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TITLE: **The Burial of Canon J.A. Calata and the
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Cradock, South Africa, 1983**

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**The Burial of Canon J.A. Calata
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The funeral took place on a chilly afternoon in late June 1983, in the tiny rural Eastern Cape town of Cradock. The mourners, some five thousand of them, stood in cutting, dusty, dry wind, in the public square of Cradock's dilapidated African township, a township ironically called Lingelihle, or "good effort" in isiXhosa. The eulogies for the great man began to roll forth: shepherd of his people; an African Moses; a committed Christian; a skilled and tireless politician; a man to be cherished for the ages.

Certainly, many of the figures assembled at the funeral bore out the speakers' fulsome praise. These were the stalwarts of the banned African National Congress and its newly-formed ally within South Africa, the United Democratic Front, or UDF, which would become the premier anti-apartheid opposition movement of the 1980s. Prominent clergymen, trade unionists, and regional youth activists also attended, as did this man's faithful township congregants, elders and youth, businessmen, municipal laborers, domestic servants and poor farm workers. This was the funeral of Anglican Canon James Arthur Calata--a funeral that would help resuscitate resistance on multiple levels. By 1985, the tiny town of Cradock would become known worldwide for its fierce, unified resistance against the apartheid regime. Its activists would become renowned for exporting innovative grassroots protest strategies nationwide, making the Eastern Cape region the most intensive site of resistance in the country, and the subject of the most intense repression by the state.¹

On the one hand, James Calata's funeral bears out a wealth of historical and anthropological scholarship that depicts funerals as rituals or events which produce social equilibrium, as providing cohesion in the wake of severe trauma. Calata had been a fixture in Cradock for over fifty years, and his passing had been a great shock to many. The funeral, conducted with dignity and precision, allowed residents to honor Calata's memory and recover from their loss. Calata's burial also allowed ANC and UDF activists to widely promote their ideology of non-racialist mass-based struggle and mobilize broad-based resistance. In this vein, Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry's observations, that funerals are a key mechanism for legitimating authority and producing cohesion, are quite apposite.²

Yet recent scholarship has challenged the notion that funerals and other rituals are simply moments of cohesion or authority-building. As Sally Falk Moore has noted, these types of events reveal the "ongoing dismantling of social structures" as well as the "multiplicity of social contestations and the voicing of competing cultural claims."³

¹ Accounts of the funeral include M. Tyala, "More than 3,000 at burial of Calata," *Eastern Province Herald* [hereafter *EPH*], 27 June 1983; and "Farewell to a man of vision," *SASPU National* 4, no.3 September 1983.

² M. Bloch and J. Parry, "Introduction," in M. Bloch and J. Parry (eds.), *Death and the Regeneration of Life* (Cambridge; New York, 1982).

³ S.F. Moore, "Explaining the present: theoretical dilemmas in processual ethnography," *American Ethnologist*, 14 (1987), 729. See also S.F. Moore, "Uncertainties in situations,

David Cohen, E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, and Patricia Stamp's work on funerals in Kenya, as well as Garrey Dennie's study of the burial of a South African paramount chief, underscore that funerals generate heated debates over issues such as the definition and role of "traditional" and "modern" practices, the meanings and invocations of ethnic identities, and power relations between men and women.⁴

And indeed, underneath the apparent harmony of James Calata's funeral lay a different reality, not simply one of cohesion, but of frenetic maneuvering for the rights to control the burial, of constructing competing histories of the deceased, and of promoting divergent notions of social and political order. During this event, funeral organizers addressed such key issues as the church's role in a context of emerging mass opposition, how generational control could be brought to bear upon a newly formed resistance movement, and how ideologies and tactics of past struggles could be appropriated to suit the struggles of the 1980s. The burial and memorialization of Calata was controversial and far-reaching, producing both the dismantling and remantling of social relationships and notions of political power. It is this process of dismantling and remantling, and of those ramifications for opposition politics during the early 1980s, that this paper will address.

J.A. CALATA AND PROTEST POLITICS IN CRADOCK, 1895-1977

The town of Cradock lies in the Eastern Cape region, some 240 kilometers north of the region's biggest city, Port Elizabeth. It is a small service center for surrounding white-owned farms. As in most of the surrounding towns, an unstable economy stunted Cradock's growth. Cradock's fortunes have largely depended on the wool trade, and volatile commodity prices and frequent droughts have kept the town's economy stagnant. By 1980, Cradock had some four thousand whites, six thousand Coloureds, and eleven thousand Africans.⁵

Until the 1960s, the majority of the town's African and Coloured residents lived together in the so-called old location, adjacent to the white part of town. They lived in decrepit and scarce housing, with almost no sanitation facilities. The vast majority of location residents toiled as menial laborers, the women as domestic servants for whites in town, the men for the railway and the municipality, as well as a few hundred who annually migrated to the goldfields on the Rand.⁶

Cradock's black residents might have suffered poverty and segregation, but that did not stop them from striving to improve their status and gain more influence in both black and white worlds. From the 1920s onward, the old location witnessed the emergence of a small but vibrant community of black teachers, merchants, clerks and clergymen imbued with the ethos of Cape liberalism. This black petty bourgeoisie

indeterminacies in culture," in S.F. Moore and B. Myerhoff, *Symbol and Politics in Communal Ideology: Cases and Questions* (New York, 1975).

⁴ D.W. Cohen and E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, *Burying SM: The Politics of Knowledge and the Sociology of Power in Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1992); P. Stamp, "Burying Otieno: the politics of gender and ethnicity in Kenya," *Signs*, Summer, v.16, no.4 (1991); and G. Dennie, "One king, two burials: the politics of funerals in South Africa's Transkei," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol.11, no.2 (1992).

⁵ Intermediate Archives Depot, Port Elizabeth, 3/CDK/25/NA/1. "Proposed Bantu Administration Board Areas. Statistical information." Questionnaire of 9 August 1971.

⁶ Cape Archives Depot (CAD), 126 4/1/83, census of 17 August 1935; CAD 125 4/1/83, census of 6 August 1938; and CAD 3/CDK/34 4/1/27, "Report of the Cradock Joint Council as evidence for the Native Economic Commission, 1930" (hereafter "Report of the Cradock Joint Council").

adopted western, particularly English, values of upward mobility and mission Christianity, and they influenced parents across the class spectrum to develop themselves and their children along western lines.⁷ In 1930, the location featured two main churches, one Anglican and one Methodist, each with a mission school. Some six hundred African students attended the two schools, while another seventy attended a local night school. At the same time, Cradock's residents forged strong ties to regional social and intellectual networks. Children were sent to Eastern Cape boarding schools for Africans, such as Lovedale, Healdtown, and St. Matthew's, and under the tutelage of white educators, they became exposed to English values and trained to be teachers and clergymen.⁸

Among Cradock's black petty bourgeoisie, none shone more brightly than Reverend James Arthur Calata, a tall, distinguished Anglican clergyman who arrived in Cradock in 1928 with his wife and three daughters, and who remained in Cradock until his death. Calata was born in 1895 near King William's Town. From childhood, he yearned to be a clergyman, donning his mother's skirts and blouses and preaching to the family's goats. In 1914 he became an Anglican and enrolled at St. Matthew's, where he trained to become a teacher. Calata was an excellent student and athlete, especially in cricket. In the mid-1920s Calata was ordained as a priest and served in the small Eastern Cape town of Somerset East. After falling prey to tuberculosis, Calata and his family moved to Cradock, in the hopes that the dry climate would restore his health.⁹

Calata epitomized the complexities of South Africa's black bourgeoisie. On the one hand, he was a committed Anglican who believed strongly in the principles of Cape liberalism and in Western techniques of social control and upliftment. This commitment was manifested in his efforts to socialize younger residents. Calata feared that urbanization had increased generational conflict, as well as the sexual independence of younger, single African women. During the 1930s and '40s, he launched an active set of youth clubs fashioned along British lines, including sporting groups, scouting movements, church choirs, and drama groups. Calata's church, the St. James Mission, became a hub of this uplifting enterprise.¹⁰ Yet Calata was by no means a passive recipient of Cape liberal values. Even as a young man, he demonstrated his independence from Cradock's main, white-dominated Anglican synod. To the surprise and chagrin of many whites, Calata raised funds privately to build a new church for Africans, rather than relying on the Anglican church in town.¹¹ And, like other Cape elites, Calata espoused an intense pride in African--particularly Xhosa--identity, history, and cultural practices. Calata looked to preserve--and reinvent--African

⁷ B. Willan, "An African in Kimberly: Sol T. Plaatje, 1884-1898," in S. Marks and R. Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa* (London, 1982), 238.

⁸ "Report of the Cradock Joint Council, 1930."

⁹ J.C. Mbata, "Biographical Notes of Calata," in the James A. Calata Papers, *South African Political Materials. A Catalogue of the Carter-Karis Collection*, Reel 15A, File 2: XC3:96/1 (University of Cape Town); interview with Gertrude Calata, 18 Aug. 1993; and G. Gerbart and T. Karis, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1822-1964*, vol.4: *Political Profiles, 1882-1964* (Stanford, Calif., 1972-1977).

¹⁰ Interview with Gertrude Calata, 23 December 1994; interview with Geelbooi Vena, 8 February 1995; CAD 3/CDK/39 4/1/28, meeting minutes of 23 March 1931 of the Cradock Town Council.

¹¹ Interview with Gertrude Calata, 18 August 1993. See also *The Midland News*, 10 August 1931; and Rev. J.A. Calata, "The Anglican Church and School. St. Peter's Mission," (n.d.) The Calata Papers, Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand (UW), File "Brief History of Churches and Schools for Africans in Cradock."

customs, and he believed that a blend of western and African institutions would best socialize younger Africans; alongside mission education and youth-oriented clubs, Calata also deployed ritualized beatings and initiation schools.¹²

Through Calata's untiring efforts to uplift the location, Cradock's Africans developed strong links to other towns in the Cape. He took on a formative regional role in the scouting movement, becoming Divisional Pathfinder Scout Commissioner for the Cape Midlands during the mid-1930s. Calata frequently traveled around the region to inspect scouting groups as well as organizing retreats for the Cradock scouts to towns such as Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown.¹³ Calata also fostered religious ties throughout the region. He was deeply committed to Xhosa traditions, particularly the Xhosa patron saint Ntsikana. He organized an annual celebration, the *IsiKhumbuzo sika Ntsikana* (the Ntsikana Memorial) festival, which was held around the Eastern Cape. In the early 1940s Cradock hosted one festival, which drew scores of visitors from across the region.¹⁴

Calata was more than a committed and independent clergyman. He was equally devoted to political change, looking to combat segregation through moderate tactics. Calata fiercely opposed the militant mass-based protest that had swept across much of South Africa after the First World War, led by black organizations such as the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU). Protest groups like the smaller, multi-racial Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) countered all that Calata stood for: it was anti-Christian and called for struggle rather than accommodation. Instead, Calata worked with white officials and sympathetic politicians to effect gradual change, and he joined regional bodies comprised of moderate black middle-class African politicians, such as the Cape Native Voter's Convention, an organization focused on extending Africans' voting rights to areas outside the Cape colony.¹⁵

In 1930, Calata joined the African National Congress and founded a local ANC branch in Cradock, in the hopes that the organization would alleviate blacks' dire poverty. That same year, he became president of the Cape regional ANC.¹⁶ As segregationist legislation intensified, Calata's political influence grew. In 1936, the government stripped voting rights for Africans and introduced a system of white representatives for Africans and a Natives' Representative Council (NRC), comprised of chiefs and headmen. Calata lay in a sanitarium, recovering from another bout with TB, and he watched helplessly as black protest groups mounted little opposition to the

¹² Interview with Evelyn Mahlengele, 21 February 1995.

¹³ Interview with Boyce Ralawe, 26 February 1995; minutes of the Cradock Joint Council quarterly meeting, 21 May 1935, Cradock Joint Council Records, Cullen Library.

¹⁴ Z. K. Matthews, "Biographical Notes," J.A. Calata Papers (UCT), File 2: XC3 #93/3. See also "Patron Saint of the Xhosas," *Midland News*, 3 April 1952; and "U Ntsikana," *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 2 March 1940. For a discussion of Ntsikana, see N. Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (New York, 1992), 461-464; and J.B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle Movement of 1856-7* (Johannesburg, 1989), 137.

¹⁵ J.A. Calata, interview with Gwendolyn Carter, J.A. Calata Papers (UCT), File 2: XC3: 94, March 1964; and P. Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912-1952* (Berkeley, Calif., 1971), 224.

¹⁶ M. Benson, *The African Patriots: The Story of the African National Congress of South Africa*. 2nd. ed. (London, 1964), 86-87; and J.A. Calata, interview with Gwendolyn Carter, J.A. Calata Papers.

government. Upon his release from the sanitarium in 1936, Calata became secretary-general of the ANC, while retaining the Cape ANC presidency.¹⁷

A tireless organizer, Calata worked closely with Dr. A.B. Xuma, who was appointed ANC president in 1940. Together, these two men saved the ANC from extinction, bolstering membership across the country, reviving the ANC's finances, and, during the early 1940s, at a time when popular militancy was rising nationwide, incorporated working-class members by articulating a slightly more aggressive platform. In a critical move, the ANC also redrafted its constitution in 1943. The new constitution abolished chiefly influence, granted women members equal status, strengthened the central executive, and bolstered ANC branches.¹⁸

In the late 1940s, however, Xuma and Calata's power base within the ANC began to diminish. In 1944, Calata noted that "those influences of communism" were preventing him from strengthening Congress branches in Port Elizabeth and East London, and by 1945 three members of the CPSA had joined the National Executive. The ANC Youth League (CYL) also threatened the authority of older moderate Congress politicians like Calata. Though he agreed with the CYL's enthusiasm for African empowerment and its disdain for communism, the League's rejection of white liberals and black moderates flew in the face of his accommodationist politics. As the CYL's influence grew, Calata tried to maintain a brave public front, stressing to a concerned white parliamentarian in 1947 that his power base lay secure and that "only a small minority of young hotheads . . . speak as though I was no more required in the leadership of Congress." Though exhausted by these struggles and by another bout with TB, Calata assured Xuma that he would remain as secretary-general and "see the people through the struggle against communism."¹⁹

Calata could maintain his tenuous position for only so long. With the ascension of the National Party to power in 1948, and its policy of apartheid, the ANC moved to a more militant position. The following year, younger Youth Leaguers such as Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu ousted Xuma and Calata, and they pushed through the ANC's new Programme of Action, which centered around mass-based strikes and boycotts. Though deeply disappointed by his ouster and worried by the ANC's turn to more militant politics, Calata remained on the National Executive as its senior chaplain, while focusing his energies on leading local protest.²⁰

Calata's commitment to uplifting youth and to fostering tight social networks would pay profound political dividends. In the early 1950s, Calata made Cradock's old location a vital hub of ANC-oriented protest in the Eastern Cape, in large part by politicizing social and cultural organizations. Cradock became famous throughout the

¹⁷ V. Klein, "African responses in the Eastern Cape to Hertzog's Representation of Natives in Parliament Bill, 1926-1936" (B.A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978); M. Benson, *African Patriots*, 88.

¹⁸ M. Benson, *African Patriots*, 90; S. Gish, "Alfred B. Xuma, 1893-1962: African, American, South African" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1994), 163-178; P. Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa*, 272-279; and T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (London, 1983), 23.

¹⁹ J. A. Calata to A.B. Xuma, 20 March 1944, Cullen Library, A.B. Xuma Papers: Box I #440320c; A.B. Xuma to J.A. Calata, 26 March 1946, Xuma Papers: Box K #46032c; J.A. Calata to D.B. Buchanan, presumed late 1947, J.A. Calata Papers, #41/19.

²⁰ G. Gerhart and T. Karis, *From Protest to Challenge*, vol.4, 17; J.A. Calata to D. Bopape, 19 September 1949, J.A. Calata Papers, File 2: DA21 #41/27; J.A. Calata to A.B. Xuma, 14 June 1949, J.A. Calata Papers, Reel 18A File 2: XX2 #41/82.

region for its Congress Choir--a choir based in the St. James Church and comprised of parents and children who wore ANC colors and sang protest songs across the region. Through Calata's efforts, as well as those of several of his younger club-goers and a cadre of older women, Cradock's ANC branch participated actively in the ANC's national Defiance Campaign in 1952.²¹

In addition to leading ANC campaigns, Calata became an outspoken advocate for poorer residents, particularly black laborers on the nearby farms. In one widely publicized incident during the early 1950s, a farmer who shot an African woman for picking a prickly pear was arrested through Calata's efforts. In another case, the police charged a black farm laborer with killing his employer. Calata arranged for a lawyer from Johannesburg to defend the case, and the lawyer proved that the employer's son had committed the murder. Many local farmers became outraged at Calata's role in leading protest. Several refused him access to their farms, and they began to expel laborers who admitted they worshipped at St. James.²²

Calata's activism attracted both gratitude and notoriety. In 1954 his congregation presented him with an automobile for his twenty five years of service; Calata's poverty-stricken congregants from surrounding farms were the most generous donors. Eastern Cape ANC leader Z.K. Matthews praised Calata's commitment to racial equality and predicted that "when the story of [African] liberation came to be written, his name would be prominent."²³ As Calata's fame spread, the apartheid government applied vice-like pressure on him. In late 1954, police raids on St. James seized ANC documents and Congress Choir compositions, and the minister of justice withdrew Calata's licenses to perform marriages and to buy communion wine.²⁴

The state's harsh measures failed to work, for Cradock and Calata continued to play key roles in protest politics. Cradock's ANC branches mobilized powerful opposition against forced removals and rent increases during the mid-1950s. In 1955, Cradock was the site where Z.K. Matthews first proposed to create the Freedom Charter, a document which became the ANC's central policy statement for the next forty years. So too did Calata appear in the infamous Treason Trial of 1956-57, as one of 156 defendants. Thus, Calata played an integral role in stitching localized opposition to broader campaigns.²⁵

For all his successes, however, Calata failed to attract the support of a crucial constituency: the Anglican Church. From the 1940s onwards, tensions had risen between Calata and senior white members of the Eastern Cape synod, many of whom looked askance at protest and resented Calata's rising influence within the Church and within national political circles. In the mid-1940s, Calata was pressured to resign from the ANC; the church rescinded this order only after intense lobbying by an influential

²¹ M. Tetelman, "We Can't: Black politics in Cradock, South Africa, 1948-85" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1997), chap. 2.

²² Interviews with Gertrude Calata, 18 August 1993; Michael Buka, 15 November 1994; and Wilson Soci, 19 March 1995. See also J.A. Calata, "False rumour about Anglican mission," *Midland News*, 18 December 1952 and J.A. Calata to Z.K. Matthews, 29 April 1955, in the J.A. Calata Papers (UCT), File 2: XC3 #41/94.

²³ "Presentation to Calata. Building the Bantu," *Midland News*, 21 September 1954.

²⁴ "Tambo and Calata banned," *Advance*, 23 September 1954; J.A. Calata, draft of letter to the editor of *Bantu World*, 17 September 1954, The J.A. Calata Papers (UCT), File 2: XC3: #41/80.

²⁵ M. Tetelman, "We Can't: Black politics in Cradock, South Africa, 1948-85," chap. 2.

white Cape parliamentarian, D.B. Molteno.²⁶ And to Calata's deep disappointment, his synod continued to mount little if any protest against the government during the 1950s. While Anglican clerics on the Rand such as Trevor Huddleston bravely resisted the apartheid regime, most senior clergy in the Eastern Cape still refrained from oppositional politics.²⁷

The latter years of Calata's life were difficult. In the early 1960s, the government forced opposition groups such as the ANC into exile and rounded up Cradock ANC activists, sending many to prison for long terms. Though made a Canon in 1960, Calata received several short jail sentences, and he was banned for several years. Furthermore, as part of the government's apartheid policy, Cradock's Africans were forcibly removed to a new township, called Lingelihle, as were millions of black residents nationwide. In this bleak township, generational conflict intensified. Frustrated by poverty, repression and the perceived passivity of their elders, many of Lingelihle's youth broke away from community institutions and practices designed to maintain generational control, such as church groups and athletic clubs. Calata tried to heal these tensions, but his efforts were in vain.²⁸

In the mid-1970s, Cradock's younger Africans gravitated to the new political ideology Black Consciousness (BC), enabling them to act upon their frustrations with apartheid and with their elders (perceived) passivity. In October 1977, several hundred of Cradock's African students launched a protest in support of student-led unrest nationwide. During the protest, elders such as Calata, who was now in his early eighties, remained indoors, appalled at the violence committed by activists and police alike. By 1978, the government had stifled resistance across the country. Calata's political power had dimmed, and, so it appeared, had opposition as a whole.²⁹

THE REVIVAL OF CHARTERISM

Although the student uprisings had been repressed, mass opposition would soon re-emerge. By the end of the 1970s, the government was forced to make certain reforms, such as the scrapping of racial job reservation and the legalization of black trade unions. The government also revamped black local administration, instituting a new system of black representation known as Community Councils. The government promoted these councils as a new, semi-autonomous system of government, allowing blacks greater control over housing and services. In mid-1978, councils such as the Cradock Community Council (CCC) had come into being.³⁰

²⁶ Interview with Gertrude Calata, 18 August 1993. See also D.B. Molteno to bishop of Grahamstown, 7 July 1945. The Calata Papers, Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, File D2.

²⁷ Interview with Peggy Calata, 26 August 1995; J.A. Calata, "Anglican bishops on apartheid," draft letter to the editor of the *Eastern Province Herald*, 28 October 1953, Calata Papers, Cullen Library, File XC3 #99/2.

²⁸ M. Tetelman, "'We Can': Black politics in Cradock, South Africa, 1948-85," chap. 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ J. Seekings, "Political mobilisation in the black townships of the Transvaal," in *State, Resistance, and Change in South Africa*, eds. P. Frankel, N. Pines, and M. Swilling (Johannesburg: 1988), 201-203.

Rather than defusing protest, however, community councils heightened tensions across the country, for the government had established them during an economic slump. Officials warned municipalities to slash their capital expenditures, even amidst skyrocketing inflation. The state's finances for township administration plummeted. Community councils aroused intense anger amongst poorer residents, especially in the face of continued dilapidation and allegations of corruption. By 1980, townships on the Rand witnessed anti-councillor protests due to proposed rent increases.³¹

Cradock's Community Council also aroused growing opposition. By early 1979, no improvements in the township appeared, and residents lashed out at the councillors. The CCC's chairman asked the government's regional oversight board, the East Cape Administration Board (ECAB), for protection from possible attacks from angry residents and stressed that the CCC would resign if no improvements were forthcoming. The chairman's warnings would go unheeded. ECAB officials informed the CCC that the upcoming budget would show a massive deficit and that capital projects would be suspended. Despite the lack of delivery, ECAB officials forced the councillors to institute rent increases, and by early 1980 the councillors' standing had sunk to an all-time low. Rumors spread that councillors drew large salaries and other perks while most residents suffered in squalid poverty. Though many of the rumors were unfounded, they were powerful tools to provoke popular resistance.³²

As anti-councillor sentiment spread through Lingelihle, disaffected school-leavers and students once again rose up in protest. Many of the young activists had led the October 1977 demonstration and had recently returned from prison. In conjunction with other Eastern Cape youth activists, they launched an organization called "Masakhana" (isiXhosa for "Let us help each other"), which drew upon a variety of ideologies. It espoused BC principles of community empowerment, while also appropriating themes and symbols of the ANC. Members established a small choir along the lines of the Congress Choir. In organizing the choir, one Masakhana activist relates: "Rather than going about we just took some ANC aims--we took it from Calata." Members also observed important dates such as the anniversary of the founding of the ANC, and they distributed ANC material.³³

Masakhana activists criticized the CCC with increasing intensity. In mid-1980 activists organized a bus boycott and campaign to lower site rentals. Frightened by this challenge, the CCC held a public meeting to discuss rentals. After a councillor chastised residents for being disrespectful, the meeting erupted into chaos. Masakhana members chased the CCC chairman out of the meeting hall, while other councillors cowered under a table. Some seven hundred men, women and children marched to the government-run township beerhall, burning it to the ground. The demonstration ended quickly, after police shot and wounded a protester.³⁴

In the aftermath of the protest, Masakhana collapsed. The group's narrow membership helped guarantee its downfall, for it excluded older people. Police harassment and infiltration divided activists and discouraged residents from joining the

³¹ J. Seekings, "The origins of political mobilisation in PWV townships, 1980-84," *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, 59-62.

³² "Petitions to the Administration Board," of 8 March 1979, minutes of the 12th ordinary meeting of the CCC, April 1979, vol.1; "Cradock municipal budget for 1980," *Midland News*, 30 October 1979.

³³ Interviews with Nceba Gqasana, 19 December 1994; Nomsa Frans, 21 December 1994.

³⁴ "Beerhall burnt in Bantu township," *Midland News*, 20 May 1980; interview with N. Gqasana.

group. Activists further lost credibility with residents by drinking alcohol openly, and in some cases by using marijuana. "They organized but they were drinking," a former security policeman relates. Several of the group's leaders went into exile while other members withdrew from active organizing. Frustrated younger residents searched for new ideologies and organizations that would effectively challenge the government.³⁵

Their hopes would soon be realized. In the wake of the 1976-77 uprisings, the limitations of BC's exclusivist and abstract approach became apparent. Activists across South Africa began to gravitate to the ANC's non-racialist ideology, as laid out in the Freedom Charter.³⁶ By late 1980, the ANC's messages had begun to win over the younger set of Cradock's student activists. They tuned into the ANC's exiled radio program Radio Freedom and pasted in their school books pictures of exiled ANC leaders and other African liberation leaders. The birth of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) in 1979 would seal the students' transition to Charterist politics. The first president of COSAS was an ANC member. Regional and national COSAS organizers visited Cradock to set up a branch. Although police surveillance hindered the formation of a formal branch, many students affiliated to COSAS.³⁷

Cradock's COSAS activists looked to transcend the localized politics of Masakhana. In April 1980 COSAS launched a boycott in black schools, which took on particular intensity in the Eastern Cape. The boycott spread to Fort Hare, forcing the university to close. Cradock's Fort Hare students returned to Lingelihle and, together with COSAS members, organized a boycott of the junior secondary school. The boycott peaked in November, forcing the school's principal to call in police to protect the minority of members writing exams. Like the 1977 boycott, the police responded violently, shooting students with salt cartridges and detaining organizers. In the face of this repression, students could not maintain the boycott, and by early 1981 most students had returned to school.³⁸

The school boycott had contradictory effects on opposition in Cradock. On the one hand, it demonstrated the ability of students to link up with national protest movements, as well as solidifying links between Cradock and other Eastern Cape activists. Nevertheless, the boycott reproduced many of the same problems that plagued earlier youthful movements. The boycott remained student-based, excluding and often alienating parents, elders, and clergy. As one COSAS activist relates

At that time, I must be honest, in 1976 and 1980 our parents were distancing themselves from whatever we did. It was our fault for not informing them of the problems we envisaged. That is why they were responding very negatively to our activities. They were also complaining that they don't know what these kids are doing . . . Because this was only pushed by the students without going

³⁵ Interview with Thando Tuku, 13 February 1995; and Fred Koni, 28 February 1995.

³⁶ T. Lodge and B. Nasson (eds.), *All, Here, and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (New York, 1991), 23-25; A. Marx, *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990* (New York, 1992), 71-72 and 91-105; S. Mufson, *Fighting Years: Black Resistance and the Struggle for a New South Africa* (Boston, 1990), 65-68.

³⁷ Interview with M. Mene; and Nomsa Frans, 21 December 1994.

³⁸ B. Pottinger, "The Eastern Cape boycotts," *Frontline*, March 1981, 19-24; J. Hyslop, "School student movements and state education policy: 1972-87," in Cohen and Cobbett (eds.), *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, 187-188. See also interview with and with Madoda Jacobs, 16 December 1994; and with Thembekile Boss, 30 December 1994.

to the church leaders, and there was no formal organization in the township so everything was just loose.³⁹

The state had one advantage over residents: repression and internal conflict prevented unified opposition. In particular the student boycotts reflected and exacerbated tensions between older and younger residents. In Cradock, parents complained that young people were flouting parental authority and that marijuana and alcohol usage had soared. Bantu Education was adding to generational conflict. The quality of Lingelihle's schools had eroded and the ability to maintain discipline had almost disappeared. An interviewee recalls that "there were problems at the high school because teachers would leave the school and go to shebeens and drink, and the children wouldn't go to school." While it is difficult to determine the accuracy of these accounts, the fact that such perceptions of social dislocation were widespread reflected the widening gulf between younger and older residents.⁴⁰

In 1983, two of Lingelihle's younger teachers emerged to ameliorate generational conflict. One was Canon Calata's grandson, Fort Calata. He had been inspired since childhood by his grandfather's activism, and he took part in several protests in Cradock during the late 1970s. The other teacher, Matthew Goniwe, was also a devotee of Reverend Calata. As a young boy in the 1950s, Goniwe had participated in Calata's youth groups and sporting clubs, as did his older brother, Jaques Goniwe. Jaques, a local ANC Youth League activist, went into exile in 1960, joining the ANC's guerrilla unit Umkhonto we Sizwe. Several years later, Jaques and other exiled Cradock activists were killed in a bloody battle with then-Rhodesian security forces. Inspired by Canon Calata and by his older brother, Goniwe joined a Marxist cell group in the Transkei in 1975. The following year, police arrested the cell group members, and Goniwe was imprisoned until 1981. Upon his release from jail, Goniwe returned to Cradock, where he began teaching in 1983.⁴¹

Goniwe and Fort Calata moved quickly to restore discipline among younger residents. They investigated cases of student tardiness and absenteeism, as well as visiting parents of wayward students and lecturing adults who used alcohol. The two men held workshops for younger residents, where they spoke about respect and the importance of familial bonds, and they pressed students to wear school uniforms, which some students had stopped wearing, allegedly to escape detection when harassing residents. According to older interviewees, the pair's efforts worked: student punctuality and attendance improved.⁴²

Goniwe had deeper designs than developing the township's youth: he sought to overthrow the apartheid regime itself. In 1982, Goniwe made contact with underground ANC organizers in the Border region, including M.A. Stofile. Stofile had a long history of interaction with Cradock. In the early 1970s he had helped to lead a boycott at Fort Hare, coordinating Cradock's students. Stofile had frequent contact with another Cradock product living in the former Ciskei, Charles Nqakula, an

³⁹ Interview with M. Jacobs.

⁴⁰ Interviews with: Mbulelo Goniwe, 27 August 1993; Peggy Calata, 5 September 1995. See also testimony of Alfred Steti Skweyiya, *The State and Patrick Mabuya Baleka and 21 Others* (hereafter *State vs Baleka*), 23, 938-23,939.

⁴¹ Interviews with Alex Goniwe, 28 December 1994; Nyameka Goniwe, 27 July 1995; Winkie Abrams, 11 August 1995; Lungisile Ntsebeza, 3 February 1995; and with Nomonde Calata, 27 December 1994. See also J. Ancer, "Ten years on - who killed Matthew Goniwe?" *Mail and Guardian*, 2 to 8 June 1995; and unpublished biography of Matthew Goniwe by Almore Cupido (n.d.).

⁴² Testimony of A.S. Skweyiya, *State vs Baleka*, 23,9341; interview with Nomonde Calata.

underground South African Communist Party member who had been banned from South Africa in 1981. Like Goniwe and Fort Calata, Nqakula had been a devotee of Canon Calata and knew Goniwe well from childhood. While there is not direct evidence that Nqakula and Goniwe met during 1982, Goniwe had ample opportunity and the necessary background to establish close links with these Border organizers. Stofile sought to establish underground ANC cells and link them to an ANC base in Lesotho. Goniwe became Stofile's point man in Cradock.⁴³

Goniwe first had to organize Lingelihle's residents, and he had to do so with great precision. The lessons from his Transkeian study group played a major role in their strategy. To Goniwe, revolutionary change would only come about through slow, patient organizing and disciplined, tightly controlled groups. An astute historian, Goniwe saw how Canon Calata had unified the location by organizing cultural organizations for young people. The cadre of Cradock's Youth League in the 1950s had been Calata's initiates in St. James. Thus Fort Calata and Goniwe listened attentively when Canon Calata advised them to refrain from explicit political themes when trying to mobilize residents. This advice made sense for another reason: most residents, especially elders, were loath to engage in open confrontation with the state. They had seen the harsh reaction of the police toward the 1977 protesters and had no wish to take such political risks.

Goniwe and Fort followed Canon Calata's suggestions. Initially they focused on developing an outwardly apolitical organization, formed for younger people and run by older intellectuals. Their efforts quickly paid off. In May 1983, a mass meeting occurred in the township's Methodist Church. Some six hundred people attended. Speakers addressed the subject of juvenile delinquency and the need for younger people to attend church. The attendees established several committees, including drama, education, and choral music, to be led by older professionals. Many of the older committee leaders saw these clubs as apolitical, unaware of Goniwe and Fort Calata's deeper motives. They had no idea how quickly their perceptions would change.⁴⁴

In early 1983, mass-based opposition was sweeping across South Africa. Black trade unions launched powerful strikes, including several on the East Rand during 1982-83. New politically-oriented youth congresses and residents' associations, or civics, were also springing up in black townships, to protest sub-standard living conditions. Port Elizabeth formed perhaps the most potent civic, known as the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO), as well as a youth association, the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (PEYCO), led by dynamic organizer Mkhuseli Jack. These localized opposition movements had one common thread: they embraced Charterist politics. As Mark Swilling writes, they "articulated the principles of non-collaborationism with government institutions, non-racialism, democracy, and mass-based direct action aimed at transforming urban living conditions and challenging white minority rule." In January 1983 a national protest movement took form, when trade unionists, clergymen and civic activists attended a conference in Johannesburg. In his keynote speech, Rev. Allan Boesak challenged delegates to create a national, non-racial body to coordinate local struggles. Following this conference, the United Democratic Front was born. Over the next six months, regional UDF bodies in the Western Cape, Natal, and the Transvaal were formed. With the rise of national opposition, as well as mounting anger against Cradock's councillors, Goniwe and Fort Calata now needed a catalyst that would propel residents to organize politically. It

⁴³ Interview with Arnold Stofile, conducted by Jeremy Seekings, 26 April 1993; and interview with Charles Nqakula, 20 July 1993.

⁴⁴ Testimony of A.S. Skweyiya, *State vs Baleka*, 23,9341-45; interview with T. Boss.

would come suddenly, and it would transform anti-apartheid resistance on multiple levels. That catalyst was the death, on June 16th, of Canon Calata.⁴⁵

MEMORIALIZATION AND CONFLICT, JUNE 1983

Calata's death presented an ideal opportunity for local activists to gain critical political currency, to advertise Charterist messages, to bring older residents into the struggle, and to establish stronger connections to regional organizers. Calata's death immediately took on broader political significance. A myth soon circulated that days before Calata's passing, as his daughter sat with her father in his darkened room, he assembled an imaginary meeting of old ANC leaders. Though sick and weakened, the rumor went, Calata implored these leaders to continue fighting the apartheid state. At his funeral, held in Lingelihle one week later, Calata's wish would be realized. In death, as in life, Calata would boost non-racial opposition while hitching Cradock's protesters to the rising national movement.⁴⁶

In South Africa, activists had already begun to use political funerals to great effect. In 1977 the funeral of murdered BC leader Steve Biko revolved around political themes. Biko's funeral inspired younger activists across the Eastern Cape to launch protests, which in all likelihood prompted the South African state's 1982 decision to pass a law allowing for the prohibition of speeches and songs at funerals. Yet the government was still unable to clamp down on political burials. Just three months before Calata's funeral, in early 1983, a funeral of a black activist took place in the small town of Driefontein. The activist, who had been shot by police while protesting removals, became a martyr. Some 1,500 mourners, many of whom did not know the victim, attended the burial, singing revolutionary songs and baring the clenched fist salute of the ANC. The event received wide media coverage. With Calata's passing, Eastern Cape activists saw his funeral as an ideal moment to promote Charterist opposition politics by invoking the memories of a respected historical figure.⁴⁷

The activists' objectives would be severely impeded, however. Calata's burial became a complex, contested performance, embodying his multiple political and social identities. On the one hand, black clergy in the Anglican church lobbied to conduct the funeral, arranging for a St. James congregant to give the introductory speech. For its part, the banned ANC also sought to play a major role, via UDF organizers, who were to discuss Calata's political career. The two parties initially agreed to merge theology and protest, creating a funeral program that featured speakers from both camps, but their alliance quickly ran aground. Days before the funeral was to begin, Lingelihle's Anglican cleric, a Reverend Dumezweni, announced that politics would play no part in the funeral. Calata was, in the words of one interviewee, to be buried "like a priest, at the Church, singing hymns and saying nothing of his involvement in politics." Fort Calata and other local activists were outraged, arguing that Calata was "involved in this ANC also and it needs to play its role."⁴⁸

⁴⁵ M. Swilling, "The United Democratic Front and township revolt," *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, 90-91; T. Lodge, *All, Here, and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (New York, 1991), 34-48; and J. Seekings, "The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front of South Africa, 1983-1991," (unpublished manuscript), 42-46.

⁴⁶ R. Thurow, "The ANC is banned but it is in the heart of a nation's blacks," *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 April 1988, 1.

⁴⁷ R. Goldstein, "Political funerals," *Society* (March/April 1984), 13-14; J. Lelyveld, "New hero created in South Africa," *The New York Times*, 17 April 1983.

⁴⁸ Interview with Nomonde Calata, 27 December 1994.

Dumezweni's position was hardly surprising. Like most other local black clergymen, he was deeply conservative. Dumezweni was reviled by many activists and students for his alleged cooperation with the security police following the 1977 protests, but he maintained a strong following amongst older residents. He was worried about losing his power base, about the rising influence of local activists like Goniwe and Calata, and he knew that the funeral could politicize otherwise hesitant residents. Nor did Fort Calata's position come as much of a surprise. Aside from his political agenda, he had strong personal reasons for challenging the church's authority. Though a committed Anglican, Calata was hostile to many clergymen, black and white, whom he scorned as indifferent to their congregants' plight or as state collaborators. This antipathy dated back to childhood. When Fort Calata was a small boy traveling with his grandfather, for example, he was not allowed into the homes of white clergy in town. And he was outraged that the church had never protested his grandfather's banning orders or jail sentences. Thus, the death of Canon Calata was exacerbating a highly personalized and politically-motivated conflict between activist and clergyman.⁴⁹

The mourners fought their conflict upon symbolic terrain. Dumezweni and local ANC organizers both announced their intention to purchase the coffin. At this point, Calata's family became deeply divided. One of Calata's granddaughters protested that the family deserved to buy the coffin and make the funeral arrangements, but her pleas were ignored. In the end, the activists won out. When Calata's family arrived at the morgue to claim the body, they discovered that a coffin had already been purchased, from the nearby Eastern Cape town of Queenstown; Fort Calata and Goniwe had arranged for underground ANC activists there to purchase the coffin. As Nomonde Calata, the widow of Fort Calata, recalls: "He [Fort] and Matthew were moving around. It was the ANC who bought the coffin, who arranged everything from Queenstown." These debates did not escape the notice of the police, who arrived at the morgue and asked why the church was not involved in the coffin purchase. Fort Calata responded that the family was arranging the funeral, and the police accepted his explanation.⁵⁰

On the day of the funeral, tensions between the clergy and activists reached a boiling point. Without informing his family or the church, Fort Calata had arranged for a stage to be built in front of his grandfather's house, creating a huge open space suitable for a large rally. He then informed a sputtering Rev. Dumezweni that Canon Calata's body could go to Ascension Church only "after the ANC had played its role" at the rally. Township residents had already been informed by word of mouth about the service, and that it would be a politically-oriented. At this point, Dumezweni backed down, knowing that he had been outmaneuvered. The rector of an Anglican church in Port Elizabeth, Peter Bowen, scheduled to speak at Calata's funeral, arrived to find a tense atmosphere and an outraged Rev. Dumezweni:

The owner of the local bus fleet had withdrawn all his vehicles for fear of damage to them. Archdeacon John Dumezweni was in a tither. ANC elements had taken over all details of the funeral, telling him that Ascension Church was not to be used, but that the service would be public on the open ground near the Calata house . . . I realized that I could end up on the receiving end of SAP truncheons or ANC stones and I knew that I didn't possess the Stephen-like grace simply to go down smiling blissfully. In the event the knuckleduster was not needed.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Interview with Peggy Calata, 27 August 1994; interview with Mbulelo Goniwe, 27 August 1993.

⁵⁰ Interview with P. Calata and with N. Calata.

⁵¹ Peter Bowen to Guy Butler, 22 October 1984.

The funeral occurred without incident. On this chilly winter day, older underground activists from across the region came, including Arnold Stofile, Charles Nqakula, and Steve Tshwete, as did younger student activists from other large towns. So too did national-level UDF organizers. Overseas visitors tried to attend, but police refused to allow them to leave the airport in Johannesburg.

As expected, funeral organizers took ample opportunity to promote Charterist politics. Nelson Mandela apparently sent a message from his prison cell to be read at the funeral, while the funeral program emphasized how Calata espoused non-racialist struggle. An ANC flag was draped over the coffin, a practice to be repeated innumerable times over the next decade. The keynote speaker was Archie Gumede, a longtime ANC activist. Gumede had been a Treason Trial defendant with Calata and later a chairman of the Release Mandela Committee. Gumede spoke eloquently of Calata's history of political involvement, his commitment to peace and democracy, and his frustration with the government's refusal to negotiate with blacks. He focused on Calata's signing of the 1949 Programme of Action, studiously ignoring the bitter disagreements Calata had with younger ANC organizers or Calata's expulsion from the general-secretaryship. Above all, Gumede cited Calata's unswerving commitment to oppressed people, underscoring how he "paid particular attention to the welfare of the people he served which influenced him to fully participate in efforts to achieve the total freedom of the individual in South Africa regardless of colour, creed or religion." Though Gumede did not explicitly canvass for the UDF, his speech promoted an unmistakably Charterist message and served as a powerful, if indirect, advertisement of the UDF's ideological affiliation to the ANC.⁵²

Other speakers used Calata's example to challenge the audience to take a more active role in protest. Black clergy and church organizations came under fire. Dr. Simon Gqubule, former president of the Methodist Church, stressed that church groups could no longer be "gatherings where people get together to cry over their sins but to be active and make themselves useful to the community." A clergyman from Port Elizabeth underscored that the churches' political passivity was frustrating blacks, for "their prayers were going unanswered." Nonyameko Mxenge, widow of the slain Durban activist Griffiths Mxenge and herself a future victim of state-sponsored death squads, reminded mourners that Calata "realised that the Kingdom of God is an extension of freedom realisable in this world and consumed finally in heaven." Calata refused to "divorce Christianity from the liberation struggle," she declared.⁵³ The fight for Calata's body thus became part of a larger struggle by activists to repudiate the authority claimed by more conservative clergy, and to press for the type of liberation theology that was sweeping across other developing countries, Latin America in particular. Calata's body became, to use the words of Garrey Dennie, a "highly complex text, suffused with meanings...", as well as a way to "inscribe and to re-write specific political messages . . . and to erase others."⁵⁴ For clerics like Rev. Dumezweni, this process was unsettling indeed.

⁵² M. Tyala, "More than 3 000 at burial of Calata," *Eastern Province Herald*, 27 June 1983; "Farewell to a man of vision," *SASPU National*, no.3 September 1983, 17; "James Arthur Calata funeral service," program distributed at the funeral of Canon J.A. Calata.

⁵³ "The Church's role in liberation is focus of funeral," *Eastern Province Herald*, 27 June 1983; and "Farewell to a man of vision."

⁵⁴ G. Dennie, "One king, two burials: the politics of funerals in South Africa's Transkei," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 11:2 (1992).

After the rally, the coffin was taken to Ascension church, which, in the words of one observer, was "packed with a large chanting crowd." With a touch of liberal condescension, Peter Bowen later recalled how he placated the funeral-goers, by assuring them of whites' respect for Calata. "I continued, saying that many white people did not regard James Calata as a priest, but as a politician (More slogans, clenched fists - great stuff," Bowen wrote. After comparing Calata to Moses, Bowen depicted Calata's role as a priest, as "a shepherd of his people, who knew them, sought them out, stayed with them, loved them, fed them, and taught them." To Bowen's great relief, the crowd roared its approval, chanting the ANC's chief slogan "Amandla!" Marchers then took Calata's body to the cemetery, where he was buried. Calata's funeral infused many in Lingelihle with new political resolve. "Nobody was scared then after the funeral," Nomonde Calata remembers. "I should think that after the funeral, it gave hope and brought everybody back their spirit."⁵⁵

Funeral organizers had hoped particularly to encourage older residents to join protest organizations. Rev. Mncebisi Xundu, longtime friend of Canon Calata and master of ceremonies at the burial of both Biko and Calata, observed that activists saw the funeral "as a way of creating a climate for the senior citizens to be part of the struggle, because the struggle was being relegated to the youth. . ." Funeral organizers had given prominent place in the funeral procession to older women, in recognition of their struggles in the 1950s. Their tactics worked. Many older residents became invigorated by the visible display of ANC symbols, the reconstruction of Calata's political career, and by memories of past protest. The presence of older, politically respected speakers further swayed them. "What really helped us during the death of Calata, the speakers mobilized us--from all over the country, all with ANC inclinations," an interviewee relates.

Calata's burial also linked younger residents more firmly to Charterist protest. Funeral organizers had taken pains to involve and address youth. Gumede emphasized that Canon Calata died on June 16th, thereby linking Calata and the ANC to the Soweto uprising of 1976. Younger activists, singing ANC freedom songs, carried the coffin, and they were deployed to help visiting politicians escape police detection. These efforts paid off. National ANC-oriented student newspapers covered the funeral in great detail, lauding Calata and linking him to the UDF. Regional youth organizers like Mkhuseleli Jack returned to their townships, eager to disseminate Charterist ideology. Speakers such as Steve Tshwete inspired younger activists by describing how he had evaded police roadblocks to attend the funeral, and how youth must emulate the heroism displayed by Robben Island prisoners such as Nelson Mandela.⁵⁶ Charles Nqakula recalls his pleasure at the funeral procession, which to him signaled the rebirth of broad-based resistance in Cradock:

Many of us were worried in the late '70s because Cradock was slumping in terms of political activity until Calata's death. And I was pleasantly surprised when we came across a guard of honor, firstly members of the women's union of the Anglican church and immediately thereafter school children who were all carrying ANC flags. It came as a pleasant surprise to me and that was the beginning of the resuscitation of the struggle in that area.⁵⁷

Calata's burial reflected the resurgence of broad-based resistance and the efforts by older protest organizers to take control of opposition. Yet older organizers did not meet with unqualified success, for some younger residents had used the funeral to

⁵⁵ P. Bowen to G. Butler, 22 October 1984.

⁵⁶ Interview with Nceba Gqasana, 22 July 1998; interview with Siphiwo Siko, 24 July 1998.

⁵⁷ Interview with Charles Nqakula, 20 July 1993.

establish their own notions of authority, power, and resistance. On the morning of the funeral, some younger activists had approached each shopkeeper, instructing them to close their shops. All complied except one, a prosperous older merchant and Anglican congregant named K.T. Ntlale. Younger residents accused Ntlale of being a "capitalist sell-out" and threatened him with violence. In the face of this pressure, he reluctantly closed.

The funeral had invigorated many residents, but people needed more concrete leadership to translate feeling into action. The evocation of Charterist symbols had inspired the mourners, but police pressure and the lack of a formal protest group discouraged older residents from open confrontation. Cradock's residents also required better organization and a more coherent vision to channel their energies, as well as leaders who would impose discipline over younger activists. Above all, they needed leaders who could transform localized frustrations and inchoate political affiliations into broad-based organization.

POLITICAL PROTEST IN THE WAKE OF THE FUNERAL

Cradock's organizers sought to capitalize upon the energy produced by the funeral and by the broader revival of national protest that the funeral epitomized. Goniwe and Fort Calata redoubled their efforts to mobilize young people and restore discipline. Though lacking funding and facilities, local leaders organized a youth choir, table tennis matches, and other indoor games. In August, residents held a mass meeting, in which they launched a new organization, known as the Cradock Youth Association (CRADOYA). Members elected Goniwe chairman and Fort Calata as its secretary. On the surface, CRADOYA's aims remained apolitical. Much of the association's executive did not want CRADOYA to become an opposition group, and it represented itself to township officials as a "non-profit cultural organisation." CRADOYA may have flown an apolitical flag, but it was inherently a political organization. Most of its core members had participated in protest, especially the 1977 and 1980 boycotts, and were staunch COSAS activists.⁵⁸

CRADOYA had scarcely begun to operate before more immediate issues swept the township. By April 1983, several hundred new houses had been built in Lingelihle. ECAB officials proposed a "sliding scale" rental scheme, in which residents would pay rates based on their monthly incomes. The rent scheme burdened residents across the class spectrum. Many families survived on the incomes of domestic servants, whose wages could not support the new rents. Railway workers, Lingelihle's largest wage-earning constituency, complained about the rents, especially in light of recent layoffs. Teachers and nurses also blasted the scheme, and residents complained that the new houses were identical with the older municipal houses and yet they were paying higher rates. And all objected that the new houses lacked electricity or water-borne sewage. Unwittingly, the government had helped organizers to bridge class divisions by instituting a system that penalized everybody.⁵⁹ In August of 1983, Cradock's community councillors discovered the dangers of the rental scheme. Residents besieged the councillors with complaints when they heard the terms of the sliding scale. Councillors tried to persuade ECAB officials to lower rents but to no avail. ECAB

⁵⁸ Testimony by A.S. Skweyiya, *State vs. Baleka*, 23,945-46; interview with Nomsa Frans, 21 December 1994; interview with Mbulelo Goniwe. See also constitution of CRADOYA, held in minutes of the 67th ordinary meeting of the CCC, 10 November 1983, vol.9.

⁵⁹ Minutes of the 54th meeting of the CCC, 14 October 1982, vol.7; minutes of the 64th ordinary meeting of the CCC, 11 August 1983, vol.9; interview with T. Boss; testimony of A.S. Skweyiya, *State vs. Baleka*, 23,947-48; and Anon., "Building a tradition of resistance," *Work in Progress* (August 1985, 4-8).

officials declared that the scheme would begin in September, and the CCC reluctantly assented.⁶⁰

The timing could not have been worse. On 20 August 1983, the UDF was officially launched. Thousands of delegates representing over five hundred organizations attended the conference, which took place in a Coloured township outside of Cape Town. Archie Gumede was appointed national co-president, and he gave a powerful address. As Peter Bowen had done at Canon Calata's funeral, Gumede spoke about Moses. Moses, Gumede related, had "led the children out of Egypt [and] . . . there is simply no reason why the people of South Africa cannot move out of the apartheid state into a state which all shall be free and the people shall govern." The delegates planned several nationwide boycotts. One boycott would protest the impending municipal election of black councillors in November; another would protest the creation of a separate parliament for Indians and Coloureds.⁶¹

For Goniwe, the opportunity to organize Lingelihle had arrived. He judged that Calata's funeral and the UDF launch would motivate residents to act upon their frustration with sub-standard conditions. Goniwe had observed teachers complaining about the sliding scale and encouraged them to convene a meeting with residents who had similar grievances. On 25 August, some one thousand residents held a mass meeting. It was perhaps the most fateful meeting in the township's history. Goniwe was elected chairman of the meeting. The crowd debated how to fight the sliding scale plan. Residents agreed to hire an attorney to fight the rental scheme, and some two thousand rand was collected. Throughout September, residents met weekly to discuss their grievances and to collect money for an attorney.⁶²

Protest took firmer shape in October, when residents created a formal civic association. Goniwe traveled to Port Elizabeth to meet with Molly Blackburn, a member of the Provincial Council and a prominent member of the Black Sash, an organization of white women that assisted blacks. Blackburn advised Goniwe to create a draft constitution for the residents' association. He returned to Cradock and the trustees produced a constitution, which residents ratified on 4 October. The Cradock Residents' Association (CRADORA) was born. Civic members elected Goniwe as chairman and Fort Calata became CRADORA's treasurer.⁶³

CRADORA immediately produced results. Civic organizers presented Cradock's councillors and state officials with a petition that criticized the rental scheme and warned that a "ground swell opposition to the high rents, abounds in the township." It requested that ECAB officials meet with "elected representatives" of "residents of the Black Township." Volunteers circulated the petition around Lingelihle. More than eighty percent of the ratepayers signed it. The petition was a smashing success, both in terms of the rent issue and boosting the civic's popularity. ECAB officials were sufficiently shaken that they amended some of the rental rates. By

⁶⁰ Minutes of the eighth special meeting of the CCC, 15 August 1983, and of the ninth special meeting of the CCC, 18 August 1983, vol.9.

⁶¹ T. Lodge, *All, Here, and Now*, 49-52.

⁶² Testimony of A.S. Skweyiya, *State vs. Baleka*, 23,949-50; and interview with Nyameka Goniwe, 27 July 1985.

⁶³ Interview with Di Bishop, 20 July 1995; testimony of A.S. Skweyiya, *State vs. Baleka*, 23,951-54.

claiming to be properly elected "representatives," CRADORA activists denied the legitimacy of the community councillors and of black local authorities as a whole.⁶⁴

While civic leaders had the rental scheme as a focal point of protest, they also mobilized broad-based, cross-generational support by following some basic organizational principles. First, civic leaders maintained strict discipline, which helped to secure adults' trust. Goniwe and Fort Calata stressed the need to restore "lost" values, such as respect for elders, sexual chastity, and temperance. Goniwe and Calata stressed the need to restore "lost" values, such as respect for elders, sexual chastity, and temperance. Organizers moved around the township speaking out about crime. Such "values" had always been contested and constructed, but they had a real appeal among elder residents, evoking romantic notions of life in the pre-removal period. Savvy politicians, Goniwe and Calata spoke to pervasive anxieties about social and economic dislocation.

With the memory of the dissolution of Masakhana still fresh, civic leaders had to practice what they preached. Goniwe stressed that activists should forego marijuana. They must also renounce promiscuity if they wished to create a society that did not exploit women. Students "can still be revolutionary," he declared, but they must "be well behaved and . . . embodiments of the new South Africa." He devised a nine point "code of conduct" for organizers. The code encouraged honesty and trust and warned against arrogance and exclusivity. Goniwe and Calata enforced these values. When a CRADOYA leader allegedly tried to seduce female activists, for example, Goniwe ordered him to desist. Many elderly residents began to see Goniwe and Calata as role models.

Second, CRADORA appealed to older residents by taking concrete steps to improve their lives. Civic leaders upbraided councillors for allowing pensioners to wait for hours at the township's community hall for their pensions, and the civic organized transport to bring pensioners to the hall. In so doing, the civic boosted its standing at the expense of the councillors, who lacked the resources and popular support to launch such projects. CRADORA organizers bolstered their support amongst elders by appropriating familiar language and symbols, particularly ANC themes and slogans. At CRADORA meetings, Goniwe exhorted residents to remember jailed ANC leaders like Mandela and to remember they were part of a bigger movement. According to one prominent older female organizer, elders as well as youth flocked to the civic because it was "taking over where the ANC left out and people felt familiar. To many people it [CRADORA] was a completely new thing but to others who knew Tato [Canon Calata] it is a continuation of the struggle."⁶⁵

As a political leader, Goniwe showed a keen awareness of the values and aspirations of his audience. Older residents, especially those active in political opposition, had been influenced by Canon Calata's stress on non-racialism, but they also shared his uneasiness about a class-based revolution. Goniwe thus took pains to avoid introducing Marxist concepts in his speeches, for he worried that these concepts would produce internal conflict. Older residents were still cautious about confrontation, and there was already simmering resentment toward apolitical residents held by younger activists. Had Goniwe stressed an anti-capitalist theme, it is likely that younger people might have attacked African elites, especially those hesitant to join the protest organizations. Goniwe did not want to give the police an excuse to detain organizers on charges of inciting public violence, nor did he want to alienate elders, who feared indiscipline.

⁶⁴ "Cradock Residents Committee: petition dated 12-9-83 and telegram," in minutes of the 66th ordinary meeting of the CCC, 13 October 1983, vol.9.

⁶⁵ Interview with N. Calata; interview with Babise Soga; "Building a tradition of resistance."

Finally, CRADORA attracted elders' support because of its adroit use of older women as organizers. While women did not serve on the executive, they played a powerful secondary role. Nonyanga Sibanda, a leader of the mass ANC campaigns of the 1950s and a prison veteran of the 1960s, became a leading civic organizer. Her political acumen, unbending commitment, and physical presence proved invaluable. Another older woman, Babise Soga, underpinned CRADORA's efforts to mobilize older residents. Soga was a shebeen queen, but this did not deter Goniwe and Calata. Though committed to a temperance line, the two men recognized the importance of shebeens for political networking and endeavored to use them. Soga encouraged her customers, many of them older residents, to attend meetings, and she transmitted their grievances to civic leaders. Women also boosted CRADORA through fund-raisers. One civic activist recalls that "there were situations where the organization was in financial crisis. You find these women go out of their way to find the money, to raise funds for CRADORA. Pudding stands, selling stands in each and every area of the township."

Yet for all their importance in sustaining the civic, few women had any impact on shaping CRADORA's strategies. One activist recalls that no women occupied public platforms, aside from Sibanda. According to Nyameka Goniwe, widow of Matthew Goniwe, female activists were content to "sublimate these [female] issues into broader political issues and organization." Though Goniwe often called for more concerted involvement by women, most civic organizers hesitated to transcend conventional gender boundaries. Older female activists accepted--if sometimes grudgingly--the constraints placed upon them and continued their organizing on behalf of CRADORA.⁶⁶

By the end of 1983, the civic had extended its influence outside of Lingelihle. CRADORA established strong links with other Eastern Cape civics, particularly in the Border region. In large part, this occurred because of Goniwe's close ties with Nqakula, Tshwete, and Stofile--ties solidified by Calata's funeral. Organizers from Grahamstown and Cradock met constantly to discuss building local protest structures, and CRADORA organizers came to Grahamstown to help its activists draft a constitution. In the subsequent months, CRADORA established close ties with opposition leaders in towns such as Port Alfred.⁶⁷

In contrast to its relations with the Border civics, CRADORA's ties to the UDF remained tenuous. This was not uncommon. As Jeremy Seekings has shown, the impact of the UDF on local-level protest was minimal until early 1985. This was due in part to organizational problems and to ambiguity concerning the UDF's role in coordinating localized opposition.⁶⁸ In particular, the Eastern Cape UDF had emerged awkwardly, for it was beset by personal and ideological rivalries. It was finally born in December 1983, at a conference in Port Elizabeth. Goniwe and Calata attended the conference and affiliated the civic with the UDF. Yet even after the conference, CRADORA and the regional UDF maintained imperfect links. The UDF's resources were centered in Port Elizabeth, and regional UDF leaders rarely traveled to smaller, more rural towns such as Cradock. As civics became more assertive, and as the pace of

⁶⁶ Interviews with: Victor Puwani, 15 March 1995; Andile Sindelo, 12 March 1995; D. Bishop; N. Goniwe, 26 July 1995; and with P. Calata, 27 August 1995.

⁶⁷ Interview with N. Goniwe; interview with Dan Sandi, 1 August 1995.

⁶⁸ J. Seekings, "'Trailing behind the masses': The United Democratic Front and township politics in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal region, 1983-83," *JSAS*, vol.18, no.1, March 1991; J. Seekings, "The origins of political mobilisation in PWV townships," in *Popular Struggles in South Africa*.

events quickened after the UDF's formation, the divide widened. Goniwe criticized the UDF for neglecting CRADORA on questions of funding and strategy, and he criticized the behavior of regional UDF organizers as "domineering and undisciplined." Civic leaders in the Eastern Cape's hinterland thus formed strong ties amongst themselves, as opposed to forming links with opposition groups in metropolitan areas.⁶⁹

State officials recognized the power of civic protest and worked to undermine CRADORA. In late 1983, police allegedly spread a rumor that Goniwe intended to murder Fort Calata, out of jealousy that Calata had been appointed president of CRADOYA. Police also distributed anonymous "smear pamphlets" and warned Goniwe and other activists to refrain from politics. These tactics failed. As an enthusiastic CRADORA organizer wrote, police harassment "served to unite residents against a common enemy," and it gave the organisation credibility, most particularly in the eyes of the youth.⁷⁰

CRADOYA's youth needed little prodding to become more politically active. By the end of 1983, the youth association had dropped its apolitical facade. Its transition began with a play. Goniwe had persuaded a young CRADOYA member to write a play about the heroic Zulu figure, Shaka. CRADOYA took the show to surrounding Karoo townships and finally back to Lingelihle. Lingelihle's performance, however, crashed when some of the cast appeared drunk. Enraged at this lack of discipline, Goniwe convened the association to discuss its direction. One member replied that the group should sing freedom songs. Younger CRADOYA leaders eagerly accepted the suggestion, for they hoped to shift the association's focus to oppositional politics. At its next meeting, CRADOYA members sang freedom songs. Shortly thereafter, CRADOYA's chairman, a Rev. Phezi, stepped down. CRADOYA confirmed its political intentions by affiliating with the UDF at the December conference.

CRADOYA's linkage to the UDF, combined with renewed pressure by the security police, sharpened divisions within the community. Battle lines formed between many teachers and civic and youth organizers. "Before we were singing church songs and we brought back revolutionary songs, and they [teachers] saw this as a plot of the ANC," a former CRADOYA activist recounts. In December, most teachers withdrew from the youth association. Divisions also widened between activists and apolitical clergy. As CRADORA and CRADOYA grew, organizers needed halls for church meetings. The police approached local clergy and ordered them to refuse the civic use of their halls. Most clergy acceded to the order, while others began charging activists for the use of their facilities.⁷¹

Despite all these conflicts, Cradock's civic and youth organizations were flourishing by early 1984. According to one organizer, civic meetings "became stronger. That big hall [the township's community hall] would be so full . . . you have to go thirty minutes early to get space."⁷² By reviving youth-oriented networks and reducing generational conflict, focusing on material grievances, taking advantage of

⁶⁹ Interview with Stone Sizani, 6 August 1995; undated, handwritten note by Matthew Goniwe, Matthew Goniwe Papers, Manuscripts and Archives department, Yale University, folder two.

⁷⁰ Interview with Gladwell Makhawula, 2 February 1995; report from CRADORA organiser to the UDF National Executive Committee (NEC), evidence submitted to the *State vs. Baleka*, File J2.19 (T24).

⁷¹ Interview with Mopo Mene, 14 February 1995; interview with N. Frans, 21 December 1994; interview with T. Boss; and see J.-A. Bekker, "A diet of Shaka and beer made kids hungry for change," *Weekly Mail*, 24 April 1987.

⁷² Interview with N. Goniwe.

mounting anti-councillor sentiment, and involving adults, community leaders such as Goniwe had created a powerful, mass-based protest movement. Equally importantly, Canon Calata's funeral allowed civic leaders to connect their struggle to growing national opposition and to past protest campaigns, discourses, and slogans.

Yet non-violent mass protest could not last. In 1984, the state ordered Goniwe's transfer to another school. He refused. The government fired him, provoking a massive school boycott. The government then detained Goniwe and Fort Calata until late 1984, and younger activists and police engaged in violent confrontation. In late 1984, the government released the two men. Goniwe soon organized an intensive protest campaign against the Community Council. In early 1985, the councillors resigned, the first in South Africa to do so. Goniwe and other Cradock activists also set up innovative grassroots protest structures, known as street committees, and began organizing in neighboring towns, forcing those councillors to resign as well. In response, the government sought to eliminate Goniwe and Calata. At the end of June 1985, Goniwe, Calata and two other activists were ambushed while returning home from a UDF meeting, their charred and mutilated bodies were found several days later. Their funeral, held in Cradock in July of 1985, drew some fifty thousand people. Their graves were placed nearby that of another political stalwart, Canon Calata. That night, the government announced a state of emergency, setting off a reign of terror that would not abate for over five years.

CONCLUSION

Z.K. Matthews' 1954 prediction that J.A. Calata's "name would be prominent" in the history of South Africa has, unfortunately, not materialized. Few if any of the "mainstream" or popular histories of protest politics have given Calata proper recognition. To take two examples: Nelson Mandela's autobiography makes one fleeting mention of Calata; the *Reader's Digest Illustrated Guide to South African History* makes no mention at all. Yet Calata was a crucial actor in South African history, helping to save the ANC from extinction and linking localized protest to regional and national struggles. In so doing, he helped make the Eastern Cape one of the most vital centers of resistance in the country. And even in death, Rev. Calata was a vital historical figure. His funeral became a high-stakes arena in which notions of resistance, theology, and generational control were defined, popularized, and contested. His burial also nurtured the formation of non-violent Charterist civic and youth protest organizations across the Eastern Cape--organizations that would generate formidable mass-based opposition in the months to come.