British rule 'did not now die more than they did in the days when they destroyed people for witchcraft'.[133]

Sean Redding correctly points out that there is a cross-cultural contextual problem when it comes to the understanding of witchcraft. Magistrates often dismissed the belief in witchcraft as an 'ancient mode of deceit' and superstitious custom; the witch-finder regarded as nothing more than a charlatan.[134] Officials often did not understand the difference between the *igqwira*, the sorcerer who was the source of evil, and the *igqira*, the protector of society. Both were routinely labelled as witchdoctors in white writings. When Mditshwa raised the issue he was told: 'Government did not recognize witchcraft as any offence, and therefore could not permit anyone to suffer for what, according to our law, was no offence'.[135] A.T. Cunynghame, who travelled through the Eastern Cape in the 1870s, not only believed that the *igqira* was unjust and a charlatan but evil himself, bringing misery and suffering through false allegations.[136]

Missionaries, perhaps because they were more concerned with the supernatural than the magistrate, often had a better understanding of the role of witchcraft in the society, and that the *igqira* was considered 'a protector of society against the wiles of sorcerers'.[137] By attempting to stop smelling out, there was the potential danger of people at times believing that the colonial government was protecting or even in league with witches.[138] Bransby Key wrote a concerned letter to the magistrate at Tsolo in 1880: 'Now that the government has become paramount in the

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[131] BNA G.27-'74, Umhlonhlo and his People appear before the Secretary for Native Affairs, 7.3.1874, p. 146.
[132] *Ibid*, p. 147.
[133] *Ibid*.
[134] *Ibid*, Orpen to Umditchwa and Umhlonhlo, 22.10.1873, p. 95; Redding 'Sorcery and Sovereignty', p. 256.
[135] *Ibid*, Umhlonhlo and his People appear before Secretary for Native Affairs, 7.3.1874, p. 147.
[136] Cunynghame, *My Command in South Africa*, pp. 130-131.
[137] G. Callaway, *The Fellowship of the Veld: Sketches of Native Life in South Africa* (London, 1926), p. 49; Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 40.
[138] Redding, 'Sorcery and Sovereignty', p. 257.

Country the “umhlahlo’ is forbidden and consulting the witchdoctor generally, so that the people in their ignorance believe that they have now no protection against the wicked practices of the ‘umtakati’.[139]

Sean Redding goes further than the idea that the government was protecting witches to argue that the colonial state became viewed as ‘malevolent’.[140] The process of compiling tax registers combined with attempts by colonial officials to stop the punishment of individuals blamed for witchcraft, argues Redding, inspired a belief ‘in the white-controlled state’s spiritual malevolence that was partly responsible for sending them and their chiefs into revolt’.[141] A number of historians have criticized her argument. Jeff Peires argues while there were specific examples when the colonial government was viewed as bewitching black people, ‘magic and witchcraft were extremely marginal to the political consciousness and the political struggles of the oppressed black people in the eastern Cape’ and that witchcraft ‘is the weapon of the weak not of the strong’.[142] Redding is correct to point out how central tax and the state’s attempt to stop smelling were to the rebellion. However, she presents very little evidence for her hypothesis that the two became closely associated in the minds of African people to make the colonial state appear especially malevolent. She is also correct to point out that the colonial government by attempting to prevent actions being taken against those accused of witchcraft at times seemed to be protecting witches. However, she tends to down play the other factors contributing to the discontent developing against colonial rule. Economic exploitation, in the form of the hut tax, political and judicial interference through the appointment of magistrates and the drawing of magisterial boundaries all contributed to the suspicion and dislike of colonialism.

The Mfengu

Bransby Key, Bishop of St John’s, placed great emphasis on the conflict between the Mpondomise and Mfengu as a reason for the building discontent against colonial rule and eventually the 1880 rebellion. He wrote that ‘far as Umditshwa’s tribe was concerned, the quarrel was much more bitter against the Fingo than it was against the white people – indeed

[139] *Ibid.*
[140] *Ibid.*
[141] *Ibid.*
[142] Peires, ‘Frankenstein Visits the Eastern Cape’, p. 235-236.

they would probably have remained quiet had there been no Fingoes in the country'.[143] Key has over stated the case, but it is clear that a certain amount of anger existed towards the Mfengu who often turned to magistrates to assist them in land disputes, thus reinforcing the belief that the Mfengu rejected the authority and ways of their hosts.

Traditionally the Mfengu were considered to be refugees who fled Natal in 1820 to escape the violence associated with the emergence of the Zulu kingdom. Reaching the Eastern Cape after travelling southwest down the Indian Ocean coast, they were enslaved by the Gcaleka until they were liberated in 1835 when the British Army crossed the Kei River. Under the Wesleyan missionary John Ayliff they became Christians and prosperous farmers.[144] Historians during the 1980s questioned this view of the origins of the Mfengu. Julian Cobbing argued that the Mfengu were not refugees from Natal but actually Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape who were taken as labourers and given a new identity and history by colonial officials.[145] Alan Webster concluded that the Mfengu before 1835 came from multiple origins and were not a single group of refugees, although the nucleus of the Mfengu in the Cape Colony, he argued, came from a group of captives taken by the British Army when it crossed the Kei River in 1828 in a campaign against the Ngwane.[146] Although there have been critiques of Cobbing and Webster's revisionism of Mfengu origins, it is accepted by most historians that some of people who adopted the ethnic identity Mfengu came from or had forebears in Natal, while others had their origins amongst the Xhosa-speaking people of the Eastern Cape. Tim Stapleton points out that many Xhosa-speakers chose to live in Mfengu settlements and simply changed their identity.[147]

In the mid-1860s thousands of Mfengu families left the border regions of the Cape Colony as white settlers expanded into the area and crossed the Kei to settle on land formerly controlled by the Gcaleka chiefs. By the 1870s this territory, known as Fingoland, also became crowded and a

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[143] Gibson, *Reminiscences of the Pondomisi War of 1880*, p. 12.
[144] T.J. Stapleton, 'Oral Evidence in a Pseudo-Ethnicity: The Fingo Debate', *History in Africa* 22 (1995), p. 359.
[145] T. Stapleton, '"Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants": The Fingo (or Mfengu) as Colonial Military Allies During the Cape-Xhosa Wars, 1835-1881 in S. Miller (ed.), *Soldiers and Settlers in Africa, 1850-1918* (Leiden, 2009), p. 17.
[146] Ibid.
[147] *Ibid*, p. 18.

new wave of migration began into East Griqualand.[148] Initially these migrants settled on and around mission stations. They were often the earliest converts to Christianity and comprised the bulk of converts on the Anglican mission in the territory of Mditshwa and Mhlontlo.[149] Most of the converts on the Methodist mission Shawbury, within the territory of Mhlontlo, were also Mfengu.[150] Although they hoped to live under the missionaries, the church had no option but to recognize Mhlontlo's authority over them. This caused some unhappiness, for example, in 1866 when they were expected to provide men for a military campaign against the Mpondo.[151] Later many Mfengu leaders negotiated with chiefs and settled elsewhere. The most significant group of Mfengu was the Nxasana who under William Njikelana negotiated with Mhlontlo to settle in his territory.[152] The Mpondomise accepted the Mfengu as subjects for the tribute they paid and because they increased the number of men available for military service. The Mfengu communities settled on the periphery of the state close to rival chieftaincies and were part of the defense of the chiefdom.[153] Mditshwa at a meeting with William Ayliff in October 1878 made it clear that he considered the Mfengu his subjects. Seeing the Mfengu chief Umfuno he said: 'I am glad Umfuno is here, so that we can all talk; he is my child; he was circumcised by me, so he may go into Pondoland without guilt'.[154]

The Mfengu who settled in East Griqualand brought with them a reputation for having collaborated with colonial officials for decades and for defying many of the established beliefs and economic practices of the Xhosa. Tim Stapleton has shown that the Mfengu more than any other African allies contributed to the colonial military success in the Eastern Cape, and from the mid-to-late nineteenth century Mfengu auxiliaries contributed significantly to British war efforts.[155] Suspicion of the Mfengu amongst the chiefdoms of the Eastern Cape went beyond their involvement in colonial wars. Poppy Fry argues convincingly that Mfengu identity developed out of a lifestyle and worldview that emphasized agriculture and trade and rejected

[148] Beinart and Bundy, Conflict in Qumbu, p. 111.
[149] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, pp. 60-61.
[150] W. Taylor, *Christian Adventures in South Africa* (New York, 1881), p. 373.
[151] *Ibid*.
[152] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', p. 111.
[153] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 59.
[154] BNA G.43-'79, Minutes of meeting with Umditshwa's People and the Secretary for Native Affairs, 14.10.1878, p. 47.
[155] Stapleton, '"Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants", pp. 15 & 46.

established systems of Xhosa authority.[156] The involvement of Mfengu men in agriculture and attempts to engage in trade outside of the control of chiefs broke with social practices and challenged widely accepted standards of Xhosa-ness.[157] Many Xhosa, especially chiefs, regarded the Mfengu as anti-social and supernaturally dangerous. The Mfengu migrants to East Griqualand reinforced their reputation for defying chiefs when they proved reluctant to provide manpower for a campaign against the Mpondo. They were accused of defying the rule of the chief by going to magistrates.[158] Welsh spent a considerable amount of his time dealing with land disputes, nine tenths of which were between Mpondomise and Mfengu.[159] While the degree to which the Mfengu rejected the authority of the chief is probably exaggerated, there is evidence that they made use of the colonial legal system to assert their independence from chiefs who considered them subjects and that this caused tension. Welsh reported in 1878 that blows had been freely exchanged between Mfengu and Mpondomise.

The implementation in the 1870s of colonial rule between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers was a complex and paradoxical process. The authority and multiple roles of the chiefs did not end with the arrival of the magistrate, just as the magistrate's position was not established with his appointment. Pre-colonial beliefs and practices continued and were transformed as new beliefs and ideas were introduced. It was, for the colonizers and colonized, a time of confrontation and compromise in which ideas, policy, practical realities and personality met. Colonial administrative structures in the area were weak and a handful of magistrates implemented Cape rule. Without any military support and isolated from Cape Town by vast distances, they turned to the chiefs to assist them, a deeply ironic process considering the Cape administration's general belief that chiefs were a barrier to the progress colonial rule was supposed to bring. In the mid-1870s chiefs, under the impression that they were allies with the new officials and co-operating with them was advantageous, assisted magistrates to assert their authority.[160] Colonial officials in turn, in particular the ever cautious Brownlee, were aware of how tenuous the Cape's position was in the area and were prepared in the earlier years to

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[156] P. Fry, 'Siyamfenguza: The Creation of Fingo-ness in South Africa's Eastern Cape, 1800-1835', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 36 no. 1 (March 2010), p. 25.
[157] *Ibid*.
[158] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p 70.
[159] BNA G. 17-'78, Report of the Magistrate with Umditshwa, Tsolo, 24.1.1878, p. 85.
[160] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 58.

compromise with the overall objective of securing colonial rule in the area. Thus they delayed enforcing the payment of hut tax and the taking of a census. Brownlee restored Mhlontlo, despite his defiance, to his position as chief as not to provoke a reaction early in the process. By the later years of the decade the realities of colonial rule had become apparent to chiefs. They were aware that they were now subjects rather than allies of the colonial government. They had lost their political independence, their judicial authority was undermined, economic exploitation in form of the hut tax was enforced, attempts to impose new boundaries cut them off from supporters and natural resources, migrant groups that had accepted their authority now used the colonial state to assert their independence and the magistrates allowed witchcraft to spread. The interactions between chiefs and magistrates become more adversarial and confrontational as chiefs reacted against the transformations being wrought. The discontent against colonial rule that was building in these years was most strongly expressed by the Mpondomise chiefs Mditshwa and Mhlontlo, and it was thus unexpected that the uprising against colonial rule that broke out in 1880 was initially among the Basotho chiefdoms of Matatiele.

Chapter Four

‘Easily Managed People’:
The Basotho Chiefdoms Rebel

In the face of the changes brought on by colonial expansion, tensions began to grow in the late 1870s among the Sotho-speaking chiefdoms of Matatiele. In October 1880 many of these chiefdoms joined their kinsmen in Basutoland in an uprising against the Cape government. The uprising arose from the Cape administration’s attempts to disarm all black people living in the Transkei and Basutoland as part of a confederation policy, which aimed to unite the various independent territories in the sub-continent under the British flag. The discontent, however, had been building for some years before. Attempts to undermine the authority of chiefs, the implementation of the hut tax and unhappiness about the borders laid down by white officials had all caused resentment against colonial rule. The treatment of Nehemiah Moshesh over his attempts to gain autonomy for the Basotho chiefdoms of Matatiele from Griqua and then Cape rule, and proposals to sell off parts of the Quthing district in Basutoland to white farmers after the defeat of Chief Moorosi of the Baphuthi in 1879, exacerbated tensions. When Charles Brownlee, the chief magistrate of East Griqualand, became aware of the discontent developing among the Basotho chiefdoms along the Drakensberg he attempted unsuccessfully to use his personal influence to dissuade them from rebellion. In early October colonial rule collapsed at Matatiele, forcing magistrates, white troops and traders to abandon the area and flee to Kokstad. The decision to join the uprising was not unanimous. Most of the Hlubi did not rebel and even among the Basotho divisions occurred. Ruling families became split over the rebellion and the adherents of chiefs who remained loyal to the colonial government deserted them.

‘Moshweshwe’s land on the other side of the Malutis’: Nehemiah Moshesh and the struggle for the autonomy of Matatiele

The arrest and trial of King Moshoeshoe’s son Nehemiah in 1876 for allegedly instigating an uprising against the government was seen by many Basotho, both in Basutoland and below the Drakensberg, as an attempt by the Cape administration to undermine their rights and property. Tensions in the Matatiele area began building two years before the arrest of Nehemiah when colonial officials rejected, or simply ignored, attempts by the Basotho chiefdoms to obtain

autonomy for the region from Griqua authority and then Cape rule. The Basotho settlement at Matatiele was considered by Moshoeshoe, and after his death in 1870 by his heir Letsie, as part of the Sotho kingdom.[1] Nehemiah had been forced out of the area in 1865 by the Griqua but many of his followers remained at Matatiele between the upper Mzimvubu and Kinira Rivers and became reluctant subjects of Adam Kok. Gillian Bardsley has shown that the Griqua government was not primarily concerned with the Matatiele area, and that even after the expulsion of Nehemiah its focus was on administering, surveying and allocating land around Kokstad and at Mzimkhulu.[2] The Griqua deputed their responsibilities at Matatiele to their Sotho ally the Hlakoana chief Lepheana and his sons Ramohlakoana, Marthinus, Musi and Sibi. For most of the 1860s and 1870s, argues Bardsley, political divisions at Matatiele, which had their roots in Lesotho, revolved around conflict between what she refers to as the Moshesh faction, represented by Nehemiah and later his uncle Makoai and his son Sekake, versus Lepheana and his sons.[3]

Around 1867 Nehemiah, unwelcome in his father's kingdom because of conflicts with his brothers, returned across the mountains and settled on the right bank of the Kinira River in Lebenya's location in the Mount Fletcher district. From there he exercised some control over his former followers through his deputies Letlatala, Moteri and Rass.[4] In early 1874 Nehemiah, aware that the Cape government intended assuming the administration of the Griqua state, began a campaign for the Basotho to occupy Matatiele under a British magistrate, independent of Adam Kok. In February he wrote a petition to Charles Brownlee from Komaligare insisting that the country on the western bank of the Mzimvubu claimed by Adam Kok had been allotted to him and his followers in a letter addressed to him on 4 August 1863 by Sir Philip Wodehouse.[5] He concluded with the lines 'I am now coming with the desire to occupy my locations on the western bank of the Umzimvubu' and begged the secretary 'to recover my country to me again'.[6] Brownlee did not respond to Nehemiah's letter.

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[1] BNA G. 27-'74, Orpen to Secretary for Native Affairs, 10.9.1873, p. 78.
[2] Bardsley, 'Politics and Land in Matatiele 1844-1900', p. 48.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 57.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 60.
[5] CPP G.37-'76, Nehemiah to Brownlee, Komaligare, 22.2.1874., p. 110.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 111.

Eight months after Nehemiah wrote his letter to Brownlee, East Griqualand was annexed by the Cape colonial government. Nehemiah's struggle shifted from attempting to throw off the yoke of Adam Kok's authority to campaigning for the Basotho of Matatiele to be placed under a British rather than Cape colonial magistrate. While Nehemiah considered himself an Englishman and loyal subject of her majesty, he, like most Basotho, had a deep suspicion of the Cape colonial government.[7] The Basotho were aware that the Cape administration, particularly after responsible government in 1872, represented the interests of white settlers who continually agitated for more land, labour and legislation to restrict the movements and rights of Africans. Generally historians are in agreement that by the mid-1870s Nehemiah and his brother Tsekelo, in addition to pressing the Matatiele claim, 'seemed keen to widen the front of resistance by fixing on more general issues around which to fuse opposition to the Cape administration'.[8] The brothers were aware and concerned about Basutoland's change in status from being under the direct authority of the high commissioner to being administered by the Cape, and more seriously the consequences of the confederation policy. In 1868 the colonial office placed Basutoland under the authority of the high commissioner. In 1871 the high commissioner Henry Barkly, who had been given a free hand as far as Basutoland was concerned, decided the territory should be governed by the Cape Colony. Colonial writers were under the impression that the Basotho did not understand in the least the implications of this change.[9] Actually Tsekelo, who had served in the Basutoland Police, was aware of the differences for the kingdom of direct imperial rule and Cape rule and argued at the 1874 *Pitso* that the Basotho had given their territory to the queen and not 'these people at the Cape'.[10]

The Basotho were just as concerned about Matatiele being placed under the Cape administration as they were about the kingdom beyond the Drakensberg. Nehemiah travelled to Cape Town in May 1875 and presented a petition, with the consent of his brother Letsie, to parliament. He was careful to point out that the petition was on behalf of his brothers, the sons of Moshoeshoe, and the 'Basuto tribe, some 150,000 of Her Majesty's subjects'.[11] He argued in the petition that the

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[7] *Ibid*, Statement of Nehemiah Moshesh, p. 129; Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 84.
[8] Benyon, *Proconsul and Paramountcy*, p. 146.
[9] Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto*, p. 113.
[10] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 56.
[11] CPP G.37-'76, Statement by Nehemiah Moshesh, p. 125.

Basotho had the right to occupy the area as it was given to them by Faku and that their move below the escarpment had later been approved by Sir George Grey.[12] Despite support from Joseph Orpen, he was fobbed off by Cape officials with the argument that the Griqua territory was not legally part of the colony and any discussions regarding a separate magistracy would be premature.[13] While Nehemiah was in Cape Town, his wife crossed into the Mount Currie district with three attendants to consult a traditional doctor. Cumming, the magistrate at Kokstad, confiscated the cattle this small group had brought with them and issued an instruction that Nehemiah would be arrested if he returned to East Griqualand without a pass. Cumming believed Makoai had encouraged Nehemiah to hold political meetings and abetted him in other ways and in a strongly worded letter dated 28 June instructed him to arrest Nehemiah if he entered his location.[14]

Nehemiah returned to East Griqualand just as a second colonial land commission began its investigations. The commission, consisting of Charles Griffith, governor's agent in Basutoland, Samuel Probart, a member of the legislative assembly, and Thomas Cumming, now superintendent of the Idutywa Reserve, was appointed to investigate land grants made by the Griqua government after May 1872, but spent most of its time considering Nehemiah's petition for a separate magistracy for the Basotho. The commissioners held public enquires at Matatiele from 27 September to 7 October. Much of the evidence gathered revolved around Nehemiah and his supporters' actions some 15 years earlier when the Griqua first arrived in Nomansland. Nehemiah testified before the commission for three days. His argument for the separation of the territory beyond the Kinira and upper Mzimvubu was based on the same points presented to parliament a few months earlier – the land was given to the Basotho by Faku and sanctioned by two colonial governors. Nehemiah also testified that he and his followers had assisted the Griqua with shelter and food towards the end of their trek to Nomansland, but that the initial cordial relations broke down when Adam Kok's subjects began stealing cattle and livestock from them.[15] Nehemiah was followed by numerous Sotho and Griqua witnesses, including Adam Kok. The *Kaptyn* and Griqua witnesses all placed the blame for the stock theft on Nehemiah and

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[12] *Ibid*, pp. 128 & 130.
[13] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 74.
[14] CPP G.37-'76, Cumming to Makwai, 28.6.1874, p. 12.
[15] *Ibid*, Testimony of Nehemiah Moshesh, 28.9.1875, p. 161.

his followers.[16] The commissioners accepted the Griqua versions of events and concluded that Faku did not have the right to cede the territory to Moshoeshoe as he had already given up the land in 1850 to British authority through the government of Natal.[17] The commissioners expressed doubt that Faku had ever made an arrangement with Moshoeshoe regarding Matatiele and pointed out that the first time it had been mentioned was after Nehemiah had settled in the area.[18] The commissioners ruled that Nehemiah had failed to establish his claim and that he and his supporters had been justly expelled by the Griqua because of 'their lawless conduct'.[19]

The clearly biased conclusions reached by the commissioners reinforced the general suspicion of the Cape administration held by the Basotho. Besides being concerned about their change in status from imperial to colonial subjects, Basotho leaders were equally unhappy about the attempts to introduce confederation to southern Africa. Nehemiah and Tsekelo were aware of the broader implications of confederation and found these unacceptable.[20] There were reports in early 1876 that the brothers had encouraged people in the Transkei to resist Cape encroachment. They supposedly told the Mpondo that white people were 'going to have a conference to plan how they might best oppress the black man, and that the big chiefs ought to take counsel together to be ready to resist'.[21] By the mid-1870s many colonial officials came to believe that Nehemiah was in league with his kinsmen in Basutoland and the Mpondo Paramount Mqikela in a scheme to provoke opposition to British rule among African chiefdoms.[22] Besides a few rumours reaching Cape Town, there was very little evidence to support this supposition.[23]

In 1876 Nehemiah became embroiled in a confrontation with the chief magistrate of East Griqualand Matthew Blyth, which led to his arrest. Many of Nehemiah's supporters had remained at Matatiele and those who had fled with the chief had almost all returned by late 1875. The return of Nehemiah's adherents heightened the long standing conflict over land and influence between the Moshesh faction and Lepheana. In the latter half of 1876 Rass and

[16] *Ibid*, Testimony of Adam Kok, 2.10.1875, p. 202.
[17] *Ibid*, Commissioners to Colonial Secretary, 22.10.1875, p. 56.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] *Ibid*, p. 59.
[20] Benyon, 'Basutoland and the High Commission', pp. 317-318.
[21] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 56.
[22] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 88.
[23] Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto*, p. 126

Moteri, supposedly acting on instructions from Nehemiah, threatened to burn down the homesteads of the adherents of Ramohlakoana unless they moved 'from land which belonged to Nehemiah' and settled beyond the Kinira River.[24] In September 1875 Ramohlakoana confronted Moteri regarding the threats which led to an altercation at Moteri's homestead. In the skirmish Ramohlakoana was assaulted and told he would be expelled from his location.[25] The magistrate at Matatiele reported the incident to Blyth and summoned the men to appear at the magistrate's office. The magistrate fined those who appeared two head of cattle to be delivered within 14 days. On Blyth's instructions two respected messengers were sent to repeat the summons. A number of men still refused to appear, informing the messengers that 'they were Nehemiah's people and they would not attend except on his order'.[26] After one of the messengers was assaulted, Blyth proceeded from Kokstad to Moteri's homestead with 25 members of the FAMP and a detail of Griqua. When Blyth arrived he was confronted by armed men. After unsuccessfully attempting to get the men to appear at the magistrate's office and not wanting to provoke the situation further, Blyth withdrew.

In October 1876 Blyth presided over a special court of enquiry at Matatiele to investigate the case of Nehemiah Moshesh who took up arms against the government in the mountains of Matatiele on or about 22 September 1876. The case began in an atmosphere of wild rumour and heightened tension. Blyth had been told confidentially that there were plans to seize the magazine in Kokstad while he was at Matatiele and so he ordered Africans levies from Mzimkhulu to the capital to reinforce the small military force there, and placed others at strategic positions between Matatiele and Kokstad to keep communications open.[27] Blyth received reports that a prophetess encouraged people to destroy European clothing and iron pots.[28] The magistrates collected voluminous evidence. Some witnesses testified that Nehemiah had instigated the attack on Ramohlakoana at Moteri's homestead before leaving for Lesotho so as not to be implicated, and that it was he who encouraged his men not to appear before the magistrate. Others insisted that he was innocent. Nehemiah appeared voluntarily before the

[24] CA CMK 5-2, Testimony of Mguba.
[25] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 94.
[26] CA CMK 5-2, Testimony of Mguba.
[27] Rainier, M*adonela*, p. 95.
[28] *Ibid*.

court and although he maintained that the Basotho and Hlubi of Matatiele were his father's subjects, he denied having any jurisdiction over their actions, sending messages telling them to defy the magistrate or even being at Matatiele when the debacle took place. Blyth instructed Nehemiah to be arrested on the suspicion of instigating the various tribes to rise against Government and imprisoned in Kokstad. Refusing to appear before the magistrate and the assault of his messengers were strong actions of defiance, but describing what transpired at Matatiele in September as an armed uprising was an overreaction by Blyth. There is no substantiated evidence that there was any organized or violent attempt to revolt against the colonial government. Saunders has correctly pointed out that 'a very minor confrontation was therefore vested with major significance by the Cape officials concerned'.[29]

To put distance between him and his supporters, Blyth sent Nehemiah, his headman Letlatala and about a dozen other men under armed escort to Pietermaritzburg. At the border on the Mzimkhulu River the Natal Mounted Police refused to take charge of the group of prisoners and the FAMP had to take them on to the capital. The Natal authorities, still jittery over the criticism they had received over the treatment of Langalibalele, did not want the responsibility of the chief and pointed out that Blyth's warrant was null and avoid.[30] Eventually the FAMP returned with Nehemiah to Mzimkhulu and imprisoned him there. Most of his men taken to Kokstad were fined and released. Nehemiah remained in jail for six months without being charged. The strain began to show and the once corpulent man was described by a journalist as thin in the face with blood-shot eyes.[31] Nehemiah's brother King Letsie and Joseph Orpen both offered unsuccessfully to post bail. Initially the Cape attorney general had doubts that there was enough evidence to convict Nehemiah, but eventually he charged the king's son with sedition and sent him to King William's Town for trial in April 1877. Within hours he was acquitted. Firstly, it was established that he was not a British subject as East Griqualand had not been formally annexed and so in effect his arrest was illegal, and secondly, Chief Justice de Villiers pointed out that there was no evidence to establish his guilt.[32]

[29] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 56.
[30] *Ibid*, p. 96.
[31] *Ibid*, p. 98.
[32] *Ibid*.

Historians have pointed out the destructive long term effects the treatment of Nehemiah had among the Basotho.[33] Edna Bradlow points out that the actions against Nehemiah created mistrust among the Basotho 'without the government wholly perceiving its effect'.[34] Magistrates, particularly in Basutoland, generally reported a disinterest in what had transpired with Nehemiah, however, as Bradlow shows they were extremely interested. Nehemiah was at times unpopular with the Basotho and not always considered a wise chief.[35] However, his attempts to gain autonomy for Matatiele from Griqua and later Cape rule struck a deep chord among the Basotho who considered the area 'Moshweshwe's land on the other side of the Malutis'.[36] In May 1877 a petition, signed by 'the chiefs and people of the Basuto tribe', was presented to the Cape Assembly asserting the Basotho right to the country below the Drakensberg. Nehemiah, the petitioners wrote, had been illegally sentenced and deprived of his property after petitioning the government for this land when it was being alienated in favour of non-resident strangers.[37] A further petition presented in 1878 re-iterated Basotho claims to Matatiele and in 1880 Orpen moved in the parliament that no land claimed by the Basotho between the Mzimvubu and Gatberg be removed. The Basotho living on either side of the Drakensberg felt strongly about what they considered as unlawful alienation of their land.[38] John Benyon insisted that much of the discontent among the Basotho, prior to the introduction of a disarmament policy, was focused on two issues: firstly, rumours of the British government giving part of Basutoland to the Free State, and secondly, British neglect of claims to the Matatiele area.[39]

The Land of the Baphuthi

The belief among the Basotho of Basutoland and Matatiele that the Cape government intended to illegally alienate their land was reinforced by the treatment of the Baphuthi people after their defeat in 1879. The Baphuthi, numbering about 5 000 followers of the chief Moorosi, inhabited a rugged mountainous area south-east of the Orange River in the Quthing district of Basutoland.

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[33] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 96; Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 56.
[34] E. Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland, 1871-1883* (Pretoria, 1968), p. 138.
[35] P. Sanders, *'Throwing Down White Man': Cape Rule and Misrule in Colonial Lesotho, 1871-1884* (Pontypool, 2011), p. 26.
[36] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland*, p. 138.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] *Ibid*, p. 139.
[39] Benyon, *Proconsul and Paramountcy*, p. 145.

The Baphuthi were a heterogeneous band comprising people of different ethnic and social backgrounds under the authority of Mokuoane and later his son Moorosi.[40] Rachel King has shown that the Baphuthi went through several phases during their existence. During the first phase they emerged as a regional power under the aegis of Moshoeshoe, while maintaining a degree of independence. The Baphuthi dispersed their power across a large area between the Kraai River and Maloti-Drakensberg highlands. Through a network of allies they maintained a lifestyle of mixed garden agriculture and cattle raiding.[41] The Baphuthi chiefs did not establish a political centre and by moving through but repeatedly returning to the same locales they were well positioned for cattle raiding. With the establishment of the Wittebergen Reserve by the Cape government in 1850 in territory inhabited by the Baphuthi, the polity entered a new phase and found their way of life constricted, and Moorosi withdrew to his other territories across the Tele River. The Baphuthi continued to operate within the reserve and launched cattle raids into Natal and Nomansland and then retreated to the Sanqu River Valley for safety. The introduction of Cape rule in the early 1870s and the policies the Cape government attempted to impose posed a threat to Baphuthi way of life and signalled the final phase of the constriction of the lifestyle of the Baphuthi.

The remoteness of Mount Moorosi and its distance from the magistrate at Mohale's Hoek ensured relative independence for the Baphuthi in the first few years of colonial rule. In May 1877, however, Charles Griffith, the governor's agent, attempted to bring then under closer control by making their country a new sub-division of Quthing with its own magistrate.[42] Hamilton Hope, formally a clerk in the Mafeteng magistracy, was appointed magistrate. The strong-willed, but inexperienced, Hope was determined to assert colonial authority which Moorosi, a diminutive man in his 80s but still vigorous, did all he could to resist. The conflict led, as Peter Sanders shows in *Throwing Down White Man*, to four crises over Moorosi's authority in two years and led to war between the Baphuthi and the colonial government in 1879.[43] Griffith initially attempted to defeat the Baphuthi by using a force of 2000 men furnished by Letsie. Theal speculates that Letsie provided the men in the belief that if he proved

[40] King, 'Voluntary Barbarians of the Maloti-Drakensberg', p. 26.
[41] *Ibid*, p. 23.
[42] Sanders, *Throwing Down White Man*, p. 64.
[43] *Ibid*, pp. 65-70.

his loyalty the Cape colonial government would not continue with a policy of disarming the Basotho.[44] Moorosi and some of his adherents retreated to a mountain stronghold which Cape forces then besieged. Despite numerous attacks on this mountain fortress, it was only on 20 November that Cape troops defeated Moorosi. The chief was killed and decapitated in the assault. King argues that Moorosi waged war with the colonial government to preserve a way of life.[45] It was a culmination of half a century of forging alliances, exchanging ideas and experimenting with tactics of resistance.[46]

While the Basotho might have contributed to Moorosi's end, they were deeply disturbed by how the colonial government dealt with his people after the chief's defeat. It was proposed that the Quthing district be incorporated into the Cape Colony and divided up into farms for white settlers. This would in part contribute to covering the expenses of the campaign against the Baphuthi which had dragged on for some months, but more importantly would show other 'tribes that rebellion would not go unpunished'.[47] Frere in his opening speech to parliament in 1880 announced that Quthing was being surveyed into farms which would soon be sold off by public auction. In an attempt to justify his actions, Frere argued that by rebelling Moorosi's followers had lost their right to occupy their ancestral lands and removing it from them was a 'just and expedient punishment'.[48] Griffith and Orpen both strongly disagreed with this course of action. Griffith supported the inalienability of all of Basutoland and was concerned about the discontent that would follow if land was sold off. Frere's proposal went against general custom that rebel subjects might have land removed temporarily but land would not be alienated from the rest of the chiefdom.[49] Quthing was considered part of Basutoland and Letsie objected in a letter to Barkly in February to his people being punished as a nation for Moorosi's actions. In March Orpen presented a petition to the Cape parliament on behalf of the king objecting on the grounds that when Wodehouse had accepted the Basotho as British subjects he had assured them their land would remain intact. Letsie's petition was not met with a favourable reception in the Cape

[44] G.M. Theal, *History of South Africa 1873 to 1884* (Cape Town, 1964), p. 45.
[45] King, 'Voluntary Barbarians of the Maloti-Drakensberg', p. 25.
[46] *Ibid*, p. 22.
[47] Theal, *History of South Africa 1873 to 1884*, p. 57.
[48] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland,* p. 142.
[49] Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto*, p. 137.

parliament.[50] The developing crisis was cut short in late December when the imperial government stepped in and the secretary of state for the colonies overruled the proposal to sell parts of Quthing. Quthing remained part of Basutoland, however, the damage had been done and many Basotho rightly believed that their rights and property were under attack from the Cape colonial government. [51]

Magistrates in East Griqualand were all aware of how people in the region reacted to the Cape's actions against Moroosi. Hamilton Hope, whose mishandling of the situation had contributed to the crisis, was now magistrate with Mhlontlo and felt that the Moroosi crisis was a source of restlessness amongst the Mpondomise.[52] Welsh, magistrate with Mditshwa, reported that Moorosi's rebellion and prolonged defiance had 'a very prejudicial affect' on the Mpondomise.[53] He believed that 'the main cause of the slackness in paying up the hut tax is the aspect of affairs in Basutoland which is causing a strong undercurrent of restlessness and doubt'.[54] He went on to write that 'the attitude lately assumed by Mditshwa and his sons may be traced to the same cause and it will require calm and judicious management to maintain the authority of Government'[55] Generally historians who have studied the area, argue that Moorosi's rebellion 'must be seen as a curtain raiser to the BaSotho 'Gun War' of 1880-1'.[56] Edna Bradlow sees the treatment of Moorosi, along with Nehemiah and Langalibalele, as contributing to the buildup of dissatisfaction among the Basotho against the colonial government, the last straw of which was brought on by disarmament.[57] What is clear from magistrates' reports is that it was not only the Basotho who were concerned about events at Quthing; the Mpondomise were just as worried. It was not surprising that the Mpondomise, who had become painfully aware that the Cape administration was undermining their rights and attempting to transform their way of life, were restless about what had happened to the Baphuthi. They must have been deeply concerned that their land rights were no longer guaranteed.

[50] Theal, *History of South Africa 1873 to 1884,* p. 58.
[51] Sanders, *'Throwing Down White Man'*, p. 96.
[52] BNA G. 13-'80, Report of Magistrate with Umhlonhlo, 7.1.1880, p. 100.
[53] *Ibid*, Report of Magistrate with Umditshwa, 6.1.1880, p. 95.
[54] *Ibid*, Resident Magistrate Tsolo to Chief Magistrate Griqualand East, p. 96.
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] Benyon, *Proconsul and Paramountcy*, p. 171.
[57] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland,* p. 143.

'My gun belongs to the Queen… and I will stick to it': Confederation, Disarmament and Rebellion

From 1870 a large trade in guns developed on the diamond fields as migrant Basotho labourers purchased firearms and returned home with them at the end of their contracts. This trade concerned officials in the Free State and Basutoland but overall attempts to control it were feeble and half-hearted. In 1872 the Free State government officially protested to the Cape about the trade in guns, however, despite its own concerns, the Molteno ministry was not willing to decisively deal with the issue. By the mid-1870s, however, disarmament became intertwined with a policy of confederation and the Cape administration took a stronger stand on controlling the ownership of weapons. Frere believed that disarmament was vital for confederation to succeed, and for the Cape colony to become more self-sufficient in the area of defense.[58] Once he arrived in South Africa, Frere focused his attention on persuading the Cape administration to disarm all African chiefdoms as a prelude to confederation.[59] Molteno did not show much interest in expanding the colony's responsibilities beyond its borders, and opposed Carnarvon's confederation plans which led to clashes between him and Frere. In early February 1878 Frere dismissed the Molteno ministry as it was an obstacle to confederation and disarmament and Gordon Sprigg, a frontier farmer, became premier. Initially Sprigg supported Molteno's opposition to Carnarvon's confederation plans, however, he subsequently became a staunch federalist.

Sprigg's administration heralded a more aggressive, or as he described 'vigorous', Native affairs policy.[60] Central to this policy was the undermining of the position of chiefs, an attitude he had in common with his predecessor, and the disarmament of all Africans living under Cape rule. While the Molteno government had been happy with a policy that would gradually break down the powers of the chiefs, Sprigg in a speech to his constituents in East London announced:

> it is our intention not to talk about breaking the powers of the chiefs, but really to break their power…Our intention is to recognize no chief whatsoever within the Colony…Our

[58] Benyon, 'Basutoland and the High Commission', p. 358.
[59] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland,* p. 144.
[60] Sanders, *'Throwing Down White Man'*, p. 141.

object will therefore be to break up all the tribes; that a tribe shall not live together as a tribe; that certain small locations only shall be established.[61]

Sprigg was also won over to the idea of disarming all Africans, and worked with Frere in this regard 'in complete harmony'.[62] In May 1878 the attorney-general introduced the Peace Preservation Act to parliament. The bill would allow the governor, advised by his ministers, to proclaim certain districts 'within which it shall not be lawful for any person (except such persons as are herein-after exempted) to bear, carry, or have in his or her possession …any arms, weapons…or ammunition'.[63] The law in principle would only be applied to certain rebel areas.[64] There was little objection from opposition politicians. At the committee level questions were raised over the wide discretionary powers given to the executive by the bill, but after Sprigg assured them that he would move slowly and cautiously, the bill passed without further discussion at the end of August.

The Mfengu in the King William's Town district, who had fought on the colonial side on numerous occasions, were the first to be called upon to voluntarily disarm. Despite being deeply unhappy about disarmament, they handed in some four thousand odd guns and assegais.[65] The act was then extended to small groups of Emigrant Thembu. Some of the chiefs hesitated for a while and it seemed at a point they might resist disarmament, but eventually they handed over about seven hundred guns to colonial officials.[66] In early October Sprigg instructed the governor's agent in Basutoland, Griffith, to apply the act to the Basotho. Griffith informed the Basotho at the annual *Pitso* held on 24 October 1878 that a disarmament act had been passed in the Cape parliament. Although he did not specifically inform the gathering that the act would apply to them, the significance was not lost on the Basotho and the announcement was met with silence. In August 1879, as it became known that the Basotho were unhappy about the policy and rumours of unrest reached Cape Town, the House of Assembly debated the application of Sprigg's policy to Basutoland. The opposition was still divided. Sauer was placated by Sprigg's

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[61] *Ibid*, p. 85.
[62] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland,* p. 144.
[63] *Ibid*, p. 145.
[64] P. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman* (Johannesburg, 1982), p. 77.
[65] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 73.
[66] *Ibid*.

assurances that the Basotho would be consulted first before the government attempted to disarm them. J.J. Irvine, the member of the Legislative Council for King William's Town, was concerned the Cape was 'drifting into the most ruinous native policy' which 'has been carried on in the most despotic and illegal manner'.[67] The majority of the members voted to continue with the policy in the belief that it could be implemented peacefully.

Towards the end of 1879 Sprigg travelled to Maseru to attend the annual Pitso, which was held on 16 and 17 October, to address the estimated 6000 to 10 000 men who had gathered to hear him speak. Griffith opened proceedings and pointed out that Sprigg was there as the mouth piece of the queen and that all the measures which he intended introducing were for the good governance of the people and peace and prosperity for everyone. Letsie in his letter of welcome mentioned that people were troubled by being 'dispossessed of their dwellings and lands by this disturbance of Morosi'.[68] Sprigg then began his address. He started by praising Griffith and describing him as a worthy and capable man and emphasized that when he spoke it was as if the government of the queen was speaking. This was no idle flattery. Sprigg hoped to achieve disarmament in Basutoland by using Griffith's personal influence among the Basotho.[69] Before addressing the issue of disarmament, he announced that the hut tax would be increased from 10 to 20 shillings a year. He spent some time discussing how the Basotho would benefit from the increased revenue. He then informed the already agitated gathering that disarmament would apply to them.[70] He then directly addressed the issue of the resistance against disarmament and pointed out that Cape troops drove the Galekas and Gaikas out of their country when they rebelled and defeated Cetshwayo.

Once he finished his address, man after man stood up to object to the increased hut tax and disarmament. Lerotholi, a son of King Letsie, responded most eloquently:

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[67] J.J. Irvine to J.X. Merriman, 16.5.1879 in Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman*, p. 76.

[68] CPP G.13-'80, Report of Proceedings at the Pitso, held at Maseru, on Thursday and Friday, the 16th and 17th October, 1879, p. 39.

[69] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland*, p. 151.

[70] CPP G.13-'80, Report of Proceedings at the Pitso, held at Maseru, on Thursday and Friday, the 16th and 17th October, 1879, p. 43.

> …when a boy begins to run about he sharpens a stick and calls it an assegai, and stabs field-mice with it, and now we have grown up and we have got guns, and those guns we say belong to the Queen. Col. Griffith, our honoured Governor's Agent, we will weep on account of you this day, and we will weep on account of your magistrates, who are the magistrates of the Governor's Agent. If we have committed a crime, and have trifled with the peace of the Queen, then let it be said right out to us, and let us be told that we are naughty boys, and that we have broken the peace of the Queen. All that I have got to say is, that my gun belongs to the Queen, and that I will follow the Queen about with this gun wherever she goes, and I will stick to it.[71]

On the following day a meeting was held with the chiefs for Sprigg to explain in detail how the act would be implemented. The chiefs objected bitterly.

If the premier had cared to listen to Lerotholi he would have heard where the Basotho stood – they had been loyal to the government, were saddened by the treatment they were receiving and were not going to hand in their weapons. Sprigg, however, did not hear the warnings and issued a circular as the 'Premier and Master of the Colony' demanding a voluntary disarmament as a proof of loyalty. (Henceforth his critics referred to him 'the little master').[72] On 22 December, responding to instructions from Cape Town, Griffith called for the Basotho to voluntarily surrender their firearms for which they would be compensated. The results were almost nil.[73]

In January 1880 Letsie submitted a petition against disarmament to the Cape Government and another to the queen. The petition was compiled by missionaries working among the Basotho, who strongly expressed their feelings on disarmament:

> We have done our utmost to obey our magistrates…Our guns are at the disposal and command of the Queen's Government. Our guns wait for any order which the Queen shall give us to use them in her service and for the honour of her name. It was at her command those guns seized Langalibalele; even now, they have fought against Morosi on behalf of the Queen.[74]

[71] *Ibid.*
[72] Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, p. 85.
[73] Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto*, p. 138.
[74] CPP A.12-'80, Petition of Basuto Chiefs and People to Frere, 21.1.1880, p. 3.

At a cabinet meeting in March it was decided that the petition did not warrant a change in policy.

The actions of the Cape government regarding disarmament began to be of concern to officials in London. Hicks Beach at the Colonial Office had initially been sympathetic to the idea of controlling the gun trade in South Africa but by the late 1870s he became concerned by the possibilities of conflict and urged caution.[75] In March Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had assumed the duties of governor of Natal and the Transvaal and high commissioner for South-Eastern Africa the previous year, sent a minute to Hicks Beach describing disarmament as 'a very dangerous experiment' which he believed would 'unite every section of the natives in South Africa against us'.[76] In the same month Hicks Beach warned the Cape government that imperial assistance might not be forthcoming if the colony faced a rebellion.[77]

A proclamation issued on 6 April 1880 required the surrender of all guns before 21 May, under penalty of imprisonment with or without hard labour for any period not exceeding seven years or a fine not exceeding £500.[78] At the end of April a deputation from Letsie, accompanied by the French missionary Cochet, travelled to Cape Town to present their case against disarmament and the selling of land at Quthing. They emphasized in the petition that they were loyal to the government, had never been 'accused of misconduct' but were told to surrender the very arms they had been 'called upon to use in upholding the Government'.[79] While they were willing to pay double the tax, they felt it their duty to lift up their voices and 'let our cry come before your Honourable House for deliverance from this harsh and humiliating law'.[80] Matters became heated in April and May. Just as the outrage over proposals to sell off parts of Quthing were at their height and anger over disarmament was building, the governor issued a proclamation on 12 April that the hut tax would be increased to one pound. Another proclamation, issued on the same day, announced that individuals residing in Basutoland could apply to the governor's agent to obtain a quit rent grant of one or two morgen at the seat of each magistracy. This went against

[75] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 83.
[76] *Ibid*, p. 84.
[77] Saunders, 'The Transkeian Rebellion of 1880-81', p. 32.
[78] Theal, *History of South Africa 1873-1884*, p. 58.
[79] CPP A.10-'80, Petition of Letsie and other Chiefs of Basutoland.
[80] *Ibid*.

the agreement Moshoeshoe made when he ceded the country to British authority which was that the land would be inalienable.[81]

Griffith reported in February that Masopha was intimidating the Mfengu chief Mpoba who surrendered his guns.[82] In late April he wrote to the secretary for native affairs that the whole community was 'in a state of apparent bewilderment, awaiting the final settlement of the disarmament question'.[83] The act, like so much colonial legislation, had unforeseen circumstances. Griffith reported that the 'common people' who had

> for some years past looked up to the Magistrate with confidence and respect, and have fled to them for counsel and protection, whenever oppressed by their Chiefs or others, are now forced back into the arms of their Chiefs, who are acting as their champions in endeavouring to obtain a reversal of disarmament policy.[84]

He went on in the same letter to emphasize how the people look upon the magistrates with suspicion and that the prestige of government was at a very low ebb.

In response to the concerns raised by opposition members, the administration offered greater compensation for the guns handed in and promised to return a tenth of the weapons. The date for the surrender of weapons was extended to 21 June and then 12 July in order to give the Basotho deputation from Letsie time to return to Basutoland and report back. Letsie agreed to hand in his weapons although he was deeply opposed to doing so. Letsie's resistance to disarmament was tempered by his age, ill health and concern about his own position. It was the king's brother Masopha and his heir Lerotholi who became the most outspoken and determined critics of disarmament.

After parliament went into recess on 30 July, Sprigg travelled to Basutoland, accompanied by Joseph Orpen, who was considered an expert on the Basotho, to re-discuss disarmament. On Orpen's advice, Sprigg attempted to appease the powerful dissident chiefs Lerotholi and Masopha. The *Pitso* was a failure. Masopha refused to attend and Lerotholi demanded the total

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[81] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland*, p. 156.
[82] CPP A.12-'80, Governor's Agent to Secretary for Native Affairs, 10.2.1880, p. 11.
[83] *Ibid*, Governor's Agent to Secretary for Native Affairs, 27.4.1880, p. 38.
[84] *Ibid*.

withdraw of the Peace Preservation Act.[85] Merriman criticized the meeting, writing 'we were treated to the spectacle of the chief Minister of this Colony meeting open resistance to law by palaver, and imploring the assistance of some of the very individual chiefs whom he had been foremost in condemning and scoffing at…'.[86] The government moved troops from the colony to Basutoland after an attack on men who had handed in guns. On 13 September war began when colonial troops under Colonel Carrington came under fire while on their way from Wepener to Mafeteng. Among the Basotho the war is known as the *Ntoa ea Lithunya*, the War of the Guns.[87] The minority who handed over their weapons became known as *Mateketa* (those who hold licences) while the rebels were known as *Mabelete* (those who kept guns).[88] It was the hard-drinking, ill-educated but popular Lerotholi, described by Merriman as 'the bravest of the brave', who led a guerilla war against colonial troops with the support of most of the Basotho.[89]

'The political condition of the district is satisfactory': Building Tensions at Matatiele

The war has been discussed in some detail in other works and what is important for this study is how events in Basutoland impacted on the chiefdoms of East Griqualand. Magistrates in the Transkei generally disapproved of the Disarmament Act and had strong views against it.[90] Disarmament highlighted the ideological differences between imperial and settler politicians and members of the Native Affairs Department. In this case the magistrates of Basutoland and the Transkei had a better understanding of the attitudes held by African people and the difficulties of practically enforcing disarmament. D.B. Hook, magistrate at Herschel at the time of the war, felt 'the disarmament idea was excellent theoretically, but bristling with risk'.[91] The influential magistrate at Mzimkhulu, Donald Strachan, believed disarmament would create a 'common cause of distrust'.[92] Magistrates amongst the Mpondomise and Basotho were aware and concerned about how people felt about disarmament. Welsh at Tsolo reported that the

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[85] *Ibid*, p. 86.

[86] Merriman to Editor Graaff-Reinet Advertiser 2.12.1880 in Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman*, p. 84.

[87] Sanders, *Throwing Down White Man*, p. 98.

[88] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland,* p. 154.

[89] Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto*, p. 147; Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, p. 86.

[90] J.X. Merriman to Bishop N.J. Merriman, 25.2.1879, in Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman*, p. 71.

[91] D.B. Hook, *With Sword and Statute: On the Cape of Good Hope Frontier* (Cape Town, 1906), p. 279.

[92] BNA G. 13-'80, Report of the Magistrate of Umzimkulu, 6.1.1880, p. 85.

Mpondomise were restless.[93] He wrote that the Mpondomise 'were very naturally wondering whether they too would be called upon to surrender their arms'.[94] Martin Liefeldt, magistrate at Matatiele, reported 'The feelings of the natives regarding disarmament has not been openly expressed, but I believe they consider it a very serious matter. A gun to the Mosuto is the most valuable article he possesses, and he thinks it his duty to retain it at any sacrifice'.[95]

It was not surprising that the Basotho of Matatiele, who inhabited 'Moshoeshoe's land over the Malutis', considered disarmament 'a serious matter'.[96] An 1875 census of the Matatiele district placed the population at 5728 Basotho and 2529 Mfengu. Colonial officials divided the chiefdoms between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu rivers into two broad categories: those in the Mzimkhulu, Mount Currie, Matatiele and Gatberg districts which had lived under the old Griqua government and the more recent colonial subjects of Makaula, Mhlontlo, Mditshwa and Jojo. Magistrates considered the latter 'not so advanced as the other districts' and 'more barbarous and less thrifty', while the former 'had enjoyed peace and prosperity' under colonial protection.[97] Colonial officials regarded the Basotho as ideal subjects; examples of the success of the Cape's civilizing policy. They wore European clothing, bought ploughs and wagons, had 'discarded the round huts and live in good-sized brick buildings', accepted Christianity, paid their hut tax, provided men for levies, all signs from the perspective of colonial officials of advancement, progress and loyalty.[98]

Liefeldt reported confidentially in 1878 that 'the political condition of the district is satisfactory. The action taken by the different tribes in quelling the Griqua rebellion, shewed great loyalty to Government, and I have every reason to believe they remain so'.[99] He went on to report that the influence of the government was 'gradually superseding that of the chiefs'. In January 1880 Brownlee echoed Liefeldt's report and wrote that 'everything appeared most satisfactory and

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[93] *Ibid*, Report of Magistrate with Mditshwa, 6.1.1880, p. 95.
[94] *Ibid*, pp. 95-96.
[95] *Ibid*, Report by Magistrate of Matatiele, 1.1.1880, p. 89.
[96] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland*, p. 138.
[97] BNA G.13-'80, Report by Chief Magistrate of East Griqualand, 27.1.1880, p. 72.
[98] *Ibid*, p. 70
[99] G.33-79, Report of the Assistant Magistrate of Matatiele, 1.1.1879, p. 42.

peaceful' at Matatiele.[100] In April, however, the chief magistrate obtained information from a source that the Sotho King Letsie had sent messengers to the Basotho living in the Matatiele district urging them to make common cause with their kinsmen in Basutoland and resist disarmament as 'their turn would follow'.[101] According to Brownlee's informant, the Basotho 'in case of a rising, had the promise of support from most of the Chiefs of this division'.[102] Brownlee reported his concerns to William Ayliff, the secretary for native affairs, who brushed them aside.[103] Despite what Brownlee had heard via his informants, over the next few months 'to all appearance matters continued to move on smoothly and satisfactorily as usual'.[104] In early September, as the crisis in Basutoland deepened and finally led to open warfare, Brownlee received reports that Makoai received messengers from Basutoland and that the Basotho were driving their cattle into the Drakensberg.[105]

Brownlee summoned a gathering on 11 September at Liefeldt's residence at Moteri's Kop beyond Matatiele to discuss matters in Basutoland. Brownlee informed the estimated 500 men attending the meeting that the CMR had not been moved to Basutoland with hostile intentions, but to protect those who had voluntarily handed over their arms and were now being attacked by Lerotholi against the wishes of his father.[106] Incorrectly, but in good faith, Brownlee informed the gathering that disarmament would be voluntary.[107] Brownlee's misunderstanding seems to have originated from a statement made by Sprigg at the 1879 *Pitso* in which he said in the face of strong criticism by the Basotho chiefs that the government 'leaves the matter for the present...when times have become quieter...you will see it is for your own advantage', which was interpreted by many at the gathering and subsequently reported in the press that disarmament would be temporarily shelved.[108] Brownlee then directly confronted the issue, informing the gathering that he was aware that many of them intended joining the lawless actions of Lerotholi

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[100] BNA G.13-'80, Report by Chief Magistrate of East Griqualand, 27.1.1880, p.71.
[101] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 194.
[102] BNA G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 69.
[103] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 153.
[104] BNA G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 69.
[105] In his work *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History* Brownlee says the messages were from Letsie. In his magistrate's report written in February 1881 he says the messengers were from Lerotholi and Masupha.
[106] BNA G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 69.
[107] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 195.
[108] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland,* p. 149.

and Masopha, but that they should remember that the land they lived on was not their heritage but had been allocated to them by the government. They enjoyed peace and prosperity while living there and became wealthy and whatever the Basotho did in Basutoland it did not concern them.[109] The chiefs present, including those who would later remain loyal, spoke indignantly of Brownlee's suspicion that Makoai was involved in fermenting rebellion.[110] They pointed out that as a Sotho he was obliged to receive messengers from Letsie, but it did not necessarily follow that he would obey them. To Liefeldt's query about the movement of cattle, they responded that there was no ulterior motive; the cattle were being moved to new grass, albeit slightly earlier than usual.[111] Brownlee was aware that the 'feeling of sympathy with rebels was very strong', but hoped the meeting would result in 'a change for the better'.[112]

When Brownlee realised that he had been incorrect in telling the Basotho that disarmament would be voluntary, and that they knew of the CMR defeat on 13 September while marching from Wepener to Mafeteng, he decided to return to Matatiele to rectify the mistake and calm the situation. He hoped that his personal influence 'might restrain the rebellious chiefs and people from revolt'.[113] He left for Moteri's Kop on Thursday, 30 September, accompanied by George Hawthorn, magistrate at Mzimkhulu, and Donald Strachan, a prominent trader, as well as 25 members of the *Abalondolozi*, under William Catherine of the CMR. On instructions from Brownlee, Liefeldt raised just over 100 men from the Basotho and Hlubi chiefdoms in case they were needed to protect the magistracy. Included in their number were 15 men under Ramohlakoana's son Stampa and 40 under his brother Musi. On the journey over to Matatiele, Brownlee was informed by a Hlubi headman named Umgubo that the Basotho 'had cast in their lot with the Basutos of Basutoland' and planned to attend the meeting on the following day armed in order to kill the magistrate and the other government officials.[114] Brownlee decided nevertheless to continue with the meeting. On Saturday, 2 October, about 600 mounted and armed followers of Chief Makoai and his son Sekake gathered at Sekake's homestead about a mile and a half from the

[109] BNA G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 69.
[110] Harber, *Gentlemen of Brave Mettle*, p. 77.
[111] *Ibid.*
[112] BPP C. 2569 Enclosure 7 in No. 42, Brownlee to Secretary for Native Affairs, 13.9.80.
[113] Macquarrie (ed.), *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1, p. 107.
[114] BNA G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 70; Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 196.

residency, and then made their way to Moteri's Kop, arriving at 11 o'clock. A few unarmed Hlubi were also in attendance but remained aloof from the Basotho. If the Hlubi offered any resistance when the plan to murder the magistrates was put into action they too would be killed. Brownlee, not wanting to exacerbate the tensions, informed the men who had accompanied him and those raised by Liefeldt to remain at the CMR quarters about a quarter of a mile from the residency. Informers told Brownlee that during the meeting a signal would be made by Chief Sekake, which, when repeated by his uncle Chief Pandela, would indicate it was time to kill the white officials.[115] He then addressed the meeting. He told the men that they had grown prosperous in the years that they had lived in Matatiele under the protection of the government and that if they went into rebellion they would again become wanderers, and would not be permitted to return to the land they were now, by their folly and rebellion, abandoning. He urged them to return home and lay down their arms and follow their peaceful occupation and 'all would be well, and the demonstration of that day would be pardoned'.[116] He concluded that the Basotho present should not be mistaken in believing that all races in South Africa were on their side. There were many who looked with envious eyes on the country in which the Matatiele Basotho had so rapidly become wealthy; they loved the Basotho cattle and Basotho lands more than they loved the Basotho, and these men would rather fight against the Basotho than against us.

After his speech Brownlee asked Stampa, son of Ramohlakoana, to fetch his pipe from the magistrate's house. Stampa jumped up and shouted 'make way!' Some of the men mistook this as the prearranged signal to attack the officials and they rushed to their horses for guns and battle-axes. Sekake and Pandela did not move and the ashamed men returned to their places. Brownlee remarked, 'I see your move and I understand it'.[117] Donald Strachan then addressed the meeting, and he too pointed out how the Basotho had prospered since settling at Matatiele. After Strachan's speech the leading men had an opportunity to speak, and the 'usual protestations of loyalty followed'.[118] Brownlee then informed the meeting that he would stay at the residency until Monday and if they saw the error of their ways they might again meet him. His decision to stay was to give white traders the time to move to places of safety. He also was prepared to take the risk so that by

[115] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 197.
[116] *Ibid*, p. 198.
[117] *Ibid*, p. 199.
[118] *Ibid*.

his 'presence and advice strengthen and encourage the small unarmed garrison of Matatiele' which if he had left 'would have discouraged them and encouraged the rebels'.[119]

There is no account of the discussions that followed among the Basotho chiefs. After the meeting with Brownlee concluded some of the men present went to Sekake's village, about a mile and a half from the residency. The majority returned to the residence of Sekake's father Makoai, where they spent the night. From the residency Brownlee and the other officials saw mounted messengers riding in all directions from Sekake's camp. According to the Brownlee, Sekake sent the messengers to inform the chiefs who had not been at the meeting that the magistrates were cut off from Kokstad and that all the chiefdoms, including the Griqua, were in arms against the government.[120] This created the impression among the chiefs who were loyal that they stood alone and would be attacked as chiefdoms were in Basutoland.

On Sunday morning Marthinus Lepiane came to the magistracy and informed Brownlee that he wanted to join the government side 'but it was difficult to say where the Government side might be found, and besides this, it would have been certain destruction for him to leave the Basotho'.[121] At midday Makoai sent a messenger to protest against Brownlee's orders that whites should abandon the Matatiele area as he felt this reflected negatively on his loyalty. He asked pardon for the armed demonstration made by his people and his sons the day before. Brownlee refused to withdraw the instructions for traders to abandon the area as he felt they were no longer safe among the Basotho. He informed the messenger that there was no reason for Makoai to ask for forgiveness and 'that if the people would lay down their arms and return to their ordinary occupation, the matter would be satisfactorily arranged'.[122] He then sent Makoai's messenger to Sekake's homestead saying that he had not heard from the Basotho about the proceedings of the previous day, and that as he was to leave on Monday he needed to see Sekake. Sekake's response was that he had already done wrong by appearing armed before the magistrate the day before, and was afraid to come and see him. Brownlee informed him that he was prepared to overlook what had happened the day before but by refusing to appear before him he committed another offence. A short while later Sekake sent

[119] BNA G.20-'81, Report by Chief Magistrate of East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 71.
[120] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 200.
[121] *Ibid*, p. 201.
[122] BNA G.20-'81, Report by Chief Magistrate of East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 72.

Ramrooba, one of his leading men, to say that he would see Brownlee once his uncles Pandela and Umpapulana had arrived and that they would come armed. Shortly before the messenger arrived, Ramohlakoana, who had spent most of the day at the magistracy and 'who appeared to be in great distress', left.[123] It had been arranged that he and his brother Sibi would meet Brownlee the next day with as many armed and mounted men as they could raise to accompany the officials on part of their journey back to Kokstad.

Shortly before sunset Ramohlakoana returned and informed Brownlee that his son Stampa, who with 15 men made up part of the men raised by Liefeldt to defend the magistracy, had been told by Ramrooba that Sekake and his men planned to attack the magistracy that night and that Stampa should be ready to join the attack to which he had agreed. Brownlee ordered Ramohlakoana to remove Stampa. Brownlee was concerned that Musi could not be trusted either and instructed him and his 25 men to guard the stables which were outside of the enclosure and 'where he could do no more harm to the little garrison than any other of Sikaki's men'.[124] Brownlee instructed Donald Strachan to prepare the magistracy for the expected attack. All the men, black and white, were issued with ammunition and a couple of remaining boxes placed in the centre of the enclosure, ready if they needed to be used. After dark, Musi asked if he could leave and talk to Sekake to see what his plans were and report them back to the magistrate. This roused Brownlee's suspicion about Musi's loyalty and he declined his request and directed he be watched. Brownlee, worn out by two sleepless nights, retired to bed early and left the younger members of his staff to keep watch. The expected attack did not materialise and the night passed by quietly.

On Monday morning, 4 October, Brownlee decided to return to Kokstad. Liefeldt suggested that he and his clerk, Austen, and a few policemen should make a dash cross country to the Hlubi clans towards what is now Mount Fletcher and organize a levy. Brownlee suggested that he wait until they had left the magistracy which would draw the enemy away and give them a better chance of escape. Brownlee agreed to Strachan's suggestion that they avoid the main wagon road which was blocked by Makoai's men and instead take the route that passed Ramohlakoana's homestead. Makoai's men closely watched their movements. They did not

[123] *Ibid*.
[124] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 203.

increase their pace when they saw about 200 men riding just ahead of them, as they did not want it to seem that they were running away. When out of sight of Sekake's camp they turned to the left towards Ramohlakoana. Having attained the crest of the first hill they were met by a group of about thirty horsemen under Ramohlakoana and 20 men under his brother Sibi, who accompanied them for about five miles before turning back to attend a meeting at Sekake's. While making their way across the Cedarville Flats, an advance guard of men attacked them. A short skirmish ensued without loss of life on either side. The colonial force managed to repulse the attackers and reached the Cedarville Drift safely. Brownlee left Strachan in charge of the camp at the Cedarville Drift and on Tuesday hurried back to Kokstad to start making preparations for a campaign against the Basotho. He left the decision whether to hold the drift or fall back to Kokstad to Strachan. On Wednesday, 6 October, Strachan, realising that it would be impossible to hold on indefinitely to the drift and concerned that he might be cut off by the rising river, withdrew to Kokstad. Shortly after leaving for Kokstad, Sekake's men occupied the buildings at Cedarville.

The events that transpired at Matatiele raise an important question: to what extent were the Basotho chiefdoms influenced by what was happening in the Sotho kingdom? Makoai and Sekake's decision to join the uprising came as a surprise to colonial officials and prompted Theal to comment that it 'had burst like sudden thunderclap' upon the government.[125] There were none of the tell-tale signs of discontent that were evident among other chiefdoms that later rebelled. Charles Brownlee believed that the Basotho chiefdoms reacted to events taking place among their kinsmen beyond the Drakensberg, and responded to a call by either Letsie or Lerotholi to rebel. In his reports and writings on what transpired at Matatiele Brownlee left contradictory statements. In his magistrate's report written in February 1881, and in his speech to the Basotho at Matori's Kop, he said the messengers were from Lerotholi and Masopha. In his work *Kafir Life and History* he insisted that as late as September it was Letsie who was sending messages to the Basotho chiefdoms in East Griqualand informing them that his child Lerotholi had got into conflict with the government and although he was too old to support him, he expected them to do so.[126] Saunders too writes that the Basotho of East Griqualand 'had reasons of kin to help push

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[125] Theal, *History of South Africa 1873 to 1884*, vol. 10, p 161.
[126] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 194.

them into rebellion'.[127] Peter Sanders, however, points out that the Basotho at Matatiele 'had reasons of their own for rebellion'.[128] They too feared disarmament. Saunders has shown that with the outbreak of the Zulu War and Moorosi's uprising, Cape officials became more hesitant about disarming chiefdoms in Thembuland and East Griqualand as this would make them defenseless before the Mpondo.[129] Although disarmament 'slackened' east of the Kei, rumours spread that after disarmament the government intended limiting the number of cattle and planned to move women and children to the western districts of the colony, all of which caused much disquiet among the Basotho of Matatiele.[130] Makoai and his followers knew firsthand what it meant to be defeated by a better armed enemy, and watched events in Basutoland with grave concern. Blyth's treatment of Nehemiah Moshesh a few years earlier and the Cape's subsequent rejection of his and later Letsie's claim to land in the Matatiele district was, as Barlow has shown, a source of resentment. Would the Basotho of Matatiele have rebelled if their kinsmen had not risen in Basutoland is the pertinent question? They were relatively small chiefdoms and probably would not have been pushed, regardless of their own fears about the changes being brought on by colonialism, into rebellion unless it was initiated beyond the Malotis.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from events unfolding in September and early October. Firstly, there were divisions between and within chiefdoms and ruling families as to whether they should join the uprising. Lepheana and his son Ramohlakoana remained loyal, while Musi, Marthinus and Ramohlakoana's son and heir Mohlakoana joined the rebels. The Batlokhwa ruling house was also divided. Chief Lelingoana and his brother Lesuthu joined the uprising, while his uncle and former regent Lehana remained loyal. Not all chiefs or their supporters could be simply placed into the categories of loyal and rebel. Some chiefs waited to see which way events would go before taking sides. Lepheana's son Sibi's initially made a show of loyalty but later joined the rebels. Once the colonial forces crossed the Mzimvubu and it was clear gained the upper hand, he rejoined the government forces.

[127] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 92.
[128] Sanders, '*Throwing Down White Man*', p. 156.
[129] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 73.
[130] *Ibid*.

From what took place, it is clear many Basotho supported the rebellion. Colonial officials tended to see a dichotomy between chiefs and commoners and believed that chiefs forced their followers into rebellion against their wishes.[131] From their actions in September and October 1880 we are able to gain some understanding about how commoners viewed colonialism. Many Basotho shifted their adherence from loyalist chiefs to those who rebelled. Half of Sibi's supporters joined the rebels, while all of Ramohlakoana's adherents abandoned him. Lebenya was 'abandoned and robbed' by his own people.[132] Most of his men joined Sekake in the skirmish at the Mzimvubu Drift and later fought with him in the mountains of Basutoland.[133] His own people abducted Leheana and carried him off as far as the Orange River before he was rescued by Ramohlakoana. Approximately 120 men at most remained with Leheana. The majority deserted him for his nephew Lelingoana.[134] The fact that, despite the considerable risks, most followers of Sibi, Lebenya and Leheana joined the uprising shows that they were deeply unhappy about the actions of the Cape administration. It also puts pay to the notion that commoners blindly supported chiefs regardless of their decisions.

The conflict resulted in major shifts in the long standing alliances and divisions at Matatiele, as well as changes in political leadership. Gillian Bardsley has shown that for most of the 1860s and 1870s political divisions in the area – effectively Nehemiah Moshesh and Makoai versus Lepheana and his sons - had its origins in Lesotho. Once the rebellion broke out Lephenea's sons Musi, Marthinus and Mohlakoana fought with Makoai and Sekake in the conflict. There seems to have been some attempt by Makoai to try and win Ramohlakoana over to the rebel side. Brownlee believed that he and the other officials were not murdered as Makoai 'did not consider it politic to break with Ramhlakwna and Sibi by attacking us while they were our escort'.[135] The alliance between Nehemiah and Makoai split as the latter rebelled and the former remained loyal. The policies of the colonial government posed enough of a threat to overcome at least some pre-colonial divisions that had their origin in the Sotho kingdom.

[131] *Ibid*, p. 93.
[132] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 218.
[133] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 198.
[134] *Ibid*, p. 167.
[135] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 205.

The rebellion resulted in a notable change in political leadership amongst hereditary leaders. Nehemiah for most of the 1870s had been the most vocal critic of colonial rule. Yet he remained loyal, and played little part in subsequent events. There is no direct evidence as to why he decided to remain loyal, but probably like his brother George, he was not certain if the Basotho could win and by backing the colonial side he could gain some of the autonomy from Letsie that he desired and motivated his move to Matatiele in the 1850s. His last experience with the Cape government which had resulted in months in jail without bail might also have tempered his fighting spirit. Makoai had proven his loyalty in the eyes of colonial officials by paying his tax and providing levies to guard the passes of the Drakensberg during the Moorosi rebellion now emerged with his son Sekake as the leaders of the rebellion at Matatiele. Political loyalties, whether they developed before or after the establishment of white rule, were constantly shifting depending on changing realties, an idea that magistrates did not always fully understand. Besides Makoai, others chiefs who had been considered loyal just a few months earlier joined the rebellion. Lelingoana had also provided men to guard the passes over the Drakensberg during Moorosi's rebellion. His uncle and the regent Lehana held back from providing men and so he was removed as chief by colonial officials and replaced by Lelingoana.[136] Further towards Mount Fletcher political relations had been characterized by conflict between Lebenya and his ally Lehana against the Hlubi, in particular the followers of Zibi, over land between the Kinira and Tina Rivers. Lehana and Lebenya now found themselves on the same side as Zibi and often on the receiving end of raids by rebels.

The uprising that began in September 1880 against the Cape government among the Basotho chiefdoms at Matatiele resulted from years of growing mistrust and deep unhappiness over the actions of the colonial administration. In the mid-1870s concerns over the undermining of the role of chiefs, the payment of hut tax and redrawing of boundaries, resultant essentially from the policies developed by Charles Brownlee during his tenure as secretary for native affairs, were heightened in the late 1870s by the actions of a new ministry at the Cape as major shifts took place in both imperial and colonial policy. Confederation spurred a more vigorous native affairs policy under the Sprigg ministry, supported by the high commissioner, which was underpinned by disarmament and the threats of breaking up chiefdoms and the alienation of land. At a

[136] BNA G. 13-'80, Report by Magistrate of Gatberg, 5.1.1880, pp. 102-103.

number of critical times white officials misunderstood, whether through arrogance or miscalculation, the immediate and long term consequences of their decisions. Blyth believed that the arrest of Nehemiah would stop any potential defiance of the colonial government but instead it increased his popularity. Magistrates seemed oblivious to the support Nehemiah Moshesh had in his struggle for greater autonomy for the Matatiele district and his general resistance to confederation. The proposal to confiscate the lands of Moorosi and hand it over to white farmers which was meant to act as a warning to those who intended to resist colonial rule, 'acted not to inhibit revolt but foster it'.[137] Sprigg and many opposition politicians in the Cape parliament held onto the notion almost to the last that disarmament could be achieved peaceably, despite warnings from Griffith, missionaries and Lerotholi to the contrary. Despite having their own deeply felt reasons for resisting colonial rule, it is unlikely that the smaller chiefdoms of Matatiele would have gone as far as rebelling if it had not been for the actions of the *Mabelete* in Basutoland. The uprising split ruling families, as some chiefs remained loyal and others rebelled. The large number of men who deserted loyal chiefs indicated a degree of popular support for the uprising. The old Moshesh-Leheana dichotomy broke down to a large extent. Nehemiah and Leheana once considered recalcitrant remained loyal and largely lost their support, while Makoai, Sekake and Lelingoana, the former loyals, emerged as leaders of resistance to colonial rule.

[137] Saunders, *The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 92.

Chapter Five

'Hearts White towards Government':
Loyal Chiefdoms and the Offensive against the Basotho

In early October 1880 colonial rule collapsed at Matatiele. King Moshoeshoe's senior cousin, the venerable warrior Makoai and his son Sekake, and the Batlokhwa Chief Lelingoana and his brother Lesuthu emerged as the most prominent of the rebel leaders. These men led their followers on a series of raids against white-owned farms and Hlubi homesteads. Despite having the same concerns about the unacceptable changes brought by colonial rule, the Bhaca, Nhlangwini, Hlubi and Xesibe chiefdoms of East Griqualand remained loyal to the colonial government and comprised the bulk of the military force that went against the Basotho. Pre-colonial relations between loyal and rebel chiefdoms, past experiences with the Natal colonial government, present political realities and the prospects of economic benefits all contributed to the decision by these chiefdoms not to take up arms in 1880. The Griqua, many of whom had recently rebelled against the Cape administration, also remained loyal. Their complicated relations with surrounding chiefdoms during the years of their independence, particularly their campaign against the followers of Nehemiah in the 1860s, prevented an alliance with the Basotho, despite their own experiences with colonialism. This chapter explores the dynamics that contributed to chiefdoms choosing to remain loyal, as well as the role played by indigenous leaders in the colonial campaign against the Basotho.

The Nhlangwini

The Nhlangwini chief Sidoyi played a particularly important role in the military actions against the Basotho and his and his followers' progress from rebels to loyals needs to be understood. At Mzimkhulu the Nhlangwini chiefdom lived under Sidoyi and the heirs of Fodo. Although genealogically senior, the house of Fodo had become split and greatly weakened by internal conflicts. This left Sidoyi as the most influential chief in the Mzimkhulu area and his loyalty and that of his followers, not always assured, vital for the colonial government. The chiefdom had been devastated by its conflicts with Natal authorities in 1846 and 1857. It was only by forming an alliance with the Griqua after their arrival in 1863 that the chiefdom was able to adequately resist the more numerous Bhaca and regain some of its former prosperity. Although Sidoyi was

hesitant initially to give unqualified support to the Cape government after 1874, it was unlikely that he wanted to be pulled into another devastating confrontation with a colonial government, albeit it a different administration, and he proceeded with caution.

The Nhlangwini's conflict with Shepstone in Natal two decades earlier and their subsequent alliance with the Griqua government of Adam Kok concerned colonial officials who were always suspicious of their intentions and attempted to limit the influence of their leader Sidoyi. Magistrates on Natal's southern border, besides alleging that men living under Sidoyi were responsible for stealing horses and cattle from frontier farmers, believed from the late 1850s that he was gathering people around him who were discontent with white rule and would become over time a threat to the stability and safety of the colony. Caesar Hawkins, magistrate of the upper Mkomazi and stationed at Richmond in Natal, wrote in July 1858 that Sidoyi's

> Tribe are gradually withdrawing from this Colony and joining their late Chief. Seven kraals have already left and the greater part of the tribe will most probably follow eventually. I would beg to call the attention of His Excellency to this combination of two Chiefs who have both been punished by the Government and who being settled upon our immediate frontier would be ready to take advantage of any opportunity of avenging themselves and recovering their lost cattle.
>
> Although the numbers are at present too few to be formidable, yet may become so by gathering around them the disaffected and turbulent from the surrounding tribes as well as those who have been driven from British Kaffraria and who are gradually filling up the country beyond our south western frontier.[1]

White officials attempted to stop Sidoyi's followers who had remained in colony after his flight from the Natal government from joining him at Mzimkhulu. In February 1870 Hawkins, with the permission of the lieutenant governor, wrote to the secretary of the Griqua government proposing that an arrangement be entered into by which all Africans who crossed without permission from Natal to Griqualand be compelled to return to the colony with their cattle. The Natal government, in turn, would apply the same policy to Africans leaving Griqualand. The proposal was in response to Hawkins having received a report that 'about forty kraals of the

[1] PAR, 1/RMD 3/1/1/1 Hawkins to Secretary for Native Affairs, 28.7.1858, p. 171.

Enhlangweni tribe' had crossed the border for the purpose of joining Sidoyi. The concerned magistrate wrote:

> Unless measurers are immediately taken to put a stop to this exodus the whole of the Enhlangweni tribe I am given to understand propose leaving Natal and forming a strong nation under Usidoi or some other chief of this tribe. I need not point out to you that the formation and concentration of so strong a tribe will sure to be a source of future trouble to Captain Kok and eventually involve the Natal Government in complications on account of their proximity to the border.[2]

Two years later Hawkins again expressed his concern, writing to the secretary for native affairs 'another section of the Enhlangwini tribe have left the Colony for the purpose of rejoining their former Chief Usidoi in Griqualand; in a few years the whole of Usidoi's people with the exception of a few kraals will have quitted the Colony'.[3]

With the appointment in 1874 of Orpen as British resident to Nomansland, Sidoyi realized that the Cape administration was asserting its influence beyond the Mthatha River which made his position and that of his adherents more precarious than before. In January 1874, as Orpen was organizing an expedition against Langalibalele, Sidoyi travelled to the magistracy near Mount Fletcher to seek an interview with the resident and offer his assistance. Orpen recorded the meeting as follows:

> The outlaw Sidoni came forward and desired to be forgiven his offences, and I said that having shown his loyalty, and came forward in arms to save the Queen, he was forgiven so far as this territory was concerned, and I would plead for him to the Natal Government, and I am now about arranging his submission to Natal preparatory to pardon.[4]

In May the magistrate at Mzimkhulu, Donald Strachan, accompanied Sidoyi to the magistrate at Harding where he paid a fine of £50, for which Strachan stood surety, so that his outlawry could be rescinded.[5] He was disqualified from holding chiefly rank in Natal but it did remove the threat of arrest if he crossed the border, and the possibility after annexation of him being forced

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[2] PAR, 1/RMD 3/1/1/2, Hawkins to Secretary to the Griqua Government, 17.2.1870, p. 342.
[3] *Ibid*, Hawkins to Secretary for Native Affairs, 12.8.1872, p. 489.
[4] BNA, G.27-'74, Orpen to Brownlee, 21.1.1874, p. 124.
[5] Rainier, *Madonela*, p 108.

to return to Natal by the Cape administration. Strachan attempted, despite his own personal misgivings about Sidoyi, to draw the chief into the new administration by not only having his outlawry lifted but by ensuring he was granted a farm by the 1875 commission.

Despite his efforts, Strachan was concerned Sidoyi would find common ground with his Griqua allies against the Cape administration. At the time that the Cape government assumed the administration of East Griqualand, a group of Griqua who were unhappy with the annexation founded an organization called the Committee of Twelve. Among the leaders of the Committee were Adam 'Muis' Kok, Willem 'Tol' Kok and Lodewyk Kok. These men were all younger members of ruling families. They were the heirs to the *Kaptancy* who suddenly found themselves bereft of their inheritance. The real standard bearer of the younger men was Smith Pommer who, considering his childhood experiences, viewed the coming of colonialism with apprehension. Sidoyi had developed a long-standing relationship with Pommer going back to the 1850s.[6] In March 1876 Strachan reported to Cumming, the first colonial magistrate of East Griqualand, that Pommer was 'known to be intriguing with Sidoyi' and as a consequence a request was made that a company of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police be sent to Kokstad.[7] The discontent against the colonial government was brought to a head in February 1878 when the magistrate arrested Lodewyk Kok and his brother Adam 'Muis' Kok after a disagreement with a shopkeeper in Kokstad. Muis was released on bail and Lodewyk retained to stand trial. Adam Muis left East Griqualand for Pondoland with some of his followers. Exactly what Muis was doing in Pondoland is a matter of some debate. Blyth later claimed Muis hoped to establish an alliance with the Pondo and Nhlangwini under Sidoyi to lead an uprising against the government. Blyth reported in February 1878 that Sidoyi 'is a restless and not very loyal man, and is carefully watched'.[8] In mid-March Sidoyi unexpectedly reported to the magistrate's office in Mzimkhulu and handed over his arms as a pledge of loyalty to the government.[9] Blyth returned them to Sidoyi as government arms to be used when instructed to do so. On 9 April Blyth received reports of armed meetings and the movements of Griqua towards Pondoland. On 11 April matters began to become more urgent. 'Muis' crossed the border from Pondoland at

[6] Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas*, p. 118.
[7] Dower, *The Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand Eas*t, p. 86.
[8] BNA G.17-78, Report of the Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 5.2.1878, p. 63.
[9] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 113.

Brook's Nek and joined forces with Smith Pommer who had ridden up from the Ibisi with his followers as well as supporters of Sidoyi. Muis and Pommer began to make their way in a circular movement to the old Griqua laager site on Mount Currie.

While this was taking place Strachan was marching up from Mzimkhulu with members of the *Abalondolozi* to offer assistance to Blyth in Kokstad. Strachan had sent a message to Sidoyi instructing him and his men to meet him at the Zuurberg range. Sidoyi did not report at the appointed time and Strachan pushed on without him. On 14 April Blyth led his force against the Griqua who were positioned in the old laager on the slopes of Mount Currie. Just before the skirmish began Sidoyi and his men appeared. Strachan immediately took the chief into the CMR camp in Kokstad while his men joined the colonial forces in attacking the Griqua position.

At a commission established in December 1878 to investigate the Griqua rebellion numerous witnesses testified that Sidoyi had agreed to join the uprising and provide military support for the attack that took place at the old laager. Sidoyi strongly denied all of these allegations and insisted that he was loyal. The commissioners concluded:

> He acknowledges himself that rumours of the period were unfavourable to his loyalty. And well he may, for ever since his flight from Natal, he has been a suspected individual. There is always a great deal of "smoke" about Sidoi…There is not a more fervent loyalty than that of Sidoi if gauged in words. If there were no such thing as deeds his character could not be improved; and his deportment at the time of the disturbance must be regarded from the two-fold aspect of words and deeds.[10]

Sidoyi had hedged his bets from 1874 until 1878, pulled between the loyalty he had to Pommer and the Griqua and his fears of what colonial rule would bring, and at the same time communicating with Orpen and Strachan, the two most influential officials of the new order. In April 1878 he threw in his lot with the colonial government against his former allies. His decision was probably motivated in part by experiencing firsthand the colonial government's violent suppression of challenges to their authority, but also an understanding of the benefits of remaining loyal. Strachan had attempted to include him in the new administration and show him

[10] CPP G.58-'79, Commission into the recent outbreak in Griqualand East, p. 40.

the possibility of reward. Although Sidoyi and the Nhlangwini remained loyal throughout the conflict, colonial officials and settlers had deep misgivings about him. The *Natal Witness* incorrectly reported on 9 October that Sidoyi had joined the rebellion and expressed concern that because the chief had supporters on both sides of the border, the Colony of Natal would be pulled into 'the Cape's misfortunes'.[11]

The Bhaca of Mzimkhulu and Mount Frere

The Bhaca chiefdom was split between the adherents of Msingaphantsi at Mzimkhulu and those of Makaula at Mount Frere. Msingaphantsi was in a weak position. He was young and inexperienced and had been recognized as head of the Mzimkhulu Bhaca not because of his genealogical position, but because the Griqua had expelled his two brothers and the regent Thiba from the area.[12] The Mzimkhulu Bhaca, like the Nhlangwini, had fallen foul of the Natal colonial government in 1854 and understood the risks of being on the losing side. The followers of Makaula were the more formidable scion of the Bhaca and their loyalty, with that of the Nhlangwini, was vital for the colonial administration to regain its authority in East Griqualand. Makaula had faced the disturbing reality that the government he believed would be an ally was working to undermine his position and sought to fundamentally change the way of life of his chiefdom. He had objected to the boundaries drawn by colonial officials, complained about the hut tax and was aware that his political and judicial role was being undermined, yet despite all of this, Makaula and his people fought on the colonial side during 1880 and 1881. This can in part be explained by pre-colonial relations. The Bhaca had originally formed an alliance with the Sotho in 1860 against the Mpondomise but in the following year this broke down and conflict developed between the two chiefdoms. The Bhaca had also been in conflict over land and cattle for some time before the establishment of colonial rule with the Mpondomise who were about to join the rebellion. In the face of colonialism, among some of the Basotho chiefdoms shifts in alliances occurred and long term conflicts and divisions overcome. This did not occur between the Bhaca, Mpondomise and Basotho. Makaula's decision to remain loyal might in part have been motivated by his enmity with Mhlontlo and the Basotho.[13] However, simply putting his decision to fight on the colonial side down to personal feelings or pre-colonial political relations

[11] *Natal Witness* 9.10.1880
[12] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 108.
[13] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhaca', p. 151.

is an oversimplification and misleading. Makaula, like all chiefs in East Griqualand, had to deal with an aggressive colonial system. Rebellion was one way of dealing with colonialism but negotiating with Cape officials and even fighting on the colonial side was another. Makaula was probably also motivated by the benefits of remaining loyal – the prospect of land, cattle and maintaining the good favour of a government that could well win.

The Hlubi

Once Brownlee and Strachan withdrew from Matatiele, the rebels were in control of the area along the escarpment. Their earlier actions focused on the looting of white-owned trading stores, cattle raids against loyalists and burning their homesteads. Brownlee pointed out that while the rebels burnt white farms and raided cattle they 'allowed the farmers and traders to escape with their lives'.[14] It was the Hlubi who took the brunt of these often fatal raids.[15] Conflict between the Basotho and Hlubi had its origins a decade earlier when Governor Wodehouse had encouraged Zibi in 1869 to join his kinsmen Ludidi and Lupindo in Nomansland as a solution to overcrowding in the Wittebergen Reserve. The Basotho considered the area as their domain and the Hlubi as interlopers. Lehana, who lived on the upper Tinana, allied himself with the Mpondomise chief Mhlontlo and Lebenya in a campaign against the Hlubi in about 1870. Zibi was forced to retreat into the Tinana Valley, a third of the land he formally inhabited, and here lived under the protection of Adam Kok. Although the Hlubi had no reason to break with the colonial government to form an alliance with two chiefdoms which had attempted to expel them from the region, colonial officials feared the possibility that the Hlubi might join the rebellion. In an attempt to ensure their loyalty, Martin Liefeldt, the magistrate at Matatiele, did not retreat to Kokstad with Brownlee and Strachan after leaving Moteri's Kop but made his way to Ludidi's homestead.

About an hour after Brownlee withdrew from Moteri's Kop, Liefeldt left the magistracy with his clerk and two policemen. Believing that the Hlubi at Moteri's Kop would not be harmed, he left them to negotiate with the Basotho. The Basotho informed the 60 loyal Hlubi that as they were not at war with them, they could return to their homes. On their way down the steep descent

[14] BBN G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 74.
[15] *Ibid*.

from the magistracy they came to a narrow part of the road which was partly blocked by fallen rock. They found the way occupied by Sekake's men and a skirmish ensued in which eleven Hlubi were killed, the first fatalities of the rebellion in East Griqualand. Brownlee was greatly concerned by the killings, fearing the survivors would join the rebels thinking he had abandoned them and fled for safety. This was not a totally unfounded concern. Some Hlubi did go over to the rebels to save their property and lives; however, the majority remained loyal.[16]

After leaving Moteri's Kop Liefeldt made his way to the Hlubi of Ludidi who inhabited an inaccessible mountainous region known as Elukolweni beyond the Kinira River. Brownlee reported that the Hlubi were 'in a state of utmost confusion and panic', victims of raids and attacks by Musi and his men who had burnt Lupindo's homestead on 5 October.[17] Zibi, surrounded by rebels and aware that the colonial officials had fled to Kokstad, was in an untenable position. Brownlee believed that at a point he 'cast in his lot with the Basutos', however, he seems to 'have only temporized for present safety'.[18] He later fled with his people to Maclear and was caught up in the siege of the town. Many of Lebenya's followers abandoned him and fought with Sekake.[19] Colonial Officials criticized Lebenya because he did not render assistance to white traders and was suspected of being involved in the looting of stores.[20]

The Xesibe

The Xesibe, like the Hlubi, were a smaller chiefdom, often in conflict with a larger and more powerful neighbour. Much of Xesibe history was characterized by a bitter campaign to retain their independence from the Mpondo who considered them vassals. The Xesibe were considered by the colonial government to be tributary to the Mpondo on condition that the territory they occupied was left intact and they were dealt with fairly. The Xesibe claimed that this did not happen and the Mpondo Paramounts in turn insisted that the Xesibe did not accept their authority. In 1878 the Xesibe became British subjects hoping to have a strong ally on their side in their ongoing conflict with the Mpondo. Twelve months after being accepted as British

[16] BBN G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 12.2.1881, p. 73.
[17] *Ibid*.
[18] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kaffir Life and History*, p. 212.
[19] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 198.
[20] CA, G. 2-'84, Report of the Griqualand East Land Commission, p. 8.

subjects, cattle raids and minor skirmishes led to full-scale war and the colonial government was compelled to take the side of its new subjects. Once the rebellion broke out in 1880 raids by Mpondo forces increased. The Xesibe realized that their best chance against the Mpondo was to retain good relations with the colonial government.

The Griqua

The Griqua, like the other chiefdoms of the region, were unhappy about the disarmament policy.[21] More importantly they had recently lost their independence which had been followed by an uprising against the Cape government in 1878. A few days after the outbreak, 28 Griquas 'either by choice or from compulsion' joined the rebels.[22] Lodewyk Kok, a nephew of Adam Kok who had been involved in the Griqua uprising, was of particular concern to colonial officials. He was 'found taking his family and wife in the direction of the Basutos' and arrested.[23] Brownlee did not think he had many followers but believed that if he had joined the Basotho 'much harm would have been done, and at least some who were now on our side would have been found on the other'.[24] The majority of the Griqua, however, remained loyal and Brownlee later wrote that his initial suspicions were 'unjust' and that they 'worked willingly and cheerfully'.[25] Despite the Griqua having some issues in common over colonial rule with the chiefdoms, they did not overcome pre-colonial conflicts and attitudes. In principle citizenship in the Griqua state did not depend on colour. Anyone who was prepared to do military duty and swear loyalty to Kok and the *Raad* could become a burgher, and a number of Africans did so. However, there was a clear distinction made between those who lived a 'tribal life' and were thus eligible for hut tax and those who lived as Griquas.[26] Generally the Griqua considered Africans as subjects and Kok at times had to control demands by his burghers for land in locations. The Griquas campaign against Nehemiah's Basotho in 1865 was well remembered and unlikely to encourage alliances from either side.

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[21] Sivewright to J.X. Merriman 9.2.1879, in Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman, 1870-1890*, p. 69.
[22] BBN G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.2.1881, p. 78.
[23] *Ibid*, p. 75.
[24] *Ibid*.
[25] *Ibid*, p. 78.
[26] Ross, 'The Griqua in the Politics of the Eastern Transkei', p. 135.

Dark and Critical Times

On his return to Kokstad from Moteri's Kop, Brownlee faced 'dark and critical' times.[27] His most immediate concern was to raise and arm a military force to quell the rebellion amongst the Basotho. The only permanent military force beyond the Kei was the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police. The FAMP was established in 1855 and initially served as a police force along the frontier, but after 1872 it served as a reaction force inside and outside of the colony. Although the Molteno ministry set store by the FAMP, some British officers thought they were badly trained and ill equipped.[28] When the Sprigg ministry came to power it increased the size of the FAMP and established another unit named the Cape Mounted Yeomanry. The FAMP took on military responsibilities and in 1879 was renamed the Cape Mounted Rifles. In times of conflict white volunteer units and native levies reinforced the CMR, approximately a thousand strong in 1878. The Cape administrations preferred to rely on predominantly English-speaking volunteer units based on the British regimental system.[29] The first volunteer unit was raised in 1855 and by 1877 there were 49 volunteer units in the Cape.[30] Besides these permanent volunteer units within the colony, many units existed for short periods to serve in specific conflicts. The vast majority of men, however, involved in frontier conflicts were drawn from native levies. The use of African allies was widely practiced throughout colonial Africa. John Laband points out that 'the European conquest of Africa would never have been possible without African auxiliaries'.[31] They provided logistical support for every imperial field force operating in Africa, serving as wagon-drivers, herdsmen, boatmen, porters, cooks, scouts, guides and interpreters.[32] They also often served in the front line of battle. It was vital for colonial powers to secure black levies for their campaigns because although they generally had the technological advantage when it came to weaponry, regular colonial troops and white volunteer units were outnumbered. Mfengu auxiliaries in the Eastern Cape greatly augmented the small colonial contingents and in that way reduced the numerical superiority that the Xhosa had in earlier conflicts on the frontier.[33]

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[27] BBN G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 12.2.1881, p. 75.
[28] Laband, *Zulu Warriors,* p. 115.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid*, p. 8.
[32] *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.
[33] Stapleton, "Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants", p. 46.

White observers had mixed feelings about the use of native levies. Those men who fought with them generally praised their bravery and loyalty. Politicians and settler leaders were more critical. James Sivewright, discussing the possible use of native levies during the Anglo Zulu War, wrote 'the natives are not worth a curse…There is not a single tribe except the Fingos, and Donald Strachan's wild mountaineers, to be trusted: and they may be needed to work nearer to their own homes than Natal'.[34] Sprigg was particularly critical of native levies and wanted to do away with them altogether. He received warm applause when he stated in a speech:

> The defence of the colony ought to depend on European inhabitants alone, for otherwise there was a great danger of giving rise to a feeling on the part of the natives that the white men could not do without them…it would be a good day for them when they felt that there was no chance for them against the European race.[35]

Despite his strong stand while electioneering, in practice Sprigg's administration relied heavily on African troops.

Although the Sprigg ministry increased the size of the military establishment, it was still not big enough to deal with the uprising in Basutoland, and in the months leading to the rebellion in East Griqualand the new administration in Cape Town had cut their military presence on the border as troops were diverted to Basutoland. William Ayliff, the new secretary for native affairs, felt there was no necessity for maintaining a large force of CMR beyond the Kei, and in August Brownlee was asked what would be 'the very smallest number of men you consider necessary for the safety of your district'.[36] When conflict broke with the Basotho, all troops in the colony marched to Basutoland to quell the uprising. The left wing of the CMR that was responsible for the defense of East Griqualand was called up to the Basutoland border in early September. A concerned Charles Brownlee requested permission to approach imperial troops stationed at Pietermaritzburg in the Colony of Natal if need be, but Sprigg declined as he wanted the Cape to be seen as militarily self-sufficient.[37] Sprigg was also aware that in March Hicks Beach, concerned that disarmament might lead to conflict, had informed Frere that no Imperial troops

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[34] Sivewright to J.X. Merriman, 9.2.1879 in Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman*, p. 69.
[35] Quoted in Laband, *Zulu Warriors*, p. 147.
[36] CA, CMK 1/152 Commandant General King William's Town to Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 2.8.1880.
[37] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 154.

would be furnished, 'and the colony must deal with any difficulties which may arise'.[38] Eventually Sprigg allowed Brownlee to approach the Natal colonial government which provided supplies, including 500 snider rifles. The few Cape Mounted Riflemen who had remained at Fort Donald on the Mpondo border were withdrawn to Kokstad and replaced by a contingent of Africans levies from Mzimkhulu. East Griqualand was thus not only without the professionally trained troops of the Cape Mounted Rifles, but also without military commanders to co-ordinate and lead a campaign against the Basotho. Extra pressure was placed on Brownlee by criticism from the correspondent of the *Natal Witness* who reported that there was a 'general desire for prompt and more energetic action of government officials here'.[39]

The Native Levies: The Abalondolozi, Amatemba, Baca Contingent and Griqua Contingent

Brownlee turned to the influential magistrate Donald Strachan to raise a force from the loyal chiefdoms to go against the Basotho. Strachan had served as magistrate of Mzimkhulu during the time of Griqua independence and retained the position after the Cape annexed the area. His position in the Griqua state and later the Cape Colony depended on the influence he had amongst the chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu. His contemporaries often wrote about his 'extraordinary hold over the natives, by whom he was regarded with the greatest respect' and his 'immense influence among the natives'.[40] This was at times hyperbole, but his ability at critical moments to ensure the loyalty of influential chiefs to the Cape and to raise large numbers of African levies to fight on the colonial side gave him clout far beyond his position as a bureaucrat. Writers have tended to romanticize the reasons for Strachan's influence and the loyalty with which he was held, ascribing it to his great physical strength, his dynamic personality, bravery, linguistic skills and knowledge of African customs and history.[41] While these personal characteristics contributed to his influence, his role at Mzimkhulu evolved over time as circumstances changed. Like other more insightful Cape officials he understood that the enforcement of colonial rule was a dynamic process depending on punishment and reward but at times compromise and co-operation. Like Theophilus Shepstone in Natal, he was not adverse to using force against chiefs who defied

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[38] Bradlow, *The Cape Government's Rule of Basutoland,* p. 155.
[39] *Natal Witness* 14.10.1880
[40] Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto*, p. 152.
[41] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 33; V. Sampson, *My Reminiscences* (London, 1926), p. 45; MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 2, p. 77.

Griqua authority to remove them from their positions and replace them with men who would be more co-operative. He used force to remove the Bhaca regent Thiba and his successor Nomtsheketshe. He was equally careful to reward those who co-operated with the *Raad* with land and positions in the administration, and not to unnecessarily alienate people. Unlike some officials, he did not believe that practices such as *lobola*, polygamy or circumcision were criminal or immoral.[42] By the time he was called upon by Brownlee in September 1880 to co-ordinate the campaign against the Basotho at Matatiele he had lived at Mzimkhulu for over twenty years, had developed intimate relations with the chiefdoms in the area and had established his authority by punishing those who balked at colonial rule and rewarding those who did not.

The exact number of men in the field waxed and waned but at the height of the conflict there were approximately 5560 black and 475 white troops involved.[43] The vast majority, approximately 3000, of the levies were drawn from a corps that Strachan himself had raised twelve years earlier in 1868 from among the chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu and became known as the *Abalondolozi* or 'Protectors'. Strachan, who was at this stage magistrate of Mzimkhulu under the Griqua government, raised the corps to assist in restoring calm after conflict broke out in the Bhaca ruling house between the regent Thiba and Nomtsheketshe, a claimant to the chieftaincy. Strachan made use of the corps again in 1871 when Nondabula was blamed for causing the illness of the Nhlangwini heir Dungwana.[44] During the Griqua rebellion of 1879 the *Abalondolozi* fought for the first time on the colonial side and were responsible for killing and decapitating the rebel leader Smith Pommer. The Bhaca, who made up the majority of the men in the *Abalondolozi* at this stage, resented the Griqua's presence and interference in their affairs, and had not forgotten the defeat the Griqua had inflicted on their kinsmen at Mount Frere just a year earlier.

Strachan ensured their loyalty by rewarding members of the *Abalondolozi* with cattle, land grants and positions in the Griqua and later colonial administrations. He used his influence with a commission appointed in 1875 by the colonial government to investigate land grants to ensure

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[42] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 190.
[43] *Government Gazette* 30.11.1880.
[44] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 36.

that leaders in the *Abalondolozi*, including Nondabula, John Singengane and James Nyangiwe, obtained titles to farms. The Cape administration appointed two of his most trusted lieutenants, Sayimani Rhadebe and John Singengane, headmen in the Mzimkhulu district. Rhadebe, who came from Table Mountain near Pietermaritzburg, had befriended the Strachan brothers and accompanied them to Mzimkhulu. He was appointed headman of groups of people who had settled near the Mzimkhulu Drift from Natal. Singengane, leader of the Magaqa clan, lived with his people in the Malenge Valley and had formerly been a subject of the regent Thiba.[45] He used the divisions in the Bhaca ruling house to assert his independence. Traditionally Singengane's success is viewed in terms of his relationship with Strachan, although his descendants are emphatic that he was an independent hereditary chief whose position and influence were independent of Strachan.[46]

In September 1880 when the CMR proceeded to Basutoland, 30 men of the *Abalondolozi* guarded the powder magazine in Kokstad.[47] Members of the *Abalondolozi* patrolled Kokstad and according to the correspondent for the *Natal Witness* were 'doing good service'.[48] As soon as Strachan and Brownlee arrived in Kokstad from Moteri's Kop, Strachan sent word to Mzimkhulu for the *Abalondolozi* to muster in the capital. Within days scores of men poured into the capital. Charles Brownlee wrote that

> The only side from which we could expect aid was the Umzimkulu, and as soon as the people of this division heard that their chief, Strachan, was in danger, they poured into Kokstad night and day, during the most inclement weather…they restored confidence not only to Kokstad but to the Hlubis and other clans, who, before they saw any prospect of aid were prepared to cast in their lot with the rebels.[49]

William Dower, missionary amongst the Griqua, wrote that the *Abalondolozi*:

> Came along singing in unison their war song, beating their shields all in rhythmic time, making a weird, and to unaccustomed ears, a terrible sound. More than once I felt not a little nervous when these fierce armed and mounted men, with the frenzy of war on them -

[45] *Ibid*.
[46] G.W. Magaqa, 'Amanqolo' (unpublished manuscript), p. 15.
[47] *Natal Witness* 18.9.1880.
[48] *Natal Witness* 9.10.1880.
[49] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kaffir Life and History*, p. 218.

> some in full war-paint stood two deep round the Market Square, to receive a word of encouragement from "Charles" Brownlee, before proceeding to the front. They often outnumbered the Europeans by ten to one - yet I never heard of one of them offering insult or injuring property in the town.[50]

The command structure of the *Abalondolozi* consisted of an unlikely, but effective, combination of colonial officials, members of the white farming community, hereditary chiefs, government-appointed headmen, an emerging *Amakholwa* class and remnants of the Griqua ruling class. There were four commandants: Donald Strachan, G.W. Hawthorn (magistrate at Mzimkhulu), J.C. Garner (magistrate at Mount Frere) and T.W. Tayler. Some of the white officers, including the adjutant H.C. Sloley and others such as George Roe Scott, C.J. Castle and W.H. Chaplin, had been members of the CMR and thus had some formal military training. The majority of the *Abalondolozi* were followers of the Bhaca and Nhlangwini chiefs Msingaphantsi and Sidoyi, both of whom were officers in the corps. Theal incorrectly wrote that the *Abalondolozi* consisted of small groups of refugees who had lost their hereditary chiefs and regarded Strachan 'as their head, and were devoted to him personally'.[51] Other men from ruling families who served as officers included Fodo's son Somfunyana and Fodo's brother Nondabula. In 1871 Nondabula, who was then living with his supporters east of the Ibisi, had been smelt out for causing the illness of his brother Fodo's heir Dungwana. Fodo's supporters gathered to eat up Nondabula but were prevented from doing so when Strachan called out the *Abalondolozi*. Nondabula moved his homestead to a safer site within Strachan's cornetcy.[52] He in effect became a headman under Strachan although during the Langalibalele crisis he showed his independence when he refused to provide men for the Natal government, saying 'he was no dog to be lent out'.[53] Somfunyana had clashed with Strachan three years earlier in 1877 when he and a group of men attacked and killed a prominent man named Sontabu, blamed for causing the death of the regent Nkeswane.[54] He fled to Pondoland where he was beyond colonial rule but eventually under pressure Mqikela handed him over and he was tried at Mzimkhulu. The acting magistrate wanted to give him a heavy sentence but Strachan argued

[50] Dower, *Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East*, p. 112.
[51] Theal, *History of South Africa since 1795,* vol. 5, p. 198.
[52] Rainier, *Madonela*, pp. 36-37.
[53] *Ibid*, p. 61.
[54] *Ibid*, p. 105.

against this saying 'the tribe had already suffered considerably through the affair'.[55] Among the officers were two prominent Christian converts, Bhede Keswa and May Damoyi. Bhede's uncle William Kongo was a Methodist missionary at Pearsetown near the Ibisi. Bhede, or Nathaniel as he was called, was appointed by Donald Strachan to guard a drift on the Ingwangwane River to stop the Griqua smuggling guns from Natal. May Damoyi had come to the Umzimkulu district in 1864 with the frontier missionary Richard Hulley from Mount Frere. The inclusion of Msingaphantsi and Sidoyi, the two leading chiefs of the Mzimkhulu district, as officers in the *Abalondolozi* was strategic but ironic. Strachan, like most Cape colonial officials, believed that by jealously holding on to their power chiefs were a hindrance to the positive transformation colonialism was supposed to bring, and less than a year earlier he had written in his annual magistrates report, 'I have always found those who have no Chiefs make the best and most progressive subjects.[56] However, he was in favour of maintaining stability in the Transkei through 'co-operation of responsible local leaders'.[57] Strachan considered it bad in principle to arm African men but accepted that in certain circumstances the administration had no option, and in these cases the wellbeing of the troops should be assured.[58] Strachan, despite his political beliefs, was a pragmatist who knew that he needed the Nhlangwini and Bhaca chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu to defeat those Basotho who had rebelled. In order to do this he needed the support and loyalty of their chiefs.

The *Abalondolozi* served as a military force to suppress, at times violently, insubordination to Griqua and later colonial rule, but under Strachan it served various other purposes. It became a mechanism to reward loyalty through cattle, land and at times wages and a way in which Strachan was able, albeit for short periods of time, to bring within colonial structures potentially problematic power groups from Mzimkhulu. It demonstrated Strachan's pragmatism. He included former rebels like Sidoyi and Somfunyana as they still had some influence among the chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu and it was unwise to exclude them from the colonial administration.

[55] *Ibid*, p. 108.
[56] BNA G. 13-'80, Report by Magistrate of Umzimkulu, 6.1.1888, p. 85.
[57] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 189.
[58] *Ibid*, p. 191.

Besides the *Abalondolozi*, Strachan and Brownlee relied at the beginning of the campaign against the Basotho on a levy raised amongst the Hlubi by Martin Liefeldt, a corps known as Usher's Natives and another drawn from the Griqua population. Martin Liefeldt, after leaving Moteri's Kop in early October, spent a month at Elukolweni and raised a force of 300 men from the followers of the Hlubi chief Ludidi. Initially they fought off raids by Basotho on their homesteads but later joined the colonial campaign. Henry Usher, the son of a local farmer, raised a native levy which was known as Usher's Natives. It was formally accepted on 13 December 1880 and consisted of 650 men.[59] Later in the campaign Usher's Natives amalgamated with Liefeldt's Hlubi levy to form a regiment known as the *Amatemba* (the hopefuls). Like the *Abalondolozi*, the officers of the *Amatemba* consisted of white farmers and black chiefs and included Zibi among its commissioned officers.[60]

The Baca Contingent initially consisted of a strength of 1000 men. The majority, 866, were adherents of Chief Makaula.[61] In March 1881 a further 3000 were being raised, 300 of whom had already been enrolled. Makaula's kinsman and rival Nomtsheketshe too threw in his lot with the colonial government and some of the men in the Baca Contingent were his adherents. Initially he and his men crossed into the Mount Fletcher district and placed themselves at the disposal of Liefeldt, probably in an attempt to distance themselves from Makaula's influence. An irate Brownlee instructed him and his men to return and remain under Blenkins' authority.

The Griqua Contingent, accepted on 7 October 1880, consisted of 409 men under Commandant G.C. Brisley.[62] Brisley had served as secretary to Adam Kok and the *Raad* in the years of Griqua independence and still had some influence among the late *Kaptyn's* subjects. The Mount Fletcher Native Contingent also comprised of Griqua men and numbered as many as 1200 members under Captain Liefeldt, but served on a part-time basis.[63]

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[59] G. Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1954), p. 203.
[60] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 175.
[61] Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, p. 38.
[62] *Ibid*, p. 89.
[63] *Ibid*, p. 117.

White Volunteers Units: The Kokstad Volunteers, Usher's Rangers and Baker's Horse

At the beginning of the campaign there were three white volunteer units. The Kokstad Volunteers and Usher's Rangers came from the white population of East Griqualand, while Baker's Horse was raised in Pietermaritzburg in the Colony of Natal. The white population was still relatively small in number in 1880. East Griqualand had only been formally annexed the previous year and although traders and land speculators moved into the area in increasing numbers from the mid-1870s, it was only towards the end of the decade that farmers who intended settling permanently had started to arrive. The Kokstad Volunteers, under Captain Watkinson, were initially enrolled to protect the town of Kokstad. The initial enrolment consisted of 120 mounted men and 167 infantry.[64] When it became clear that the Basotho were unlikely to attack the capital, the number of volunteers dropped considerably and members often did not report for duty. A reporter from the *Natal Witness* wrote that if they were offered loot a great many more men would join, 'but to go on guard twice or three times a week in these beautiful wet nights, at the rate of 7s. 6d. per diem, is hardly good enough'.[65] There was dissatisfaction among the infantry members who were paid the same amount as the Griqua contingent. The same reporter for the *Natal Witness* commented that 'there is surely no satisfaction in this, but the Government had no doubt good reasons to place the Griquas on the same pay-level with the white volunteers'.[66] The mounted members later saw action at the front. Some members of the infantry resigned to join Usher's Rangers. Henry Usher, who had raised a native levy, also raised a mounted corps of 33 men from the Kokstad farming community.[67]

Major J.F. Baker raised a corps known as Baker's Light Horse (generally simply known as Baker's Horse). Baker had served from 1860 to 1870 in the Ceylon Rifles and came out to South Africa in the late 1870s to raise a mounted volunteer corps to serve in the Ninth Frontier War of 1877 and 1878.[68] In the following year he raised another corps which saw action during the Zulu War, and were the first to make contact with the Zulu army at the battle of Ulundi.[69] At the end of September Baker, who had been acting as the magistrate for Alexandra County, arrived in

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[64] *Ibid*, p. 105.
[65] *Natal Witness* 2.11.1880.
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, p. 203.
[68] PAR, CSO 728 1879/5168 Application for Employment under the Natal Government by Major J.F. Baker.
[69] J. Laband, *The Battle of Ulundi* (Pietermaritzburg, 1988), p. 28.

Pietermaritzburg to raise a corps of 200 men for service in Basutoland. With the news of what was transpiring at Matatiele, Baker decided to send his men to East Griqualand instead. On 9 October a small detachment left for Kokstad. On 11 October another troop of Baker's Horse left Pietermaritzburg and arrived in Kokstad two days later after marching through heavy rain. The majority, 120 men, arrived in Kokstad on 26 October.

White volunteer units, like their black counterparts, were both praised and criticized. A reporter for the *Natal Witness* wrote on 14 October 1880 'we congratulate Colonel Baker upon having secured a set of men who, for discipline, physique, and general orderly conduct would teach many a regiment of regulars a good lesson'. Reverend William Dower, the former Griqua minister, however, left a more critical description of Baker's Horse:

> They were a lawless lot, spite of the fact that not a few of them were men of noble lineage, out from home for a lark or "to have a shot at the natives." Every honest man in East Griqualand regarded them more as banditti than as friends and protectors, and breathed more freely when they had gone hence.[70]

Baker's Horse was not unique in the annals of colonial history to be criticized for the use of excessive force. White volunteer units in the Colony of Natal, such as Royston's Horse during the Bambatha Rebellion of 1905, gained a reputation for extreme violence.[71]

The Offensive Begins

Strachan waited for the arrival of the first batch of Baker's Horse on 13 October before attempting to reoccupy the Cedarville Drift. On 14 October, a remarkable ten days after fleeing Moteri's Kop, Strachan's force left Kokstad. The Mzimvubu was still in flood after days of heavy rain and Strachan faced the task of getting several hundred men across the river. On the 17 October, Usher ferried a strong force, ten at a time, across the water. The *Abalondolozi* plunged into the river and waded across under fire and occupied the hotel and outbuildings. The Basotho withdrew to a farmhouse overlooking the drift and kept up a heavy fire. A party of E.G. Volunteers and Usher's Rangers drove the rebels from their position and pursued the Basotho some four miles beyond the drift. It took the whole of Monday, 18 October, for the column to

[70] W. Dower, 'Anecdotes of the Early Days' in *The Kelvin Press Christmas Annual* (1912), p. 41.
[71] J. Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion* (Pietermaritzburg, 2006), p. 102.

cross the Mzimvubu. During the morning Sidoyi arrived at the camp, putting pay to the rumours that he had joined the uprising.

On 19 October, Strachan left the Cedarville Drift with the men under his command, now twelve hundred strong, and began fanning out in a wide sweep towards Matatiele. On route they were joined by Sibi and some of his men who professed their loyalty to the government. It was reported to Strachan that Ramohlakoana was also loyal but all his men had deserted him. Brownlee, upon receiving the news, was pleased to hear of the chiefs' professions of loyalty, but was aware that 'beyond the political influence which their surrender may impart, Sibi having brought no followers with him, but little importance is to be gained by his submission'.[72] Strachan's force was joined by mounted members of the Kokstad Volunteers. The last mentioned corps having with them 'a rocket apparatus' and a large cannon.[73] By that evening they were encamped 'at the pans' near Matatiele'.[74] During the next morning they pushed on to Matatiele. Strachan expected an engagement at Matatiele but on arriving at the village found that the Basotho had withdrawn to the magistracy at Moteri's Kop. After a short off-saddle, a patrol of 300 men rode on to Moteri's Kop. When the Basotho saw the colonial forces approaching, they set fire to the buildings of the magistracy and residency, and retreated. Colonial troops pursued the rebels towards the Drakensberg. The Basotho attempted unsuccessfully to rally and face the colonial troops.

On 22 October, Strachan sent a message to Martin Liefeldt for the Hlubi levies he had raised to join the main column at Matatiele. Liefeldt had been in Ludidi's location for close on a month but on 21 October divided his force into three columns and began marching back towards Moteri's Kop and Matatiele. The centre column marching from Rolweni towards the Matatiele range was attacked by a large number of rebels. The left column came to their assistance and managed to push the rebels back. The right column marched through the Mvenyane. By the morning of the 22 October Liefeldt was 12 miles from Moteri's Kop. However, he was within six miles of Lebenya's homestead and feared that his men who were lacking in arms and

[72] CPP A.26-'81, Chief Magistrate to Strachan, 23.10.1880.
[73] *Natal Witness* 2.11.1880.
[74] *Ibid*.

ammunition would disperse if attacked.[75] Upon receiving the message from Strachan, he moved forward with his force, now up to 700 men. Liefeldt's force had more than doubled in a period of a few weeks which seems to indicate that many of the Hlubi had temporized before committing themselves to the government side.[76] Early on the morning of 23 October a strong party of Usher's men was sent to occupy Sekake and Pandela's homesteads. On the same day Strachan moved on to establish an advance camp at Qacha's Nek on the border of Basutoland and sent out strong parties to scour the area. As colonial troops gained ground men who had originally joined the rebellion switched sides. About 200 men under Lebenya offered their services to the colonial government as did some of the followers of Sekake.[77] The Baphuthi heir Maskala surrendered at the end of October and his small group of approximately 25 men served as guides and trackers for the government.

By 23 October, Strachan reported that 'the country between Matatiele and Kokstad is now completely denuded of rebels', and he suggested that the Native and Griqua portion of the Kokstad garrison be sent to Fort Donald.[78] While Brownlee informed Strachan on 23 October 'that all steps which you consider it necessary to take with a view to the repression of the rebellion will meet with my cordial approval, for you are aware that I place the greatest confidence in you personally', the chief magistrate did request that due to the heavy expenditure he should when he deemed it necessary 'order back any of the men who you consider may no longer be required, in order that their services may be dispensed with'.[79] However, on 24 October Strachan, then at Qacha's Nek, received a desperate telegram from Kokstad that on the previous day the magistrate at Qumbu, Hamilton Hope, had been killed and the uprising was spreading among the Mpondomise chiefdoms.

By mid-October it seemed that Strachan's force of black levies and white volunteer units had the uprising under control in East Griqualand. In a relatively quick campaign, despite some logistical problems, they had pushed many of the Basotho rebels into the Drakensberg Mountains

[75] BBP C.-2821 Enclosure 12 in No. 12, Liefeldt to Brownlee, 22.10.1880.
[76] Harber, *Gentlemen of Brave Mettle*, pp.102-103.
[77] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 173.
[78] CPP A.26-'81, Strachan to Brownlee, 22.10.1880.
[79] *Ibid*.

and across the Orange River into Basutoland. There was some irony that the Cape government armed black levies to fight an uprising that was, in part, caused by an attempt to disarm the African chiefdoms, and that in many cases hereditary chiefs, who the administration in Cape Town had been steadily undermining, served as officers in these corps. Sprigg had strongly denounced the use of black levies and even the commandant of troops in East Griqualand, Donald Strachan, was in principle against arming black men. However, immediate military and political realities over-ruled ideology, and these levies became the backbone of the campaign in East Griqualand. The Bhaca, Nhlangwini, Hlubi and Xesibe made up the majority of the black corps at the beginning of the campaign and each had its own internal dynamics which influenced the decision to remain loyal. Although the Bhaca shared the same concerns about colonial polices with the Basotho, their past conflicts with the Mpondomise and Basotho, experiences with the colonial government and maintaining the good will of the new administration and prospects of the reward of cattle and land were strong reasons to remain loyal. It had taken the Nhlangwini almost twenty years to recover from the losses of their confrontation with Shepstone in the 1850s, and there was no appetite to repeat the process. The Hlubi had been at odds with the Basotho and Mpondomise over land and influence in the Mount Fletcher area for well over a decade, and probably believed that loyalty to the colonial government was vital to retain their position. While Brownlee was concerned that the killing of Hlubi men at Moteri's Kop might have persuaded the Hlubi chiefdoms to join the uprising, which a small number did, the incident probably had the opposite effect and the majority remained loyal. The Xesibe, despite the concerns they had about colonial rule, saw more benefits to remaining loyal than forming alliances with old foes in a campaign that they could well lose. Drawing chiefs, especially Sidoyi and Makaula, who still had influence in the region, into the colonial fold had been a lengthy process which began some years before the uprising. Central to the process was the establishment of the *Abalondolozi* regiment which Strachan used as a way of rewarding co-operative individual leaders and entire chiefdoms, pulling them into the colonial political structures.

Chapter Six

‘The Hand of the White Queen was Killed’: The Uprising Spreads to the Mpondomise Chiefdoms

Although they accepted colonial rule in 1873 as a way to solve the internal and external problems by which they were beset, the Mpondomise chiefs Mhlontlo and Mditshwa soon understood the realities of white rule and by the 1870s resisted the changes introduced by the Cape administration. Both clashed with magistrates over boundaries, resisted attempts to limit their authority, continued to permit the smelling out of sorcerers and proved uncooperative when it came to the collecting of hut tax and the taking of a census. Both chiefs and their adherents watched with alarm as disarmament was enforced in Basutoland, and viewed this policy as a betrayal by the colonial government of its allies. Like the Basotho, the Mpondomise were concerned not only with the changes already brought on by colonial rule, but came to fear what was still to come. Hamilton Hope, magistrate at Qumbu, attempted to win Mhlontlo over as an ally, despite the chief’s vocal criticism of the actions of white officials and at times open defiance. The magistrate wanted to use levies provided by the chief to suppress the uprising amongst the Basotho at Matatiele and hoped that his considerable influence would prevent further chiefdoms joining the rebellion. Hope misunderstood Mhlontlo’s intentions and it cost him his life in late October. Traditionally historians have interpreted Hope’s death as a strategic decision by Mhlontlo, who became regarded by white officials as the leader of the rebellion, to gain a considerable cache of weapons to be used by his men to fight against magistrates who were forcing unacceptable changes on to the Mpondomise. More recently some historians have argued that Hope, and the colonial system in general, became viewed as evil and that the magistrate was ritualistically killed to restore the health of the chiefdom.

The Chief and the Magistrate

Mhlontlo, who was in his early forties at the time of the rebellion, cut a dramatic figure - tall, graceful and an excellent horseman. He had a fearsome reputation amongst both his African neighbours and the white missionaries and colonial officials with whom he had dealings. He was known for being brave, disciplined, a great warrior and being held in great respect by his

followers.[1] M.B. Shaw, son of the famed frontier missionary William Shaw and who served as magistrate with Mhlontlo from May 1876, has left the most detailed and perhaps nuanced description of the chief's personality. He wrote in his magistrate's report for 1876, after knowing him for seven months:

> I found, from the first, that, although he possessed the character of being a resolute and determined man, occasionally stubborn, violent, self-willed, and not likely to turn aside, yet he possessed one distinguishing quality and, for a savage a grand one withal, and that is, his thorough contempt for falsehood and lies…I found also that the man, cunning and crafty as he is in common with other native chiefs, was bold and very out spoken; and that he had also the manliness to appreciate a corresponding tone and bearing, even though the subject may have proved distasteful.[2]

Hamilton Hope replaced Shaw as magistrate. Slightly older than Mhlontlo, he too cut a dramatic figure. His long grey beard made him appear older than his 50 years and he limped due to an accident that had left his right leg shorter than the left.[3] Hope had worked as an auctioneer and agent at Dordrecht, Tarkastad and Queenstown, before being appointed town clerk of Aliwal North in 1870.[4] He later transferred to the Basutoland Civil Service as clerk to the magistrate at Mafeteng.[5] In 1877 he became magistrate at Quthing among the Baphuthi people of Chief Moorosi. It was a sensitive post and Hope fared badly in his first magisterial position. The complexity of his responsibilities and inexperience made him work too much by the book.[6] He was in particular over-rigid in enforcing the law relating to the payment of hut tax.[7] There was often conflict between Moorosi and Hope over the rights of jurisdiction claimed in civil and criminal cases. In March 1878 the Cape administration removed Hope from the Quthing magistracy and transferred him to Qumbu in July of that year. Hope left Quthing with the name *Mdilizantaba* (mountain-feller) and a reputation, according to the French missionary D.F.

[1] BNA G. 21-75, Report of the British Resident in St. John's Territory, March 1875, p. 96; Phipson, 'A Trip through Kafirland', pp. 139-140.
[2] BNA G.12-'77, Report of the Magistrate with Umhlonhlo, January 1877, p. 46.
[3] *Twenty-Five Years Soldiering in South Africa* (London, 1909), p. 110.
[4] K. Schoeman, *Olive Schreiner: A Woman in South Africa, 1855-1881* (Johannesburg, 1989), p. 195.
[5] In 1863 Hope had married Emma, daughter of the Basotho missionary Samuel Rolland and his wife Elizabeth, a pioneer educationalist.
[6] Benyon, 'Basutoland and the High Commission', p. 360.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 361.

Ellenberger, for being 'an irascible, impatient character greatly feared by the Baphuthi because of his free use of the sjambok on them'.[8]

M.B. Shaw seemed to generally have avoided confrontation with the strong-willed Mhlontlo. Hope was a more assertive personality and from his arrival it was clear that he was going to have a more complicated and confrontational relationship with Mhlontlo whose behavior he soon concluded was barbaric.[9] While eager to stamp his authority, he was still sensitive about the conflict with his superiors in Basutoland that had led to him being transferred to Qumbu. Shortly after his arrival he began writing letters and telegrams to the secretary for native affairs in which he requested that his position be more clearly defined and asked that he be told what amount of authority to exercise and how far he should 'push that authority'.[10] The letter writing seems to have been occasioned by an unscheduled visit by Mhlontlo and some of his councillors to Hope in late August which the newly-appointed magistrate interpreted as an attempt to test his authority. On 21 August, Mhlontlo and a group of his adherents arrived at the magistracy to see Hope even though he had not sent for them. Having not received any replies to his letters and telegrams about his position from the secretary for native affairs, he put them off until the next day. An irate Hope wrote to Cape Town that he presumed that they were going to question him about the amount of authority he was to exercise and would have to content himself and the Mpondomise 'with fencing their questions' when he should be giving 'straight forward and honest answers'.[11] Hope was probably not incorrect in his interpretation of Mhlontlo's intentions. At a time when colonialism was defined by the personal interaction between chief and magistrate, the arrival of a new magistrate 'could reshape the local political landscape' and Mhlontlo probably was testing the new arrival.[12]

Hope soon made the colonial presence more strongly felt that his predecessor. In early November he conducted a trial of men who had severely assaulted a woman who had been smelt out for having bewitched and caused the illness of a man of some importance. Hope insisted that

[8] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 62; Quoted in Schoeman, *Olive Schreiner*, p. 500.
[9] CA, NA 158 Hope to Secretary for Native Affairs, 22.8.1878.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 100.

Mhlontlo be present at the trial of the men to serve as a warning to others.[13] He sentenced the men to imprisonment with hard labour to terms varying from six to twelve months. He began placing more pressure in January 1879 for the payment of hut taxes in arrears.[14]

'A child of the government': An unlikely alliance

Despite Mhlontlo being clearly unhappy about the changes wrought by white rule, in the early part of October 1880 Hope believed that he could be won over as a strategically important ally to the colonial government in their conflict with the Basotho chiefdoms. Considering how outspoken Mhlontlo was this is difficult to understand, but perhaps Hope had been reassured when the chief, through his spokesman, insisted that 'Evil disposed people say that Umhlonhlo is no friend to Government' when he was actually 'determined to be a child of the government'.[15] When Hope heard, on 4 October, that Brownlee and the other officials were hemmed in at Moteri's Kop, he sent a message to Mhlontlo asking him to provide 200 men to go to the chief magistrate's relief. Hope's messenger reached Mhlontlo at midnight and despite appearing 'considerably startled', the chief immediately summoned several of his principal advisors to consider the request.[16] Mhlontlo informed Hope that he was in mourning for his chief wife, daughter of Kreli, and should not appear in public, but as 'this was a case of emergency' he would 'turn out the required number of men at once to go to the rescue of "Charles", the Father of them all'.[17] He did, however, have doubts that 200 men would be enough and advised Hope to find additional manpower. On the following morning Hope and Mhlontlo received word of Brownlee's escape from Moteri's Kop. The chief, on hearing of the magistrate's return to Kokstad, sent a message of congratulations, 'expressing on behalf of himself and people their profound belief in, and regard' for Brownlee and their pleasure at his safety being secured.[18] Hope was not finished with his plans to make use of Mhlontlo in the developing crisis and instructed the chief to 'hold himself in readiness at any time as he may be called upon'.[19]

[13] CA, NA 158 Hope to Secretary for Native Affairs, 26.11.1878.
[14] BNA G. 13-'80, Report of Magistrate with Umhlonhlo, 7.1.1880, p. 100.
[15] BNA G. 43-'79, Minutes of Meeting with Pondomise, 18.10.1878, p. 52.
[16] CA, CMK 1/152, Resident Magistrate Office Qumbu to Chief Magistrate, Kokstad, 14.10.1880.
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] CA, CMT 1/74 Resident Magistrate Qumbu to Chief Magistrate Umtata, 5.10.1880.

Three days later, on 7 October, Hope did call upon the chief and on this occasion requested that he go with him to the Maclear area to assist in restoring order and confidence. The magistrate wanted Mhlontlo, and a large retinue of men, to accompany him to a trading store named Chevy Chase, which was situated on the road from Matatiele to Maclear, where he planned to call a meeting of the chiefs of the area and at which Mhlontlo was to publically profess his loyalty to the government. Hope reported that Mhlontlo was 'perplexed' by his request which did not surprise the magistrate 'knowing as I do the extent to which he had been intriguing with the surrounding tribes'.[20] He spent considerable time with the chief, during which time he 'used many arguments to show him his duty'.[21] Mhlontlo, however, carefully abstained from making any promises about providing men.[22] Eventually Hope informed the chief that he believed that the Bathlokwa people under Lelingoana had already taken up arms and that he would go up there himself and restore order without Mhlontlo. As Hope was about to ride off, Mhlontlo seized his hand and said, 'go on I will follow, and where you die I will die'.[23]

It is not clear at this point whether Mhlontlo had decided to join the uprising. If Hope's informants were correct, he had been discussing his options with surrounding chiefs. What is clear is that Mhlontlo was hesitant, if not unhappy, about providing men and accompanying Hope to Maclear. He was, however, still careful at this point to make a show of loyalty by receiving Hope and a few days earlier sending messages expressing his joy about Brownlee's safe return to Kokstad. Hope and Mhlontlo would for the next two weeks constantly interact and negotiate, and each occasion would be characterized by the same ambiguity. In numerous telegrams and letters Hope compared his negotiations with Mhlontlo to a game of cards. He wrote to Brownlee that 'having led my King of Trumps if anybody in the game holds the Ace I lose the trick, if not my King wins'.[24] The analogy belied the risk and seriousness of what was transpiring. Hope had decided to use Mhlontlo to help him restore 'order and confidence' in the Maclear and Mount Fletcher districts.[25] If Hope could convince Mhlontlo, who not only had a fearsome reputation among surrounding chiefdoms but was known to have clashed with

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[20] CA, CMK 1/152, Resident Magistrate Office Qumbu to Chief Magistrate, Kokstad, 14.10.1880.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] *Ibid.*

magistrates in the past and openly expressed his unhappiness about colonial rule, to publically express his loyalty this would persuade the Bathlokwa chiefs Lelingoana, Lehana and Joel, the Kwena leader Lebenya as well as the Hlubi of Ludidi not to join the Basotho clans of Matatiele, and thus limit the scope of the uprising.

After the meeting Hope and his retinue began the journey towards Chevy Chase. Mhlontlo and three of his men caught up with them at dusk and they reached Rutter's store at Chevy Chase late that night. For the remainder of that night Mhlontlo's adherents came trooping in and by the next morning there were nearly 300 men present. Hope received information that an attack was planned on the store for that day, 8 October, but their presence had prevented it. Hope instructed Mhlontlo to send for Lehana and Lelingoana so that he could address them and their supporters. Continual heavy rain made it difficult for runners to reach the chiefs and it was on Sunday before Hope had the meeting with Lehana and Lelingoana. The former arrived with seven unarmed attendants and the latter with 400 armed men. Thomson, the magistrate at Gatberg, believed that Lelingoana and his people were restless and 'would join in any disaffection'.[26] On Sunday, the rain still falling, Hope confronted the Bathlokwa chiefs (Lebenya's brother Mhloboko was also present) and their men and asked them 'point blank if they intended rebellion or not'.[27] They, according to Hope, tried to fence the question, but Mhlontlo came forward and declared his own loyalty and determination to support the government.[28] Lehana promised staunch support for the government but Lelingoana was initially hesitant. They eventually swore allegiance but asked why their own magistrate had not convened the meeting. Hope replied that Thomson had not been able to leave home and had asked him to talk to them. He then announced that they would all ride to Maclear to see Thomson. This was another shrewd move by Hope. He had received news that Joel was planning an attack on the residency, and hoped to prevent it by appearing with a strong force of Bathlokwa, accompanied by Mhlontlo, Lehana and Lelingoana. The Bathlokwa objected to riding in the rain but Mhlontlo supported Hope's suggestion. They arrived the next day at Maclear and the scene at Chevy Chase was reenacted. Called to the magistracy, Joel 'very sulkily gave in his allegiance and grudgingly furnished men to fill up the number required to protect trading stations and guard mountain Passes, as well as the

[26] *Ibid*, Resident Magistrate Gatberg to Chief Magistrate, Kokstad 6.10.1880.
[27] *Ibid*, Resident Magistrate Office Qumbu to Chief Magistrate, Kokstad 14.10.1880.
[28] *Ibid*.

Residency'.[29] Hope then split the Bathlokwa, Mpondomise, Mfengu and Griqua into groups and mixed them at various places 'to prevent them taking any active steps against us, as we should suspect them if any of them withdrew their men.'[30]

Hope, by 9 October, felt the crisis was over. He believed he had used Mhlontlo's influence to assure, at least temporarily, the loyalty of the Bathlokwa by the chief's public exclamations of loyalty at Chevy Chase and Maclear. Although he was aware of the possibility that Mhlontlo might prove disloyal, he reported in a telegram written on the 9 October and sent the following day to Elliot in Mthatha that Mhlontlo had 'up set all Bathlokwas plans chiefs coming in to me'.[31] It was a misreading of the situation. The evidence shows that both Mhlontlo and Lelingoana, and a number of other chiefs from the area, had already decided to join the uprising and that what was transpiring at Chevy Chase and Maclear was nothing more than a show in order to play for time.

According to Walter Stanford, at the time magistrate at Engcobo, Lelingoana had pressed Mhlontlo to begin operations then by killing the magistrates; however, the Mpondomise chief declined as he hoped to first obtain arms and ammunition from the colonial government.[32] A number of other witnesses supported Stanford's assertion. Cornelius Sejosing, a headman at Tsitsana, claimed Lelingoana and Mhlontlo 'were intriguing' to kill the magistrates at Chevy Chase.[33] Mpenzuka, a constable at the Maclear magistracy, who was present at the meeting overheard a conversation between Joel and Lelingoana, in which Joel remarked 'Umhlonhlo is too long in making things. We could have finished the matter by this time'.[34] He also reported hearing a conversation among Mhlontlo's men that 'this thing must not be done yet because there are no guns here'.[35]

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[29] *Ibid*.
[30] *Ibid*.
[31] CA, CMT 1/74 Resident Magistrate Qumbu to Chief Magistrate Umtata, 10.10.1880.
[32] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1, p. 109.
[33] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, statement by Cornelius Sejosing, 19.12.1903.
[34] *Ibid*, Statement by Mpunzuka, 23.12.1903.
[35] *Ibid*.

When the Basotho rebelled the magistrates in East Griqualand and Thembuland had a shortage of arms. On 6 October, the secretary for native affairs informed Major Elliot, magistrate of Thembuland posted at Mthatha, that 500 rifles had been dispatched from King William's Town and he was to provide weapons to Welsh and Hope from this cache. On 10 October a supply of weapons arrived at Qumbu. The secretary for native affairs ordered Captain Matthew Blyth, chief magistrate of the Transkei, to send an additional two hundred snider rifles and a large supply of ammunition from Fort Ibeka near Butterworth to Qumbu.[36] Blyth protested vigorously as this would deplete his arsenal but he was overruled.[37] At least one journalist pointed out the irony that the conflict in Basutoland was caused by disarming the Basotho and that the colonial government 'have prepared for a suppression of the insurrection by putting arms into the hands of natives not more reliable'.[38] Merriman levelled a scathing criticism in the press against Sprigg in which he wrote 'the Government deliberately proceeded to arm the most treacherous and dangerous natives in the whole territory'.[39]

Thomson and his clerk Robert Cumming also believed that these chiefs were already in a state of rebellion. On 6 October, Thomson had sent Cumming, and a translator named Abner Molefe, to Mount Fletcher to assist white traders in the area. The trading stores in Lebenya's location had been looted and the white proprietors had fled to Lebenya's homestead for protection. The chief requested support from Thomson at Gatberg who dispatched Cumming and Molife with 70 men provided by Lehana and 50 by Zibi to remove Europeans from the area. The officials discovered on their arrival that Lehana had been deserted by most of his men. Surrounded by rebels and fearing for their safety, they left during the night of the 9 October and crossed the Drakensberg to Barkly. A sarcastic Hope wrote to Brownlee 'anyone who had courage to breast the Drakensberg in such weather, should not, I think, have made a precipitate flight from an imagery enemy'.[40] Events would soon show that Cumming and Molife had a better understanding of what was transpiring than Hope.

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[36] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Magistrate Butterworth to Attorney Innes, Kingwilliamstown, 12.12.1903.
[37] W.T. Brownlee, *Reminiscences of a Transkeian* (Pietermaritzburg, 1975), p. 103.
[38] *The Western Daily Press* 1.11.1880.
[39] J.X. Merriman to editor Graaff-Reinet Advertiser 2.12.1880 in Lewsen (ed.) *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman*, p. 85.
[40] CPP A.26-'81, Resident Magistrate Qumbu to Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.10.1880.

While Hope attempted to assure the loyalty of the chiefs at Chevy Chase and Maclear, Welsh called a meeting of Mditshwa and his adherents at Tsolo to ascertain where they stood. Due to the bad weather, Mditshwa arrived with only a handful of men and so the meeting was postponed. From his short interaction with Mditshwa, Welsh reported that the chief was 'all right'.[41] Mditshwa was not present at the second meeting, held on 14 October, as he was reportedly ill, however, three of his sons and chief councillors were present. Hope, who had returned from Maclear, addressed the men on this occasion, and delivered a message from Mhlontlo 'to the effect that they should now sink minor differences and stand shoulder to shoulder as Govt. men'.[42] Mhlontlo was not present but his messenger Makubunja endorsed Hope's message. Due to the absence of Mditshwa, Welsh did not call on the Mpondomise to furnish a contingent for active service, but felt from the tone of the meeting that here would be no difficulty when the time came.

Death at Sulenkama

In the belief that he had secured the loyalty of the Bathlokwa, Hope now turned his attention to launching a military campaign against the Basotho of Matatiele with the aid of the Mpondomise. He reported on 13 October that Mhlontlo was prepared to 'furnish half his army to attack Makwai from this side'.[43] The short telegram did not mention Mhlontlo's hesitancy or the pressure that had been placed on him by Hope. Matanga, a policeman at the Qumbu magistracy, would later testify that Mhlontlo told him, 'I am going because I am forced against my wish. I ought not to go as I am in mourning for my wife, Chief Kreli's daughter (Mamarile). I had deputed my uncle Gxumisa to take charge of my men in this expedition, but Mr. Hope insisted upon my going'.[44] Hope arranged to meet Mhlontlo at Sulenkama, a stream running into a tributary of the Tsitsa River situated about 50 yards off the main wagon route from Qumbu to Chevy Chase and seven miles from Mhlontlo's Great Place at Qunqu. From Sulenkama they would proceed to Chevy Chase and there meet Thomson and with members of the Border Horse launch an attack against the Basotho.

[41] CA, CMK 1/152 Welsh Tsolo to CM. Kokstad, 12.10.1880.
[42] *Ibid*, Welsh Tsolo to Chief Magistrate Kokstad, 14.10.1880
[43] *Ibid*, Hope, Tsolo to Chief Magistrate Kokstad 1310.1880.
[44] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Statement by Matanga to Magistrate of Qumbu, 10.1.1895.

Hope had a week to organize his campaign. He requested from Elliot, on 13 October, that two clerks from the Mthatha office be seconded to him for the duration of the action against the Basotho. One of the men was to serve as a commissariat officer and the other to 'make himself generally useful'.[45] A few days later William Henman and Robert Warrene rode from Mthatha to Qumbu to accompany Hope and his assistant Alfred Davis on the campaign. Davis was known as *Sunduza* and his brother W.S. Davis was missionary at Shawbury Mission Station where Mhlontlo's son Charles was being educated.[46]

The other magistrates in East Griqualand were much more hesitant and circumspect than Hope, believing that the chiefs he was convinced he had won over to the colonial side were already in a state of rebellion. Brownlee wrote on the 12 October that considering Mhlontlo's 'impulsive and uncertain disposition' Hope 'was incurring a serious risk, and that his life was in danger, but as the exigency of the country justified the risk' he agreed to Hope's plan of action.[47] On October 19, Hope received a letter from Stephen Adonis, a deacon of the Anglican Church at Sulenkama, warning him that there were plans to kill him. The next day Hope reported the contents of Adonis's letter by telegraph to Brownlee.[48] On Wednesday morning, 20 October, Hope had a telegraphic conversation with Brownlee at which point the chief magistrate, probably his initial suspicions rekindled by Adonis's warning, tried unsuccessfully to persuade Hope not to continue with the meeting. Major Elliot too seemed to be having second thoughts and sent a telegram to Qumbu advising Henman and Warrene to return to Mthatha. They too refused and insisted on accompanying Hope to Sulenkama. The men received a number of warnings about Mhlontlo's intentions. Welsh at Tsolo entreated Hope to take every precaution against treachery on Mhlontlo's part, as did an Mfengu headman named Manxaodidi. Hope, strangely, told Mhlontlo of Manxaodidi's warning.[49]

Despite the warnings, Hope left Qumbu on 20 October. The four white officials were accompanied by nine black policemen and three wagons and two scotch carts loaded with

[45] CA, CMT 1/74 Resident Magistrate Qumbu to Chief Magistrate Umtata, 13.10.1880.
[46] P.M. Lokwe, 'The Experiences of the Catechist and Christians at S. Paul's, Xokongxa', in Gibson (ed.) *Reminiscences of the Pondomisi War of 1880*, p. 32.
[47] BBN G. 20-81, Report by Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 14.1.1881, p. 74.
[48] CA, CMK 1/152, Resident Magistrate Office Qumbu to Chief Magistrate, Kokstad, 14.10.1880.
[49] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1, p. 110.

supplies, 51 snider rifles, 7000 rounds of ball cartridges and a case of loose gunpowder. Hope and his entourage reached Sulenkama at about 8 o'clock on Thursday morning, 21 October, after spending the night at Cengcana. It had been raining incessantly. Later that day Mhlontlo arrived at Sulenkama with about 400 armed men. Hope addressed them and said those willing to fight against Makoai would be enrolled immediately. Mhlontlo told an impatient Hope there were still more men on their way and requested that enrolment be left over until the following day, to which the magistrate agreed. Reverend Stephen Adonis, who had warned Hope previously by letter about Mhlontlo's intentions, rode over to Sulenkama and warned him again, in the presence of Davis, that he suspected the chief was treacherous.[50] Hope rejected the warning, saying that Mhlontlo could have killed him at Qumbu or on the journey to Maclear if that was his intention.[51] Thomson at Maclear sent a telegram to Brownlee on the same day saying he had 'grave reasons from reliable information that an intended plot is contemplated to first obtain a supply of arms and ammunition and then turn against us.[52] The telegram was sent on to Hope. Hope sent his last telegram to Brownlee in Kokstad: Mhlonhlo seems trying all he can to get large force to move tomorrow four hundred here more coming up now rain has stopped if he is going to set me might have done so long ago.[53]

On Friday the chief returned to Sulenkama from Qanqu and he and his brother Mtshiki and four other men dined with Hope and his clerks. Mhlontlo spent several hours in Hope's tent discussing future operations and seemed to 'be full of zeal and loyalty'.[54] Mhlontlo, with his uncle Gxumisa, slept in the shelter of Hope's baggage cart that night. Next morning he declined Hope's invitation to breakfast and sat on an ant-hill opposite the wagon road, speaking to people coming backwards and forwards. During the course of the morning more Mpondomise men arrived at the camp bringing the total number up to between 700 and 800. Late in the morning Mqayimbana, on Mhlontlo's instructions, gave an order for an *umguyo* to commence. Mhlontlo was in constant conversation with his councillors who were also present and messages

[50] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Statement by Rev. S. Adonis [n.d].
[51] S.A. Bangela, 'The Murder of Mr. Hope', in Gibson (ed.) *Reminiscences of the Pondomisi War of 1880,* p. 21.
[52] CA, CMK 1/152, Resident Magistrate Maclear to Chief Magistrate Kokstad, 22.10.1880.
[53] *Ibid*, Hope to Chief Magistrate Kokstad, 23.10.1880.
[54] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Statement by A.E. Davis to Henry Elliot, in Elliot to Under Secretary for Native Affairs, 5.1.1894.

were constantly going to and fro between Mhlontlo and the surrounding chiefs. At about 1 o'clock, while the dance was taking place, Mhlontlo and Gxumisa went to Hope's tent and they shook hands. Hope offered them a drink of brandy and water and they toasted the health of the queen. Mhlontlo then invited Hope to witness the dance, so that it could be decided how many men were to be enrolled. Warrene and Henman, who had been sitting outside on one of the scotch carts, accompanied the magistrate and chief. The men joined Davis who had already been watching the *umguyo*. Mhlontlo's men formed a large circle which the new comers entered. Davis remained standing with Mhlontlo to his left. Hope sat down on a horse-rug with Warrene to his right and Henman standing behind. At a point in the proceedings Mhlontlo addressed the gathered crowd. There are conflicting reports about what he said, but according to Matanga, the policeman at Qumbu, the chief said:

> 'You Pondomise, children of the Government, it is because the Government is your father that you are what you are today. You are to hear what your father the Government has to say to you. I have nothing to say to you, your father Hope will speak to you. Take heed to what he says to you. As for myself, I wish to speak aside to Sunduza.[55]

Taking *Sunduza* by the hand, he walked aside with him. A short distance away he turned and cried aloud, 'You Pondomise! There are your chiefs!' Mahlangeni seized Hope by the beard with his left hand and drove an assegai with his right hand through his left breast killing him instantly.[56] It was five past one. Other men stabbed Henman from behind and also died instantly. Warrene attempted to draw his revolver but was picked up by a number of men on the point of their assegais and killed.

Davis was disarmed by Mhlontlo and three of his men. Some of the men rushed towards Davis, but Mhlontlo stopped them, telling the gathered men that that he 'was fighting only against the Govt: and that all missionaries and their sons were to be saved as well as all shopkeepers'.[57] Two of the policemen from Qumbu, Matanga and Sam Tselane, fired shots into the crowd, before fleeing for cover among the tents. They were called back and taken to Mhlontlo who took

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[55] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of a Transkeian*, p. 84.
[56] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Statement by A.E. Davis to Henry Elliot, in Elliot to Under Secretary for Native Affairs, 5.1.1894.
[57] *Ibid*, A.E. Davis to Secretary for Native Affairs, 29.10.1880.

away their guns. Matanga reported that Mhlontlo said to him and the other black staff from Qumbu: 'I am not killing you. I am only killing this little lame man and the white men from Umtata who are forcing me to go against my will. Davis is our own child, we would be sinning if we killed him'.[58] The Mpondomise overran the camp and Mhlontlo distributed the guns and ammunition amongst his men.[59] The bodies of Hope, Warrene and Henman were stripped of their clothing.[60] Hope's beard was cut off 'with the skin of the face attached' by Tshaka, one of the army doctors, who wore it.[61]

Two traders who had a store at Tina Drift carried the news of what transpired at Sulenkama to W. Power Leary, the assistant magistrate at Mount Frere, on Sunday, 24 October. Leary immediately sent a telegram to Brownlee in Kokstad informing him that Mhlontlo had broken out and that it was rumoured Hope had been killed. Brownlee had travelled to Harding to meet with Sir George Colley, the governor of Natal. When he returned that afternoon the telegraphist delivered the news to a shocked chief magistrate as 'tears filled his eyes'.[62] Later in the afternoon further details of what transpired 'came to hand through native sources'.[63] On Monday Brownlee sent off an angry letter to the secretary for native affairs pointing out that he had often foretold that disarmament would lead to rebellion.[64]

On 26 October, Reverend Davis rode to Qumbu to see Mhlontlo to seek permission to bury the bodies of Hope and the other two murdered men. Davis later reported the details of the conversation he had with Mhlontlo. The chief said 'some of the recent enactments of the Colonial Government were so harassing in their nature as to make it impossible to exist under them, and that, although he knew he would eventually be defeated and his people destroyed, still

[58] CA 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Statement by Matanga 10.1.1895.
[59] *Ibid*, Statement by Hlwatika 7.12.1903.
[60] *Ibid*, Statement by Smile Lutseke, 8.12.1903; 1-KWT 1-1-1-323, statement by E.C. Goss, 12.12.1903; Testimony of Jantjie Booy, 28.3.1895.
[61] *Ibid*, Statement by Hlwatika 7.12.1903; 1-KWT I-I-I-323, W.P. Leary to Chief Magistrate Transkeian Territories, Umtata, 22.12.1903.
[62] W.L. Davies, *Trooper and Trader* (Alice, 1929), p. 21.
[63] CA 1-KWT I-I-I-323, W.P. Leary to Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, Umtata, 22.12.1903.
[64] CPP A.26-'81, Brownlee to Secretary for Native Affairs, 25.10.1880.

they would rather welcome the alternative than tamely submit'.[65] In a letter written to the *Cape Argus* from Buntingville on 10 November 1880 Davis wrote that Mhlontlo 'was not unwilling to grant' permission for the bodies to be buried, however, his councillors and minor chiefs 'would not hear of it'.[66] Davis left two accounts of the councillors response. In one he said a messenger told him that the request could not be agreed to 'inasmuch as such a proceeding would be against all precedent, - the bodies must be left to their fate'.[67] In his letter to the *Cape Argus* he wrote that 'It was not their custom, they said, and the bodies must be eaten by birds, or their medicines would not act'.[68]

'I am only killing this little lame man'

The death of Hamilton Hope at Sulenkama is the best known and most written about occurrence of the Transkei Rebellion. What motivated Hope's death and what the events in the weeks and days leading up to his murder and the actions of the rebels afterwards reveal about the motives, beliefs and attitudes of Mhlontlo and the Mpondomise rebels have become a matter of some debate over the last few years. The policemen and wagon drivers who accompanied Hope have all left accounts of the events leading to his death. Mhlontlo's immediate reaction to Hope's death and his reasoning for rebelling can be constructed from his conversations with Matanga, the policeman on the Qumbu magistracy, A.E. Davis, the only white official not to be killed, and his brother Reverend W.S. Davis. Matanga left three accounts and A.E. Davis at least five of what transpired at Sulenkama.[69] The first account left by Davis was a brief letter written at 10 p.m. on the night of the murder. His subsequent accounts are more detailed.[70] In a letter written on 29 October from Shawbury to the secretary for native affairs in Cape Town he mentioned that Mhlontlo was fighting against the Government and not traders or missionaries.[71] In a verbal account he gave to Henry Elliot, Davis reported that Mhlontlo told him 'all the tribes are in this, and if others have done their work as well as I have the Government is dead today in the

[65] *The Times* 14.12.1880.
[66] BBP C. 2821 Enclosure in No. 9.
[67] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Rev. Davis to Mr Scott, Clarkebury, 5.2. 1895.
[68] BBP C. 2821 Enclosure in No. 9.
[69] The first in 1895, he testified at Matanga's trial in 1903 and gave an account to W.T. Brownlee
[70] On 29 October he wrote a letter. On 9 November he wrote a letter from Umtata to the Secretary for Native Affairs in Cape Town. He gave a verbal account of what transpired to Major Elliot about a fortnight after the murder.
[71] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, A.E. Davis to Secretary for Native Affairs, 29.10.1880.

Transkei'.[72] In a letter written on 9 November, after he had reached Mthatha, Davis gave the most comprehensive account of Mhlontlo's response to Hope's death:

> The following are the words of Mhlonhlo which he addressed to me soon after Mr Hope's murder:- "I am not rebelling against the Missionaries, not against the traders but against the Government and their Magistrates. The whole and sole reasons are three. 1st the disarming Act, 2nd the cattle branding and 3rd the taking away our children by the Government to Cape Town. But the Chiefest of these is disarming.
>
> I know sooner or later that our guns would have been demanded from us, but sooner than obey that order we have rebelled, for our guns will never be given up. We can understand tribes who have rebelled against Government having their arms taken away but why are other tribes disarmed who have proven themselves loyal. I refer particularly to the Fingoes and Basutos proper, who have been unjustly dealt with in this respect. For this cause I have long been on the point of rebelling but the time had not arrived; now all tribes are combined and reel for these causes and Umqikela is the Chief who told me that I must murder Hope to show that I really was in earnest.
>
> Kreli's son is here and his father is rising. I go to attack the Bacas from this side and Umqikela from the other side. I know perfectly well my fate; I am like a man committing suicide; I have as it were tied a cloth over my eyes and am about throwing myself over a precipice; but I would sooner do that than submit to have my guns taken away. You Sunduza (myself) I save as being the son and brother of a missionary, if you are afraid to remain you and all the other Europeans may have a free passage out of my country.[73]

From the statements made by Mhlontlo to the various witnesses it is clear that he was unhappy about the harassing demands made by the colonial government. We know from earlier interactions between Mhlontlo and colonial magistrates that these demands included attempts to stop smelling out, redefining the boundaries of his chiefdom and undermining his position as chief. In his conversations with Davis, Mhlontlo made it clear that disarmament was the main reason for his decision to rebel. In one account the chief is reported to have said 'he was not

[72] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Elliot to Acting Under Secretary for Native Affairs, 5.1.1894.
[73] *Ibid*, A.E. Davis to Secretary for Native Affairs, Mthatha, 9.11.1880.

going to kill either missionaries or shopkeepers, but would kill all the Magistrates, as they were going to kill the people by disarming them, and he would rather die than give up his guns'.[74] Disarmament was abhorrent to the Mpondomise, and Basotho, at multiple levels. Besides removing a commodity hard worked for, disarmament would leave the Mpondomise vulnerable to their enemies. Rank racist hypocrisy ran through the process as men who had borne arms on behalf of the colonial government were now told they were children and should hand over their weapons. Disarmament was a betrayal by the colonial government of their allies. Mhlontlo, echoing what Letsie had expressed in his petitions against disarmament to the Cape parliament, told Davis: 'We can understand tribes who have rebelled against Government having their arms taken away but why are other tribes disarmed who have proven themselves loyal. I refer particularly to the Fingoes and Basutos proper, who have been unjustly dealt with in this respect'.[75]

The words 'loyal', ''disloyal' and 'rebel' were parts of colonial discourse. Magistrates often described individual chiefs or entire chiefdoms as being 'loyal' or 'rebels'. Loyalty, as far as magistrates were concerned, was shown through specific actions, such as providing levies, paying tax, assisting the magistrate in the census or adopting European clothing or technology. It is difficult to tell whether colonial officials realized that the notion of loyalty and betrayal went both ways, and that the Basotho and Mpondomise were stung by the acts of betrayal of the colonial government. In his letter to the *Cape Argus* Davis reported that Mhlontlo told him:

> 'Some people commit suicide by shooting themselves, some by hanging and others by throwing themselves over a precipice, having first bound a handkerchief over their eyes. I am doing the latter. I know well I shall get the worst of it; but I would rather die than endure what is coming. The English government has either entirely changed from what it was a few years ago, or it must be ignorant of what the magistrates are doing. We are harshly treated. We came under Government to gain peace and quietness, instead of which we have been in a continual state of unrest from the treatment we have received. Faith has been broken with us over and over again. We could, however, have put up with all this; but it is what is coming that has led the black races to combine against the

[74] *Glasgow Herald* 25.12.1880.
[75] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, A.E. Davis to Secretary for Native Affairs, Mthatha, 9.11.1880.

white man. Our cattle are to be branded; our arms are to be taken away; and after that our children are to be seized and carried across the sea'.[76]

Two important ideas that need some discussion emerge from this statement. Firstly, Mhlontlo feared what colonialism might still bring, an idea he had already mentioned to Davis. Secondly, the statement shows how Mhlontlo viewed colonialism and how different this was from the ideas held by white officials. Men like Brownlee and Orpen, whatever their shortcomings, sincerely believed that colonialism would bring stability and progress, and worked their entire lives, often making great sacrifices, to bring it about. When Mhlontlo spoke about the changes brought by colonialism he referred to guns being removed, cattle branded and children taken away. For him colonialism was impacting on his ability to protect his people, it was undermining the economic foundation of the chiefdom and endangering its existence. Colonialism was changing the way of life of the Mpondomise. It was a system that could not be trusted as magistrates had turned on their allies and those who were loyal to them by making increasingly unreasonable and unacceptable demands.

Before colonialism became bureaucratized in the later decades of the nineteenth century, magistrates introduced and enforced legislation through the chief. The behavior of the magistrate and his relationship with the chief and his councillors influenced how people interpreted and in certain cases reacted to colonialism. The process was personal and driven by individual personalities who to some degree could heighten discontent or lessen potential conflict. In Mpondomise tradition Hope is remembered as an arrogant man who treated the chief with disrespect, probably without the knowledge of the government. Mhlontlo himself pointed to Hope's behavior as one of the reasons he was killed. Zulu Siwahla insisted that at a meeting held at Qumbu, Mhlontlo said, 'I am not fighting with Government, I have only quarreled with Mr Hope'.[77] The renowned Mpondomise historian Mdukiswa Tyabashe recounted that when Hope asked the chief to provide men to go against Makoai, Mhlontlo refused as he was in mourning for his great wife and according to Mpondomise custom, he could not even 'talk about an armed force'. Hope's response, according to Tyabashe, was to shout at

[76] *Cape Argus* 10.11.1880.
[77] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, statement by Zulu Siwahla, 22.12.1903.

the chief: “You’re a liar! You’re a liar! You said that you would obey the government. And now, you’re not being obedient to the government! You’re a liar!”

Tyabashe goes on to tell how Mhlontlo returned to his Great Place and called a meeting of his councillors and important men of the kingdom and reported to them the treatment he had received from Hope. Mhlontlo’s uncle Gxumisa stood up and said: “That magistrate should be expelled for what he has done! The government must be told that the magistrate must go. You, a king, should never be insulted! The magistrate must be driven out!”

Just before the meeting came to an end Mahlangeni, an ‘agitator who rivaled all the fomenters of those days’ mounted his gelding and shouted to those gathered, “Mpondomise, who is this who’s insulted? The king of the Mpondomise! Insulted!”

The Mpondomise said, “This magistrate must be expelled!”

“It’s not the government that insulted the king! It is this person!”

“He must be expelled!”[78]

Although colonialism played out locally at a personal level, people were aware that the magistrate was part of a bigger and much more powerful system. The killing of a magistrate was not simply a killing of a man, however tragic. It was the rejection of a political and economic system; the defiance of the colonial government and ultimately an empire. The Mpondomise understood this and described Hope’s death as the hand of the white queen being killed and the fences of the newly established order being plucked up.[79] From the accounts left by Matanga and Davis it is clear that Mhlontlo was aware of the risks he was taking by rebelling against colonial rule and in particular taking the life of a magistrate. In his discussion that morning Mhlontlo told Davis that

> He had done a bad thing; he was like a man riding hard on horseback with a bandage over his eyes in a dangerous part of the country, but by what he had done he would secure rest of three years; as the whole of the country was rising, and the Government would first have to deal with those to the East of the Pondomisi before attacking. The

[78] Scheub, *The Poem in the Story*, p. 236.
[79] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 64.

battle field he said would be in Tembuland He said he had nothing against individual white people only against Government and its Officials.[80]

It is clear from Mhlontlo's statements that the Mpondomise decision to rebel was not a fatalistic attempt to stop the changes brought on by colonialism regardless of the cost. Mhlontlo believed that other chiefdoms would also join the uprising which would entangle the colonial government in a drawn-out military response. There is evidence of discussions between the Sotho, Mpondomise, Mpondo and Thembu about a possible alliance against the colonial government.[81] Mhlontlo was under the impression that Sarhili, the Mpondo paramount Mqikela and Dalasile, the most powerful of the Thembu chiefs, would all unite in a war againt the Cape government. Davis claimed that Mhlontlo told him that Mqikela urged him to kill Hope to show that he was serious about confronting the colonial government.[82] Mhlontlo was aware that the involvement of the Mpondo, still independent and the largest polity in the region, was vital if they were to be successful, and Mpondo ambassadors were, at Mhlontlo's request, present when Hope was killed.[83] It is not clear if these chiefs misled Mhlontlo in terms of how dedicated they were to a war against a common threat or whether they changed their minds when the risks became more apparent, but a general uprising did not materialise as Mhlontlo believed it would. Sarhili was in hiding after the Ninth Frontier War and was not in a position to fight. Mqikela and the Mpondo decided not to fight and the Thembu king Ngangeliziwe, increasingly unpopular amongst his own people, submitted to colonial authorities. Although the rebellion was not as wide-spread as Mhlontlo thought it would be, it did spread beyond the chiefdoms of Matatiele in the months to come and colonial officials faced a much more difficult task suppressing it than they thought it would be in September and early October.

Mhlontlo made it clear that missionaries and traders were 'not to be touched' and guaranteed the safety of the refugees at Shawbury.[84] They were hesitant to believe him, and Davis wrote 'his

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[80] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Rev Davis to Mr Scott, Clarkebury, 5.2. 1895.
[81] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of a Transkeian*, pp. 85-86 and MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1, pp. 104-5 and pp. 116-117.
[82] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, A.E. Davis to Secretary for Native Affairs, Mthatha, 9.11.1880.
[83] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of a Transkeian*, pp. 85-86.
[84] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, A.E. Davis to Major Elliot, Shawbury, 25.10.1880.

treachery is deep and we cannot trust him'.[85] Despite Mhlontlo's statement that missionaries and shopkeepers were not to be harmed, two traders and a mason in the district were murdered within a day or two of Hope's death, but they seemed to all have been motivated by 'old quarrels' and personal vendettas.[86] A trader named Martin was stripped, pursued and killed but he was reported to be in an advanced stage of alcoholism and had 'made himself very objectionable hence his death'.[87] Thompson, a mason at the Tina Drift, was 'reported to have been killed by his own boys to whom he had been a hard & rough taskmaster'.[88] Usher, who was on good terms with Mhlontlo, was killed by a man with whom he had had a dispute and ejected from his store.[89] Mhlontlo expressed great displeasure that his orders that shopkeepers were not to be harmed were disobeyed.[90] At a meeting at Qumbu he 'wanted to know why his men had killed the Europeans'.[91] Although Reverend P.M. Lokwe claimed that Mhlontlo gave the order to 'kill the whites, save the blacks' and some colonial newspapers reported that that Mhlonhlo wanted 'the expulsion of the white man from South Africa', his comments and reactions to the killing of white traders show that this was not an anti-white uprising but aimed at removing white officials.[92] Some whites were perplexed by what they saw as the contradictions in his behavior. He seemed indifferent to Hope's death, yet saved Davis and was angered by the killing of white traders. Miss Barnely, a teacher at the Shawbury Mission, commented that Mhlontlo was 'a strange compound of barbarism and kindliness'.[93] The paradox is easily explained. Hope treated Mhlontlo badly and enforced unreasonable policies on the Mpondomise, while the missionaries and traders provided sought after goods and services.

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[85] *Ibid*.
[86] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of a Transkeian*, p. 86.
[87] Cory Library MS 19801/2, C.M. Maynard to W.T. Brownlee, 15.11.1931.
[88] *Ibid*.
[89] Cory Library MS 19801/2, Maynard to Brownlee, 15.11.1931; Brownlee, *Reminiscences of a Transkeian*, p. 86.
[90] CA 1-KWT I-I-I-323, A.E. Davis to Secretary for Native Affairs, Qumbu, 29.10.1880. There are numerous other sources indicating that Mhlonhlo was unhappy with the deaths of the Europeans: Letter by Cusens on 25 October 1880 and printed in the *Natal Witness* 4.11.1880.
[91] *Ibid*, statement by Zulu Siwahla, 22.12.1903.
[92] P.M. Lokwe, 'The Experiences of the Catechist and Christians at S. Paul's, Xokongxa' in Gibson (ed.), *Reminiscences of the Pondomisi War of 1880*, p. 32; *The Times* 16.11.1880.
[93] *London Standard* 3.12.1880.

Guns or a ritual murder: Interpreting and Reinterpreting Hope's Death

The reasons for Hope's death have been the topic of heated debates among contemporary historians. The conventional interpretation of Hope's death is relatively straight forward. Mhlontlo had decided by early October of 1880 that Hope should be killed but delayed giving the order for the magistrate's death until he had obtained weapons. Once these were in his grasp he instructed Hope be killed and the weapons used in an attempt to remove the magistrates who were making unreasonable demands of the Mpondomise. More recently Clifton Crais and Sean Redding have attempted to reinterpret Hope's death. The starting point of Crais's argument is the idea that in order to understand the reactions and decisions of Mhlontlo in 1880 the historian needs to understand the cultural belief systems of the Mpondomise. Only by understanding how Africans give meaning to their world and focusing on the 'centrality of culture' can one understand their actions.[94] Central to the world view of the Mpondomise, argues Crais, was a belief in witchcraft and evil. He argued that the Mpondomise considered occult forces to be operating especially powerfully during important political moments, and that this concept shaped their perceptions of Hope's actions which were in turn transferred to their perceptions of the colonial state. Crais argues that it was probable that the Mpondomise believed that Hope had access to magic and control over powerful symbols and rituals.[95] The illness of Mhlontlo's wife, the drought and the increasing conflict with colonial officials stemmed from witchcraft that needed to be removed. The Mpondomise believed that Hope, and thus the colonial system, was evil. Crais's argument is not simply a matter of shifting the focus from guns to witchcraft but really is an attempt to fundamentally reinterpret South African history. By presuming that Mhlontlo shared a 'bourgeois Enlightenment relationship to reality' we have misunderstood his actions, which were determined by his own cosmology, ideology and consciousness.[96]

A number of historians have criticized Crais's argument. D. Wylie points out that even Crais acknowledges that the evidence about the importance of magic in Xhosa politics rests on the

[94] C. Crais, 'Peires and the Past', pp. 238-239.
[95] Crais, *The Politics of Evil*, p. 69.
[96] C. Crais, 'Frankenstein visits the Eastern Cape: A (Brief) Reply', *South African Historical Journal*, no. 52. p. 246.

level of probable truths and he can only hypothesize that Hope was killed as a 'ritual sacrifice'.[97] The most comprehensive criticism of Crais's work comes from Jeff Peires. Peires points out that there is 'not much evidence' for most of Crais's argument regarding the killing of Hope, and criticizes him for his lack of fieldwork, not making full use of written Xhosa sources and misunderstanding of Xhosa terminology.[98] More importantly, Peires contends that the exercise of magic by no means precludes secular thinking and activity and that the use of magic does not imply a recognition of the presence of evil.[99] Peires concludes that there were times that the colonial government was perceived as bewitching black people and there are some indications that black people did perceive colonists as literally evil, but magic and witchcraft were marginal to the political consciousness and political struggles of black people.[100] Hope's death, Peires points out, was a political act, not a ritual murder.[101]

Sean Redding, while acknowledging that Mhlontlo rebelled 'to reassert his own authority', argues that the rebellion 'was also a political and cultural attack, as the rebels mobilised the pre-colonial symbols of chiefly authority to counter both the symbols and rituals, as well as material effects, of colonial control.[102] By doctoring weapons and men to make them impervious to bullets the Mpondomise chiefs, argues Redding, 'tried to mobilize their own supernatural resources to counter the malevolent powers of Cape officials'.[103] The first act of war, the killing of Hope, embodied the revolt's political symbolism. By killing Hope, Mhlontlo 'extinguished the local practitioner of Government' but their corpses and disembodied spirits still posed a danger and so to keep away Government influence physically and spiritually the bodies of the men were not buried.[104] Redding's argument is problematic. She too accepts the idea that the Mpondomise believed Cape officials were malevolent, although there is no evidence for this. The doctoring of men and weapons by the chief prior to conflict was a standard practice and there is no indication that either Mditshwa or Mhlontlo consciously mobilised pre-colonial

[97] D. Wylie, 'Review of The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* vol. 35 nos. 2/3 (2002), p. 497.
[98] Peires, 'Frankenstein Visits the Eastern Cape', pp. 226-227.
[99] *Ibid*, p. 230.
[100] *Ibid*, pp. 235 & 236.
[101] *Ibid*, p. 228.
[102] Redding, 'Sorcery and Sovereignty', pp. 249-50.
[103] *Ibid*, p. 261.
[104] *Ibid*, p. 260.

symbols to fight the rituals and symbols of colonial control. They were simply doctoring their men to protect them against the enemy. Mhlontlo's refusal to allow Hope's body to be buried is also often misunderstood. That too was a standard practice and not a conscious attempt to keep away the spiritual influence of the colonial government.

The alleged mutilation of Hope's body and the use of his body parts is also a red herring in the debate over what motivated his death. Casekile, a policeman at Qumbu, was the only witness to Hope's murder who claimed his body was mutilated. He testified 'Nomganga and Veve were present. They were the army doctors – Nomganga mutilated the bodies. I saw him cutting Mr. Hope's testicles. I did not see him cut the other bodies but I saw they were mutilated. I did not notice where the wound was on the other White man'.[105] Casekile's account, certainly the most emotive and dramatic, differs from all the other eye witnesses who mentioned that Hope's beard was cut from his face but make no mention of mutilation. One has to, therefore, question Casekile's account. Perhaps he was saying what he thought colonial officials wanted him to or as an Mfengu whose people had suffered themselves at the hands of the Mpondomise he might have been influenced by his own agenda. William Power Leary, the magistrate at Mount Frere, believed Casekile and repeated the idea in numerous accounts and letters that the corpses were mutilated 'for purposes of doctoring the Army'.[106] This was interpreted by Power Leary as proof that Mhlontlo, despite being in mourning for his great wife, was still in control of the chiefdom, 'as no Army doctor would dare mutilate a body unless War was actually declared or by the direct instructions of the Chief'.[107]

Mhlontlo himself clearly articulated his motivations. The Mpondomise requested colonial rule in the belief that it would bring peace and quietness. Instead magistrates dealt with them unjustly and made increasingly unreasonable demands, the worst of which was disarmament. If the colonial government could betray its allies with such a demand what more would they ask? Would they take away cattle and children and threaten the existence of the chiefdom? Distraught by what had already happened, and fearful of what was to come, they rebelled. At times people

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[105] CA, 1-KWT 1-1-1-323, Statement by Casekile, 24.12.1903.
[106] *Ibid*, Letter from W.P. Leary to Blenkins, 12.2.1904; Leary to Chief Magistrate Transkei Territories, 22.12.1903.
[107] *Ibid*, Letter from W.P. Leary to Blenkins, 12.2.1904.

wondered if the government knew how the magistrates were behaving and what they were demanding. Hope's interactions and treatment of Mhlontlo was personal and his disrespect and arrogance still echo down the centuries. Hope believed, although he was aware of the potential risks, that he could use Mhlontlo in the colonial campaign against the Basotho. It was a tragic miscalculation. Mhlontlo too knew of the risks he took. He was not sure exactly how matters would end but he knew that the killing of Hope would bring retribution and possibly defeat. He continued, never the less, partly as he felt he had no option and had to stop the changes colonialism was bringing, but partly in the belief that other chiefdoms would join the uprising which would weaken the colonial response and prolong the rebellion.

Chapter Seven
The Rebellion

From late October of 1880 until the middle of May 1881 East Griqualand was in a state of rebellion. There were two phases to the conflict. From late October until the end of November the Mpondomise at Tsolo and Qumbu were on the offensive and the influence of the Cape administration collapsed in these areas. Towards the end of 1880 the uprising entered a new phase as colonial forces launched a campaign against the Mpondomise and Basotho. The first phase of the rebellion, although relatively short – not more than six weeks in total – highlighted the political workings of the chiefdom in two areas. Firstly, there were differences of opinion and dissenting voices amongst the Mpondomise ruling class in regards to the uprising. At least two of Mhlontlo's uncles as well as one of his brothers initially argued against an uprising. On the opposite side of the spectrum there was some support for the removal of all whites, including traders and missionaries who contributed through commerce and Christianity to changes in Mpondomise society. Mhlontlo, considered by Colonial officials as the political and military leader of the Mpondomise during the rebellion, and his influential uncle Gxumisa supported the removal of colonial officials only. This approach gained most support and influenced Mpondomise strategy which was the destruction of magistracies, although at times the firebrands, generally the sons of Mditshwa and their supporters, looted trading stores and attacked mission stations. Secondly, the events of November 1880 demonstrated the role indigenous leaders played in the crisis. Mhlontlo influenced decisions to some extent, although he was unable to control the actions of all of his supporters. Mditshwa's involvement was ambiguous. The evidence seems to indicate that he was pushed into rebellion by his sons and by popular support for an uprising amongst his followers.

The Mpondomise Offensive

Mhlontlo and his councillors knew that the Cape administration would send troops to East Griqualand and that eventually the Mpondomise would have to prove themselves in armed conflict.[1] However, it would take some time for the administration to raise and organize the necessary manpower and the Mpondomise needed to take advantage of the hiatus and remove

[1] *The Cape Argus* 10.11.1880

magistrates and destroy the magistracies fairly swiftly. The destruction of Mthatha, the largest administrative centre of white rule, was initially a principal goal. During the day of the 24 October Mpondomise scouts were seen on the heights east of the Mthatha River and Mfengu refugees who were pouring into the capital reported an attack was imminent.[2] On Monday morning groups of Mpondomise, joined by small numbers of Mpondo and Thembu, looted the trading stores and farm houses that surrounded Mthatha, and then crossed the river and threatened the Anglican mission of St John's. White volunteers confronted them and drove them back, killing four rebels. After this skirmish the Mpondomise abandoned any further attempts to attack Mthatha and focused instead on the destruction of the smaller and less protected magistracies at Qumbu, Tsolo and Maclear.

On the day of Hope's death the Mpondomise cut the telegraph lines, destroyed papers, looted the residency and pulled down the jail at Qumbu.[3] Mhlontlo arrived late on Sunday from Chevy Chase and occupied Hope's residence.[4] The chief held a meeting with the white men at Qumbu that afternoon after which they rode to the Shawbury Mission Station. The refugees at Shawbury received a message from the Mpondo chief Nqwiliso informing them that Mditshwa planned to attack the mission and that their lives were in danger.[5] They left Shawbury on Wednesday, 3 November, in two groups and made their way to Nqwiliso's Great Place, before retreating to Mthatha.

At Tsolo, Welsh, his family and local white traders had barricaded themselves in the local jail. On Sunday, 24 October, a group of men arrived at Tsolo under Mditshwa's son Xomfana who said he had been sent by his father to convey the people in the jail to the Great Place and then on to Mthatha. Welsh declined to leave, believing it was safer to stay in the jail. Xomfana and his men seized the stock at the magistracy. On Monday Mditshwa came to Tsolo himself and offered to provide an escort to take the refugees to Mthatha. Welsh declined the offer, telling the chief that his son Xomfana had stolen his stock the day before and he would not trust himself to anyone. Mditshwa expressed his concern for Welsh saying that he did not want to see his blood

[2] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1, p. 115.
[3] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Testimony of E.C. Goss, 12.12.1903.
[4] *Ibid*, Statement by E.C. Goss, 12.12.1903.
[5] *Ibid*, A.E. Davis to Secretary for Native Affairs, Mthatha, 9.11.1880.

spilt at Tsolo. Welsh, however, would not be moved. The Mpondo chief Nqwiliso offered to provide men to relieve Welsh, however, he pointed out that the magistrate was unlikely to leave the jail in the company of black men alone, and so a group of seven white volunteers accompanied the Mpondo. The men set out from Mthatha early on Saturday morning, October 30, for Tsolo. The Mpondo force was not prepared to go through the territory without the knowledge and consent of Mditshwa, and so two men were sent to the chief's homestead to inform him that they were going to relieve Welsh and to request they not be disturbed or interrupted. The messengers returned with two of Mditshwa's sons and some of his councillors to show them the way. They kept up communication with the chief and obtained his consent through one of the councillors.[6] On the return journey groups of Mpondo men joined them, pushing up the numbers to 700 or 800, which probably prevented an attack from the Mpondomise.

On 23 October Thomson left the Maclear magistracy for Chevy Chase where he was to rendezvous with Hope and Mhlontlo. He was accompanied by 40 volunteers from Barkly East and Dordrecht under Captain Muhlenbeck and what remained of Lehana's loyal Batlokwa – at most 120 men. On Sunday Mhlontlo and his men marched up to Chevy Chase and halted within sight of the store. The rebels attacked the store on 25 October but sharpshooters held them at bay. Ledingoana and Mhlontlo's men then besieged Chevy Chase.

'You are a white man': Attacks on the Mfengu

The Mfengu who lived on the western and southern borders of the Tsolo district crossed the Mthatha River into Thembuland when the rebellion broke out. Here they were attacked and robbed by a petty Thembu chief named Umdukiswa who had joined the uprising.[7] Those Mfengu living at St Paul's Mission came in with the relief column sent to Tsolo. Reverend Stewart wanted the relief party to digress to Mboktwana, an outstation of St Augustine's, to rescue a small group of Mfengu Christians. The leaders of the party felt that this was too risky and pushed on to Mthatha without them. The next day, 1 November, the mission was surrounded and attacked by a group of men under Mditshwa's son Ketani. They killed seven

[6] Lokwe, 'The Experiences of the Catechist and Christians at S. Paul's, Xokongxa', p. 42.
[7] BNA G.20-'81, Report of Resident Magistrate of Tsolo, 4.1.1882, p. 86.

men and drove their cattle off.[8] The women and children made their way to Mthatha, arriving on 3 November in a destitute condition. Alex Welsh, who had just arrived in the capital after being rescued from Tsolo, was placed by Major Elliot in charge of the refugees from East Griqualand and it became his responsibility to requisition rations. Welsh believed that the killing at Mboktwana had an unforeseen circumstance. The Mfengu living in Pondoland considered joining the rebellion but demurred when hearing about the deaths at Mboktwana.

Key felt that the Mfengu were killed because they were Christians.[9] The fact that they were Christians set them apart more obviously from the majority of the population and probably reinforced the idea that they were outsiders rejecting the ways of the Mpondomise. The anger against the Mfengu, however, ran much deeper. There seems to be some resentment against their prosperity.[10] Making use of agricultural techniques they had brought with them and taking advantage of the connections that the missionaries had with merchants in the Cape Colony, they sold maize and other agricultural produce to the colonial market. More importantly they were seen as colonial sympathizers. Tim Stapleton has shown that from the mid to late nineteenth century Mfengu auxiliaries made a significant contribution to British war efforts in the Eastern Cape. Mfengu manpower greatly augmented the small colonial contingents and in that way reduced the numerical superiority that the Xhosa had in earlier conflicts on the frontier.[11] Their involvement in frontier wars on the colonial side created resentment and suspicion amongst other chiefdoms. They had settled, after paying tribute to Mhlontlo and Mditshwa, on the mission stations and along the peripheries of the Mpondomise chiefdoms as subjects of the chiefs. The Mfengu resented having to provide men to fight against the Mpondo and some of the other obligations they had to the Mpondomise. After the establishment of Cape rule and the years leading up to the rebellion, they had turned to the magistrate's courts to sort out many of their legal issues, particularly concerning land, which created the impression they were rejecting the authority of the Mpondomise chiefs. Not only did they reject the Mpondomise chiefs but in the process turned to magistrates whom the Mpondomise increasingly viewed with disdain. Philip Lokwe, an Mfengu missionary at St Augustine's, would later at the trial of Mditshwa recall a

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[8] *Ibid*, p. 87.
[9] Callaway, *A Shepherd of the Veld*, p. 68.
[10] Saunders, *Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 96.
[11] Stapleton, "Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants", p. 46.

conversation he had with Goniwe who said he had come to 'eat him up'. When asked why, Goniwe responded 'because you are a white man meaning govt. man'.[12]

Divisions and Obligations: The Mpondomise Ruling Class and the Rebellion

A number of important questions, as far as this study is concerned, are raised by the events that transpired at Qumbu, Tsolo and Chevy Chase. Firstly, what were the attitudes amongst the Mpondomise ruling families to what was taking place? There is evidence of divisions amongst these families as how to deal with colonial authorities and more generally the changes brought by colonialism. Amongst the Mpondomise of Qumbu two of Mhlontlo's uncles, Xumisa and Msongelwa, and his brother, Mtzansi, initially did not support the uprising. His uncles did not attend the meetings at Sulenkama and on the day of Hope's death were in the Mount Frere district in Sodladla's Location. They attempted initially to obtain protection from the Bhaca chief Makaula but were informed by a messenger from Mhlontlo to return to their homesteads and they eventually fought in the rebellion. Xumisa was killed in January 1881.[13] Msongelwa was badly wounded and crippled in early November. He died in 1901. Mtzansi survived the rebellion and served as a headman under the colonial government. From a letter written by Reverend Davis to *The Cape Argus* newspaper there is an indication that some of Mhlontlo's councillors supported the removal of all whites, both missionaries and traders, from the territories.[14] Some went as far as arguing they should be killed.[15] Mhlontlo seemed to have used his influence to convince enough of his councillors not to take the more radical approach of attacking white traders and missionaries and to focus on removing white officials only.

Mditshwa's involvement in the uprising is ambiguous. It seems that his sons were gaining influence and popularity in the chiefdom and that this, in part, contributed to his decision to reluctantly join the rebellion. His heir Mtshazi, son by his Great Wife Nogqili, daughter of the Gcaleka chief Sarili, was a boy of about ten at the time, however his older brothers, in particular Xolani, Zembe, Xomfana and Ketani, had supporters within the chiefdom. They, influenced

[12] CA, Appeal Court Criminal, 1/3/1/1. Evidence by Philip Lokwe

[13] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, W.P. Leary to Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, Umtata, 22.12.1903.

[14] *The Cape Argus* 10.11.1880

[15] *Ibid*.

according to Welsh by Mhlontlo, pushed their father to join the rebellion.[16] In a conversation with Welsh in late October, Mditshwa had said 'that his sons were responsible for the war and that he could not control them'.[17] Although Welsh did not believe that Mditshwa had 'lost all control', he did feel that 'he had lost a great deal of his authority' and that 'the people were led by his sons'.[18] It seems from the evidence available that it was Xomfana who wanted to kill Welsh and the other officials at Tsolo, and that Mditshwa's offers to take them to Mthatha might well have been sincere. According to Welsh's son Robert, Xomfana, unbeknown to his father, had not 'only selected the spot where we were to be attacked, but had actually told off the men who were to do the killing'.[19] Although Mditshwa was 'not heart and soul in the rebellion', he did continue to fulfill the duties required of a chief in a time of crisis.[20] He organized the army, doctored the assegais and guns and was present, albeit at a distance, at the skirmishes with colonial forces.[21] Cameron and Stewart believed he was sincere in his offer to take them to Mthatha while the trader William Leary believed he was 'treacherous'.[22]

The involvement of Mditshwa and Mhlontlo in the rebellion demonstrates the strengthens and limitations of indigenous leaders, as well as their political and social obligations within the system of the chieftaincy. Mditshwa, pushed into rebellion by popular support amongst younger men, still continued to fulfill the ritualistic roles required of chiefs. He doctored the weapons of those fighting and was in the vicinity of major skirmishes with colonial forces. Mhlontlo seemed to have enough influence to convince his councillors not to attack traders and missionaries, however, even his influence was limited. Although he stressed that traders and missionaries should not be harmed, trading stores were looted, mission stations torched and at times converts harassed. Mditshwa's son Titani led a group of men to St Augustine's and looted the mission station and drove away 70 sheep and four head of cattle belonging to the converts. Initially Key's livestock was not touched but Goniwe and his followers raided 40 sheep belonging to the missionary. Mpondomise converts at St Augustine's were also in a precarious position. Initially

[16] BNA, G.20-'81, Report of A.R. Welsh to Secretary for Native Affairs, 4.11.1880, p. 94.
[17] CA, Appeal Court Criminal, 1/3/1/1. Evidence by A.R. Welsh.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] CL, MS 19864, Dr Robert Welsh to his daughter Tuppy, Umtata, 1946, p. 21.
[20] BNA, G.20-'81, Report of A.R. Welsh to Secretary for Native Affairs, 4.11.1880, p. 93.
[21] CA, Appeal Court Criminal, 1/3/1/1, Evidence by John Ndzibo; Evidence by Neclana.
[22] CL, MS 19721, Grandmother Leary's Letters on the Pondomise War, 1880-1881, p. 7.

they stayed at the mission as it was the Mfengu 'who ran away to Mthatha'.[23] Later they too left by night for the capital.[24]

The question that needs to be answered is whether the looting of stores and mission stations was simply cases of opportunistic theft or whether there were political motivations or ideological dimensions to them. There is little evidence to draw definite conclusions. However, when attacking St Augustine's the rebels put on Reverend Key's surplice and held a mock service.[25] This does seem to indicate that the men were mimicking and belittling the rituals and practices of the church and that there was perhaps a dimension beyond simple theft to the actions of these men. This same question needs to be asked about the destruction of magistracies. The destruction of magistrates' offices was strategic. In the process telegraph offices were burnt down and the equipment destroyed which stopped communication between Mthatha and Kokstad. Rebels obtained weapons and ammunition, which in the case of the Qumbu magistracy was a considerable cache, and the cattle of the magistrate and his staff were driven off. They burnt records, often of criminal cases involving smelling out, taxation and land disputes. The destruction of magistracies took on a symbolic and even ideological dimension as well, as the rebels copied the rituals of the magistrate and court and in the process belittled them. Matanga, the policeman who had witnessed Hope's death, returned to Qumbu in an attempt to get back his prize horse and reported the following scene,

> I found the chief [Mhlontlo] seated in my Lord's great chair in which it was his wont to sit when he was resting in his house, and before the chief was the great table from the house of trials (court-room), and on the table was that great book of causes (criminal record book), and on a chair from the office sat Policeman Griffith beside the table, and from time to time he turned over the leaves of the book and read aloud from it: 'So-and-so charged with the crime of so-and-so; found guilty ; sentenced to so-and-so'. And then there would arise a great shout, and the armed warriors would rush upon the book and stab it with their spears, the while they shouted the death shout. Then would

[23] Lokwe, 'The Experiences of the Catechist and Christians at S. Paul's, Xokongxa', p. 49.
[24] *Ibid*.
[25] CL, MS 19721, Grandmother Leary's Letters on the Pondomise War, 1880-1881, p. 12.

> Griffith read again, while the warriors exulted and laughed aloud and made mock of the government, who, they said, was now dead.[26]

A similar pantomime was carried out at Engcobo after Stanford fled. Stanford reported that,

> There was high festival in my office. A blanketed warrior representing Ndabeni (myself) occupied the judicial bench. Another on a chair below was addressed as Lufele (Daniel). Then a mock prisoner was placed in the dock and the form of a criminal trial was mimicked with keen humour. Nor was Webb (Umquwu) the chief constable left out of the piece. At the conclusion of the dramatic entertainment, the offices, our houses, and the police huts, were set on fire.[27]

'Bad times for the black people': The Mpondo Paramounts and the Transkei Rebellion

A second question that needs to be answered is what were the intentions of the Mpondo paramounts? The attitude of the Mpondo Paramounts Nqwiliso and Mqikela to what was transpiring in East Griqualand is open to disagreement. Nqwiliso, who had succeeded his father Ndamase as ruler of western Pondoland in 1876, had very little sympathy for the Mpondomise. His father Ndamase and Mhlontlo engaged in bitter fighting in the 1860s. In 1866, after a year of drought, Ndamase sent many of his followers to cultivate the fertile banks of the Mzimvubu River.[28] Many of these people lived in homesteads on the border of the kingdom with the Mpondomise and thus weakened the defense of the area.[29] Mhlontlo took advantage of this and in July 1866 attacked a homestead of one of Ndamase's sons on the Tsitsa River. In the following year Ndamase in turn launched a campaign against the Mpondomise to recapture Mpondo cattle. Despite not having great sympathy for the Mpondomise cause, colonial officials in 1880 did not trust Nqwiliso and were irate that he did not come to the defense of Mthatha and were concerned that he was keeping in touch with Mhlontlo's men. Sir G.C. Strahan wrote to the Earl of Kimberley that:

> The action of N'quiliso is by no means easy of explanation, and, notwithstanding what he has done and what he has professed, his sincerity is still questioned. Almost immediately after the receipt of the news of Mr. Hope's murder, N'quiliso appeared

[26] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of a Transkeian*, p. 88.
[27] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford,* vol. 1, p. 131.
[28] Stapleton, *Faku,* p. 117.
[29] *Ibid*.

> with his army at the Umtata, and although Umditshwa's people were looting the traders' stores on the left bank of the river, in sight of the magistracy, and almost under N'quiliso's eyes, he took no active steps to prevent what was being done…Messengers were to be seen frequently passing between his army, and that of Umditshwa, which was encamped not far off, and there seems to be little doubt that an understanding was then come to for a time, at least, between them.[30]

Colonial suspicions grew when some of Nqwiliso's followers were involved in the looting of shops near Mthatha. Nqwiliso sent several of his brothers to Major Elliot in Mthatha 'distinctly giving him to understand that the shops were plundered in his country without his knowledge' and to prove his loyalty he promised to eat up the people implicated.[31]

Nqwiliso attempted to prove his loyalty by providing men to relieve Welsh at Tsolo. Timothy Stapleton argues that Nqwiliso provided men and assisted the refugees at Shawbury in order to gain colonial support and get revenge for the battles of the 1860s.[32] Nqwiliso needed colonial support to reinforce his claim to be an independent ruler with the same status as Mqikela, a claim denied by the eastern Mpondo. Reverend Lokwe believed Nqwiliso offered to rescue the people at Tsolo as a way 'to pay the damage done by his people on the border who joined the Pondomisi in looting shops'.[33] Despite providing men to rescue the refugees at Tsolo, colonial officials considered his 'loyalty doubtful'.[34] Welsh insisted Nqwiliso sent his son Bokleni and Philip Charles at the head of a body of men into the Tsolo district to meet with Umfino, a rebel headman, who with a following of about 300 men, had looted trading stores at Umjika, and later the homesteads of loyal Mfengu in the Ncambele Valley. He later moved with the plunder into Pondoland where he was protected by Nqwiliso.[35] Welsh also criticized Nqwiliso for not offering protection to loyalists at Tsolo. They were subsequently 'eaten up' by the men who lived in Pondoland, and although they appealed to Nqwiliso he offered no redress.[36]

[30] BPP C.-2755 No. 103, Strahan to Kimberley, 10.11.1880.
[31] *Natal Witness* 4.11.1880.
[32] Stapleton, *Faku*, p. 132.
[33] Lokwe, 'The Experiences of the Catechist and Christians at S. Paul's, Xokongxa', p. 40.
[34] BPP C.- 2755, No. 76, Sir G.C. Strahan to Earl of Kimberley, 6.11.1880.
[35] CPP, 1881, BNA, Report of Resident Magistrate of Tsolo, 4.1.1882, p. 90.
[36] *Ibid*.

Mqikela's stand was of great concern to colonial officials. He had succeeded his father Faku as paramount in 1867 but his authority did not stretch south of the Mzimvubu River. Besides his wife, Mamatiwane, being Mhlontlo's sister, he did not have any reason to co-operate with colonial officials. Towards the end of 1877 Frere came to believe that the Mpondo, after the defeat of the Gcaleka, posed the greatest military threat on the eastern frontier. He believed that for strategic and commercial reasons Britain should possess Port St. John's and placed pressure on Mqikela, holding over him the allegation that he had been complicit in the Griqua rebellion, to cede the river mouth to British authority.[37] Mqikela refused to give in and so Frere turned instead to Nqwiliso. Hope's clerk Alfred Davis insisted that Mhlontlo told him Mqikela 'is the Chief who told me that I must murder Hope to show that I really was in earnest'.[38] The Mpondo were of such concern to imperial officials that in mid-February of 1881 Lord Kimberley, secretary of the state for the colonies, sent a message to Mqikela that as long as he remained friendly, he would be left undisturbed. The chief replied: 'I value these words as these are bad times for the black people'.[39] By December they had clearly decided to throw their lot in on the colonial side and Elliot reported on 2 December that Nqwiliso's councillors informed him that the Mpondo Army wished to co-operate with the colonial troops.[40] On 7 December a force of 900 Mpondo, accompanied by 12 white traders, crossed the border into Mpondomise country and burnt homesteads and carried off cattle. A few days later Philip Charles and 2000 Mpondo had joined Major Bourne in a raid against the Mpondomise.

Divisions amongst the Thembu

The focus of this work is the rebellion as it took place between the Mthatha and Mzimkhulu Rivers; however, it is necessary to briefly look at what was taking place among the other chiefdoms to the south during this period. The Transkei by 1880 had been divided up by the colonial government into Thembuland, Emigrant Thembuland, Bomvanaland, Gcalekaland and Fingoland. The chiefdoms inhabiting Thembuland, Emigrant Thembuland and Bomvanaland became involved to various degrees in the rebellion. The Thembu chiefdom was the largest in

[37] Saunders, *Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 70.
[38] CA, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, A.E. Davis to Secretary for Native Affairs, Mthatha, 9.11.1880.
[39] Saunders, *Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 96.
[40] BPP C.- 2821, Enclosure in No. 26, Summary of Events reported from the Colony and Kaffraria since the 30th November.

the territories and of most concern to colonial officials. In 1875 the Thembu king Ngangelizwe had asked to be 'taken over' by the colonial government. Like Mhlontlo, Mditshwa and Makaula, the request was motivated by the need to have a strong ally against external enemies and internal challenges to his power. Ngangelizwe was considered a weak leader who had alienated his neighbours and chiefdoms living under his authority by his actions. His extreme abuse of his wife Novili, daughter of the Gcaleka king Kreli, had led to his father-in-law invading the Thembu kingdom. A number of chiefdoms, the largest and most important being the Qwathi, acknowledged his paramountcy but he 'exercised little control over them' and they often openly defied him.[41] The Qwathi, under chief Dalisile, had opposed Ngangelizwe's request for colonial protection. Eventually Dalisile, under pressure, reluctantly requested colonial rule but later attempted to unsuccessfully withdraw.[42]

In late October the Qwathi and some of the Thembu joined the rebellion. They had the same reasons to attempt to throw off white rule as the Basotho and Mpondomise. Disarmament, new laws, anger amongst chiefs over their loss of power and an increase in the number of Mfengu moving into the area all contributed to the dissatisfaction.[43] The events of the rebellion in Thembuland followed a similar pattern to those in East Griqualand. Initially, despite the discontent, the magistrates felt there was 'no noticeable change in the bearing of the people'.[44] In early October two subordinate chiefs seized the cattle and belongings of Mfengu refugees from Maclear who had moved into the district to escape the developing conflict in Thembuland. On 27 October Elliot informed the magistrates that he did not have the manpower or arms to protect them and that they were not to run any risk for the sake of saving a few buildings and that they should gather the white residents at the magistracies and then retreat to towns in the colony. As soon as the magistrates abandoned their positions the rebels looted and burnt the buildings.

The Thembu chiefdom became split by the rebellion. The king Ngangelizwe remained loyal and fined supporters near Umtentu for robbing a shop and was doing his best to keep his people

[41] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford,* vol. 1, p. 52.
[42] *Ibid*, p 53.
[43] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford,* vol. 1, pp. 98 & 103; BNA G.8-83, Report of the Civil Commissioner of Queenstown 30.12.1882, p. 15.
[44] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford,* vol. 1, p. 117.

quiet.[45] On 29 October he and his sons placed themselves under the protection of Elliot at Mthatha 'on the plea that he could no longer restrain his people'.[46] Colonial officials had differing views about Ngangelizwe's influence over his followers. Stanford, magistrate at Engcobo, felt that 'except under his leadership the Tembus as a nation will not in my opinion rebel'.[47] Elliot was, however, of the opinion that Ngangelizwe personally opposed war with the government 'but was entirely unable to control his people, and whether he gave or withheld permission to fight would make little difference to the Hala tribe, the majority of whom are decidedly in favour of war, but hesitate to commit themselves'.[48]

The Colonial Offensive

For the last days of October until the middle of November the Mpondomise and Basotho led the offensive. They destroyed the magistracies at Qumbu, Tsolo and Moteri's Kop, surrounded Maclear and cut communication between Kokstad and Mthatha. From the middle of November the colonial campaign against the Mpondomise began. Colonial troops, consisting of black levies drawn from loyal chiefdoms and white volunteer units raised in the colonies of Natal and the Cape, began a series of raids against the Mpondomise. For the last two weeks of November the Mpondomise confronted the colonial patrols on the lower lying areas around Qumbu and Tsolo. By early December they retired into the more mountainous and rugged country further inland. When the Gun War broke out in Basutoland, the Cape government appointed Brigadier-General Charles Mansfield Clarke commandant general of colonial troops.[49] In principle Clarke was in control of all military activity in East Griqualand and Thembuland. In practice he oversaw the military manoeuvres along the Thembuland border and military activity in the rest of the territories was the responsibility of Major Henry Elliot, the chief magistrate of Thembuland, who was stationed at Mthatha, and Charles Brownlee, chief magistrate of East Griqualand, at Kokstad.

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[45] BPP C.- 2821, Enclosure in No. 19, Summary of Events reported on since 23 November 1880.
[46] BPP C.-2755 No. 103, Strahan to Kimberley, 10.11.1880.
[47] *Ibid*, Enclosure 2. in No. 93, Stanford to Elliot, 6.10.1880.
[48] BPP C.- 2821, Enclosure 1 in no. 6.
[49] P. Gon, *Send Carrington: The Story of an Imperial Frontiersman* (Craighall, 1984), p. 39.

Elliot and Brownlee both faced formidable challenges, the most important of which were overseeing military activity against the rebels, obtaining arms and ammunition, protecting the civilian population and ensuring the continuing co-operation of loyal chiefdoms. As the Transkei Territories had been denuded of professional troops when the CMR was sent to Basutoland, Elliot and Brownlee had to depend on white volunteers and black levies to suppress the rebellion. At the end of October there was one sergeant, one corporal and four privates of the Cape Mounted Rifles in Mthatha.[50] A further 140 men were raised from the white population of Thembuland to defend the capital.[51] Volunteers had to be drawn from further afield in the Colonies of Natal and the Cape. Captain R.E. Giles, ex-Royal Artillery and Commanding Officer of the Cape Field Artillery, left King William's Town on 26 October with 90 men drawn mainly from the CMR for Mthatha. A further 100 men raised in King William's Town left the next day. The commandant general hoped to send 900 men to Mthatha by recruiting men in Cape Town, Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, East London, Graaff Reinet and Queenstown. Arming these men was a difficult task. The loyalty of the Bhaca and Nhlangwini chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu ensured that the main wagon road from Kokstad to the Colony of Natal remained open and gave Brownlee access to firearms and ammunition. Elliot at Mthatha was in a more difficult position. He had to rely on convoys of wagons from the Cape Colony or Port St John's in Pondoland. At the end of October only half of the 140 men recruited in Mthatha were armed.[52] Elliot was so short of firearms that in late October he armed men with axes. This was slightly relieved when the magistrate at Port St John's sent 55 Sniders and 21 boxes of ammunition to the capital. Trying to ascertain where the rebels were concentrated was also a difficult task. Elliot established an Intelligence Corps which consisted of fourteen men to ascertain 'the position and movements of the rebels'.[53] The corps went out on regular patrols from Mthatha to gather intelligence about the rebels' whereabouts from civilians they encountered. This was reported back to Elliot who then sent out larger patrols under Bourne and Giles. Elliot also relied on information from missionaries, black converts and most importantly the Mpondo Paramount Nqwiliso who provided 'valuable information on several occasions'.[54]

[50] BPP. C. – 2755, Enclosure 1 in No. 94, Summary of Events reported since 26th October 1880.
[51] *Ibid*, Enclosure 7 in No. 90, Elliot to Colonial Secretary, 26.10.1880.
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] BPP C-2821 Enclosure in No. 14, Summary of Events reported since 16th November.
[54] *Ibid*.

Ensuring the safety of and feeding the many white traders and missionaries, Christian converts, Mfengu and Thembu loyalists that had fled to Mthatha at the outbreak of the conflict occupied much of Elliot's time. He feared in early November that communication with the colony would not remain open for very long but hoped that 26 wagons filled with vital stores which had just crossed the Bashee River, escorted by 20 Transkei Militia and 50 Mfengu, would reach Mthatha.[55] The wagons arrived on 13 November and Elliot hoped to relieve the problem of so many refugees in Mthatha by offering rations and free passage to King William's Town in the wagons that had brought supplies but no one took up the offer, afraid to do so without a white escort. By early December dysentery broke out at Mthatha and Elliot used every means to convince non-combatants to leave for the colony with the first escort.

Colonial Military Operations and Tactics

East Griqualand was divided into three areas of military operation: Tsolo, Qumbu and Matatiele. The Cape government appointed Major W.G. Parminter of Baker's Horse, who had distinguished himself at Hlobane and Ulundi during the Anglo-Zulu War, commandant of the forces at Mount Frere, the main base from which to launch attacks against Mhlontlo's followers in the Qumbu district. Major J.H.W. Bourne of the CMR took command of troops at Mthatha and from there took action against Mditshwa's supporters in the Tsolo area. Donald Strachan, commandant of forces in the Matatiele area, continued with the *Abalondolozi* and *Amatemba* a gruelling campaign in the Drakensberg against the Basotho. Colonial tactics in East Griqualand were typical of those practised by British forces in the Eastern Cape and other parts of southern Africa. White and black troops went out on short patrols to engage the rebels. These engagements varied from skirmishes involving a few dozen men to battles involving hundreds of men on both sides. The rebels suffered by far the greater casualties. Losses of 50 or more men in a single engagement with colonial troops occurred, a devastating loss for the relatively small chiefdoms. Colonial military leaders, however, did not hope to defeat the rebels through heavy losses. They also carried out a scorched earthed policy that aimed at destroying the productive capacity of the Mpondomise chiefdoms.[56] By burning down homesteads, destroying crops and carrying off livestock, colonial officers hoped to force chiefs to surrender as their followers faced

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[55] *Ibid*, Enclosure 1 in no. 6.

[56] Stapleton, "Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants", p. 46.

starvation. The scattered settlement patterns of homesteads offered little protection to the civilian population and made them vulnerable to colonial raids.

The Campaign against the Mpondomise of Qumbu

The colonial forces operating in the Qumbu and Gatberg areas consisted initially of A troop of Baker's Horse, 150 Nhlangwini members of the *Abalondolozi* and the Baca Contingent. They were later reinforced by the Xesibe Native Levies, 655 strong, drawn from the supporters of Jojo.[57] Both the Bhaca and Xesibe were more concerned about being attacked by the Mpondo, than they were fighting the Mpondomise.[58] The mobility of the colonial troops operating from Mount Frere improved when reinforced by a troop of Willoughby's Horse. Willoughby's Light Horse, accepted for service on 25 October, consisted of 230 men recruited in Pietermaritzburg by Digby Willoughby, a captain in the Natal Native Contingent during the Anglo Zulu War of 1879.[59]

Major Parminter's move into Mhlontlo's chiefdom was deferred from day to day due to the flooded state of the Tina River.[60] By 15 November the Tina had subsided enough to make it passable and Major Parminter launched a foray from Mount Frere into the territory of Mhlontlo to attack and burn the chief's Great Place at Qanqu. As the colonial forces pushed forward the Mpondomise set fire to Mhlontlo's homestead and retreated. Mhlontlo with two or three attendants took refuge in the bush at Sulenkama.[61] Colonial troops burnt every homestead in their advance as well as what remained of Mhlontlo's Great Place.[62] They pursued the Mpondomise into the hills where hand to hand combat took place. At this point Parminter changed his original plan. He had not brought slaughter oxen with him and as a consequence there was no meat. He decided to rather focus on capturing Mpondomise cattle. During November Parminter also led a number of smaller raids into Mhlontlo's territory.

[57] Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, p. 213.
[58] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, p. 218.
[59] Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, p. 209.
[60] *Government Gazette* 7.12.1880.
[61] CL, MS 19801/1, C.M. Maynard to W.T. Brownlee, 29.9.1932.
[62] *Government Gazette* 7.12.1880.

In early December Baker moved into Mhlontlo's territory. On 6 December he pushed across the Tina and arrived at Qumbu the following day. Since Baker had crossed the Tina into the Qumbu district in early December, Elliot, magistrate at Mthatha, was finding it difficult to obtain definite information regarding the whereabouts of Mhlontlo and his men. On 1 December he was incorrectly informed that Mhlontlo had dispersed his army and was attended by only eight men to avoid capture.[63] On 11 December while on patrol Baker found a large number of Mpondomise in the Caba Forest. On 14 December Nqwiliso reported through Philip Charles that Mhlontlo, Mditshwa, Mabasa and Lelingoana and their supporters were in the Tsitsa Gorge. The rugged nature of the gorge provided cover for men and room for stock. Nqwiliso urged colonial troops to surround the gorge as the capturing of these chiefs and the destruction of their men 'would effectually stamp out the present rebellion from the Umtata to the Umzimkulu'.[64]

On 18 December Baker launched a major assault against the Mpondomise at the Tsitsa Gorge. The battle at Tsitsa Gorge was a devastating loss for the Mpondomise. Baker estimated that 50 men at most managed to escape the gorge.[65] The rest fell to 'Usher's bullets' and 'the assegais of the Bacas'.[66] Baker in his official report wrote 'so thick in many places were the corpses that as many as 17 and 15 were counted lying together within 20 yards of each other'.[67] Baker and the correspondent for the *Natal Witness* both recorded a loss of 300 men for the Mpondomise at Tsitsa Gorge.[68] The Mpondomise historian Tyabashe recalled that after the battle 'the Mpondomise were scattered, scattered in this land; the Mpondomise were scattered now'.[69] When the chief was told that his uncle Gxumisa 'remained behind – that is to say, he was dead', Mhlontlo, after a moment of quiet, said to those present: "Mpondomise, today the government has defeated us. So – those of the mountain, to the mountain! Those of the water, to the water! Let us disperse!"[70] The battle at Tsitsa Gorge broke Mpondomise resistance, although they were involved in a number of minor skirmishes in January of 1881 - at Xuka Drift on 2 January,

[63] BPP C.- 2821, Enclosure in No. 26, Summary of events reported in the Colony and Kaffraria since the 30th November.
[64] *Ibid*, Enclosure 1 in No. 37, Summary of events reported since the 14th December 1880.
[65] *Ibid*, Enclosure 4 in No. 44, Report by Baker, 21.12.1880.
[66] *Ibid*.
[67] *Ibid*.
[68] *Ibid*.
[69] Scheub, *The Poem in the Story,* pp. 238.
[70] *Ibid*, p. 239.

Mapassa's Nek on 8 January and at Joel's Nek on 13 January. In April Captain Maynard led a patrol into the Tsitsa Valley where a skirmish ensued in which Alfred Leary fatally shot Mahlangeni, Hope's killer.[71] After the defeat at Tsitsa Gorge, Mhlontlo, and members of his family, spent some time in Pondoland but eventually crossed into Basutoland where he lived for two decades in exile.

The Campaign against the Mpondomise of Tsolo

From November colonial forces led by Major Bourne of the right wing of the CMR and Captain Giles, of the Cape Field Artillery, began operating from Mthatha against the Mpondomise supporters of Mditshwa. The Mfengu provided large numbers of men for the levies that went against the Mpondomise. On 15 November, 35 men under Giles and about 35 volunteers from Mthatha went out on a patrol towards an Mfengu station named Fodo in Mpondomise territory, after receiving reports that one of Ngangalizwe's councillors Umdukiswa was leading men in attacks against the Mfengu and looting their cattle. Facing colonial fire power for the first time, the Mpondomise retreated after an hour of intense fighting with a loss of between 40 to 50 men. The Mpondomise were led by Mditshwa's son Zembe, accompanied by his brothers Goniwe, Bangani and Mhangagi. Mditshwa observed the fight from miles away.[72] Shortly afterwards another major skirmish took place at Tabasa at which Goniwe and Bangani were present. Mditshwa was within sight of the conflict, and had doctored the men and their weapons before they left.[73] On 16 November, after receiving reports that the Mpondomise were stealing cattle from refugee Mfengu near the Cicira River, Bourne went out with a patrol of about 60 men for the purpose of reconnoitering and if necessary assisting the Mfengu. The colonial forces surprised the Mpondomise at Kambi drift on the Mthatha and pushed them back towards the river. The Mpondomise lost between 40 and 50 men.[74]

Despite playing a significant role in suppressing the rebellion, the loyalty of the Mfengu became strained by disarmament and disputes over cattle captured from rebels.[75] The Mfengu in the

[71] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 1 p. 156.
[72] CA, Appeal Court Criminal, 1/3/1/1. Evidence by John Ndzibo; Evidence by Neclana.
[73] *Ibid*, Appeal Court Criminal, 1/3/1/1. Evidence by John Ndzibo
[74] *Ibid*.
[75] Stapleton, "Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants", p.45.

King William's Town district were the first to be called upon to voluntarily disarm, leaving them vulnerable to attack. During the Transkei Rebellion colonial authorities tried to control the cattle looted from rebels. The commandant general reported that captured stock would not become the property of the captors but would be sold and at the close of operations half the amount realized would be divided among the troops engaged in the field.[76] This caused great unhappiness amongst all of the colonial allies, including the Mfengu. This discontent came to a head in late November just before the battle at Kambi Drift near Mthatha. On 23 November a large group of Mditshwa's men crossed the Mthatha River and with a force under Umdukiswa were going to seize the cattle of the refugees in Mthatha and cut off communication with the colony. A force of 30 CMR, 50 white volunteers and 1 500 black levies, the majority of whom were Mfengu, left the capital that evening and marched towards Kambi Drift. Prior to the battle on the 24 November it was reported that about half of the Mfengu who were supposed to have taken the field had left on the night of the 23 and returned to their homes.[77] The remainder who took part in the battle 'did not display bravery'.[78] Elliot reported in late November that he 'had discovered a mutinous spirit among some of the Fingo people' and in an attempt to stop this feeling spreading he had inquired into the matter and sentenced the Mfengu Chief Mchali's son to one year's imprisonment and disarmed and dismissed a number of others.[79] It was reported in January 1881 that all the Mfengu levies in Wavell's column which was operating in Thembuland had deserted over unhappiness over captured livestock, and that it was proving difficult to enlist more men.[80]

A.R. Welsh reported that as early as 3 November Mditshwa wanted to surrender but that he was being 'closely watched by his sons at his great place'.[81] After the losses of 16 and 24 November Mditshwa reportedly retired to the Mjika Forest. On 12 December Bourne left Mthatha on a three day patrol towards Mjika accompanied by 1000 loyal levies in search of Mditshwa and his men. That evening they reached Mditshwa's deserted homestead which they torched. On 30 December Mditshwa, aware of then increasing loss of men and stock, sent messages with

[76] CPP G.10-81, Report of the Commandant-General of Colonial Forces for the year 1880, p. 2.
[77] Stapleton, "Valuable, Gallant and Faithful Assistants", p. 45.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] BPP C.- 2821, Enclosure in No. 18, Summary of Events reported on since the 23rd November 1880.
[80] *Ibid.*
[81] BNA, G.20-'81, Report of A.R. Welsh to Secretary for Native Affairs, 4.11.1880, p. 94.

Manqupo, son of Nomlala, to Welsh and Key in Mthatha indicating that he wished to surrender.[82] Bishop Key had been in the United Kingdom during the early stages of the rebellion but had returned to South Africa at the end of 1880. It was estimated that by late December Mditshwa had lost between 100 to 150 men.[83] His stock losses were severe. In one raid alone his people lost 10 000 head of cattle to colonial forces.[84] An almost equal number of horses, sheep and goats had been driven off. Key, Welsh and Cumming, accompanied by a small force of African policemen, set out from Mthatha to meet the chief, who was believed to be in a cave in the Nxasa Valley. Welsh and Key were accompanied by Colonel Wavell who was leading an advance of colonial troops and Mfengu levies against Mditshwa. Welsh arrived with Cumming and Mditshwa began to negotiate with Welsh for his surrender. Welsh assured him that 'his person would be safe' but that he would have to stand trial before judges of the Cape Colony.[85] Mditshwa, accompanied by two of his sons and 6 of his councillors, returned to the camp and he was handed over to Wavell. Welsh left as he wanted to avoid further unpleasantness between him and Wavell as he 'did not approve of his mode of conducting affairs'.[86] A further 800 men surrendered to Wavell, bringing with them large quantities of live-stock. Mditshwa and his men were held at the military camp at Tabasa to be sent to King William's Town for trial. About half of the men escaped and eventually the magistrate discharged the rest. In all about 100 of Mditshwa's followers were arrested and sent to King William's Town. (Fifteen were eventually charged and the remainder released). The Mpondomise historian Mdukiswa Tyabashe recounts that Mditshwa surrendered and did not flee in order to save his people. When he was told to flee to Lesotho, he responded, 'No, if we depart from here, the quality of Mpondomise, the Mpondomise ethos, will come to an end. We'll become refugees who'll never have any land! As for me, I choose to surrender myself. And when I've done that' I'll be arrested. They might even hang me, if they so desire, but they'll leave these people alone to rebuild the land.'[87]

[82] *Ibid*, p. 87.
[83] *Ibid*.
[84] *Ibid*.
[85] KAB, Appeal Court Criminal, 1/3/1/1, Testimony by A.R. Welsh.
[86] BNA G.20-'81, Report of A.R. Welsh to Secretary for Native Affairs, 4.11.1880, p. 87.
[87] Scheub, *The Poem in the Story,* pp. 239-240.

The Campaign in the Drakensberg

In a swift campaign from early to late October Strachan and his men, as described in chapter four, had pushed the Basotho rebels into the Drakensberg. After the murder of Hamilton Hope, he withdrew to Matatiele where he set up his headquarters. From here he was able to send out patrols towards Chevy Chase and Mount Fletcher, as well as over Qacha's Nek and into the Drakensberg. On 30 October, after the return of the patrol from across Qacha's Nek towards the Orange River, Strachan sent a large force to relieve Thomson, the magistrate at Maclear. He had been surrounded at Rutter's trading store at Chevy Chase since the 23 October after travelling there to meet Hope. On the next day, 5 November, the country cleared, the column returned to Matatiele, taking Rutter and his family with them. Thomson returned to Maclear where Basotho rebels besieged the town until mid-December when a force from the colony relieved it.

On 8 November, a patrol launched an attack and completely routed a Basotho force. The retreating men tried under heavy fire to either find refuge in Qacha's Cave or swim across the Orange River to the relative safety of Basutoland. A large number were unable to reach the entrance of the cave and colonial forces stabbed them in hand to hand combat. Others drowned while swimming across the fast flowing Orange River. The Basotho lost an estimated 70 to 80 men that day. On Sunday, 21 November, after being holed in town for four days in bad weather, a patrol left Matatiele and reached the foothills of the Drakensberg by mid-morning. They planned to cross into Lesotho at Rama's Nek but this was impassable because of heavy snow storms and so they had to follow a pass some miles to the right of Rama's Nek. Edward Barker and 10 men rode to the top of the pass to watch as the column, which left just after noon, began its steep and slippery ascent. Barker's advance guard continued on and lost contact with the main column, delayed getting pack oxen and ammunition over the pass. Barker and his men persuaded a group of rebels who led them into a narrow gorge where they ambushed the colonial patrol from the front and flanks. Mounted Basotho cut off their path of retreat. The Basotho stabbed all of the men, bar one who managed to mount a horse in the ensuing confusion and charge through the rebel ranks. The remainder of the column then dislodged the Basotho from the gorge and the cliffs and pushed them into the valley below. The Basotho began to retreat, some crossing the Orange, and others retreating into Nehemiah's Cave. Watkinson's Kokstad Volunteers gained a height and stopped the firing from the rebels, allowing the colonial troops

who had moved into caves to sleep the night. The colonials lost one officer, fifteen troops and five wounded. The Basotho lost 30 men on the field but many more wounded must have died later.

By late November Baker had recovered from an attack of gout and the effects of a fall from his horse and began to take command. On 28 November, Baker left Kokstad for Matatiele to discuss with Strachan an attack on Nehemiah's Cave which he hoped would be a decisive blow to the Basotho. It was reported that 2000 men had re-crossed the Orange and sent a message to Strachan that they were 'ready for him'.[88] On 2 December, Strachan left on his campaign with 1500 men. By 6 December, Strachan and his men were four hours from Nehemiah's Cave but were bogged down by a severe snow storm. On the following day they reached the cave and launched an attack against the Basotho, many of whom drowned attempting to cross the Orange. This was a fairly decisive blow against the Basotho and resistance in this part of the Drakensberg faded afterwards. Strachan sent half of the men in the *Abalondolozi* to the Pondoland border and the remainder returned to their homes to cultivate their lands. Willoughby's Horse and African levies would then guard the mountain passes of the Drakensberg to stop Basotho rebels returning.

Hostilities in Basutoland ended on 11 April 1881. In East Griqualand the conflict dragged on for another month, although it was waning. Colonial troops were spent after months of operating in difficult conditions in the Drakensberg. One seasoned campaigner described the campaign as a strenuous affair, 'not so much from the fighting point of view as from the roughing-it part and the food supply question'.[89] Troops were supposed to receive a daily ration of two pounds of meat and one and a half pounds of meal. They seldom saw these rations and relied on the meat of emaciated oxen.[90] Blankets and rugs were in short supply and even in the summer temperatures dropped in the mountains to below freezing. The wet weather hampered military operations and caused an epidemic of horse-sickness which cost Strachan ten percent of his mounts.[91] In January the assistant adjutant-general made administrative adjustments in an attempt to end the

[88] *Natal Witness* 9.12.1880.
[89] Quoted in Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 177
[90] *Ibid*.
[91] Harber, *Gentlemen of Brave Mettle*, p. 120.

fighting and cut down on costs. He ordered Baker's Horse to Lesotho and Strachan became the head of a combined force consisting of the *Abalondolozi*, *Amatemba* and local levies. Henry Usher served as Strachan's second in command.

With Mhlontlo's defeat at the Tsitsa Gorge, the surrender of Mditshwa and the Basotho defeat at Nehemiah's Cave, military operations from January 1881 onwards focused on the Hlankomo, Luzi and Pitsing valleys where supporters of the Batlokhwa chief Lelingoana and his brother Leshuta were barricaded in caves in the Drakensberg and resisting attempts by the *Amatemba* to dislodge them.[92] The *Amatemba* were operating from a fortified encampment, known as Fort Usher, in the hills near to where the Mount Fletcher magistracy was later established. Despite incessant rain, cold and a shortage of supplies, Usher's men effectively harassed the Basotho, and eventually managed to push Lelingoana and his men over the Drakensberg. Letsie allowed them and their followers to inhabit the Orange River Valley from where they maintained links with their kinsmen who had remained at Matatiele. Lerothodi called upon Lelingoana to assist the Basotho in early 1881 in their fight against Cape troops.[93] According to his praise poem, he identified fully with the Sotho cause and enthusiastically fought against the British.[94] In January 1881 the magistrate of the Quthing district, John Austen, pursued Lelingoana and his men up the Orange River and in an ill-judged attack, the Basotho killed the magistrate and eight of his men.[95] Lelingoana sent Austen's decapitated head to Letsie. Lelingoana's actions have traditionally been seen as an attempt to make up with the house of Moshoeshoe for his father Sikonyela's attack on Thaba Boisu in 1829.[96] Lelingoana was probably motivated by more recent events. Austen, who had replaced Hamilton Hope as magistrate with Moorosi, was generally an unpopular official, and in his former position as superintendent of the Wittebergen Reserve had pushed for the removal of the Batlokwa to Nomansland. There seemed also to be long standing personal enmity between Austen and Lelingoana who had mocked the magistrate by referring to him as a *Leqhea*, half-caste.[97] For his loyalty, Letsie allowed Lelingoana to occupy the country of the upper Orange River in the Mokhotlong district. One of the last

[92] *Ibid*.
[93] Sanders, '*Throwing Down White Man'*, p. 182.
[94] *Ibid*.
[95] *Ibid*, p. 164.
[96] Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto*, p. 164.
[97] King, 'Voluntary Barbarians of the Maloti-Drakensberg', p. 164.

skirmishes of the uprising in East Griqualand occurred in mid-May at Makomering near Mount Fletcher. There was no formal surrender or battle to mark the end of the conflict in East Griqualand. From May onwards rebels either fled to Basutoland or gave themselves over in a piecemeal fashion to magistrates.

The rebels had really only had the upper hand for a couple of weeks in October and November of 1880 when they besieged and destroyed the magistrates offices at Qumbu and Tsolo, launched an attack on Mthatha and surrounded Chevy Chase. The Mfengu, considered colonial sympathizers and unpopular because of their prosperity and attempts to use the colonial legal structures to their advantage, were the target of at times fatal attacks. In November colonial troops, consisting mainly of black levies, began an offensive against the Mpondomise in the Qumbu and Tsolo areas. The events of late October to mid-November demonstrate that there were divisions amongst the Mpondomise ruling houses towards the rebellion, but that despite these differences there was enough social cohesion for the chiefdom not to split in the face of the political and economic crisis that followed. These events also show that chiefs had to consider the wishes of their councillors, members of their extended families and the wishes of their supporters. Mditshwa despite his misgivings continued to carry out the obligations and expectations of a chief in times of crisis, and Mhlontlo, a strong personality and forceful leader, at times could not control the actions of his followers.

Chapter Eight

Punishment and Compromise:
Indigenous Leaders and the Headmanship System

Initially after the collapse of the rebellion the Cape administration focused its attention on affecting a settlement in Basutoland, so magistrates in East Griqualand had to re-establish colonial rule and deal with the immediate social and political consequences of the uprising. In 1883 the Cape government, through a protracted land commission, focused on securing colonial rule in East Griqualand in the long term. The commission, which substantially changed settlement patterns, aimed at rewarding those chiefdoms that had remained loyal with land and dividing and weakening those that had rebelled by confiscating land. The commission also laid the foundations of a new administrative system centered on the 'location' and 'headman'. Despite their misgivings about established hereditary leaders, colonial officials were aware that they had considerable support and could not easily be excluded from the new system. Loyal chiefs and members of their extended families as well as rebels who were no longer considered a threat became paid employees of the government. The Cape administration drew them, along with loyal commoners, into the colonial structures as headmen whose functions the state attempted to define and control according to the needs of maintaining white rule. The focus of this chapter is on how indigenous leaders responded to the new administrative system, as well as the broader changes taking place. While many members of the ruling families became headmen and entered into an at times uneasy alliance with the colonial government, white officials excluded Mditshwa and Mhlontlo from the system. In the decades following the collapse of the rebellion, they had to reassert and redefine their roles in regards to the colonial government, their adherents, headmen and Mfengu politicians who attempted to move away from ethnic politics and win over the Mpondomise. Mhlontlo most successfully reasserted the role of the chieftaincy. Despite the risks, he returned from exile in 1903 and reestablished his presence by appealing to his former status as an independent leader, playing on his role during the rebellion and offering alternative leadership to colonial officials, headmen and Mfengu politicians. For many Mpondomise, Mhlontlo became associated with a struggle for a way of life fundamentally changed by colonialism.

'A dead lion's skin which could not even protect a hare': Attempts at a Settlement in Basutoland

As the conflict drew to a close in East Griqualand in early 1881, the Cape colonial government attempted to obtain a settlement in Basutoland. In early September 1880 Letsie had offered the submission of his people if the disarmament law was dropped. The offer was rejected. In April 1881 Sir Hercules Robinson, the newly-appointed Cape governor and high commissioner, modified the disarmament requirements and proposed simply fining the rebel chiefs. The Cape government and Letsie accepted the proposal but the king was unable to enforce the settlement and the conflict continued. In April, when parliament opened, Thomas Scanlen moved that the government had mishandled affairs in Basutoland and the Transkei territories and had imperiled the best interests of the colony.[1] Supporters of the administration pointed out the speed with which the rebellion had been suppressed and Sprigg denied disarmament had provoked the uprising but shifted the blame to a plot to overthrow white rule. The government's majority was reduced to only three and Sprigg eventually resigned and in early May Scanlen became prime minister. Scanlen sent J.W. Sauer, new secretary for native affairs, in August to Basutoland to negotiate with the chiefs. Joseph Orpen, the governor's agent, failed to persuade Letsie to take action against Masupha. In April 1882 the Cape parliament repealed the Disarmament Act. The Cape administration had lost its influence in Basutoland, and George Moshesh, a loyal, described Cape rule at a *pitso* called by Orpen 'as a dead lion's skin which could not even protect a hare'.[2] In 1883 Merriman travelled to England to persuade a reluctant Home Office to accept responsibility for Basutoland.

By early 1883 the Scanlen government wanted to hand over the territories east of the Kei directly to London as well.[3] The cabinet considered the Transkei territories a financial burden on the colony which was going through a period of economic depression. The Cape administration proposed temporary retrocession of the area to Britain. Merriman, while in London discussing Basutoland, suggested that the Transkei territories also come under British rule, which would avoid any future conflicts that might arise out of 'two distinct systems of native government

[1] Saunders, *Annexation of the Transkeian Territories*, p. 97.
[2] Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman*, p. 101.
[3] Saunders, *Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 110.

growing up side by side'.[4] The imperial government wished to first settle issues in Basutoland and was not prepared to act unless the Cape government made a formal request that they take over the territories beyond the Kei. Scanlen's government decided to leave the issue until after elections, although retrocession and the state of the economy were the two chief issues of the 1883 campaign. The two ideas were linked and Merriman argued that if the Colony got rid of the administration of the Transkei territories, which he described as a white elephant, the colony would save £50 000 a year on administration and £150 000 on the army.[5] Magistrates were divided. Brownlee, the architect of the Cape's movement beyond the Kei, felt strongly that if retrocession took place the chiefs would regain their old influence and this would be a step back for the Cape's civilizing policy. Stanford, however, supported imperial rule of the territories, as did the South African Native Political Association. Opposition parties, however, came out against retrocession. They viewed the territories as offering opportunities for land-hungry white farmers and a solution to 'overcrowding' in the colony.[6] The Scanlen government left office in May 1884 and any ideas of retrocession ended.

Food shortages and the Migrant Labour System

From mid-1881 the civilian population of the Mpondomise and Basotho chiefdoms began returning from the mountainous and forested areas in which they had taken shelter to what remained of their homesteads. The colonial war of attrition left many homesteads burnt, cattle herds reduced, crops destroyed and grain pits empty. Food shortages loomed. Individual magistrates attempted to deal with the social consequences of the rebellion. Welsh returned to Tsolo in February 1881. He raised a force of 100 black soldiers under European officers to assist him. He called a meeting at which he offered to allocate land to both loyals and rebels.[7] The population in December 1881 was 1584 men. By the following January, 1159 men had surrendered but only 51 guns were handed in.[8] Welsh had hastened his return to enable both loyalists and rebels to reap crops that had been planted prior to the rebellion, and there was an abundant harvest in 1881. However, Mditshwa's followers had lost most of their stock and were

[4] Quoted in Saunders, *Annexation of the Transkeian Territories,* p. 111.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 112.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 117.
[7] BNA G. 20-'81, Report of the Resident Magistrate of Tsolo, 4.1.1882, p. 87.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 88.

in an impoverished state.[9] Some had taken stock into western Pondoland which the Mpondo stole.[10] The followers of Mhlontlo, who had driven stock into eastern Pondoland, fared slightly better.[11] The drought was broken by good rains towards the end of 1882 but little ploughing could be done and Welsh predicted food shortages by the following winter.

With famine looming, Welsh was concerned about an increase in crime. W.T. Brownlee, magistrate at Qumbu, reported that cattle theft was a consequence of the 'scarcity of food'.[12] Welsh suggested the government buy excess grain at a modest price while it was still available and then use it to pay road parties. This would not only improve the state of the roads at a comparatively small cost, but the 'idle Pondomise would be taught to earn his food by the sweat of his brow'.[13] In early January he wrote that the Mpondomise were still 'pinched for food' and 'the people having very few cattle to supply them with milk with which to supplement their diet of grain, are having very hard times of it, in fact, it is a mystery how they manage to exist at all'.[14] The Basotho at Matatiele too faced the prospect of food shortages. Many had lost stock to colonial forces and disease.[15] Due to drought, hailstorms and grubs in 1884, the yield of maize was low and prices high.[16] Not only rebels suffered the consequences of the rebellion. The loyal Hlubi were also almost destitute.

The predicted shortages led to an increase in men entering the migrant labour market in the colony. Welsh issued 145 passes to men, many of whom were accompanied by their families, to move to the colony in search of work. Many others went without passes. W.T. Brownlee issued some 5 062 passes for people to go and work in the Cape Colony and also to travel to neighbouring districts to buy cattle.[17] The cattle and food shortages forced the colonial government to temper its demands for the payment of hut tax. Welsh only started collecting the

[9] BNA G. 20-'81, Report of Chief Magistrate, 20.1.1882, p. 71.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] BNA G.8-'83, Report of the Magistrate of Qumbu, 30.12.1882, p. 251.
[13] BNA G. 20-'81, Report of the Resident Magistrate of Tsolo, 4.1.1882, p. 88.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] BNA G. 20-'81, Chief Magistrate Kokstad to Under Secretary for Native Affairs, 20.1.1882, p. 71.
[16] BNA, G.2-'85, Report of Magistrate of Matatiele, 8.1.1885, p. 178.
[17] BNA G.8-'83, Report of Magistrate of Qumbu, 30.12.1882, p. 251.

tax again in 1884, while in parts of Thembuland magistrates put off demanding the hut tax until 1885, although the money still had to be paid as arrears.[18]

Re-establishing Colonial Rule

Magistrates had to relocate and rebuild magistracies, make their presence felt through the use of the CMR and African levies, prosecute those involved in the rebellion and prevent rebels returning from Basutoland. Legal action against individual rebels and attempts to stop people returning from the Orange River Valley proved difficult in practice and led at times to differences of opinion amongst officials. Magistrates also faced criticism and political pressure from angry white farmers in the border regions of Mount Fletcher and Matatiele who had lost livestock and feared another rebellion.

During the rebellion magistracies had been the targets of rebels who looted and torched those at Moteri's Kop, Tsolo, Qumbu and Maclear. These needed to be rebuilt and reoccupied by the magistrate and his staff. The government relocated a number of magistrates' offices closer to larger administrative centres or to areas surrounded by loyal chiefdoms or white-owned farms. The magistracy at Moteri's Kop was relocated to the village of Matatiele in 1883 and Martin Liefeldt, who had served during the rebellion, continued as magistrate. The new position ensured that the magistracy was connected to Kokstad by a band of white farms. The magistracy at Tsolo was rebuilt 12 kilometres closer to Mthatha, on the site of the St Paul's Mission Station. The former magistracy site became the Presbyterian mission of Somerville. At Qumbu the magistrate settled loyal Mfengu around the magistracy. In 1882 the government divided the Maclear district into two magistracies so as to make administrating and controlling this large area easier. The new magistracy became known as Mount Fletcher and consisted of the locations under the authority of Lebenya, Zibi and Lehana. W. Power Leary, who had served with the Bhaca regiment during the rebellion, was appointed the first magistrate. The creation of the Mount Fletcher magistracy, wrote Charles Watermeyer, the acting chief magistrate of East Griqualand while Brownlee was seeking medical attention in the United Kingdom, would create a certain amount of confidence among Europeans and natives who 'are less likely to be disturbed by alarming, though often groundless rumours, when they have a Magistrate close at hand with

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[18] Redding, 'Sorcery and Sovereignty', p. 263.

whom they can confer'.[19] Watermeyer encouraged magistrates to be visible by travelling through their districts as often as the opportunity allowed so that they could come in contact with the people they were administering.[20]

As the conflict drew to an end in Basutoland in early 1881 the CMR returned to East Griqualand and small detachments were stationed at the various magistracies. Watermeyer recommended that the Cape Infantry, recently posted to Kokstad, replace the CMR at magistracies as they 'would command the most confidence, as the inhabitants would entertain no fear that they would be suddenly removed which has been experienced here in regard to the CMR'.[21] Magistrates also made use of former members of the Baca Contingent and *Abalondolozi* to assistant them in re-establishing their authority. The Baca Contingent had been disbanded due to dissatisfaction with the distribution of stock and the non-payment of compensation for horses lost during the rebellion.[22] In March, however, the administration approved the re-enrolment of 200 Bhaca men to garrison Qumbu. Members of the *Abalondolozi* remained stationed at Matatiele until late August 1882 when No 4 troop of the CMR replaced them.[23]

With magistrates back at their posts and supported by detachments of the CMR and black levies, the process of dealing with those who had rebelled began. In Basutoland the Cape administration decided on a general settlement. However, the administration instructed magistrates in East Griqualand and Thembuland to deal with rebels 'individually and not tribally'.[24] But even in these areas a compromise had to be reached. It was impossible to prosecute every individual who had joined the rebellion as in most cases this was the vast majority of the adult male population of the chiefdom. The only magistrate who attempted to compile figures which showed the numbers of men who went into rebellion was Welsh at Tsolo. According to his statistics, the population of the chiefdom comprised 2, 577 married men in October 1880. Of this number 1,744 men had rebelled, 417 remained loyal and 250 men were

[19] BNA G.8-'83, Report of the Chief Magistrate, East Griqualand, 8.1.1883, p. 221.
[20] *Ibid*, p. 223.
[21] *Ibid*. p. 222.
[22] *Ibid*, Report of Magistrate of Mount Frere [n.d], p. 243.
[23] PAR 1 MAT 4/1/1/1 Office of the Chief Magistrate to Resident Magistrate, Matatiele, 21.8.1882.
[24] BNA G. 20-'81, Brownlee to Secretary for Native Affairs, 28.6.1881, p. 75.

described as semi-loyal.[25] The accuracy of these numbers can be questioned, but even bearing in mind possible mistakes it is clear that the majority of the population had rebelled. The colonial government decided, therefore, to focus on those men who were considered leaders of the rebellion. By early February the secretary for native affairs instructed magistrates to accept the surrender of anyone involved in the rebellion on condition that they hand over 'all arms and give up all ammunition'; 'submit to all or any conditions Government might impose in regard to their settlement' and to accept the authority of the magistrate. This would not apply to chiefs or others who had 'taken a prominent part in the war' who were to be dealt with differently.[26] Magistrates kept a register of those who had surrendered and issued them with tickets as proof that they had been allocated land.[27]

Magistrates soon discovered the difficulties of collecting evidence against those responsible for plunders and robberies on stores and farms.[28] Many people's actions had been ambiguous; often changing sides or being swept along with events. At times prosecutions led to threats of more unrest. Rumours spread into 1882 that Lebenya was about to rebel. When the magistrate investigated these allegations he discovered that the disquiet stemmed from a judgment against some of Lebenya's people for looting stores in 1880. When Watermeyer looked into the matter on the spot he found the judgment 'had fallen more hardly on the innocent than on the guilty' and that 'an influential family, against whom there is no recorded evidence, being the principal sufferers'.[29]

Although legal action was taken against a number of individuals involved in the rebellion, the practicalities and complexities of the situation meant there were not many prosecutions in the long run. Besides the high profile trials of prominent leaders like Mditshwa and Mhlontlo which took place in King William's Town and Grahamstown, most prosecutions of rebels by local magistrates in East Griqualand were for not having passes when they crossed back into the Cape from Basutoland. Many followers of Mhlontlo and Makoai had crossed over into the Sotho

[25] *Ibid*, Report of the Resident Magistrate of Tsolo, 4.11.1880, p. 95.
[26] *Ibid*, Brownlee to Leary, 12.2.1881 p. 74.
[27] *Ibid*.
[28] *Ibid*, Brownlee to Secretary for Native Affairs, 28.6.1881, p. 75.
[29] BNA G.8-'83, Report of the Chief Magistrate, East Griqualand, 8.1.1883, p. 221.

kingdom as the war drew to a close. Chiefdoms and individual families became split between Matatiele and Basutoland. Some chiefs attempted to go through the colonial administration to get permission for their families and supporters to return to the colony. The magistrate at Matatiele allowed Ramohlakoana to bring minor children back to East Griqualand but would not permit any adult male relations to return. Sibi's and Lebenya's followers who had joined the rebels unsuccessfully applied to return from Basutoland.[30] The official stand was that rebels would not be allowed to return to East Griqualand, as this 'would have a bad effect on those natives who had remained loyal at considerable sacrifice'.[31] It was chronic food shortages which forced many men to return to Matatiele without passes. They returned, either permanently or for short periods, to obtain food without the necessary permission from colonial officials and risked being arrested and imprisoned if found without a pass.[32] The magistrate of the newly-created Mount Fletcher magistracy reported in December 1884 that most of the offences tried during the year had been contraventions of the Pass Act, and that the majority of the offenders were rebels from Basutoland.[33] These included four of Mhlontlo's men captured near the Tina River, armed with government guns.[34] The magistrate of Matatiele reported in a similar vein that 'a large number of Basutos without passes have been brought up and fined'.[35] However, he wrote that strict supervision of the border would be needed as owing to the scarcity of maize in the Orange River valley 'those rebels will always be dependent on this District for breadstuffs'[36].

Joseph Orpen, the acting governor's agent in Basutoland, motivated in part by a desire to deal with the situation humanely but also realizing the need to practically control the movement of people, issued passes quite liberally to Makoai's people to visit Matatiele to buy corn on condition they report to the magistrate at Matatiele. In January 1882 he authorized Pushuli Makwae and Thomas Ntsenyi to issue passes to Makoai's supporters proceeding on visits to Matatiele.[37] This went against the government's policy of not allowing former rebels to return and Liefeldt queried Orpen's actions with Brownlee in Kokstad. Brownlee replied that although

[30] *Ibid*, Report of Magistrate of Mount Fletcher, 29.12.1882, p. 247.
[31] BNA G. 20-'81, Report of the Resident Magistrate of Matatiele, 31.12.1881, p.84.
[32] PAR, 1/MAT 4/1/1/1, Office of the Resident Magistrate of Kokstad, 16.2.1882.
[33] BNA G.2-'85, Report of Magistrate of Mount Fletcher, 26.12.1884, p. 171.
[34] BNA G.8-'83, Report of Chief Magistrate of East Griqualand, 8.1.11883, p. 223.
[35] BNA, G.2-'85, Report of Magistrate of Matatiele, 8.1.1885, p. 178.
[36] *Ibid*.
[37] PAR, 1/MAT 4/1/1/1, Acting Governor's Basutoland to Chief Magistrate East Griqualand, 27.1.1882.

the issuing of passes by Makwae and Ntsenyi was 'irregular and not in accordance with law' he was prepared to accept it considering the 'exigencies of the country'.[38] The secretary for native affairs, however, instructed Orpen in March to issue the passes himself or deputize another magistrate. In July Orpen wrote to Liefeldt informing him that there were a number of families formerly from Matatiele living about the Orange River and down to the border 'who from having no corn fields have had no harvest and require food'.[39] Ignoring the instructions issued by the secretary for native affairs, he informed Liefeldt

> I have provisionally given two of them Pushuli and Thomas (who can write) the permission which mere humanity requires to write passes for such as requires to go to your District to obtain food – go to your office to obtain other passes there as otherwise they would require a journey of six days to go to and return from the nearest magistrate in Basutoland. Many have left for the Colony and elsewhere in search of employment and food'.[40]

Magistrates, particularly in the Matatiele and Mount Fletcher districts, also faced pressures from white farmers and traders who were angry about the losses they had incurred during the rebellion, and who feared the possibility of further uprisings. Farmers had started moving in to East Griqualand after 1874 and had only been on the land for a few years when the rebellion broke out. Many were still paying off loans on farms.[41] Most of the farmers lost their stock to rebels or to disease once encamped at Kokstad.[42] In the Matatiele area many of the farmers who had lost their property were almost destitute and returned to their families in the Free State and Barkly East. In March 1882, S. Bydell, chairman of the Kokstad Committee, petitioned the Cape parliament of behalf of many of the white residents of East Griqualand, requesting compensation for their losses.[43] Those who did reoccupy farms had a feeling of insecurity and many of them believed that officials were not doing anything to protect them. In 1882, just prior to the establishment of the Mount Fletcher magistracy, the area was 'the scene of some excitement' when rumours spread that Lebenya and his followers were about to go into rebellion, loot stores

[38] *Ibid*, Chief Magistrate East Griqualand to Resident Magistrate Matatiele, 23.2.1882.
[39] *Ibid* Acting Governor's Agent Basutoland to Resident Magistrate Matatiele, 287.1882.
[40] *Ibid*.
[41] BNA G. 20-'81, Report of Chief Magistrate, 20.1.1882, p. 71.
[42] *Ibid*.
[43] CPP A. 61-'82, Petition of the Residents of Griqualand East.

and then flee over the Drakensberg to Basutoland. The traders in the area petitioned Watermeyer to raise 50 police at Mount Fletcher for their protection. Watermeyer rejected the petition, concerned that recruiting a police force would increase any disquiet that existed and dealt with the issue by assuring Lebenya and his people that he would enquire into their grievances.[44] Rumours of uprisings surfaced on numerous occasions in the years that followed the Transkei rebellion. In September and October of 1882 stories circulated around Mthatha that the Basotho and Mpondo planned a combined uprising. In May and June 1883 rumours around St Marks and Southeyville in Thembuland of an uprising, initiated by a letter written by a trader to a friend and then published in the *Cape Argus*, reached such a point of concern that the government sent the magistrate of East London to investigate the veracity of the rumours. He found there was 'not the slightest cause for alarm'.[45]

The return of former rebels to the Matatiele area became a sensitive issue among white farmers already smarting over what they felt was a lack of compensation for their losses.[46] In January 1884 the *Kokstad Advertiser* published a letter from a farmer in the Cedarville area complaining that rebels were returning to their farms.[47] On 23 February a meeting attended by prominent farmers was held at the Cedarville Drift to protest against rebels returning to re-occupy land and 'doing so by sanction of the C.M. and the government'.[48] Numerous farmers addressed the meeting mentioning specific rebels who had now returned and were living in the area with the knowledge of Liefeldt, magistrate at Matatiele. There was a belief that these men were still a source of instability. W. Taylor, a local trader, complained that the chiefs Katang and Falland with their followers were living in the area 'evidently with the intention of creating another war at some future time'.[49] Another farmer complained that he had hired a former rebel and that his cattle started mysteriously dying a few months later. Concerns were expressed that men would not invest capital if they were not guaranteed protection. Resentment was aimed at Brownlee who was supposedly allowing this to happen. A committee was elected to present a memorial to the chief magistrate. The committee met with Brownlee on 26 February who informed them that

[44] BNA G.8-'83, Report of the Chief Magistrate, East Griqualand, 8.1.1883, p. 221.
[45] CPP G. 109-'83, Fleischer to Under Secretary for Native Affairs, 21.6.1883.
[46] *Kokstad Advertiser* 5.5.1883.
[47] *Ibid,* 19.1.1884.
[48] *Ibid,* 1.3.1884.
[49] *Ibid*.

he had instructed the governor's agent of Basutoland to stop issuing passes to rebels and instructed Rolland to arrest rebels found in his district. Brownlee wrote a letter to the *Kokstad Advertiser* assuring farmers that the magistrate at Matatiele had been instructed to 'arrest, punish, and send back to Basutoland any rebels' found in the area.[50] This seemed to placate farmers for a while but complaints against Brownlee continued on and off.

New Lands and Leaders: The 1883 Land Commission

After two years of dealing with matters in Basutoland, the Cape government focused on the Transkei. In June 1883 the administration formed a commission, entitled the Griqualand East Commission (Vacant Lands) but generally called The Vacant Lands Commission, to decide on the allocation of land after the rebellion. The overall motivation of the commission was to create future security by dividing and weakening chiefdoms that had gone into rebellion. These chiefdoms were to be isolated through the creation of a belt of white-owned farms along the base of the Drakensberg in the Matatiele and Mount Fletcher areas, and the establishment of reserves of 20 000 to 25 000 morgen for European occupation around the magistracies of Tsolo and Qumbu.[51] This would be further enforced by the strategic settlement of loyal chiefdoms between them. Besides the weakening of the rebellious chiefdoms, the Cape administration wanted to publically reward those who had remained loyal by increasing their locations and punishing those who had rebelled by reducing their locations and in many cases moving them to new areas.

The commission was instructed by the secretary for native affairs 'if possible to have a continuous belt of land along the Drakensberg from the Indwe to the Umgwana occupied by Europeans'.[52] In order to achieve this loyal Basutos and other Natives in the upper portions of East Griqualand were encouraged to move voluntarily to the Tsolo or Qumbu districts where sufficient land would be set apart for their use. The secretary did stress 'it is to be distinctly understood that no natives who had remained loyal are to be removed from their present locations without their consent'.[53] The idea of large scale European settlement and the resettling of loyal chiefdoms had been advocated by prominent magistrates for at least two years before the

[50] *Ibid*.
[51] CPP G.2-'84 Report of the Griqualand East Land Commission (1884), p. 4.
[52] *Ibid*, p. 5.
[53] *Ibid*.

appointment of the commission. Charles Brownlee wrote in January 1881, in regards to the Qumbu district, that as many of the Mpondomise had not returned, the area should 'be filled up with deserving natives from other parts'.[54] This would, according to Brownlee, break up the union of the Mpondomise and punish them for their unprovoked rebellion.[55] In the same report Brownlee recommended that the area formerly inhabited by Makoai and Sekake (and prior to that Nehemiah Moshesh) in the Matatiele district be sold as farms to Europeans. If the government did take up this suggestion he proposed that a belt of 'loyal natives' be settled along the base of the mountain 'to form a barrier against stock thefts between the Europeans and Basutos'.[56] Hlubi chiefdoms in the colony proper applied to settle in East Griqualand. Officials looked upon these applications favourably. Watermeyer in early 1883 encouraged the setting aside of land in the Matatiele area for white farmers.[57] Alex Welsh too advocated the settlement of whites and 'loyal natives' from the colony in the Tsolo district.

The commission consisted of Brownlee, Strachan and Watermeyer, all of whom had been involved in the war. The formal proceedings of the commission began on 23 June 1883 at Moteri's Kop when the commissioners met with the sons of the late Nhlangwini chief Sidoyi. The Nhlangwini location at Ntsikeni in the Mzimkhulu district was, according to the commissioners, 'not sufficient for more than one half of the tribe' and many families had become tenants on privately-owned farms.[58] In recognition of the excellent services shown by Sidoyi and his men during the rebellion, the commissioners granted them land in the Matatiele district where 800 people and the chief's eldest son Mzongwane had already started settling earlier that year. Next the commissioners defined the boundaries of the locations assigned to Sibi and Ramohlakoana. Sibi had changed sides early in the uprising but his later services were recognized as were Ramohlakoana's, although his sons and supporters had deserted him and thus both men had their locations reduced. The commission allocated a location between the Matatiele magistracy and Sibi to the followers of Masakala who had first joined the rebels but after October 1880 served as scouts and guides in the Drakensberg to colonial troops. After the

[54] BNA G. 20-'81, Chief Magistrate Kokstad, 20.1.1882, p. 71.
[55] *Ibid*.
[56] *Ibid*, pp. 71-72.
[57] BNA G.8-'83, Report of the Chief Magistrate, East Griqualand, 8.1.1883, p. 222.
[58] CPP G.2-'84 Report of the Griqualand East Land Commission (1884), p. 5.

commissioners had toured the area formally inhabited by Makoai and his supporters, a meeting was held at Moteri's Kop on 29 June at which loyals from Matatiele and Basutoland could make representation. As the Gun War drew to a close in the Sotho kingdom, a number of loyal Basotho chiefs and their supporters left Basutoland and settled at Matatiele. The loyal chiefs from Basutoland included two sons of King Moshoeshoe, George and Sofonia, and a distant cousin named Tsita. The commissioners granted George Moshoeshoe some 38 000 acres of land of what they considered 'the best in the Matatiela district'.[59]

By 16 June the commissioners were encamped near Mount Fletcher, where they interviewed the rival chiefs Zibi, Lehana and Lebenya. The commissioners allowed Zibi, who had carried letters from the Chevy Chase store to Strachan's column in the Drakensberg, to retain all of the land he had settled on prior to the rebellion. The commission deprived Lehana of fertile land because many of his followers had fought against the colonial forces in the Pitsing Valley. He was only mollified on hearing that the land he would forfeit was to be settled on by whites not his rivals.[60] Lebenya, despite personally remaining loyal, too lost fertile land, being only allowed to retain what was considered sufficient for his followers who remained loyal. Brownlee pointed out that Lebenya had 500 men in his location and only 200 served under the government and that was only after Strachan's forces had crossed the Mzimvubu.

The commissioners spent three weeks in September inspecting the Mpondomise country in the company of Alexander Welsh. They allocated an area, formally inhabited by the Mpondomise, of between 50 000 and 60 000 acres of land from the Tina River to the Nqadu and Gungululu Hills for the settlement of loyal Mfengu. They included the followers of Ludidi and his son Mtengwane, a clan under Nelane from Mount Frere, a group from the Izeli Valley near King William's Town and a clan under headman Maqubo.[61] Ludidi later returned to Matatiele after conflict with his son over the distribution of land, but Mtengwane remained at Qumbu and retained control of four locations. This required the moving of the Nxasana clan from Qumbu to the Culunce Valley over which Jonas was made headman. The Mpondomise were 'provided for' by being placed in a location under headman Mzantsi, a brother of Mhlontlo, who had been

[59] *Ibid*, p. 7.
[60] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 197.
[61] Brownlee, *The Transkeian Native Territories*, p. 58.

opposed to the rebellion. This location was bound by the Tsitsa River and the locations of the Bhele chief Jamangile Mabandla and a Mpondomise location under Mabasa. Mabandla had been persuaded to exchange his land at Maclear for the land at Tsolo as part of the effort to promote the settlement of white farmers. Mabandla and Mabasa's locations were bound to the south by Jonas's location and an extensive location for Hlubi from Matatiele and Mount Frere under headman Nelane. Basotho under Sofonia Moshesh were placed in the Ngai Valley in the Qumbu area. Mpondomise in the Tsolo area were placed under Mabasa, uncle to Mditshwa, at old Tsolo.

At Mount Frere the commission moved loyal Hlubi under Mtengwane to the Qumbu magistracy in order to make room for Bhaca families from the Rode Valley. Rode was a wedge of land between Pondoland and Mount Frere and although inhabited by many Bhaca families under Makaula and Nomtsheketshe, the Cape government considered it to be under the authority of the Pondo Paramounts. Prior to the establishment of the commission Simpson, magistrate at Mount Frere, had placed pressure on Makaula to encourage the Bhaca to leave the area. He was concerned that the presence of the Bhaca who were often involved in skirmishes with the Mpondo along the border might draw the colonial government into conflict with the Mpondo. Simpson informed Makaula that these homesteads needed to be moved and if they did not those who remained would be considered subject to Mqikela and would not receive support from the colonial government or from the Mount Frere Bhaca in times of conflict. Those families who acknowledged Makaula as their chief did leave the area, however, Nomtsheketshe's followers did not move, and in January 1883 there were still 36 Bhaca homesteads at Rode.[62] Their refusal to remove was part of a long-standing power struggle between Makaula and Nomtsheketshe who was able to retain a certain independence by having followers in the isolated valley, a good distance from the magistrate and Makaula's Great Place. The magistrate felt that Nomtsheketshe outwardly pretended that he was placing pressure on his people to leave but secretly told them to stay.[63] Simpson complained that Rode had become a haven for runaways and criminals who headmen Ngalonkulu, who recognized Nomtsheketshe, refused to hand over to colonial authorities.[64] The commission supported the idea of the movement and recommended land at Qumbu. Nomtsheketshe agreed initially to move on the conditions a Bhaca headman be placed

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[62] BNA G.8-'83, Report of the Chief Magistrate, East Griqualand, 8.1.1883, p. 226.
[63] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas', p. 181.
[64] *Ibid*, p. 182.

over these people, that they come under the authority of the magistrate and not an Mpondomise chief and that the crops at Rode not be forfeited. However, he later changed his mind as he did not want to live in close proximity to the Mpondomise who had a grudge against the Bhaca for their role in suppressing the rebellion.[65] Eventually Hlubi supporters of Mtengwane at Mpoza moved for the Bhaca to settle there.

The commission's recommendations, most of which were carried out, were far reaching and in the words of Reverend Alan Gibson, 'entirely changed the face of the country'.[66] There was, however, one area in which the commission compromised - the setting aside of land for white settlement. The commission found that it was impractical to create a belt of white farms along the Drakensberg as this would require the removal of the loyal chiefs Lehana, Zibi and Lebenya.[67] George Moshesh and his allied chiefs settled in a prime part of Nehemiah's old territory on which the government had wanted to settle white farmers. Besides realizing the impracticality of moving large numbers of people, Brownlee did an about turn and came to believe that further white settlement in East Griqualand would intensify rather than relieve conflict and favoured the placement of African allies in districts where rebel land have been confiscated.[68] Despite their misgivings, the commissioners allocated approximately 4000 square kilometers for white settlement.[69] Land near Matatiele and a fairly large area around Maclear were put aside for white farmers. By 1882, 120 farms had been surveyed in the Maclear district and by early 1883 a third of the titles were ready to be issued.[70] They put aside an area in the Ongeluksnek Valley along the Mabele River, between the boundaries of Lebenya's location and Queen's Mercy, for white occupation which created a band of privately-owned farms from Matatiele to Kokstad and on to Mzimkhulu.[71] Theal remarked that 'the gain was small as far as

[65] *Ibid*, p. 185.
[66] A.G.S. Gibson, *Eight Years in Kaffraria, 1882-1890* (London, 1891), p. 48.
[67] CPP G.2-'84, Report of the Griqualand East Land Commission (1884), p. 7.
[68] W. Beinart, 'Settler Accumulation in East Griqualand from the Demise of the Griqua to the Natives Land Act' in W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido (eds.) *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1986), p. 265.
[69] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 196.
[70] BNA G.8-'83, Report of the Chief Magistrate, East Griqualand, 8.1.1883, p. 223.
[71] CPP G.2-'84, Report of the Griqualand East Land Commission (1884), p. 7.

colonization by white men was concerned'.[72] However, Margaret Rainier points out he ignored the numerical disparity between races.[73]

The commission laid the foundations of future conflict between the Mpondomise and Mfengu. The Mpondomise found groups of Mfengu now in possession of the most fertile part of their former domain. Within a decade after the rebellion the population close to doubled and land became a critical resource.[74] Land shortages prevented the Mpondomise from expanding pastoral forms of farming and so they increased crop production. Many moved back into the areas they formally inhabited and paid dues to immigrant headmen who now administered these locations. As competition over land increased, garden disputes were numerous and litigation over land increased.[75] These conflicts were not only about land but authority over locations as generally land disputes were settled by headmen. Headmen often used their authority over access to forests and the role they played in the allocation of land to benefit their own followers while disadvantaging their rivals. These disagreements and conflicts over land and authority flared into open violence in 1912 and 1913.

Locations and Headmen

When chiefs and their councillors had accepted colonial rule in the mid-1870s the territory over which they ruled had been divided up into magisterial districts which 'paid scant regard to the old political units'.[76] The commission began the process of dividing the magisterial districts into locations with approximately 30 to a district. The Land Commission, for example, divided the Tsolo area into 9 locations which overtime were further sub-divided until there were 24 locations in all. The headman administered the location and in turn reported to the magistrate. Headmen 'formed the front-line echelons' of the new administration and Hammond-Tooke points out that the introduction of a policy of direct rule 'would have been impossible, or at least extremely difficult' without headmen.[77] The position of the headman did not exist in pre-colonial political structures. Among the Mpondomise, for example, there were two grades of local political office

[72] Quoted in Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 196.
[73] *Ibid*.
[74] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', p. 113.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 78.
[77] *Ibid*, p. 109.

– the *inkosana* (sub-chief) and the *isiduna* (wardhead). The sub-chiefs were usually male relatives of the chief. Mditshwa's chiefdom in the 1860s was divided into six districts, three of which were administered by his half-brothers.

In the Tsolo and Qumbu districts the land commission initially appointed headmen. Over time colonial officials demarcated more locations and magistrates appointed additional headmen. Some of the headmen were policemen and clerks rewarded for their loyalty during the rebellion. Prominent among commoners made headmen were Abraham and Matanga. Abraham, who had accompanied Orpen to Nomansland, served on the staff at the Maclear magistracy. He remained loyal and was later wounded in the uprising. In recognition of his services he was awarded 500 morgen at a quitrent of £5 per annum and made a headman.[78] Matanga, a policeman under Hope at Qumbu, was made a headman 'of a turbulent clan of horse-stealers located in a remote corner between the Tsitsa and the mountains, and there he reigned, and ruled with a rod of iron'.[79] Many of the headmen came from established ruling families and had served as *inkosana* under Mhlontlo and Mditshwa, and included Mzantsi, brother to Mhlontlo, and Mditshwa's uncle Mbasa.[80] Mtzansi and Mbasa were both against the uprising, however, a number of men who were appointed headmen had rebelled in 1880. Mditshwa's son Xomfana who played a prominent role in the uprising evaded capture by colonial authorities until 1885 when he became a headman over one of the Mpondomise locations. Colonial officials allowed some of Mhlontlo's sons to return to the Qumbu and five of them served as headmen.[81] As late as the 1970s, 17 of the 24 headmen in the Tsolo district belonged to the royal clan.[82] Amongst the Bhaca Nomtsheketshe, who was considered an uncooperative chief who one magistrate compared to Mhlontlo, was made a headman at Mpoza. His four sons Ngqakaqa, Soborolo, Phikwa and Mzobuxoki served as headmen over the Siqhingeni, Nomkolokoto, Colan and Tsimanhgweni locations respectively.[83]

[78] CPP G.2-'84, Report of the Griqualand East Land Commission (1884), p. 13.
[79] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of a Transkeian*, p. 92.
[80] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 81.
[81] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', p. 121.
[82] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 81.
[83] Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere*, p. 61.

The appointment of so many headmen from the extended ruling family demonstrated the ambiguity that characterized the Cape administration's dealings with established authorities. They tried to undermine them yet often made use of them, not only in times of crisis but included them in the administrative system in an attempt to ensure long-term stability. Magistrates on the ground understood that to introduce a new system based on headmen that excluded the *inkosana* would be impractical and extremely difficult. There was the danger that the *inkosana* excluded as headmen would gather supporters around them outside of colonial structures. White officials, like they often did, compromised with the long-term goal of securing colonial rule and appointed many *inkosana* to the position of headman. They did stop, however, at recognizing Mhlontlo's heir Charles as a chief because of his political position and character.

The headmen adopted some of the roles and rituals of the *inkosana* which gave the appearance of continuity and perhaps even provided reassurance. However, the role of the headman was fundamentally different from that of the *inkosana*; it had been transformed and manipulated. The position of headman generally became an inherited position, although it had to be approved by the government and headmen could be dismissed.[84] Headmen arbitrated in civil cases but were not allowed to conduct criminal cases. Anyone unhappy with the headman's decisions could appeal directly to the magistrate of the district. It was not lost on the people that the role of the headman was different from that of the *inkosana*. Hammond-Tooke has pointed out that the headmen became known as *izibonda* (singular *isibonda*), which literally means a supporting ridge-pole. The term was disparaging and came into usage as the headmen were placed, like a pole, to look after certain areas.[85]

Mditshwa and Mhlontlo

While the colonial government did include many members of the Mpondomise royal families, rebels and loyals, in the headmanship system, it excluded Mditshwa and Mhlontlo as they were considered responsible for the rebellion. Both men faced prosecution in colonial law courts after the rebellion. Mditshwa in the immediate aftermath and Mhlontlo some twenty years later in the early 1900s. These prosecutions should not be dismissed as a mere afterthought or footnote to

[84] *Ibid*, p. 78.
[85] Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus*, p. 80.

the rebellion. Jeff Guy in his work on the Bhambatha uprising in the Colony of Natal in 1905 argues that court cases were an extension of the campaign the Natal government had waged against the rebels.[86] This also applied to the Cape Colony twenty years earlier. Prosecutors hoped through the legal system to finally defeat the chieftaincies in the war which had begun at Sulenkama and reached its most bloody at the Tsitsa Gorge. Guy points out that the colonial legal system was concerned with prosecuting individuals whereas rebellion was a social act.[87] Officials also hoped to justify their actions, or as Lalu described it, transform themselves 'into the victims rather than perpetrators'.[88] There were unforeseen circumstances of these cases. By prosecuting chiefs individually officials unwittingly, especially in the case of Mhlontlo who was acquitted, reinforced their reputations amongst their followers as resisting colonial rule and contributed to a mystique that surrounded them.

'A Private Gentleman': Mditshwa's Return to Tsolo

After his surrender in January 1881, the Cape attorney general charged Mditshwa, two of his sons, Goniwe and Bangani, and 15 of his followers with sedition.[89] The case was heard in King William's Town on 21 September 1881. Mditshwa, when the time came to plead, addressed the jury telling them:

> I am here for the purpose of submitting myself to the Government. The crime with which I am charged is owing to the pressure brought upon me by my sons. I remonstrated with them when they entered into the war and said why do you do this, and therefore I am not guilty, because I reproved them for entering into the war.[90]

His statement set the tone for his defense and his lawyer attempted to show that Mditshwa had lost control of the chiefdom to his sons, in particular Xomfana, Umgudhle, Zembe and Katani, who had not surrendered and still alluded capture, and they had led the Mpondomise into rebellion. He argued that Mditshwa, besides being reluctantly pushed into rebellion, had saved the lives of the magistrate and the white refugees besieged in the Tsolo jail. The crown countered this by trying to show the chief was still involved in important decisions, and

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[86] Guy, *The Maphumulo Uprising*, p. 124.
[87] *Ibid*, p. 239.
[88] Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa,* p. 43.
[89] Mtangazi, Umtete, Mangali, Xilinxa, Nokaka, Dhlangwana, Mge, Mucekevana, Ntesha, Magina, Sitonga, Xosa, Zozo, Xumaga and Manqupu.
[90] *Kaffrarian Watchman* 26.9.1881.

organized and doctored his army. The first witness was Alexander Welsh whose testimony was measured and not overtly critical of Mditshwa. On being crossed examined he told the court that when he spoke to Mditshwa from the jail in August of 1880 the chief had told him 'he could not control' his sons.[91] He also said that he believed that Mditshwa was anxious that his life be saved. Welsh was of the opinion that the chief had not lost 'all control over his tribe but he had lost a great deal of his authority' and that he did not think his 'sons were solely responsible for the war, although they took a very active part in it'.[92] Leary, a trader at St Augustine's, testified that Mditshwa's son Umghudle and his men looted his home and shop and wore his wife and daughters' clothing, and that it was the chief who provided them with a wagon to leave. In his testimony he said Mditshwa had arrived after the looting was over and that he was disgusted by his men wearing Mrs Leary's clothes and ordered them to take them off, which they did.[93] The prosecutor jumped on this and on reexamination pointed out that Mditshwa 'did exercise some control over his men on that occasion'.[94] The court found Mditshwa guilty and sentenced him to three years imprisonment without hard labour. Goniwe and Bangani received two years imprisonment with hard labour. Six of the other defendants – Umtete, Mangali, Mtangayi, Sitonga, Xosa and Manqupu - received a year's imprisonment with hard labour, while the court acquitted the remainder. Mditshwa unsuccessfully appealed the verdict and began the long journey to Robben Island like so many other political prisoners.

After he had served his sentence, Cape officials allowed him to return to Tsolo in early 1885. He arrived on the night of 2 January. Mditshwa returned to a very different country to that which he had been forced to leave just a few years earlier. The magistracy had moved from the Tsolo Hill to the Xokonxa Stream. The Tsitsa Valley, the location of his former Great Place at Emqokolweni, was occupied by Bhele under Jamangile. The magistrate granted the chief land some distance from his former Great Place and the homes of most of his followers. D.B. Hook, who had been appointed magistrate at Tsolo in September 1884, described how when he went to point out in April 1885 to Mditshwa where he was to settle, the chief turned his back and refused

[91] *Ibid*.
[92] *Ibid*.
[93] *Ibid*.
[94] *Ibid*.

to 'look at anything. And that's the way he received a farm in his own territory'.[95] He did not go immediately to the ground allotted to him, but stayed in one of the Mpondomise locations until the magistrate insisted he move. He named his new homestead *Emdibanisweni*, from the verb *Ukudibawisa* – to bring together.[96]

Mditshwa believed that as he had paid the penalty for his actions during the rebellion through his imprisonment and 'had kissed the government's hand', he would return as a chief and 'look after his magistrates, his clergy, his traders'.[97] In a conversation with the missionary Alan Gibson he said, 'I want the Magistrate to allow my sons and people to come back to the District because I have been to Cape Town and served my time up there by atoning for the guilt of my sons and people'.[98] He was soon informed that he was there as 'a private gentleman'.[99] Despite being not officially recognized by the colonial government, he still held some influence among the Mpondomise and Reverend Gibson reported that 'the Pondomisi became a good deal excited about the return of Umditshwa'.[100] Colonial officials were aware that the chief retained influence and instructed him to keep from misusing the influence he still possessed or to attempt to regain a position that the government had refused him.[101] Mditshwa died on 11 March 1886. He left his home and had gone out into the veld where he died quite alone.[102] Mditshwa, a reluctant rebel, is remembered amongst the Mpondomise as the leader who handed himself over to colonial officials and sacrificed his freedom to stop the suffering of his followers, and ensure the survival of the chiefdom.

The Exile, Trial and Return of Mhlontlo

Mhlontlo's movements after the battle of Tsitsa Gorge in December 1880 are unclear. He was sheltered until late 1881 by his uncle Mbali and then fled to Pondoland where white officials placed pressure on Mqikela for his surrender.[103] He eventually made his escape in about 1883 to

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[95] Hook, *With Sword and Statute*, p. 324.
[96] B. Holt, *Place-Names in the Transkeian Territories* (Johannesburg, 1959), p. 43.
[97] Gibson, *Eight Years in Kaffraria*, p. 85.
[98] *Ibid*.
[99] *Ibid*, p.87.
[100] *Ibid,* p.67.
[101] *Ibid,* p. 87.
[102] *Ibid*, p. 91.
[103] BNA G. 20-'81, Report of Magistrate Mount Frere, 7.1.1882, p. 81.

Basutoland via Qacha's Nek. He found refuge at Phiring near Phamong in the Mohale's Hoek district.[104] We know very little about Mhlontlo's time of exile in Basutoland, except that he converted to Catholicism and was baptized by Father Gerard in the church at Roma. According to Mdukiswa Tyabashe, one day in a state of depression Mhlontlo contemplated suicide. He had used his head cloth to blindfold himself and was about to throw himself from a mountain when he heard a voice call, 'Stop! Do not do that! Go, and offer yourself to God! You shall find a church service being held, go there and pray'.[105] There is some evidence that he kept in touch with events taking place amongst his followers through his son Charles who was with him at Phiring, but travelled back and forth to Qumbu.[106] Mhlontlo returned to South Africa in 1903, at the age of 66, and was arrested by Charles Dovey, inspector of native locations, on 31 October as he crossed the Telle River in the Herschel district. In early 1902 Mhlontlo had written to Dovey asking for permission for a messenger to enter the district and collect funds from his people living there as he was 'starving'.[107] Dovey hoped to lure Mhlontlo back into Cape territory and kept up communication with him for two years.

Walter Stanford, who at the time of the rebellion had been a young magistrate at Engcobo but was now secretary for native affairs, was concerned that if Mhlontlo was held in Mthatha, which is fairly close to Qumbu, it might have a disturbing effect on the Mpondomise, and so he was moved to King William's Town.[108] A vigorous drive was then begun to find witnesses who had been at Sulenkama.[109] Twenty three years had passed since the rebellion and witnesses had died or had moved from Qumbu to other parts of the Transkei Territories. Mhlontlo underwent a preparatory examination at King William's Town, staring on 2 December 1903 and ending on 7 January 1904. On 30 December 1903, while the examination was still taking place, the solicitor general's clerk wrote,

> it is highly improbable that guilt will be brought home to the accused unless *Pondomisi testimony* is forthcoming to prove actual complicity or treachery in word or deed. Nothing that has yet appeared in the Preparatory Examination is necessarily inconsistent

[104] Mda, *Little Suns*, p. 224.
[105] Scheub, *The Tongue is Fire*, p. 272.
[106] Mda, *Little Suns*, p. 236.
[107] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', p. 118.
[108] *Ibid*.
[109] Majija, *Dark Clouds at Sulenkama*, p. 35.

with the view that the Europeans were surrounded by excited natives without any instigation from the accused'. [110]

Despite the solicitor general's misgivings, Mhlontlo was committed to trial on 7 January 1904. The magistrate denied him bail and he remained in the jail at King William's Town.

The trial was held in Grahamstown. Mhlontlo's legal counsel insisted that he was in mourning for the death of his great wife and was thus unable to be involved in the affairs of the chiefdom which he handed over to his uncle Gxumisa. The state attempted to counter this in the preparatory examination and the subsequent trial by showing, firstly, that Hope's death was premeditated and that he would not have been killed unless Mhlontlo had instructed it to happen. Secondly, they attempted to demonstrate that the chief led the Mpondomise during the rebellion and that he was present and giving orders at key confrontations between colonial troops and his men. Reverend Stephen Adonis was called in the hope that his testimony would prove that the murder was premeditated. He testified that he had received information some days before October 23 that Hope was to be killed. A number of white officials and traders who had dealings with Mhlontlo prior to the rebellion, or were supposedly well versed in African traditions, were called to testify that Mhlontlo was a strong personality and that a decision as important as the killing of a magistrate would not have taken place without his knowledge or instruction.[111] On Monday, 17 May, the jury of nine white men deliberated for 25 minutes and returned a verdict of not guilty. The state had overreached themselves by charging Mhlontlo with murder. They might have succeeded in showing that he was a strong-willed and determined chief who was involved in the rebellion but the words he spoke to the men did not prove that he had ordered the murder.

After his acquittal he spent two days at St Aiden's College, before travelling to settle at Izeli, a Catholic Mission near King William's Town. In 1905 he settled at Willowvale in the southern Transkei. A year later he returned to the Qumbu area, but the Cape administration did not recognize him as a chief and excluded him from the headmanship system. He settled on the edge

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[110] KAB, 1-KWT I-I-I-323, Letter from Chief Clerk to the Solicitor General to R.W. Rose-Innes, 30.12.1903.

[111] *Ibid*, Testimony of Robert Cumming; Testimony of W. Power Leary; Testimony of Charles Maynard.

of the district in the location of an Mpondomise headman named Yose.[112] Yose initially objected to Mhlontlo's presence in his location, fearing 'his position as headman would be endangered by the introduction into his location of a man of royal blood'.[113] The magistrate eventually persuaded him to withdraw the objection. Most headmen, although they would not openly express it, did not want Mhlontlo in their locations, due in part to a lack of space but also because they feared his presence would greatly undermine their own authority.[114] The magistrate commented that 'the one Headman was inclined to saddle his next door neighbour with the responsibility'.[115] Thus it fell to Yose, an old man and commoner who lacked authority, to accommodate the former chief.[116] Two men gave up their land for Mhlontlo but later unsuccessfully demanded it back. The site of Mhlontlo's new homestead at Caba was known as Sampompolo.

Mhlontlo's Hopes

The timing of the chief's return from Basutoland provides clues to his and his son's intentions. Beinart convincingly argues that although Mhlontlo rather vaguely suggested he had returned to the Cape to die amongst his people, events suggest he returned 'to oust those who, by providing alternative leadership, ultimately threatened the allegiance of his people'.[117] In the late 1890s some of the Mfengu leaders who had fought for the government during the Transkei Rebellion joined the independent African Presbyterian Church of Pambani Mzimba. By the early 1900s these men, generally referred to as Ethiopians, were openly hostile to the introduction of a new council system. The Cape administration hoped to hand over the responsibility of local administration to councils funded by a new 10s hut tax. Not only would this cut down on expenditure but would provide for separate and controllable institutions in which Africans could participate, while excluding them from Cape political structures, such as the parliament.[118] When magistrates explained the council system in 1902 at meetings held throughout the Transkei most headmen accepted the idea, but by 1903 leading Ethiopians, such as Ntame Dane and

[112] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', p. 121.
[113] KAB, CMT 3/879: 659, Resident Magistrate, Maclear, to Chief Magistrate, Umtata, 28.12.1908
[114] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', p. 121.
[115] KAB, CMT 3/879: 659, Resident Magistrate, Maclear, to Chief Magistrate, Umtata, 28.12.1908
[116] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', p. 121.
[117] *Ibid*, p.120.
[118] *Ibid*, p. 116.

Reuben Damane, obtained the support of many headmen and commoners against the new system. Many Ethiopian leaders in the Eastern Cape looked for support amongst rural communities regardless of ethnicity. The new tax was unpopular amongst both Mfengu and Mpondomise and there is evidence that some Mpondomise supported Ethiopian leaders.[119] In 1903 and 1904 there were large scale boycotts of the council system in the Qumbu, Tsolo and Mount Fletcher areas with many people refusing to pay the council tax. The confiscation of the cattle of tax defaulters and dismissal of a number of chiefs and headmen in 1904 contributed to breaking the resistance to the council system. Support for the Ethiopians at Qumbu was also undermined by the return of Mhlontlo. He activated the old networks linking chiefs to people and began to accumulate cattle. He was viewed as 'a man who had triumphed over the Government' and he 'succeeded, at least to some degree, in winning back popular support'.[120] His return undermined the efforts of the Ethiopians and by September 1904 popular support to resist the council system waned.

For the remainder of his days Mhlontlo fought to be able to return to Qanqu, have his family return to Qumbu and have the pass laws as applied to him relaxed. He obtained the services of the Mthatha-based lawyer Wood Gush who beginning in 1909 kept up a regular correspondence with the magistrate at Qumbu requesting that the chief be allowed to return to his former Great Place. Mhlontlo and his representatives argued that the land at Sampompolo was 'unsuitable both for pasture and agriculture'.[121] Colonial officials argued in turn that the land was 'not of the best but not as poor as Mhlontlo represented'.[122] In 1911 Mhlontlo employed a new attorney, J.H. Walker of Cofimvaba, to continue pressing his case for his return to Qanqu. As Gush had not been successful with the resident magistrate at Qumbu or the chief magistrate at Mthatha, Walker conducted a more assertive and wider campaign. He sent a petition to the governor general, Viscount Gladstone, requesting Mhlontlo be allowed to move as the land was not fertile.[123] Enclosed with the petition were three affidavits collected by Walker from men who were acquainted with the land at Caba. They swore the ground was 'barren and unfruitful and

[119] *Ibid*.
[120] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', p. 122.
[121] CA, CMT 3/879: 659, Chief Magistrate, Umtata, to O. Wood Gush, 26.11.1908.
[122] *Ibid*, Chief Magistrate, Umtata, to Resident Magistrate, Qumbu, 22.4.1909.
[123] *Ibid*, Petition for Mhlonthlo to the Governor General, 24.3.1911.

quite unsuited for cultivation' and that it had been abandoned as a result.[124] So unfruitful were his fields, argued Walker, that Mhlontlo was forced to buy grain which had cost him £120 in a few months.[125]

He also complained 'the ordinary native' obtained a pass on application from the resident magistrate at Qumbu but that he needed authority from the chief magistrate in Mthatha which caused a delay of many days, and when he was called away for urgent business to another district he had to pay the cost of the telegram to Mthatha requesting a pass. He also requested that all his family be allowed to return to Qumbu. Clearly as the matter involved the governor general the magistrate at Qumbu made a much more thorough investigation into Mhlontlo's complaints and produced a detailed report on the land at Caba. In April he sent the chief constable to inspect the plots at Caba who reported that there were 10 in all, varying from a fifth of a morgen to 4 morgen. In all Mhlontlo had about 16 morgen under cultivation. About half had been planted with mealies and the other half with millet. The constable described the mealie crop as generally bad, but the millet as good. He also had access to the common grazing ground of the location and there was still 15 to 20 morgen of virgin land available for his use. The mealie crop was poor due to 'a spell of dry weather' during November and December.[126] Mhlontlo had requested that if he could not move to Qanqu he could move to the Hlubi headman Mgobozi's location. The magistrate objected to this

> Which would be a step nearer towards the attainment of Mhlontlo's hopes. Were he allowed to remove to Mgobozi's location, which as already stated is a Hlubi location, Mhlontlo would use this as a lever to get into Mtengwane's location and eventually in Qanqu the latter location where he formerly had his chief kraal. Mgobozi's location is no more fertile than Yose's. Mhlontlo's 'Mecca' is not fertile land but his former 'Great Place' – Qanqu.[127]

[124] *Ibid,* Statement by Skade, Cofimvaba, 21.3.1911.
[125] *Ibid* Petition from Mhlontlo to the Governor General, 24.3.1911.
[126] *Ibid*, Chief Magistrate Umtata to Secretary for Native Affairs, 9.5.1911
[127] *Ibid*, Resident Magistrate, Qumbu, to Chief Magistrate, Umtata, 25.4.1911.

The magistrate at Qumbu consistently refused Mhlontlo's request on the grounds that it was 'impossible and impolitic'.[128] Qanqu was now in an Mfengu location under Mtengwane. The Mfengu were concerned about Mhlontlo's return and when they heard about it, began forcing Mpondomise out of the location. Mtengwane was slightly placated by the magistrate's assurance that he would not support Mhlontlo's application to return. More importantly, colonial officials believed, probably correctly, that Mhlontlo's desire to return to Qanqu was 'clearly an attempt to regain his land and position he occupied before the war'.[129]

Besides resettling at Qanqu, Mhlontlo's other concern in the last years of his life was to obtain permission to have his family return to Qumbu. This was part of his attempts to reassert the influence of the chieftaincy. Chiefs had always strategically placed the homesteads of male relatives in their domains as a way of keeping control and assuring loyalty. Mhlontlo had married seventeen times in his life. By the early 1900s seven of his wives were still alive. Two of his wives, Mngcolo, and Mamaya, lived with him at Sampompolo. The five other surviving wives lived in East Griqualand but were dispersed at homesteads across the territory. He had an estimated 50 sons, 13 of whom were majors by 1912 with their own families, estimated at 200. Most of his children and grandchildren still lived in Basutoland. Five sons had returned to East Griqualand. The magistrate insisted that Mhlontlo's children had been denied permission to return because the headmen refused to have them in their locations.[130] Mhlontlo countered this by insisting that the magistrate was the one stopping their return and insisted that when he discussed the matter with Yose, Melane, Tongeni and Ndevu they were all prepared to accept his family members.[131] Mhlontlo's return generally concerned Mpondomise headmen. They knew of the sway he still held among many of the people under their authority, and were acutely aware that if his sons established homesteads in the locations their positions would be undermined. They tended to play a double game, publically welcoming the chief back, but in private meetings with the magistrate objecting to his sons returning.

[128] *Ibid*, CMT 3/879: 659, Chief Magistrate, Umtata, to Secretary for Native Affairs, 11.5.1911.
[129] *Ibid*.
[130] *Ibid*, Mhlontlo to Chief Magistrate, Umtata 29.6.1911.
[131] *Ibid*.

Local magistrates believed that Mhlontlo was attempting to assert his influence not only amongst his own followers, but amongst surrounding chiefdoms as well. In September 1910 he applied for a pass to visit Mount Frere. This was agreed to by the magistrate at Qumbu, but he sent a telegram to the magistrate at Mount Frere asking him to 'ascertain quietly what he is doing' and suggested he be watched by detectives.[132] The magistrate at Mount Frere, Charles Brownlee's son Frank, objected to the visit as he felt Mhlontlo's 'presence might form a disturbing element'.[133] Brownlee believed that the aim of Mhlontlo's visit was to establish some kind of alliance with Rolobile, son of Nomtsheketshe, against Mncagisana, the Bhaca chief after the death of his father Makaula.[134] Besides attempting to assert his position over Mncagisana, Brownlee felt Rolobile had leanings towards being disloyal. He had tried to 'alienate as far as possible from him persons whose support might otherwise strengthen Rolobile's position'. Brownlee felt it was impossible to follow the actions of a man as 'crafty and cautious' as Mhlontlo and 'it was better to prevent undesirable collusion than to watch it from afar'.[135]

Mhlontlo died on 11 December 1912 about sunset and was buried the following day. It had been a tumultuous life. More than any other leader he had demonstrated the ability of the chieftaincy to survive colonial rule, and at times influence it, by adapting and redefining his role. He had started as an independent chief who had accepted colonial rule in the belief that he would have an ally against internal and external threats to his position. After a short period of co-operation with colonial officials he had come to realize that he was viewed as a subject rather than ally and that colonial policy aimed at undermining his position. He initially attempted to reassert his authority through conducting ceremonies and rituals, negotiating with neighbouring leaders and reinforcing his role as the spiritual protector of the chiefdom against witchcraft. Desperate to protect his chiefdom he took to arms in 1880 and although militarily defeated and forced into exile, he was viewed by many Mpondomise as the man who led the resistance to colonial rule and skillfully evaded capture. Colonial magistrates were forced to admit that he was 'regarded by the Pondomise people as their chief and his kraal is referred to as "Mkulu" or "Great

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[132] KAB, CMT 3/879: 659, Chief Magistrate Umtata to Resident Magistrate Mount Frere, 30.9.1911.
[133] *Ibid*, Resident Magistrate Mount Frere to Chief Magistrate Umtata, 3.10.1911.
[134] *Ibid*.
[135] *Ibid*.

Place"'[136] This reputation was aided by his acquittal and he was able to, despite not being recognized by the colonial officials in the new administrative system, gain support amongst the Mpondomise and provide alternative leadership to colonial officials, headmen and Mfengu politicians. His reputation as a freedom fighter and the mystique that surrounded him grew after his death and continued to influence the politics surrounding the chieftaincy.[137]

After the rebellion colonial officials took advantage of the social and political dislocation to redistribute land and introduce a new administrative system. Land redistribution resulted in losses for the rebels and new settlement patterns that exist to this day. In the Tsolo and Qumbu areas the Mfengu who had been allowed by chiefs to settle on the borders of their chiefdoms, were relocated to central parts of the district and clustered around magistracies, laying the foundations for generations of conflict over land. Many members of established ruling families served as headmen in the new system. Many headmen had an ambiguous attitude towards Mditshwa and Mhlontlo who returned at different times and in different circumstances to their chiefdoms. Headmen understood that both men had popular support and did not openly reject them but were concerned privately that their presence would undermine their influence. Mditshwa attempted to spare his followers from the punishment meted out by colonial authorities after the rebellion, and became a focus of unity. Mhlontlo's chieftaincy provided an alternative political focus to headmen, immigrant community leaders and the colonial state.[138] He was, and still is, seen by many as the man who resisted a system which aimed to exploit the Mpondomise and destroy their way of life.

[136] *Ibid*, Magistrate Qumbu to Chief Magistrate Umtata 25.4.1911.
[137] Jordan, *The Wrath of the Ancestors*, p. 22.
[138] Beinart and Bundy, 'Conflict in Qumbu', pp. 120 & 123.

Chapter Nine

Strained and Shifting Loyalties: Loyal Chiefdoms and the Crises of Colonialism

The chiefdoms that had remained loyal to the colonial government during the rebellion experienced short and long-term benefits. However, these chiefdoms were subject to the same invasive regulations and the long-term changes brought on by the colonial system faced by all Africans in the Transkei in the three decades following the uprising. Colonial authorities, taking advantage of the dislocation and political uncertainty caused by the conflict, began a more wide-ranging and aggressive push to assert their authority, and throughout the 1880s and 1890s Africans were subject to more and more regulations which impacted on almost all aspects of their lives. In these circumstances three areas of conflict developed between the chiefdoms and the colonial state: regulations controlling access and use of forests, compulsory dipping of cattle and the introduction of the council system in the early 1900s. These regulations, exacerbated by drought, cattle diseases, an economic downturn during the First World War and competition over land and threats to their liberties from white farmers and settler politicians, led to three crises in the 30 years following the rebellion. There were threats of an uprising in 1897 among the Nhlangwini chiefdom at Mzimkhulu, protests and boycotts of the council system at Qumbu in 1903 and a popular movement against dipping centered amongst the Hlubi chiefdoms of Mount Fletcher and Matatiele in 1914. This chapter is concerned with how, firstly, the chiefdoms which had been loyal in 1880 responded to the demands of colonial rule from the mid-1880s to 1914, and, secondly, how hereditary leaders responded to these crises. By the early 1900s loyalist chiefs were in an increasingly untenable position, caught between the expectations of their followers and demands of the colonial government. They faced vocal criticism for accepting colonial legislation and competed for support from members of the chiefdom with government-appointed headmen, populist politicians, members of their extended families and colonial officials. The Bhaca chief Makaula and his heir Mngcisana adopted an increasingly ambiguous attitude to new colonial legislation as support for Nomtsheketshe, a vocal critic of the construction of pounds and dipping, grew. Sidoyi's son Pata led the protests against the colonial government in the 1890s, and Sibi and Scanlen Lehana actively resisted dipping and initially the council system.

Chiefs, Headmen and Magistrates

Officials in the Native Affairs Department had, in principle, a fairly exact model of how to administer Africans in the Transkei. Headmen would manage the day-to-day running of locations. They would report to the district magistrate, who in turn reported to the chief magistrate in Mthatha who was answerable to the secretary for native affairs in Cape Town (and later Pretoria). The reality was very different. As Marks pointed out in her early works, colonialism resulted in the growth of numerous new interest groups within African societies.[1] From the 1880s leaders began to emerge from an educated class often closely connected to Ethiopian churches. Such men, mostly drawn from the Mfengu chiefdoms of Qumbu, attempted to create political movements that crossed ethnic and geographical lines. Most importantly an increasing number of former commoners, both male and female, were becoming more directly involved, most notably in times of crisis, in resisting colonial rule. Headmen also faced competition from members of the Cape bureaucracy. By the 1890s responsibilities that had in the early years after the rebellion been carried out by headmen were being taken over by white officials. Members of the Native Affairs Department, who had had free reign from the establishment of colonial rule in the mid-1870s to the Vacant Land Commission, found, much to their chagrin, that other departments in the Cape bureaucracy, the most important being the forestry and veterinary departments, were gaining influence in the Transkei. The establishment of white farming communities at Mzimkhulu and Matatiele further complicated matters.

The Nhlangwini and Bhaca Chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu

By the 1890s the Nhlangwini and Bhaca chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu came into increasing conflict with officials attempting to enforce new legislation and white settlers and politicians who worked to restrict Africans' rights. The worst conflicts tended to revolve not on interactions with colonial officials but the small and vocal white community of farmers and traders. Beinart asserts that a major theme in the history of the area after 1880 was the contrasting fortunes of the settler community and the tens of thousands of Africans who inhabited the Mzimkhulu area.[2] East Griqualand, and particularly Mzimkhulu, was on the periphery of the Transkeian Territories

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[1] Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion*, p. xix.

[2] Beinart, 'Settler Accumulation in East Griqualand', p. 261.

and the state was reluctant to give unqualified support to white farming communities.[3] In these circumstances Africans were able to 'stage a significant counterthrust' and purchase private farms and compete with settler farmers.[4] The Griqua government had granted 343 farms between February 1867 and October 1874. After the Cape assumed the administration of East Griqualand many of the Griqua began selling their farms. It was estimated that within 5 years of the colonial takeover approximately half the Griqua farms had changed hands.[5] There are a number of reasons why a 'mania for farm-selling' took place after 1874.[6] Firstly, many of the Griqua had been granted farms but had been too poor to work them. If, for example, a farmer's draught oxen died, his land became almost useless.[7] Secondly, and more importantly, there was great uncertainty among the Griqua about what was going to happen under the colonial government. Stories made the rounds that the Cape government was to heavily tax land and livestock.[8] These rumours were fuelled by a census taken in 1874 of not only people but also of all cattle. Land speculators deliberately spread these stories. Many Griqua believed that it was best to sell while they could still make money on their properties. There is also evidence that the Griqua had become indebted to white traders and speculators who called in the loans as the price of land increased, forcing the Griqua to sell their properties.

Most of the new land holders who replaced the Griqua were drawn from established English-speaking farming communities of Natal and the border regions of the Cape Colony. However, at Mzimkhulu Africans bought a large number of former Griqua farms. This was done in three ways.[9] Bhaca and Nhlangwini chiefs used funds collected from their followers to purchase farms bordering locations. This land in some cases was already occupied. Farms were also purchased by smaller groups who pooled funds together. Lastly, land was bought by individual Africans. By the late 1880s a black landowning class emerged at Mzimkhulu. Some of these men were hereditary chiefs, while others were Christians closely associated with the Methodist missions. The Nhlangwini chief Sidoyi and Bhaca leader Msinghapantsi were both landowners,

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[3] *Ibid*, p. 262.
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] Dower, *Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East*, p. 151.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 65.
[7] *Ibid*, p. 64.
[8] *Ibid*, p. 65.
[9] Beinart, 'Settler Accumulation in East Griqualand', pp. 282-283.

as were other hereditary leaders such as James Nyangiwe, Nondabula and John Singengane. All of these men had been closely associated with Donald Strachan's *Abalondolozi* and through Strachan's influence an 1875 colonial land commission granted them farms as a way to reward and ensure their loyalty.[10] Some of these men subsequently expanded their land holdings. The commission granted Singengane a 3000 acre farm called *Malenge* but he later bought two more properties.[11] Strachan also ensured that other loyalist leaders of the *Abalondolozi*, the most prominent being Nathaniel Keswa, obtained land grants.[12] Many of the landowners were Christians, called *Amakholwa* or believers. Most prominent among these men were members of the Keswa family, Charles Pamla and May Damoyi. William Kongo Keswa, a school teacher and an interpreter and evangelist for the Wesleyan Methodist Church, initially settled at the Ibisi with the establishment of the Pearsetown mission in the 1850s. In about 1894 he bought the farm *Deepkloof*. Charles Pamla, who was ordained in 1871 and worked for some years at the Etembeni Mission in the Mzimkhulu area, was the largest land owner in the area. May Damoyi, said to be a descendant of castaways from the *Grosvenor*, came to the Mzimkhulu district in 1864 with the frontier missionary Richard Hulley. In the late 1880s he bought the farms *Nooitgedacht* and *Thee Kloof*.

By the 1890s Africans owned a quarter of private farms at Mzimkhulu and there was an expansion of peasant production with the introduction of ploughs and the ownership of sheep and cattle increased. The relative success of African farmers and gains in land ownership brought them into competition, and at times conflict, with white farmers who increasingly asserted their own interests in the area. All of the Black landowners qualified for the franchise and this resulted in a bitter showdown between them and local white politicians. In 1888 when East Griqualand obtained a seat in the Cape Houses of Parliament, the magistrate of Mzimkhulu drew up the voters' roll and reported the names of 115 whites, 50 Griqua and over 1300 Africans, of whom it was estimated 1100 had fought with Strachan during the war.[13] One of the white candidates, Louis Zietsman, lodged an objection with the chief magistrate against all of the

[10] CPP C.5-'78, First Instalment of Papers called for by the Legislative Council on Tuesday, the 9th July, 1878 in re Land Questions in East Griqualand, p. 276.
[11] G.W. Magaqa, Amanqolo, (unpublished manuscript).
[12] CPP C.5-'78, First Instalment of Papers called for by the Legislative Council on Tuesday, the 9th July, 1878 in re Land Questions in East Griqualand, p. 276.
[13] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 249.

Africans from Mzimkhulu who appeared on the roll. The addition of so many African people to the colony greatly concerned many Cape politicians and white voters who were afraid that they would be outnumbered at the polls by African voters. As a result white politicians passed legislation making it more difficult for Africans within the Colony to qualify for the franchise. Changes made in 1887 and 1892 to the education and property qualifications reduced the number of Africans eligible to vote. Zietsman was aware that the franchise not only depended on private landownership or a salary but also required voters to be British subjects.[14] Many of the men who appeared on the voters' roll for Mzimkhulu had been either born in Natal or Nomansland prior to these areas being annexed and were thus legally not British citizens. It was this technicality that Zietsman used to make his objection.

When news of Zietsman's actions spread an agitated crowd gathered outside of the magistrate's office at Mzimkhulu, angry that they were considered 'outsiders or interlopers' when they had been paying taxes to Natal as early as 1850 and had served in colonial regiments.[15] After Strachan addressed the crowd, they elected a committee under Nathaniel Keswa to go in a body to the chief magistrate and appeal at the revising court. A hundred men travelled to Kokstad despite the cold weather and presented six test cases to the chief magistrate, Walter Stanford. Stanford found for three of the appellants. Of the men who were to be removed from the roll were James Nyangiwe who owned a farm but had been born near the Bashee in tribal territory, and the Bhaca chief Msingaphantsi whose parents had left the Colony of Natal before he was born.[16] The men wanted to appeal to the Supreme Court in Cape Town, but Zietsman's opponent James Sivewright dissuaded them from taking this course as it would delay the election in East Griqualand and leave the territory without representation in parliament.

By the 1890s tensions developed between the Nhlangwini and white farmers who had settled after the war at Ntsikeni and Glengarry where the up country grassveld was good for grazing sheep. Points of conflict included the burning of grass, dogs attacking cattle, fencing and stock theft. In 1895 the Umzimkulu Farmers' Association passed a motion that the Nhlangwini be removed to land near Gugwini on the border between East Griqualand and Alfred County where

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Ibid.*

their kinsmen lived. The farmers argued that the Nhlangwini locations were overcrowded and this led to conflicts.[17] The Farmers' Association insisted that the Nhlangwini had agreed to the move but later developments showed that this was unlikely and caused resentment amongst the Nhlangwini who had been granted these locations by the colonial government for their loyalty during the Transkei Rebellion.

The conflicts over voting rights and land were exacerbated by the announcement in 1894 of numerous new regulations, including that only first wives and their offspring would be legally recognized. This caused outrage and Thomas Pulu, even though he was monogamous, criticized the government for 'lifting up one hand against polygamy, with the other grasping more money from hut tax'.[18] Regulations restricting and controlling access to forests, vital to the homestead economy, also became a source of unhappiness. By the mid-1890s the demands of white farmers, and colonial officials, contributed to a shift in political positions in Mzimkhulu.[19] When Cecil Rhodes visited East Griqualand many prominent loyals, aware that he proposed changes to the administration of the Transkei territories, remained aloof and the premier received a far from cordial welcome.[20] The removal of Africans from the voters' roll, proposals to move the Nhlangwini from Ntsikeni as well as the extension of fencing regulations and restrictions to forests caused increasing resentment amongst the Nhlangwini and in 1896 officials and settlers feared a possible uprising.[21] The rapid spread of the rinderpest exacerbated the tensions. In an attempt to combat the spread of the disease the government established local committees to enforce measures such as compulsory dipping, the destruction of infected cattle and the construction of fences, all of which were resented by both black and white farmers. In the Mzimkhulu district it was the hereditary chief Pata, heir to Sidoyi, and to a lesser extent Msingaphantsi of the Bhaca who led the popular opposition against white settlers and colonial officials.

[17] *Ibid*, p. 264.
[18] *Ibid*, p. 263.
[19] Beinart, 'Settler Accumulation in East Griqualand', p. 278.
[20] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 262.
[21] *Ibid*, p. 265.

In 1897 the Chief Magistrate of East Griqualand rode into the Drakensberg to inspect a fence being constructed to stop the movement of cattle between the Cape Colony and Lesotho. When he neared Lehana's Pass beyond Mount Fletcher, he received urgent messages that farmers in the Mzimkhulu area, fearing an uprising, had constructed a laager and that armed bands of Pata's followers were roaming the countryside. He rode through the night to Matatiele where he received telegrams from the magistrates at Mzimkhulu and Kokstad, as well as Donald Strachan, that they expected an imminent uprising amongst the Nhlangwini and perhaps Bhaca chiefdoms of Mzimkhulu.[22] Stanford called upon George Moshesh to provide 100 levies to march to Mzimkhulu. He also instructed two troops of the East Griqualand Mounted Rifles (EGMR) to make their way to Mzimkhulu. He then rode to Kokstad and with a group of white volunteers began the journey to Mzimkhulu. On the way he came across a troop of the EGMR with Pata and about 50 unarmed followers. Towards Sneezewood he met Pata's brother Vusiwe and about twenty armed men whom he instructed to return to their homesteads.

When he arrived at Mzimkhulu he set up a commission, consisting of himself and prominent farmers, to investigate what had transpired. Strachan by his own admission could find very little direct evidence that an uprising was about to take place.[23] Much of the information he collected was based on gossip and reports received by white farmers and traders from their servants. Stanford fined Pata 25 head of cattle and reprimanded the Bhaca chief Msingaphantsi as some of his supporters had been associated with the troublemakers. The chief responded that he had no power because his authority had been taken from him and that ordinary men were able to lodge complaints against him.[24] Strachan believed that Msingaphantsi played both sides during the events that had just unfolded.[25] Stanford then rode on to the Lourdes Mission Station where he admonished Vusiwe. He received news that farmers at Swartberg had gone into laager after houses had been broken into and so he rode on with a troop of the EGMR to settle matters there by reprimanding local headmen.

[22] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 2, p. 182.
[23] *Ibid*.
[24] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 271.
[25] *Ibid*, p. 276.

White farmers criticized Stanford for not coming to their assistance earlier and more forcibly. Although there were close social and political contacts between settlers and officials, at times there were differences of opinion regarding attitudes towards Africans. Magistrates were concerned with maintaining peace and stability amongst African communities which they viewed as being threatened at times by both fellow Africans as well as settlers.[26] Settlers believed that magistrates should protect their interests, especially from what they perceived as threats to their property and persons from Africans. Thus at times conflict developed, especially at times of crisis, between settlers and officials.

Stanford at the time, and later in his reminiscences, placed the blame for the scares on the Griqua politician Andries Le Fleur.[27] Le Fleur's father Abraham had served as Adam Kok's secretary briefly while the Griqua still lived at Philippolis. The Le Fleur family settled in the Ongeluksnek area where Abraham operated as a shopkeeper, baker, butcher and carrier. Andries became involved in Griqua politics in the 1890s, campaigning in particular for Griqua land rights. He attracted a fair number of supporters and began forming links with African chiefs who too were concerned about land issues, in particular the Nhlangwini at Ntsikeni. Although the Griqua and their former allies the Nhlangwini might have had common issues with the colonial government, there were also divisions. In the 1890s a Griqua, Coloured and Native United Association was established and led by A.A.S. Le Fleur. A number of African chiefs were associated with the organization which was particularly critical of James Sivewright, the member of parliament for East Griqualand, who they believed supported racist legislation.[28] Despite these attempts at co-operation, the Griqua feared that if they were too closely associated with Africans, they would be classified as natives and subjected to even more oppressive laws and legislation. The Nhlangwini in turn were often in the forefront of buying up Griqua farms. The CMR arrested Le Fleur at the end of 1896 for 'attempting to wage war and abetting the waging of war against Her Majesty the Queen'. He stood trial at Mthatha in October 1897, but within hours the case was dismissed as it was based on hearsay evidence alone. On his way back to Kokstad he sent messages to potential allies, among them Pata and Msingaphantsi, but they were non-committal. Stanford, one of the more perceptive officials, seemed on this occasion to ignore the genuine

[26] Beinart, 'Settler Accumulation in East Griqualand', p. 288.
[27] MacQuarrie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, vol. 2, p. 183.
[28] Besten, 'Transformation and Reconstitution of Khoe-San Identities', p. 57.

feeling of resentment developing amongst the Nhlangwini. Strachan and white settlers were adamant that a rebellion would have taken place if officials had not acted promptly. White officials and African commentators criticized Strachan and white farmers for exaggerating the situation. The editor of the newspaper *Imvo* felt that white farmers had exaggerated the episode 'for their own nefarious ends'.[29] Prominent members of the *Amakholwa* community either blamed drink for what had happened or a lack of education. Reverend Charles Pamla argued that uneducated people feared they were to be dispossessed of their land and believed rumours that rich white men introduced stock diseases. Educated people, he argued, did not believe these rumours and he encouraged the money spent on the CMR be spent on schools.[30]

The events of 1897 might have been a storm in a tea cup, but three significant conclusions can be drawn from what transpired. Firstly, in a fairly short period of time former loyal leaders had become so unhappy about the actions of white settlers and officials that they contemplated rebellion. Secondly, hereditary chiefs, in particular Pata and his brother Vusiwe, were still actively involved in the politics and social issues of the chiefdom. Msingaphantsi's role was ambiguous, not completely turning his back on his former allies but supporting the discontent amongst his followers. Lastly, the black landowners of Mzimkhulu began to agitate for their interests, and leaders, such as Nathaniel Keswa and Charles Pamla, emerged from this small group. There does not seem to have been the conflict witnessed in other parts of East Griqualand between chiefs and the educated elite. They shared enough of the same concerns – protecting land rights and the right to vote – to at times work together.

The Bhaca of Mount Frere

The Bhaca of Mount Frere came to understand in the years that followed the rebellion that although there were economic and political benefits of remaining loyal in 1880, their lives would be subject to the invasive colonial legislation and regulations that affected all Africans in the Transkei. There is evidence of some economic benefits after the rebellion, however, in the 1880s and 1890s the chief and his people became increasing unhappy and disillusioned over attempts to control their access to natural resources, the establishment of cattle pounds and the building of

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[29] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 273.
[30] *Ibid*.

dipping tanks. Makaula found his authority restricted and areas of conflict developed between the chief and magistrates over limitations to his judicial powers and his rights to appoint headmen. However, it was his cousin Nomtsheketshe and long-standing rival who was most critical of the colonial government and attracted a degree of popular support.

Many white officials commented on the Bhaca's prosperity after the rebellion. Tylden, for example, wrote that the Bhaca were said to have done so well that they became more prosperous in six months of war than ten years of peace.[31] It was not only government officials who were aware of the Bhaca's prosperity. Many former rebels saw that loyals were in a much better position than they were and the economic disparities between loyal and rebel chiefdoms were often a source of tension after the rebellion.[32] Although white officials and rebels generally believed the Bhaca gained financially from the rebellion, there were complaints amongst the Bhaca themselves about not receiving compensation for horses that died during the campaign and unhappiness that they did not receive more cattle from captured stock.[33] This was a common complaint amongst loyals and had contributed to many Mfengu deserting colonial regiments during the latter part of the conflict. An 1882 War Expenditure Commission which sat in King William's Town felt that too much had already been spent by the administration on suppressing the uprising and was hostile towards claims made on behalf of African levies. This created an impression amongst the former loyals that the government had little sympathy for their losses.[34] The wages earned during the rebellion and contact with white military personnel influenced buying habits and had an impact on social behavioural patterns. The magistrate at Mount Frere wrote that Bhaca levies acquired European customs and tastes and were spending the first instalments of their pay on European dress and saddles, and with more changes in one year than in ten under normal circumstances.[35] He admitted some 'of their honesty seems to be leaving them'.[36]

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[31] Tylden, *The Rise of the Basuto*, p. 154.
[32] J. Tropp, *Natures of Colonial Change: Environmental Relations in the Making of the Transkei* (Ohio, 2006), p. 36.
[33] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas', pp. 153-154.
[34] Rainier, *Madonela*, p. 191.
[35] BNA G.-'20, Report of the magistrate of Mount Frere, 7.1.1882, p. 80.
[36] *Ibid*.

'The Trees in the Forests': The Bhaca Response to Forest Regulations

Despite the economic gains, areas of conflict developed between the Bhaca and colonial government over attempts to restrict access to forests, construction of pounds and building of cattle dips. J.A. Tropp in *Natures of Colonial Change* argues that from the mid-1880s an important aspect of the colonial government's restructuring of African political authority was an attempt to reshape people's access to forest resources.[37] Forests had been used for generations for fuel, the making of implements for the household, building materials and hunting of wildlife. They were also exploited for medicines and were at times ritually important landscapes. In 1885 the government enforced regulations which controlled the cutting and removing of firewood from forests. Tariffs had to be paid to remove wood by sledge or wagon. Wood that had fallen and was dry and did not come from reserved tree species could be removed bodily, by hand or head load, without a permit. The regulations divided the gathering of wood along gender and age lines. Labour saving animal transport was generally used by men, while the carrying of wood bodily was the function of women and children. Communities living far away from forests felt the regulations most strongly, in many cases former rebel chiefdoms that had been resettled. Women and children in these communities had to carry heavier loads over longer distances more often. When magistrates explained the regulations at meetings of chiefs, headmen and commoners in 1886 there were immediately questions and complaints to the magistrate. Makaula responded to the magistrate upon hearing of the regulations that: 'When the Bhacas came under the Colonial Government, they were not given to understand that the rights to using the trees in the forests for kraals and building purposes would be taken from them'.[38] The chief was clearly making the points that the colonial government was, firstly, being grossly unfair, and, secondly, was not abiding by the original agreement they entered into with Makaula in 1875. He went on to complain that it was wrong that people who had remained loyal were treated the same as the Mpondomise.[39] The idea of loyalty being reciprocal was raised by Letsie in his fight against disarmament, and by Mhlontlo after the death of Hamilton Hope. Makaula clearly believed that the Bhaca's loyalty during the rebellion should afford them protection from the regulations being imposed on rebels.

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[37] Tropp, *Natures of Colonial Change*, p. 3.
[38] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas', p. 166.
[39] *Ibid*.

Tropp shows that colonial personnel, chiefs, headmen and commoners negotiated control over natural resources and contested the meaning of transformations in environmental relations.[40] In the 1880s headmen enforced these regulations in their locations. As competition over land and resources increased after the mass relocations enforced by the Vacant Land Commission, headmen exploited their roles in controlling access to forests to derive political and economic benefits.[41] The resettlement of rebel chiefdoms often meant that they were denied access to or were living far distances from forests.[42] From the 1890s the role of white forest officers and African forest guards expanded in the introduction of a new management policy. Headmen fought to maintain their influence over natural resources and a period of negotiation and conflict over shifting power relations began.[43] By the early 1900s local residents became increasingly frustrated by these regulations and attacks on forest guards and their property increased. This can be seen as signs of resistance against colonial rule.[44]

Pounds, Dipping Tanks and Nomtsheketshe's fight for the Chieftaincy

In the same year the government introduced the forest regulations, it enforced new pound regulations, followed a few years later by the scab law which enforced compulsory dipping. These regulations contributed to a new set of conflicts and negotiations between colonial officials and Africans, and placed new strains on the loyalty of Makaula and the Bhaca. They also exacerbated local political rivalries as Nomtsheketshe took advantage of the rising popular discontent against colonial regulations concerning cattle in his struggle for the chieftaincy. In terms of the new pound regulations, cattle which had strayed were to be handed over to the headmen who in turn would send them on to the pound at the magistracy, where the owners had to pay a fine to get back their livestock. Makaula objected strongly, pointing out to the chief magistrate that many owners would not have the money to pay the fines and that the cattle would eventually be sold.[45] He was rightly concerned of the potential conflict that these regulations might cause.[46] The magistrate tried to convince the chief that the measures would be beneficial

[40] Tropp, *Natures of Colonial Change,* p. 9.
[41] *Ibid*, p. 32.
[42] *Ibid*, p. 34.
[43] *Ibid*, p. 32.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas', p. 168.
[46] *Ibid*.

to everyone as it would stop crops being destroyed by stray cattle.[47] The chief was unconvinced and made it clear that fines for stray cattle were not a custom of the Bhaca. Both colonial officials and chiefs, as part of this process of negotiation, evoked the idea of tradition and custom to either justify new regulations or reinforce their objections to them. Stanford when drawing up the 1885 regulations regarding the cutting of firewood justified them on the grounds that collecting firewood had traditionally been the responsibility of women. Chiefs in turn in their objections insisted that regulations were either not traditional or that it was customary for them to control natural resources.[48]

In 1894 magistrates, through chiefs and headmen, began enforcing the provisions of the scab law. Sheep scab, caused by a minute mite *Psoroptes ovis*, results in scab formations and intense itching which causes scratching, wool loss, wounding and emaciation.[49] The disease is highly contagious and spreads rapidly through flocks. In 1874 the government introduced regulations at the Cape to combat scab but they were not strictly enforced. The 1894 Scab Act made dipping compulsory as a way to stop the spreading of scab amongst sheep and goats. Compulsory dipping met with intense opposition amongst both white and black farmers and pastoralists because of the financial burdens involved.[50] The administration expected the people who lived in the locations to partly fund the construction of the tanks and as a result compulsory dipping proved unpopular amongst the Bhaca, as it did amongst all chiefdoms in the area.

An unintended result of the scab law was that it assisted Nomtsheketshe in his claim to the chieftaincy. In 1882 Nomtsheketshe began to push his claim to the chieftainship. This was rejected by the chief magistrate, Captain Blyth, on the grounds that when the Bhaca nation was threatened by enemies, Nomtsheketshe's father Mdushane had deserted them and migrated to Mzimkhulu.[51] Blyth reasoned unfairly and contrary to accepted practices regarding who inherited the chieftaincy that Nomtsheketshe had no claim to the chieftaincy as his family had abandoned

[47] *Ibid.*
[48] Tropp, *Natures of Colonial Change,* p. 81.
[49] J.D. Bezuidenhout, 'A Short History of Sheep Scab', in *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* vol. 82 no. 4 (2011), p. 188.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas', p. 178.

the Bhaca in their hour of need.[52] In the same year the magistrate reported that Nomtsheketshe had held a celebration, attended by his brother Msingaphantsi, at which he announced that Makaula had abdicated.[53] In the 1890s Makaula suffered long bouts of ill health and Nomtsheketshe used the opportunity to assert his claim. He had a certain amount of influence within the chiefdom, which was in part a result of his genealogical position. However, he shrewdly refused to co-operate with colonial magistrates in areas that were unpopular amongst the Bhaca, such as the construction of dipping tanks.[54] In 1895 when the magistrate attempted to raise a levy amongst the Bhaca to serve on the Pondo border Nomtsheketshe asserted enough influence on the men under his authority to delay them reporting for a number of days. Scully believed that Nomtsheketshe had done this in order to ingratiate himself with the Mpondo paramount Sigcau. If the Mpondo were successful in the conflict that many believed might develop with the colonial government, he would have a better chance of being recognized as chief over Makaula who was on the side of the government.[55] On 9 July 1885 a local official arrived at Nomtsheketshe's homestead seeking his assistance in choosing a site in his location to build a dipping tank. Nomtsheketshe refused to co-operate, informing the official, 'I don't want you. I will have nothing to do with you.' When the official pushed the issue the chief insisted, 'I will not give you a man – I have no sheep.'[56] The official was forced to leave the location. Scully, who believed strongly 'that disloyalty must be punished and almost equally loyalty should be rewarded', suggestion that Nomtsheketshe's salary as a headman should be cut as a public warning.[57] When his suggestion that Nomtsheketshe be sent to Robben Island did not materialize, he began a campaign to convince his superiors to dismiss the recalcitrant chief. Nomtsheketshe died in 1896 before this could happen. His death did not end the divisions within the house of Madzikane. Conflict over the chieftaincy continued between his heir Rolobile and Makaula's son Mncagisana.

The interactions between the Bhaca claimant Nomtsheketshe and a succession of magistrates demonstrated the ambiguous and ever-shifting relations between the colonial state and hereditary

[52] *Ibid*, p. 179.
[53] *Ibid*, p. 180.
[54] *Ibid*, p. 192.
[55] *Ibid*, p. 189.
[56] *Ibid*, p. 192.
[57] *Ibid*, p. 191.

leaders in the late nineteenth century. By mobilizing men to fight in the colonial campaign in 1880 he showed his willingness, albeit reluctantly, to co-operate with colonial officials. There were other areas in which his actions were ambiguous. He dallied over the removal of his people from the Rode Valley, seemed to dissuade his followers from taking cases to the magistrate which he settled himself and delayed the arrival of men to guard the border while possibly opening up some form of discussions with the Mpondo. His refusal to allow a dipping tank in his location was openly defiant. He continually read and reread events as they unfolded and responded accordingly in his attempts to retain his own authority in the face of white control while re-enforcing his claim amongst the Bhaca to the chieftaincy. His struggle for the chieftaincy had begun before the 1870s and was an example of pre-colonial relations within chiefdoms being continued into the colonial period, although they did take on a different dimension as the political and economic changes took place. His claim was based on a strict interpretation of hereditary practices amongst Nguni chiefdoms; he was genealogically the most senior descendant of the main house of Madzikane. His position was recognized in terms of ritual and ceremonies by Makaula. Part of this was rooted in Bhaca history, particularly his connection to Madzikane, and established ritual and custom. However, he did have to push this claim and retain his influence within the colonial context. This was best achieved by functioning at times within colonial structures and yet at other times outside of them. In the 1880s his ejection of the dipping inspector from his location tapped into popular discontent amongst the Bhaca against new regulations regarding cattle and forests. This seemed to contrast him to Makaula, the government man. Yet he could not completely reject colonial political structures. He supported the colonial campaign as he believed it would benefit his supporters in terms of land and cattle He accepted a salary as a headman as this gave him some control over the allocation of land and access to forests, vital to retain loyalty. Colonial officials, in turn, could not simply disregard his influence. Although Blenkins believed that he would at any moment if he saw his way clear free himself of government restraints, the magistrate appointed him and his sons headmen over a number of locations in the Mount Frere area.[58] Magistrates, aware of his support among many Bhaca, included him within the headmanship system despite his actions as a way to give him a certain amount of officially-recognized authority rather than having him

[58] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas, p. 157; Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of Mount Frere District*, pp. 63-64.

gather support outside of colonial structures. While acknowledging some of his authority, they attempted to limit and define his role within the headmanship system.

Strained Loyalties: Makaula

By remaining loyal Makaula, unlike Mditshwa and Mhlontlo who were deposed, retained official recognition as the head of the Bhaca. It was often an unenviable position. Colonial officials realized that chiefs were not going to fade from the scene, as Brownlee and before him Grey hoped would happen, in the face of colonialism, Christianity and commerce. So the Cape administration tried to redefine the roles of chiefs *vis-a-vis* their followers. It included them as headmen in the new administrative system and used the influence they had amongst their followers to enforce and smooth over the introduction of new laws and regulations. However, their authority was greatly restricted. Makaula, like all chiefs, became aware very quickly after accepting colonial rule that the Cape government was not an ally but actually aimed at undermining his judicial and political role amongst his followers. This lead to unhappiness before the rebellion and was intensified afterwards. The chief complained bitterly in 1883 to the new magistrate, Whindus, that he was not permitted to try cases of murder, witchcraft and rape which led to diminishing respect from his followers.[59] An incident in 1884 forcibly brought home to Makaula the degree to which his judicial role had diminished. In that year a fight broke out at a beer party in Diko's location. Diko and a headman named Dabula separated the men, but in the process Dabula's hand was injured.[60] Makaula tried and fined the perpetrators. The magistrate reprimanded Makaula, pointing out that he had no right to try what was really a minor case.[61] He wanted to take action against the chief but was transferred before this could take place.

Makaula also came into conflict with magistrates over the appointment of headmen and the allocation of land. Makaula in the long established tradition of Nguni chiefdoms hoped to ensure his influence by appointing his sons to administer important areas in his domain. Makaula wanted to place his son Bertie, who had been raised by Reverend Charles White and his wife, in charge over a large area of land at Cancele. The land in question included the locations of three

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[59] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas, pp. 153-154.
[60] *Ibid*, pp. 162-163
[61] *Ibid*, p. 163.

government-appointed headmen and Blenkins only agreed to a small private grant of land to Bertie.[62] When the position of headman was created Makaula submitted a list of influential men and family members to be appointed. He was under the impression that he would retain the right to change headmen as he did in the pre-colonial period. On the original list of men submitted to Makaula for his approval was a man named Nozibele who was appointed as headman of Mvuzi. Makaula believed that Nozibele would act in the position until his son Zibokwana came of age. When Zibokwana was old enough Makaula convened a public meeting at which Nozibele stated he would step down in favour of the chief's son. Whindus and the chief magistrate at Kokstad, however, overruled the action. Makaula stood his ground on the issue and eventually the magistrate appointed Zibokwana. It was a minor victory for Makaula but it underlined the degree to which his authority was subject to the magistrate's approval. This was confirmed when he discovered that the magistrate appointed a Hlubi named Mnyamana, who was not on his list, headman. Makaula complained that Mnyamana defied his authority and allowed people to settle in his location without consulting him. The magistrate refused to remove Mnyamana and Makaula believed the colonial government paid Mnyamana to spy on him.[63]

The last years of Makaula's life were characterized by financial problems and illness. Despite his £300 allowance from the government, 'he was in a condition of chronic debt'.[64] He had converted to Christianity in about 1881 as did many of his wives and children all of whom had to be clothed on his salary.[65] He was also under obligation to assist less fortunate subjects and was heavily in debt to traders. The magistrate, W.C. Scully, had to exercise a great deal of diplomacy to prevent him being sued or a writ being issued for his cattle, as 'trouble with the tribe would certainly have followed'.[66] He died on 28 September 1906 after suffering from paralysis for some years, and was succeeded by his son Mngcisana. In the post-apartheid age it is easy to laud chiefs like Mhlontlo who took up arms against the colonial system, and downplay the achievements and difficulties of Makaula who remained loyal. He fulfilled his obligations as the chief by ensuring the territorial integrity of the old chiefdom and sparing his followers the

[62] *Ibid*, p. 172.
[63] *Ibid*, p. 160.
[64] W.C. Scully, *Further Reminiscences of a South African Pioneer* (London, 1913), p. 267.
[65] CPP G.8-'83, Report of Magistrate of Mount Frere, p. 244.
[66] Scully, *Further Reminiscences of a South African Pioneer*, p. 267.

chronic shortages of land and conflicts over land that afflicted the Mpondomise chiefdoms after the rebellion. Like most loyalist chiefs he was often in an untenable position. He was still the head of the Bhaca but his powers had been dissipated and handed over to magistrates and headmen. His chiefdom was divided into locations administered by headmen, some of who were loyal to him and others who were openly hostile. He was deeply unhappy about regulations concerning forests and cattle which were enforced regardless of his objections. This often opened him up to criticism for being a government man from Nomtsheketshe who was able to more openly defy colonial officials, contributing to his popularity. He is, however, remembered as one of the great Bhaca chiefs, along with Madzikane and Ncaphayi.[67] Madzikane is revered as the father of the nation and Ncaphayi is held in high regard for saving the chiefdom from disintegration after Madzikane's death. Makaula was the chief who steered the Bhaca through the minefield which was colonial rule.

The Hlakoana

The Hlakoana at Matatiele - the sons and grandsons of Lephena and their adherents - were divided by the rebellion. Ramohlakoana, who had remained loyal but had been deserted by many of his followers, died in 1903. His heir Mohlakoana was still living in Lesotho and was not allowed to return, and so the chieftaincy passed to his grandson. Marthinus Lepiane, once a wealthy man, lived in the Quthing district in 'great poverty'.[68] Their brother Sibi had initially joined the rebellion but then returned to the colonial fold. By the late 1880s Sibi faced allegations from white farmers that there were thieves and arsonists amongst his followers who were responsible for stealing livestock and setting fire to European-owned farms on the border of his location. In January 1890 he appeared before the magistrate and members of the Umzimvubu Farmers' Association at Matatiele to answer allegations that he was un-cooperative in dealing with cattle thefts. The members of the association also expressed their unhappiness and concern over the influx of people from Basutoland into Sibi's location. After a four-hour meeting, the magistrate addressed the assembled farmers informing them that Sibi would have to apply to the magistrate for anyone new to move into his location and only people from within the Transkei territories would be considered. He also trusted that Sibi would check cattle theft as this 'had

[67] Makaula, 'A Political History of the Bhacas', p. 251.
[68] Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History,* p. 201.

been the cause of several colonial wars'.[69] Sibi, one of the last loyalist leaders of the rebellion, died in May 1930. By then he was described as being the oldest chief in the area and having the largest following.[70] The editor of the *Kokstad Advertiser* praised him for being 'a loyal supporter of the Government, and a man of sterling character, respected by Europeans and natives alike'. Some three hundred mourners were present as he was buried in accordance with Christian rites.

The Struggle against the Council System at Qumbu and Mount Fletcher

In 1903 and 1904 unrest developed in the Qumbu and Mount Fletcher districts against the council system which had its origins in the Glen Grey Act. In the early 1890s Cecil Rhodes and his secretary drew up a new piece of legislation, which became known as the Glen Grey act, to be enforced in the Transkei territories. The act as it was compiled provided for private landownership in the Transkei. It proposed that 4 morgen allotments be surveyed for which an annual quitrent of 15 shillings be paid. Only eldest sons could inherit these allotments which could not be subdivided. The act also proposed to establish a new level of local administration, referred to as the council system, which would be responsible for administering schools, roads etc. The councils would be financed from a 10 shilling labour tax which would be implemented alongside the existing hut tax. The true intentions of the act soon became apparent. While a small group of prosperous land holders might be created, younger sons in particular would not have any access to land and would be forced onto the labour market. The council system would also reduce the participation of Africans in the wider electoral system of the Cape.

In October 1894 the Glen Grey Act was extended by proclamation to the Mfengu at King William's Town. Within months there was such popular resistance to the act, in particular the new labour tax, that magistrates urged changes to the act so as not to alienate the Mfengu and transform them, in the words of the chief magistrate Henry Elliot, into 'a sullen, discontented and rebelliously disposed people'.[71] The response to the act was so strong that the government watered it down and dropped individual land tenure and the labour tax. The council system,

[69] *Kokstad Advertiser* 25.1.1890.
[70] *Kokstad Advertiser* 13.6.1930.
[71] Quoted in W. Beinart, 'Mr Rhodes and the Poisoned Goods: Popular Opposition to the Glen Gray Council System, 1894-1906', in W. Beinart & C. Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics & Popular Movements in the Transkei & Eastern Cape, 1890-1930* (London, 1987), p. 138.

however, remained and was imposed by proclamation over the Transkei. Proclamation 152 of 1903 extended the council system to the East Griqualand districts of Mount Fletcher, Qumbu, Tsolo and Mzimkhulu. In 1902 magistrates held meetings throughout these districts to announce the new measures and win over some acceptance for them. It coincided with the emerging policies of segregation and the maintenance of African reserves, which was a new direction signposted by the 1903 to 1905 South African Native Affairs Commission.

At Qumbu, Tsolo and Mount Fletcher there was strong resistance to the council system. Magistrates had initially reported that people had responded well to the measures of the act, but from May to July of 1903 large scale popular resistance to the council system emerged which continued into the later months of the year and the early part of 1904. People boycotted the councils and refused to pay the rates. Opposition to the council system was led by chiefs, headmen and populist politicians, all of whom had different motivations for their actions. In the Mount Fletcher area the two most prominent hereditary leaders, Zibi of the Hlubi and Scanlen Lehana, both initially resisted the council system.[72] Beinart has shown that both men were afraid that the council system would undermine their influence amongst their followers which was still very strong. While Scanlen pointed out to the magistrate that the harvest had been poor and that his people faced famine, he made it clear that his principle concern was when he stated 'we are afraid of our chieftainship being taken away'.[73] Although Scanlen became the leader of the popular opposition against the council system amongst his followers who resented the new levies, he was influenced by a desire to maintain the personal power he wielded.[74] Chiefs and commoners interests did at times overlap but chiefs were not able to completely control the opposition. Beinart points out that commoners blamed chiefs for originally consenting to the measures.[75]

At Qumbu the resistance to the council system was led more prominently by educated Mfengu leaders who were often members of the Ethiopian church movement. The Ethiopian church was established when Mzimba broke away from the Lovedale mission in 1898 to establish an

[72] *Ibid*, p. 150.
[73] *Ibid*, p. 151.
[74] *Ibid*.
[75] *Ibid*.

independent church. The teachings of the independent churches was known as Ethiopianism and was characterized by an anti-colonial sentiment and was regarded with suspicion by white officials. Members of the church attempted to move beyond narrow ethnic politics and draw support from the Mpondomise. In September 1902 the magistrate announced the new measures at a meeting attended by 27 headmen and 450 commoners and were, according to the magistrate, accepted by those present. When the measures became law a few months later the magistrate discovered that people now opposed them. The spokesman for the headmen, Aaron Njikelana, opposed the act. Mpondomise headmen, many former loyals appointed a few years earlier by the colonial government, opposed the council system because they knew how unpopular it was amongst the people they administered. A group of educated commoners, which included Reverend Reuben Damane, Caleb Jafta, Charles Tonjeni and Ngono, also objected to the Act. These men were members of a congregation of 300 strong under Reuben Damane. It was the members of this church that led the opposition to the council system. Magistrates were able through fines and threats of removing people from their positions to quell most of the opposition to the council system, but the events of 1903 and 1904 highlight an important issue. The opposition to the council system revealed very clearly that a popular opposition to colonial legislation had developed and headmen if they wished to retain support amongst the people in their locations had to be seen to be sympathetic to their concerns.

'We do not want to dip and we do not want the Bunga': The Anti-Dipping Movement of 1914.

In early November 1914 unrest broke out in Hlubi locations of Matatiele and Mount Fletcher against compulsory cattle dipping, which had been introduced to many parts of South Africa as a way to combat the spread of East Coast Fever. A tick-borne disease, the East Coast Fever had moved down the east coast of Africa until it reached the Transvaal in 1904. Veterinary surgeons agitated for regular compulsory dipping to kill the ticks which spread the disease. The Cape government delegated the administration of dipping in the Transkei to the councils which covered costs by charging cattle owners to dip their livestock. The 1911 Stock Diseases Act (which was extended to the Transkei in 1912 following a decision by the Supreme Court) made weekly dipping compulsory and restricted the movement of cattle from one area to another.

Cattle that were to be moved had to be segregated in paddocks for three weeks during which time they had to be dipped three times and their temperatures taken to check whether they had East Coast Fever. These regulations favoured white traders and speculators over Africans who did not have paddocks, could not afford the cost of extra dipping or access to veterinary surgeons for taking temperatures. This often resulted in Africans being forced to sell their cattle to white speculators at a low price who then resold them for up to triple the amount. Walter Stanford gave an example of cows and heifers being bought from Africans for £1 10s being resold for £6 to £7.[76]

Cattle played a central role in almost every sphere of rural life - they provided milk and meat, were used to plough and transport goods, were used in trade, were central to religious ceremonies and made up bride wealth in the form of *lobola*. Beinart emphasizes 'any influence emanating from colonial rule that bore directly upon the ownership or exchange or treatment of cattle was likely to produce deep-seated reactions from Africans in the Transkei'.[77] Few Africans, in the opinion of Stanford, believed in the efficacy of dipping cattle.[78] In certain cases cattle were scalded in tanks, which encouraged rumours that the disease was being spread by whites.[79] Resentment against dipping had been brewing for some time but reached a head in late 1914 as economic conditions for most people in the Transkei became dire. A severe drought in 1912 created a drop in harvests, leaving people forced to buy food supplies.[80] The demand for labour in urban industries had declined during the war which also impacted negatively on homesteads that were increasingly relying on the wages of migrant workers. The wool price had also declined and the restrictions on cattle movement impacted negatively on the local cattle industry.[81] The weekly payments of a halfpenny per head for dipping, demanding even in more economically stable years, became increasingly difficult to meet.[82] Black stockkeepers were aware, and resentful, that most white farmers were not dipping their cattle.[83] What caused

[76] *Kokstad Advertiser* 14.5.1915.
[77] W. Beinart, 'We Don't Want your rain, We Won't Dip', in W. Beinart & C. Bundy *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa, p. 194*
[78] *Kokstad Advertiser* 14.5.1915.
[79] *Kokstad Advertiser* 4.12.1914.
[80] *Kokstad Advertiser* 14.5.1915.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] *Ibid.*

particular bile was that there had been no outbreak of east coast fever at Matatiele, yet dipping was enforced.[84]

At public meetings held throughout the Transkei chiefs, headmen and commoners expressed their unhappiness about compulsory dipping. They called for the stopping of dipping in areas free of the disease and less frequent dipping in other areas. Three ideas were often repeated at these meetings.[85] Firstly, whites deliberately spread the disease to undermine the rural economy and force more men onto the labour market. Secondly, driving cattle to dips weekly diminished the milk supply and made them unfit for ploughing. Thirdly, there were bitter complaints about the costs involved. These meetings failed to produce any changes and so other tactics were used, such as hiding cattle from dipping inspectors, arriving late at tanks, presenting deputations to the chief magistrate and hiring lawyers to fight the dipping regulations. Those opposed to dipping were often very critical of chiefs and headmen.[86]

In early November police, dipping personnel and headmen began to report to magistrates that meetings were being conducted in the Hlubi locations of Matatiele and Mount Fletcher against dipping. White traders deserted their stores and moved to Matatiele, Kokstad and Cedarville. Between 11 and 14 November ant-dipping activists looted a dozen stores and in some cases set them alight. Leaders of the movement encouraged people to boycott cattle dips and destroyed and cut down several kilometers of telegraph wire. Groups of armed men threatened dipping personnel, and other government officials, and moved through the locations encouraging the opposition to dipping. Women in many cases stationed themselves at dipping tanks and drove away cattle being brought into be dipped.[87] The chief magistrate in Mthatha requested troops from Pretoria but Union ministers were reluctant to send troops that were needed for the war in South West Africa to the Transkei. After the chief magistrate emphasized the possibility of the unrest spreading to other parts of South Africa, the government modilised troops. The administration declared martial law and dispatched members of the South African Mounted

[84] *Ibid*.
[85] Beinart, 'We Don't Want your rain, We Won't Dip', p. 197.
[86] *Ibid*, p. 210.
[87] *Kokstad Advertiser* 15.5.1915.

Riflemen from Mthatha to Kokstad. The police went on a series of patrols, disarming men and arresting and fining them.

Walter Stanford, a former chief magistrate and now senator and secretary for native affairs, was appointed to lead an enquiry into the unrest. Stanford, accompanied by the chief magistrate W.T. Brownlee and his assistant W.P. Leary, met with a large gathering of chiefs, headmen and commoners at Matatiele. Stanford presented his recommendations in Pretoria on 8 December 1914.[88] Stanford concluded that the 'disaffection towards the Government, was primarily due to resentment against regulations imposed in connection with East Coast fever'.[89] He agreed to the requests made at meetings that dipping in clean areas during the summer months take place fortnightly instead of weekly, and that in high lying areas dipping be stopped all together during the winter.[90] The dipping of sheep was to be dropped from twice a year to once. He lifted some restrictions of the movement of cattle. He recommended that permits be issued by magistrates, after consultation with the stock inspector, for the movement of cattle from a clean area to surrounding districts.[91] He suggested that farmers make a once-off payment to cover a year of dipping rather than a weekly rate.

The state's response to the anti-dipping uprising was remarkable for its speed and willingness to compromise. The government dispatched troops on 17 November, just a few days after the looting of stores between 11 and 14 November, and Stanford presented his report on 8 December in Pretoria. Although the magistrate sentenced one man to 18 months hard labour and 24 others to 12 months with hard labour for the illegal possession of firearms, and Stanford made the well-worn threat to remove land, officials resolved the situation through compromise and negotiation. The magistrates at Matatiele and Mount Fletcher made frequent visits to the Hlubi locations often staying over for weeks to discuss the issues, listen to complaints and do all they could dissuade people from rebellion.[92] Stanford's report gave into many of the requests that had already been made for years – less frequent dipping and the lifting of some movement of

[88] *Ibid.*
[89] *Ibid.*
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] *Ibid.*

livestock. The explanation for this apparent about turn was that officials were concerned that the discontent at Mount Fletcher and Matatiele might spread throughout the Transkei Territories.[93] Some officials believed German traders encouraged the discontent by spreading stories that the Germans and defeated England and that once they conquered South Africa dipping and the Council System would be abolished.[94] There were also reports, according to Stanford, that the Hlubi might join with the Afrikaans-speaking rebels to overthrow the government.[95] Actually there is no substantiated evidence that this was true and as Beinart points out the Germans became 'a metaphor for resistance: their opposition to "the English" could be incorporated into even the most particular forms of local wish-fulfillment'.[96]

The anti-dipping movement highlighted three other issues. Firstly, resistance to the council system and dipping regulations were closely connected. Stanford was acutely aware of the increasing 'detestation of the Council system'.[97] He records that at one meeting he attended a speaker who shouted, 'we do not want to dip and we do not want the Bunga' was met with general applause.[98] At Mount Frere a loyal headmen who Stanford knew well and trusted told the secretary for native affairs, 'the demands made on the people are causing them to hate both the Magistrate and the Council.'[99] This, as Stanford correctly points out, came largely from the fact that the councils had become responsible for administering the dipping of cattle and sheep. However, resentment towards the Council or Bunga had emerged some time before compulsory dipping, and the new regulations aggravated an already volatile situation.

Secondly, Stanford's recommendations laid bare conflicts developing amongst bureaucrats over the administration of the Transkei, in particular between the native affairs department and the forestry and veterinary departments. Stanford believed that the 'personal influence and guidance of the chief magistrate and magistrate are essential factors' in the 'contentment' of Africans in the Transkei Territories, but that the magistrates' power for good were being undermined as

[93] *Kokstad Advertiser* 14.5.1915.
[94] *Ibid*.
[95] *Ibid*.
[96] Beinart, 'We Don't Want your rain, We Won't Dip', p. 201.
[97] *Kokstad Advertiser* 14.5.1915.
[98] *Ibid*.
[99] *Ibid*.

'officers of various departments abound, each responsible to some other officer stationed at Pretoria or elsewhere and unknown to the people'.[100] The 'natives were bewildered by so many masters – or tyrants as many regarded them – and no protector'.[101] Stanford went as far as suggesting that the Transkei Territories be administered as a dependency of the Union with the chief magistrate exercising authority over all departments in the territories and subject to control of the central government.[102]

Lastly, colonial officials still attempted to make use of loyal chiefs and headmen to restrict political activity. Stanford attributed the fact that the movement did not spread beyond Matatiele and Mount Fletcher to the loyalty of the Sotho chief George Moshesh and the Bhaca chief Mngcisana. Loyal chiefs were in a much more difficult situation than Stanford's comment seems to imply. Mngcisana initially supported compulsory dipping which in 1914 'secured an uneasy peace' in the Mount Frere district.[103] However, by 1916, as he became more and more aware of the popular support of anti-dipping movements - support which his rival to the chieftaincy, Rolobile, was making use of - his attitude to dipping became more ambivalent, and the magistrate complained he attended unofficial meetings at which dipping was being discussed.[104] Mngcisana and most headmen found themselves in a difficult position because of the popular anti-dipping movement. They were under pressure from the people they administered to voice their dissatisfaction while having to consider the demands made from colonial officials. Some headmen and chiefs capitulated to popular pressure and joined the protestors but most continued with their duties, making them increasingly unpopular. Stanford was told

> Our cattle have been cursed; there is no money for anything. We live by our cattle, but our cattle have got no price. It is the chiefs who have accepted dipping; we do not want it. We gave the Government everything they want. We paid our hut tax; now we have to pay the general rate. We do not want the dip.[105]

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[100] *Ibid*.
[101] *Ibid*.
[102] *Ibid*.
[103] Beinart, 'We Don't Want your rain, We Won't Dip', p. 204.
[104] *Ibid*, p. 205.
[105] *Kokstad Advertiser* 4.12.1914.

The crises of 1897 at Mzimkhulu, 1903/4 at Qumbu and Mount Fletcher and the anti-dipping uprisings of 1914 were dealt with relatively easily by white officials and never developed into the military conflict or serious threat to colonial rule that the rebellion of 1880 had been. However, these events highlighted a number of important issues. Firstly, increasingly demanding and invasive colonial legislation, as well as the demands of white farmers in the case of Mzimkhulu, had strained and transformed relations with the loyalist chiefdoms of East Griqualand, in particular the Nhlangwini and Mfengu. Secondly, in a relatively short period of time the weakening of established political systems and the economic and political changes brought on by colonial rule led to the establishment of new groups competing for influence and power in the region. Hereditary chiefs, headmen, members of the Ethiopian churches, African commoners, white farmers and members of the colonial civil service were all involved in a complex and shifting set of relations. A notable characteristic of this era was how more vocal commoners became in their resistance to colonial regulations. Their leaders increasingly bypassed headmen, and at times even local magistrates, and used new methods – petitions, deputations, mass meetings and even armed confrontations - to mobilize people and confront the state. Thirdly, it is clear from these events that hereditary leaders still held some sway in their chiefdoms. The Nhlangwini chief Pata was central in the dissatisfaction that emerged as settler politicians waged a campaign to have his followers relocated as they bordered white-owned farms. Sibi and Scanlen Lehana actively resisted dipping and the council system. Makaula and his heir Mngcisana used their influence to ensure some acquiescence to regulations at Mount Frere. It also clear that hereditary leaders found themselves under increasing pressure, caught between their followers and colonial officials, and facing criticism for accepting colonial regulations.

Conclusion

Writers, from colonial officials and missionaries to academic historians, have explained the uprising of 1880 in terms of the personal ambitions of indigenous leaders, alien government policies and cultural belief systems. All of these commentators in their attempts to understand how the chieftaincies of East Griqualand responded to colonial rule have overlooked or misunderstood indigenous political structures. It is only by fully understanding the complex and nuanced workings of the chieftaincies and how they function as political, economic and social units that we are able to draw conclusions about the ambiguous and ever-evolving interaction between the chiefdoms and the colonial state.

While hereditary male chiefs were the political head of the chiefdom and fulfilled numerous cultural and social obligations, indigenous leadership was collective. The chief functioned within an established framework of rituals, obligations and expectations. His influence was limited by a council of advisors, members of his extended family who offered alternate leadership and powerful commoners who served as local officials. Above all else, the decisions and actions of the chiefs and their councillors were influenced by their need to retain the support of their adherents. This could only be achieved by fulfilling multiple obligations to the people under their authority. They had to perform sacred rituals to strengthen and protect the people of the chiefdom from witchcraft, provide political stability, protect their followers from internal and external threats and facilitate access to land and natural resources.

It was the need to fulfill these obligations that influenced how indigenous leaders responded and interacted with the colonial state from the mid-1870s to early 1900s. The ruling families of the Mpondomise and Bhaca chiefdoms negotiated in the mid-1870s with colonial officials, in particular Orpen, to become colonial subjects, or allies as they saw it, to end internal and external conflicts which threatened the stability of the chiefdoms. Negotiating with Cape officials was not simply an attempt by individual leaders to strengthen their personal power. It was part of a process that went back in the region to the 1830s as indigenous leaders attempted to ensure political stability and lessen conflicts through marriages between ruling families, negotiations over boundaries and forming alliances with stronger polities by paying tribute. Chiefs and their

councillors were aware that extended periods of instability and conflict threatened the loyalty of their supporters. There is evidence that by the early 1870s some adherents of Mhlontlo, tired by the disruptive conflicts with the Mpondo and followers of Mditshwa, started leaving his domain. Mpondomise and Bhaca leaders probably viewed the process in similar terms to arrangements they had made earlier in their histories with the Mpondo state in which certain demands could be made for the protection offered but the internal workings of the chiefdom would be left largely unaffected.

Although magistrates were dependent on chiefs and the existing political structures to implement new laws, they aimed to ultimately sideline indigenous leaders. Cape native policy was based, at least in principle, on the idea that established leaders were arbitrary dictators who stood in the way of the progress and stability colonial rule was supposed to bring. This policy was based on a misunderstanding, ignorant or deliberate, of the structures and workings of indigenous political structures and the beliefs and world views of the people who inhabited the area. While one should not romanticize pre-colonial political structures- they were subject to abuse and internal conflicts – they were much more nuanced, complex and subject to control that many colonial writers portrayed them.

For a short while chiefs were prepared to co-operate with colonial officials in the belief that they were allies and that retaining their goodwill would be beneficial to them and their chiefdoms. By the late 1870s it became apparent to the leaders and people of the chiefdoms that the colonial state aimed to transform their societies and subjugate them rather than serve as an ally who would protect their interests. There was a growing disenchantment with colonial rule and a belief that they had been betrayed by the Cape administration which had not fulfilled its obligations. By the late 1870s numerous overlapping areas of conflict emerged between the chiefdoms and the colonial government. The resentment and concern over the changes brought on by colonialism and capitalism was shared by all members of the chiefdom. Being cut off from grazing and forests by new boundaries had far reaching effects for the homestead economy. Allowing witchcraft to spread unabated would result in serious consequences for both the spiritual and physical well-being of all people in the chiefdom. The paying of hut tax was an economic drain on most people and was a major factor in forcing young men into the migrant

labour system. The hut tax arrears amongst the Mpondomise was an indication that the discontent against colonial rule went far beyond the ruling class.

African leaders began to push back at the changes which were seen as a danger to the well-being of their chiefdoms. They vociferously objected to the new boundaries, would not co-operate in the taking of a census and were reluctant to pay the hut tax. Despite threats of punishment such as fines and being removed from their positions, chiefs continued to conduct legal proceedings, negotiated with surrounding leaders about boundaries and conducted rituals to remove witches. By the end of the decade interactions between chiefs and magistrates were becoming increasingly adversarial and confrontational. There were times at which colonial officials, aware of how tenuous the Cape's position was in the area, had to comprise when facing resistance to new policies with the overall objective of securing colonial rule in the area. Thus the enforcement of the payment of hut tax and the taking of a census were delayed, and Mhlontlo, despite his defiance, was restored to his position as chief as not to provoke a reaction early in the process. This highlights an idea that runs through the time period under discussion. The interactions between colonial state and African chiefdoms were fluid and ever-evolving, characterized at times by negotiation, comprise, co-operation and at other times by conflict, violence and force.

The establishment of alternate judicial authority in form of magistrates did not mean that large numbers of people stopped going to the chief to sort out their issues. The evidence shows that chiefs were popular and that their adherents often made use of the established judicial structures rather than co-operate with the colonial system. The one group that did make most use of the new judicial system was the Mfengu. Magistrates reported by the late 1870s that most of their cases concerned land conflicts between the Mpondomise and Mfengu. By making use of the colonial magistrates rather than established judicial authorities, the Mfengu contributed to the idea that they were outsiders rejecting the ways of their hosts, and heightened tensions between the two groups.

Colonial officials saw the resistance by chiefs as being driven by a desire to maintain their personal power. This was a misunderstanding of both their multiple roles in the society and the

more general feelings of the people living in the region. While it was the chiefs who fought back at the changes, and later led their supporters in the military conflict against the colonial government, the concerns of the chiefs reflected the concerns of the people of the chiefdom. From the evidence available it is clear that many members of the Basotho chiefdoms of Matatiele and the Mpondomise followers of Mditshwa and Mhlontlo supported the uprising. In certain cases the followers of chiefs who remained loyal to the colonial government deserted them. Half of Sibi's supporters joined the rebels, while all of Ramohlakoana's adherents abandoned him. Lebenya adherents rebelled after robbing him. From figures collected by the magistrate at Tsolo, it is clear that a large majority of Mditshwa's followers rebelled, and his concern that his adherents would shift their loyalty to his sons encouraged him to join the fight against the colonial government.

The events of late October to mid-November demonstrate that there were divisions amongst the Mpondomise ruling houses towards the rebellion but that despite these differences there was enough social cohesion for the chiefdom not to split in the face of the political and economic crisis that followed. These events also show that chiefs had to consider the wishes of their councillors, members of their extended families and the wishes of their supporters. Mditshwa, despite his misgivings, continued to carry out the obligations and expectations of chiefs in times of crisis, and Mhlontlo, who was considered a strong personality and leader, at times could not control the actions of his followers.

The same concerns and obligations that influenced chiefs that rebelled, paradoxically, weighed on the leaders who remained loyal. Past relations and experiences, coupled with present political and economic realities and the prospects of reward go a long way to explain these decisions. The Bhaca had been conflict with the Mpondomise for some time. The Hlubi had been at odds with the Basotho and Mpondomise over land and influence in the Mount Fletcher area for well over a decade and had no reason to form new alliances with old foes. Past experiences with colonial administrations probably also influenced the decision to remain loyal. It had taken the Nhlangwini almost two decades to recover from their losses after their confrontations with colonial officials in Natal in the 1840s and 1850s. The Bhaca too had lost large numbers of cattle when they found themselves on the wrong side of colonial rule. The Xesibe's conflict with the Mpondo was

heightened during the uprising, and like the Hlubi probably felt that they had greater chance against larger neighbouring chiefdoms if they remained loyal to the colonial government. The Griqua also remained loyal, despite their experiences with the colonial administration. Their attempts to subjugate Nehemiah's followers in the 1860s prevented an alliance with the Basotho despite their own negative experiences with colonialism.

The uprising of 1880/1881 hastened the changes that many of the participants had hoped to stave off. The rebellion devastated the homestead economy and weakened indigenous political structures. The colonial state took advantage of this to introduce a new administrative system in which headmen, who reported to magistrates, controlled aspects of the day-to-day running of the new administrative areas known as locations. Despite their misgivings about established hereditary leaders, colonial officials were aware that they had a certain amount of support and could not be excluded from the new system. Loyal chiefs and even former rebels who were no longer considered a threat were both recognized as paid employees of the government. They and members of their extended families, along with loyal commoners, became part of the administration as headmen whose functions the state attempted to define and control according to the needs of maintaining white rule. Men from the old ruling families became headmen knowing they would obtain official recognition, salaries and most importantly that they would be able to retain their influence locally through controlling the access to land and natural resources. Thus individuals from the older hierarchies as well as some of the rituals and functions of pre-colonial political structures continued into the new colonial system. The people of the chiefdoms, however, were aware that the roles of the headmen were largely determined by the colonial administration.

In a relatively short period of time the weakening of established political systems and the economic and political changes brought on by colonial rule and capitalism led to the emergence of new interest groups. Hereditary chiefs, headmen, members of the Ethiopian churches, African commoners, white farmers and members of the colonial civil service were all involved in a complex and shifting set of relations. Despite the benefits of being part of the administrative system, chiefs and headmen were in a difficult, at times even untenable, position. They still had to retain some support amongst the people they administered. People living in the locations of

East Griqualand could bypass headmen and go directly to the magistrate or other official, such as foresters and members of the veterinary department. By the 1890s and early years of the twentieth century Africans became angry over colonial legislation and rules that controlled dipping, pounds and access to forests and supported the efforts of Mfengu politicians or confronted the colonial state directly.

The resistance to the council system in 1903/4 was a watershed as far as political relations were concerned in the Mthatha-Mzimkhulu region for three reasons. Firstly, Mfengu politicians drawn for the Ethiopian churches who attempted to move beyond narrow ethnic politics to build a popular movement against colonialism led the resistance to the Cape administration. Secondly, the way politics was conducted took on a new path. A notable characteristic of this era was how vocal commoners were in their resistance to colonial regulations. Their leaders increasingly bypassed headmen, and at times even local magistrates, and used new methods – petitions, deputations, mass meetings and even armed confrontations - to mobilize people and confront the state. Thirdly, people living in locations criticised chiefs and headmen over their relations and interactions with the colonial state.

How did the older hierarchies who had in many cases initially led the resistance to colonial rule respond to these developments? Chiefs and headmen, even though they were part of the administration, became more critical of colonialism and under pressure from those who lived in their locations, led the resistance to new legislation. The Bhaca claimant Nomtsheketshe attracted popular support for his stand against dipping and pound regulations. The Nhlangwini chief Pata led the campaign against settler politicians who were agitating to have his followers relocated in the 1890s. Sibi and Scanlen Lehana were part of the battle against dipping and the council system, although later they became stalwarts of the system. In most cases chiefs and headmen adopted a more ambiguous attitude towards colonial officials and legislation, at times assuring magistrates that they supported new rules but often making it known to people within the locations that they were unhappy about what was taking place. Makaula's heir Mngcisana initially supported dipping regulations but later his stand became more ambiguous as popular discontent grew.

The colonial government excluded Mhlontlo from the new administrative system, however, after three decades in exile he returned to Qumbu and reasserted and redefined his role in regards to the colonial government, his adherents and the headmen who now acted as liaisons between white officials and African people. Mhlontlo experienced both draw backs and benefits from being excluded from the headmanship system. He did not have access to land and natural resources which was a vital tool for leaders to ensure support from their followers. The Cape administration removed his judicial authority which also broke an important link between chief and people. Yet, there is evidence that he had enough support to be of concern to Mpondomise headmen who believed that his presence undermined their own authority. Mhlontlo re-established his presence by appealing to his former status as an independent leader, playing on his role during the rebellion and offering alternative leadership to colonial officials, headmen and Mfengu politicians. For many Mpondomise Mhlontlo's status as their leader was assured as he fought for a way of life that colonialism destroyed. By excluding him from the administration, colonial officials unwittingly ensured that he was not tainted by the new system which contributed to his status as a freedom fighter.

Until the early years of the twentieth century hereditary leaders and the structures of which they were a part still held some sway in the lives of many people in East Griqualand despite 50 years of colonialism and economic transformations which had resulted in the emergence of numerous new interest groups. As the century progressed attitudes and perceptions of traditional authorities began to change. Increasingly they came to be regarded as collaborators of the apartheid state. This process is outside of the scope of this thesis but its roots are quite clearly grounded in the later part of this study.

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