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DEMOCRACY, CULTURE AND REMOVALS:
THE HISTORY OF 'BLACK-SPOT' COMMUNITIES IN LYDENBURG, 1943-1961

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AFRICANA

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DEMOCRACY, CULTURE AND REMOVALS: The history of 'black-spot' communities in Lydenburg, 1943-1961.

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Resistance to rural removals has, until now, not been analyzed as an important social movement that shaped the history of South Africa. This paper intends to make a case for such a proposition by analysing the struggles waged by 'black-spot' communities in the district of Lydenburg. Their attempts to maintain access to land in a 'white district' were only successful in one case, but the process of opposition in which all the communities participated had a number of consequential short and long-term effects. The paper therefore reinforces the view of Bonner *et al*, that 'countless individual, or small-scale acts of non-compliance ... played a decisive role in the rise and fall of apartheid.'[1]

The opposition practised by the community on the farm Aapiesdoorndraai is a particularly clear example of isolated, cautious methods of resistance modifying the intentions of the state. The other Lydenburg communities, in contrast, linked their resistance to broader political movements, which radicalised the opposition to removals and introduced democratic ideas into local discourses. The political movements did not, however, lead the struggle, and their impact can not be separated from the rural contexts and cultures into which they intervened. Democratic ideas were incorporated into local notions of appropriate forms of authority, and these ideas did not replace, but rather became part of a pre-existing determination to fight for land. The paper therefore seeks to address the silence around rural cultures in social movements, which was recently identified by Nemutanzhela.[2]

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1 P. Bonner, *et al, Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962*, (Johannesburg, Ravan & WUP, 1993), p. 2.

2 T.J. Nemutanzhela, 'Cultural Forms and Literacy as Resources for Political Mobilisation: A.M. Maliwha and the Zoutpansberg Balemi Organisation, 1939-1944', in *African Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 1993, p. 89. In this regard Nemutanzhela neglects to cite the important contribution of P. Delius, 'Sebatakgomo; Migrant Organisation, The ANC and the Sekhukhuneland Revolt', in *JSAS*, Vol. 15, No. 4, October 1989.

The paper does not, however, present an analysis based on cultural determinism. There were in fact individuals who opposed resistance even though they were located within the same culture as those who supported the resistance against removal. The 'collaboration' of these individuals demonstrates that material considerations were an important determinant of behaviour, and shows that 'collaboration' also sometimes produced the pursuit of African interests that modified the intention of the state.

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES AND THE LAND IN LYDENBURG

All the communities discussed in this paper regarded the land that they occupied in Lydenburg as something worth fighting for. Their determination to stay in the district contrasts with the feelings of the majority of Africans in Sekhukhuneland, who stayed away from Lydenburg and preferred 'urban and mine work', but is similar to the motives of a few 'reserve' families, who moved to Lydenburg in order to gain access to fertile fields.[3]

Lydenburg offered agricultural opportunities that were rapidly vanishing in the 'reserves'. As Isaac Twale told the Native Economic Commission in 1930: '[Lydenburg] natives [can't go to the locations of the chiefs] ... they are full, there is no space to get in.'[4] This perception was substantiated by the Sub-Native Commissioner of Sekhukhuneland, who described the conditions on the western side of the Steelpoort River as follows:

> '[Unused arable land] is getting less and less ... we have always got people coming into the locations ... and there are very few going out. ... Those people come in [and] demand new lands. Well, there is no new lands to give them ... so they simply have to use some of the lands that are [not used by absent owners].'[5]

The Commissioner stated that the 'reserve' was overstocked, eroded and not self-sufficient in food, due mainly to the climate and the soil types. Every seven out of eight years the district had to import maize. Climatically and physically the

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3 Central Archives Depot (CAD), Native Affairs Department (NTS), No. 222/280, Vol. 2096, NAD Memo, 31 January 1946.

4 Wits Historical Papers Library (WHPL), AD/438, Native Economic Commission (NEC), Lydenburg 18 August 1930, p. 625.

5 WHPL, AD 1438, Box 2, NEC, Evidence from Lydenburg, Major D.R. Hunt.

eastern side of the Steelpoort River, where the white farms were situated, was 'infinitely better'.[6]

In contrast to the conditions in Sekhukhuneland, the Lydenburg Africans who bought the farms Boomplaats and Aapiesdoorndraai in the early 1900s acquired land that was not being used, and turned both farms into productive agricultural enterprises. The section of Boomplaats that the community under chief Dinkwanyane bought was situated a distance away from the Spekboom River, but the community overcame this problem by building a canal that ran through their section and the section belonging to neighbouring farmer Ali Coetser, until the canal reached the river. This allowed some Boomplaats residents to irrigate their fields and plant wheat in winter.[7] The relatively small size of the fields and the abundance of cattle also allowed the residents to apply classic mixed farming principles by using cattle manure on their fields.[8] Within two generations, the Boomplaats residents had turned the initially arid farm into productive, irrigated plots, the value of which the Native Affairs Department (NAD) Agricultural Officer estimated to be £6 to £7 per morgen. At that time, 1949, the price for a good farm in Lydenburg was approximately £6 per morgen.[9]

Jacobus Manok, a self styled 'Shangaan Chief', bought the farm Aapiesdoorndraai, which was riparian to both the Steelpoort and Spekboom Rivers. As a result Manok's family was able to irrigate their land extensively. The farm contained as much as 260 morgen under irrigation and 100 morgen of arable dry land. Both the irrigated and the dry fields had very good soils, and in the late 1950s there was still no noticeable erosion on the whole farm.[10] The value of the farm was estimated at £44000.[11]

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6 *Ibid.*

7 African Studies Institute (ASI), Oral History Project (OHP), Tape No. 46 A/B, Interview with Kotana Stefaans Modipa, Jane Furse, 17 October 1979. See also, CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas) to Secretary of Native Affairs, 28 May 1956.

8 Interview with Mrs Moleke, Mashishing, 12 April 1992.

9 *Lydenburg News*, 14 January 1949; 20 January 1950.

10 WHPL, AD843.53.7, Edith Jones' notes on a visit to Aapiesdoorndraai, February 1941.

11 CAD, NTS, No. 936/308, Vol. 3464, Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland to Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas), 16 August 1956.

The company owned farms of Kalkfontein and Mosterthoek also produced good agricultural returns. People from Kalkfontein remembered that the farm usually produced their food requirements, plus a surplus that they used for bartering with people from surrounding farms.[12] In 1944 it was reported that Kalkfontein produced 3000 Bags of grain, and in 1949, at the time of the Kalkfontein removal, the 'bumper crop' of the residents reportedly filled up 100 truck loads.[13] Mosterthoek, according to one resident, facilitated 'a good life' because it produced the food requirements of its inhabitants in most years, as well as a small surplus that could be sold in the nearby Lydenburg market.[14] Further, the rents on these farms were not too onerous. They usually amounted to about £2 per year plus 2/- per head of large stock.[15] Most of the residents of these farms, it is shown below, paid this amount by engaging in migrant labour.

After 1940, when the Africans on the government owned farm Steelpoortpark were moved from the east to west side of the Steelpoort River, the four farms described above were almost the only areas on the eastern side where Africans could settle without having to work for a white farmer.[16] Therefore, in a regional context where land for Africans was becoming increasingly scarce, these productive farms provided the communities with a good reason to resist white encroachments on their land. The attractiveness of this land was enhanced even further by the 'independence' provided by the settlements described above. Most Sekhukhuneland residents refused to move over to Lydenburg because they were concerned about their access to urban jobs,[17] which, they no doubt realised, could be jeopardised if they placed themselves under the control of a white farmer. But on the company

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12 Interview with the Masha Council, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993.

13 CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas) to Secretary of Native Affairs, c1949.

14 Interview with Michael Monate and Jeremia Moleke, Mashishing, 10 April 1992.

15 CAD, NTS, No. 238/323, Vol. 7107, J.H. Walker to Native Commissioner Lydenburg, 17 October 1921; NTS, No. 136/323, Vol. 7099, Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland to Secretary of Native Affairs, 27 September 1922; NTS, No. 49/323, Vol. 7088, Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland to Secretary of Native Affairs, 11 August 1932; NTS, No. 971/323/17, Vol. 7155, D.R. Scott to Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland, 16 May 1955.

16 WHPL, AD843/RJ 2.2.6, List of African Occupied Farms in Lydenburg-Sekhukhuneland Region, 1938. For Steelpoortpark see Chapter One, p. 60.

17 CAD, NTS, No. 222/280, Vol. 2096, NAD Memo, 31 January 1946.

and African owned farms this was not an issue, and the residents of these farms were as free to engage in migrancy as any resident of Sekhukhuneland. Thus, for rent tenants and land owners, Lydenburg offered the best of both worlds: access to productive fields that provided some autonomy from the 'world of the whites' and access to urban jobs, which was exactly the kind of lifestyle most Sekhukhuneland residents coveted.[18]

There was one other reason to value the land in Lydenburg: the fluid and uncertain nature of the Pedi paramount's authority there. In the case of Manok and Dinkwanyane this situation gave them the opportunity to establish themselves as chiefs and expand their followings.[19] In the case of the community that settled on the company owned farm Kalkfontein, the situation allowed them to establish a tenuous independence from Chief Sekhukhune.[20] These issues had important effects on communal identities, and are described more fully below.

The willingness of these communities to oppose the state's removal plans is hardly surprising if the conditions described above are understood. But if all the communities had similar reasons to fight for their land, why then did they not offer the same kind of resistance? The answer is located in the historically defined identities of the communities, and the links that they established, or failed to establish, to institutions outside of Lydenburg.

HISTORY AND IDENTITIES

Historical experiences were an important resource in identity construction. Most of the groups that developed a strong communal identity have based this identity on a common history, and, although these histories were interpreted and manufactured, they were nevertheless derived, to varying extents, from actual

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[18] Delius, 'Migrant Organisation', p. 138: 'The residual resources of land and cattle provided important support for many rural households and allowed some men the possibility of early retirement from migrancy.'

[19] See below, p. 226; Interview with L.S. Kgane & Chief Hendrik Manok, Aapiesdoorndraai, 15 April 1993.

[20] Interview with Masha Chief's Council, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993.

historical events.[21] At the same time, the creative reconstruction of historical events ensured that available theories and existing social conditions had a large influence on the way history was used. These constructed identities, furthermore, then had an influence on the way the next historical event was interpreted, and the interplay between history, identities and social conditions was therefore a continuous process.

The essential difference between the historical experiences of the community under Manok and the one under Dinkwanyane was that the former leader arrived in Lydenburg from present day Zimbabwe as a refugee with no historical links to the area, whereas the latter had settled in Lydenburg as part of a coordinated movement undertaken by a Christian community under the leadership of the Pedi paramount's half-brother.[22] The Pedi had a long history in the Lydenburg area, and because Micha Dinkwanyane regarded himself as a Pedi chief, he had a legitimate historical claim to the area in which he settled. Manok also established a claim to the area, but because he had no connection to the Pedi claim to the area, he was forced, in order to satisfy his ambitions, to enter into a number of alliances.

Establishing alliances, especially with white protectors, was a common strategy for rootless refugees, and Manok had plenty of practice at doing just that.[23] As a boy Manok had learnt to speak Afrikaans, and had established friendly relations with white children, including the future vice-president of the Transvaal, Schalk Burger. After the war between white settlers and the Pedi in 1876, Manok helped the Lydenburg Native Commissioner to negotiate with Sekhukhune by acting as an interpreter.[24] In reward for his services he was appointed as a chief, with jurisdiction in 'white Lydenburg'. His followers were mostly from the mission station and consisted mainly of Afrikaans speaking ex-indetured labourers known

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[21] A. D. Smith. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 198.
[22] For the details of these events see Chapter One, pp. 35; 43.
[23] See Ritchken for the alliances established by refugees in the lowveld.
[24] Interview with L.S. Kgane & Chief Hendrik Manok, Aapiesdoorndraai, 15 April 1993; Interview with Chief Christian Manok by Edith Jones, Aapiesdoorndraai, February 1941.

as *inboekselings* and 'Shangaan' refugees. Dinkwanyane, whose followers were mainly Pedi, also claimed jurisdiction over African farm residents in Lydenburg. In response, and in recognition of many of his followers' ethnicity, Manok styled himself as a 'Shangaan' chief with a refugee following.[25]

Manok's childhood experiences caused him to have a lot in common with both 'Shangaan' refugees and ex-*inboekselings*. Delius argued that 'the refugee inboekseling ... ran the risk that deserting a white master could mean that he found himself without a defender, or that a servile position within Boer society had been exchanged for close and exacting ties of dependence within African societies.'[26] Thus, ex-*inboekselings*, like refugee 'Shangaans', were vulnerable and often dependant on white patrons, concerned to allay white fears, rather than challenge white claims.[27] Jacobus was equally vulnerable and eminently qualified to pursue a cooperative strategy. From an early age he had learnt the language and discourse of white Lydenburgers, and by winning their trust he had acquired power. White assistance had also helped him acquire land in 1902, as a white laywer negotiated the deal for Manok, and then advised the African to change his surname from Zwane to Manok, a racially neutral name that would not offend racist whites who saw the title deed.

In 1913 Manok tried to fight against the Land Act by travelling to England and appealing to the most important of all white patrons: King George V. The trip was, however, called off because Jacobus became ill. When the Stubbs commission came to Lydenburg to review the Land Act, Manok refused to express any strong opposition to the Act.

As a result of their different identities, Manok and Dinkwanyane expressed their claim to land in very different ways. Dinkwanyane drew on Pedi claims to the whole of the eastern Transvaal, and his father's occupation of land in Lydenburg

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[25] Beaumont Commission, Lydenburg, 30 May 1914: Evidence of Chief Manok.
[26] Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), p. 144.
[27] See E. Ritchken, Forthcoming Thesis, for the vulnerability of Shangaans in the lowveld.

before white control had been formalised.[28] He thus confidently told the Stubbs commission in 1918:

> 'We have lived here in this country for many years. We took it for our home. Our fathers lived and died here. Then there came a time when the white man appeared, and said 'We have bought these farms. You must leave.' After we had cultivated our lands we were compelled to leave because the white people came and took them away. We natives are many in this country, and we have a lot of stock, and we are starving with our stock.'[29]

He then went on to demand the whole of Sekhukhuneland and most of Lydenburg as the area that should be set aside for Africans in the eastern Transvaal. He further backed up his demands with arguments that clearly situated the issues facing Africans in Lydenburg within a regional, essentially Pedi, struggle for land. He said:

> 'That country is the only area I can recommend that would satisfy our natives. We include the village of Lydenburg. We want that to be our administrative centre and headquarters of our area. ... Colonel Damant has explained to us what the [Sekhukhune] natives have recommended. We do not agree with these recommendations. We want our area added to theirs. The natives here are spread chiefly over farms belonging to white people. They have a large quantity of great and small stock. Some of them are rent payers, and others are labour tenants.[30]

Another Boomplaats resident stated the case even more clearly. He explained:

> 'I am Mopedi. My chief is Micha. ... I agree with what the chief has said about the area. It is too small. I belong to Secocoeni's (sic) tribe. I should not like to go and live in Sekukuniland (sic). There is no more room for the natives in Sekukuniland. It is overcrowded there.'[31]

Jacobus Manok sent a spokesperson to the meeting and his demands were in stark contrast to the bold position taken by the Boomplaats residents. The spokesperson, Dirk Kana, refused to make any real demands, despite expressing concern about the situation that had arisen from the 1913 Land Act. He said:

> 'This [land] question is a great trouble to us. We can not prevent our father from doing what he wants, so we leave it to him to do what is right for us but not to chase us about from place to place. I obey the King. What he tells me to do I must do. ... I spoke with one of the native delegates sent to England to protest against the [1913 Land Act]. ... I had rather not say whether I think what he says against the Bill is right and proper.'[32]

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28 Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us*, p. 177.
29 Stubbs Commission, Lydenburg, 15 October 1917, Evidence of Micha Dinkwanyane.
30 *Ibid.*
31 Stubbs Commission, Lydenburg, 15 October 1917, Evidence of Abel Dimpejane.
32 Stubbs Commission, Lydenburg, 15 October 1917, Evidence of Dirk Kana.

At the end of the meeting those present were asked to stand up if they supported Dinkwanyane's proposal. The only people who remained sitting were Manok's ten followers at the meeting.

Different identities therefore divided the two land-owning communities from one another. The same was true of Lydenburg's two rent-paying communities. The history and identity of the Mosterthoek community was closely linked to Boomplaats. Micha Dinkwanyane had lived on the farm before the Boer War, and had left some followers behind when he moved away during the war. With the purchase of Boomplaats in 1906 Dinkwanyane once again put himself into contact with these followers, as Mosterthoek, which was now owned by a land company, shared a border with Boomplaats. The residents of Mosterthoek subsequently regarded Dinkwanyane as their chief. This allegiance undermined to some extent the community's resolve to oppose removals, because Dinkwanyane was unaffected by the Mosterthoek removal, and because Boomplaats offered a nearby, alternative area of settlement.[33]

In contrast, the Kalkfontein community did have a resident chief on the farm, and the community was therefore reluctant to submit to the authority of the neighbouring paramount chief in Sekhukhuneland. The people on Kalkfontein called themselves the Mashas, and they traced their origins back to present day Malawi. Their 'official history' - as narrated by the present chief - consists of numerous migrations in search of land and independence.[34] They settled on Kalkfontein in the 1860s. Here they found productive land that was situated on the outskirts of Sekhukhune's jurisdiction. Sekhukhune II attempted to extend his authority over the Mashas by arranging a marriage between his daughter and the Masha chief, but the Mashas felt that this marriage strengthened *their* position, and exonerated them from having to pay annual tribute to Sekhukhune.[35]

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[33] CAD, NTS, No. 238/323, Vol. 7107, Sub-Native Commissioner Johannesburg to NAD, 1 August 1923; Stubbs Commission, Lydenburg, 15 October 1917: Evidence of Salomon Sipube.

[34] Interview with Chief Lengwai II Masha, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993.

[35] Interview with Masha Chief's Council, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993.

Despite the tension between the Mashas and Sekhukhune the former nevertheless identified with Pedi land claims. They saw themselves as 'part of Sekhukhune's tribe' and spoke SePedi.[36] They shared a Pedi ethnicity even though their earlier history differentiated them from other Sekhukhuneland residents. Their identity is, however, perfectly compatible with the general character of Pedi ethnicity, which is essentially a supra-identity that transcends numerous local identities. These local identities emanated from the period before the Maroteng Paramountcy established its hegemony over *BaPedi*.[37]

Identification with Pedi land claims enabled the Mashas to claim ownership of Kalkfontein by virtue of the trials and tribulations that brought them there, and by their tenuous regognotion of the Pedi Paramount's authority:

> 'We talked to the [white man who tried to take our farm] a lot of times, trying to explain that this land is ours; and even the mineowners [who charged us rent] do not have a right to be here. As such they were supposed to pay us and our chief because they have their mines on our land.'[38]

This ownership claim had an important influence on their response to the state's removal policy. How this occurred will become clear when the paper examines the Masha removal in detail. It will also become clear that the Mashas' links to urban areas had an even greater impact on their resistance. Thus before the paper looks at the removals in detail, it first analyses the nature of migrant labour amongst Lydenburg's four African communities.

MIGRANCY AND LINKS TO THE URBAN AREAS

On Aapiesdoorndraai the eight children of Jacobus were each given a plot of land. In terms of Manok's will they were not allowed to sub-divide or sell their plots.[39] Many did however rent out pieces of their land, and accommodated labour tenants. But most were able to sustain themselves on the land without needing to resort

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[36] CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland to Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas), 9 February 1948.

[37] See Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us*, Preface; H.O. Mönnig, *The Pedi* (Pretoria, Van Schaik, 1967), p. 16.

[38] Interview with Masha Council, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993.

[39] CAD, NTS, No. 136/308, Vol. 3464, Secretary of Native Affairs to Native Commissioner Lydenburg, 21 March 1933; Interview with L.S. Kgane & Chief Hendrik Manok, Aapiesdoorndraai, 15 April 1993.

to migrant labour. Those who moved to the city did so on a permanent basis.[40] As Manok's following grew, many people settled on the unproductive dry-land sections of the farm, and these people did have to find jobs elsewhere. But economic divisions, the exclusion of non-family members from ownership of the land, and the recentness of the chieftainship's establishment, undermined the sense of community on Aapiesdoorndraai. As a result, those that did migrate did not offer their links to the urban areas as a weapon against removal threats. It was the Manok family's responsibility to defend the land, and they had no links to the urban areas.

On Boomplaats the followers of Dinkwanyane had all contributed to the purchase of the farm. This helped to strengthen their communal identification with the land. The Boomplaats purchase also brought into being a well established tradition of migrancy, because, in order to raise the money for the purchase, the male family heads had gone to work at Premier Mines, Sabie's gold mines and Johannesburg's mines. In later years male, and sometimes female, family members went to Johannesburg, Pretoria or Witbank.[41] There they worked in mines and as domestics in order to earn bride-wealth, and to supplement their families' income. Access to water from the Boomplaats canal was not equal, which caused those families who could not irrigate their fields to seek additional income in the towns. Further, as the sizes of the families on Boomplaats increased, migrancy became more general.[42] The land on Boomplaats was often not sufficient to provide for larger families, which increased the need for wage earnings. In addition there was no need for all the males to stay at home, so it made sense for the older sons to go to work in town.[43]

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40 Interview with L.S. Kgane & Chief Hendrik Manok, Aapiesdoorndraai, 15 April 1993.

41 Interview with Stefaans Moela, Mashishing, 14 April 1993; Mrs Mthembu, Jane Furse, 24 January 1992; Monica Letsoane, Mashishing 11 April 1992; Samuel Modipa, Mashishing, 11 April 1992; Mrs Moleke, Mashishing 12 April 1992; Betty Mnisi, Marulaneng, 6 June 1992.

42 Interview with Samuel Modipa, Mashishing, 11 April 1992.

43 See D. James, 'Land Shortage and Inheritance in a Lebowa Village', in *Social Dynamics* 14(2) 1988; D. James, 'A Question of Ethnicity: Ndzunza Ndebele in a Lebowa village', in *JSAS*, Vol. 16, No. 1, March 1990, p. 37; Interview with Betty Mnisi, Marulaneng, 6 June 1992; Interview with Mrs Moleke, Mashishing, 12 April 1992; Interview with Stefaans Moela, Mashishing, 14 April 1993.

On Kalkfontein migrancy was also well established. After graduating from initiation school, age regiments went to the urban areas to acquire bridewealth. This was already the practice in the nineteenth century when young men went to Kimberly. Cash was hard to come by on Kalkfontein because there were no towns in the vicinity of the farm that could provide markets for the crops produced on Kalkfontein. Thus the crops were consumed and bartered, while cash supplements were earned by the men in Johannesburg and Pretoria.[44] The Mashas built their own school and church and were able to acquire some education, which helped them to get jobs outside the mines: on the railways and in other secondary industry sectors. This pattern became established amongst both the Mashas and Boomplaats residents in the late 1930s, when jobs in the manufacturing sector became available for migrants.[45]

In contrast, the community on Mosterthoek did not establish well developed links with urban areas like Pretoria and Johannesburg. This occurred because of the quality of the agricultural land on Mosterthoek, and because of its proximity to Lydenburg. The farm's nearness to Lydenburg allowed Mosterthoek's residents, firstly, to seek short-term jobs there, and secondly, to sell their fairly abundant produce for cash.[46] Both these factors limited the need to seek jobs in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

The different links to particular urban areas played a crucial role in determining the very different behaviour of the Kalkfontein and Mosterthoek communities. The paper will demonstrate this by examining their reactions to the first removals, which, in the 1940s, were aimed at rent-tenants in white areas. But before we look at the consequences, we must first briefly examine the content of the state's policy.

REMOVAL POLICIES

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[44] Interview with Masha Chief's Council, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993.

[45] Interview with Masha Chief's Council, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993; See also P. Delius, 'Sebatakgomo; Migrant Organisation, The ANC and the Sekhukhuneland Revolt', in *JSAS*, Vol. 15, No. 4, October 1989, p. 593.

[46] Interview with Abraham Motau, Jane Furse, December, 1990.

Chapter Four of the 1936 Land Act committed the state to abolishing rent-tenancy in white areas. This aspect of the Chapter was not implemented because the NAD first wanted to acquire new land that would be added to 'black areas' and would then be able to accommodate rent-tenants expelled from 'white areas'. However, while the NAD continued with its land consolidations in the 1940s, most companies who owned land occupied by rent-tenants sold it to white farmers, thus avoiding the responsibility of removing long-standing clients.[47] This strategy was facilitated by the strong demand for land amongst white farmers, which was caused by the expansion of the white rural population during a time when agriculture was increasingly becoming a profitable enterprise. These processes fed into a pre-existing racist antagonism against 'independent Africans' in 'white areas', and caused white farmers to become more vociferous in their demands for 'black spot' removals.[48]

RESISTANCE AND POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

Kalkfontein and Mosterthoek

The earlier experiences of the Kalkfontein community shows that their existence had been threatened for some time by white economic advance and demand for land. In 1925 Kalkfontein was bought by a platinum mining company who charged rent for residence and cattle.[49] Before the company's purchase the farm was owned by an individual named Van der Merwe. The arrangement with him was also rent-tenancy, but in 1920, at the end of an agricultural boom in Lydenburg, he decided that the residents would have to become labour tenants. The community on Kalkfontein resisted this change, and they were led by their chieftainess Magosebo, a daughter of chief Sekhukhune II. Van der Merwe responded by evicting many of the residents, including the chieftainess and her son, Petrus Makopole Masha. After the company purchase and the return of rent-tenancy the two were allowed to return to Kalkfontein.

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[47] CAD, NTS, No. 1209/308, Vol. 3636, NAD Memo, c1946.

[48] See S. Schirmer, 'Racism and White Farmers: The Initiation of Racial Land Divisions at the Local Level', in *Africa Perspective*, Vol. 2, No. 1, December 1993, p. 40.

[49] CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Lydenburg Platinum Areas Ltd. to Sub-Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland, 24 November 1926: '£1.10.0 per person per anum including wife or wives, and a grazing fee of £3 per anum for large stock and six pence for small stock.'

Despite these early difficulties, the Mashas kept their land longer than the other remaining rent-tenants in Lydenburg: the community on Mosterthoek. Mosterthoek was sold in 1944, by the Central South African Lands and Mines Company, to a white farmer called Steenkamp.[50] The residents of the farm tried to counter this impending process by offering to buy the farm themselves. In this quest they were assisted by the recently elected Native Representative, Hyman Basner. The state, however, rejected the African purchase offer because the farm was not situated in a 'released area'.[51] There was no further overt resistance to the new farmer once Basner's pleas had fallen on deaf ears. Michael Monate remembered that people felt that the white farmer took away their lands because he was jealous of their productivity, but they accepted this fatalistically and moved away to Boomplaats, where they settled on smaller, rocky fields.[52] In this way they mitigated the harshness of the removal by retaining access to some land within the same vicinity, as well as links to the community under chief Micha Dinkwanyane.

Although the Mosterthoek community brought in Basner in 1944, they were unable to link up with urban political movements, because they mainly went no further afield in search of wages than Lydenburg town. In contrast, Kalkfontein was sold to a white farmer in the previous year, but there the community refused to accept the resulting situation, primarily because the Mashas established links to both the ICU and the ANC. The importance of these links will become apparent in the following examination of the Masha's resistance against removal.

At the end of 1943, the Lydenburg Platinum Areas Company sold Kalkfontein to a farmer called Martin Nieuwenhuize. Most of the African residents refused to accept the conditions imposed by the new owner, but their resistance was beginning to crumble when the 'United ICU', a very small ICU offshoot situated in Pretoria's Marabastad under the leadership of Robert Malatji, became involved

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[50] Interview with Maria Mkhonto, Jane Furse, 9 December 1990; Interview with Emily Mkhonto, Jane Furse, 8 February 1991.

[51] CAD, NTS, No. 282/323, Vol. 7107, Senator Basner to Secretary of Native Affairs, 2 September 1944.

[52] Interview with Michael Monate and Jeremia Moleke, Mashishing, 10 April 1992.

and encouraged the Masha's to resist.[53] Gawie Masha, who worked in Pretoria and had been in contact with the ICU prior to the sale, led the resistance. He had been given his trek-pass by Nieuwenhuize because he refused to agree to the new labour tenant contracts that Nieuwenhuize tried to impose. Masha then went to Pretoria to ask the ICU for advice and returned to Kalkfontein with the message that: 'Mr Nieuwenhuize can do nothing. You go on ploughing'.[54] He collected ICU membership fees and told people at a meeting: 'This money I am collecting is to protect you'.[55] The involvement of the ICU gave the Masha's renewed hope. Some people had already accepted labour tenant contracts while others had left the farm, but when Gawie Masha returned from Pretoria with the assurance of ICU support most of the people on Kalkfontein rallied behind him.

One of the most important aspect of the ICU's involvement was that it acted as an alternative broker to the existing Chief. This was particularly important in a context where chiefs were increasingly becoming state officials and were no longer prepared to represent the interests of their followers if these clashed with the state. The first ICU members, including Gawie and his father Piet Nyoko, established themselves as an alternative leadership. They held weekly meetings and formed a committee from which the Chief was completely excluded.[56] This did not mean that people rejected the institution of chieftainship, but the new emerging concepts of leadership placed a greater emphasis on accountability and less on the genealogical basis of chieftainship.[57]

Chief Petrus Masha, who with his mother had opposed the previous abolishment of rent-tenancy, was opposed to the ICU and the decision to resist. He gave the Native Commissioner details about the meetings and he asked the state to remove

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53 H. Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom* (New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1987), p. 254.

54 CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Declaration by Petrus Masha, 12 January 1944.

55 *Ibid.*

56 CAD, NTS, No. 444/323 Vol. 7120, Nieuwenhuize to Frikkie Maré, 30 May 1944; CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland to Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas), 9 February 1948.

57 P. Delius, 'The Tortoise and the Spear: Popular Political Culture and Violence in the Sekhukhuneland Revolt of 1958', Unpublished Paper, 1994: 'Both ANC members and commoners laid great stress on the ideal that *kgoshi ke kgoshi ka batho* [the chief is chief by the people] as a counterpoint to the increasingly authoritarian and co-opted realities of chiefly rule.'

Gawie Masha in January of 1944. He actually accompanied Martin Nieuwenhuize to the NAD offices to call for the expulsion of the Kalkfontein residents. At that meeting Nieuwenhuize claimed that he had 'lost control' of his property because the people there 'plough and sow as they please'.[58] He blamed this state of affairs on Gawie Masha and the ICU's promise that they would protect the people from Nieuwenhuize. In response to these complaints the NAD sent a constable, who encountered defiance and rejection of Nieuwenhuize's ownership. Most of the leaders at Kalkfontein failed to respond to the summons from the constable. The one person who did, refused to divulge any information and asked indignantly:

> 'What do you want me for? This is a secret affair and has nothing to do with Mr Nieuwenhuize. This farm belongs to the Company and Nieuwenhuize has nothing to do with it.'[59]

The state then took the initiative and prosecuted some of the residents for breach of contract. Hyman Basner again assisted the company farm residents of Lydenburg by hiring a Mr Boshoff to represent the accused. The prosecutions were however successful, especially after Basner's representative proved to be less than sympathetic and refused to defend people who had 'obviously been incited by some or other sinister movement'.[60] This outcome did not dampen the Masha's determination to resist. The convicted residents ignored the court and went back to Kalkfontein while Basner once again tried to negotiate with the NAD. This time Basner asked the NAD to buy another farm as compensation, and the Native Commissioner of Sekhukhuneland supported this proposal. But the Department of Lands refused to sell the proposed farms because the local farmers association objected. As a result the proposal was shelved.

The determined resistance of the Mashas continued to have an important impact on the situation. By the end of 1944 Nieuwenhuize was becoming less resolute. He feared that if he tried to force the Africans off Kalkfontein with a court order 'they

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[58] CAD, NTS, No. 444/323 Vol. 7120, Declaration made by Martin Nieuwenhuize, 12 January 1944. Interestingly, this resonates with Joanne Becker's work on resistance to 'betterment' in the Northern Transvaal. The title of her unpublished honours thesis is, 'We Will Plough Where We Like'.

[59] CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Statement made by Geelbooi Matidi, 15 January 1944.

[60] CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Mr Nieuwenhuize to Frikkie Maré, 30 May 1944.

will retaliate by inflicting injury to his other properties and livestock'.[61] This trepidation gave the Kalkfontein residents a reprieve until February 1946, when a new contender appeared on the scene. Martin Nieuwenhuize had promised Kalkfontein to his son-in-law, L.J.L. Malan. The latter now returned from active service in Syria determined to claim his inheritance. He backed up his calls for action with details of numerous 'disturbing' developments in the area since 1944. The first was an attack carried out by the Kalkfonteiners against two white *bywoner* families who farmed on a neighbouring segment of Kalkfontein. The *bywoner* families left the farm and the Africans took over the land. The other development was the movement of numerous labour tenant families to Kalkfontein, which infuriated farmers whose labour supply diminished as a result.

The arrival of Malan and the growing anger of the white farming community helped Nieuwenhuize to overcome his earlier fear. He obtained an ejectment order against the Kalkfontein residents. The Deputy Sheriff however experienced severe problems when he tried to issue the court order to the eighty seven families affected:

> 'When he arrived with the interpreter he found some fifty natives congregated. He tried to explain the writ and was shouted down. He called out the names of those on the list but, with the exception of one, they refused to respond. The one who did respond refused to accept the copy of the court order and adopted a very truculent attitude, as did all those present.'[62]

Nieuwenhuize's courage was exhausted. He refused to help the Sheriff because he heard that the 'Kalkfontein natives say that if the police come to take them off the farm their blood will be spilt, but Nieuwenhuize's body will also be found there'.[63]

After further delays lasting a full year the police and the NAD finally moved onto the farm, backed by a substantial number of armed men. Starting on the 18

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61 CAD, NTS, No. 444/323 Vol. 7120, NAD Memo: The Controller of Native Settlements, c1944.

62 CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Commissioner (SAP) Nelspruit to Secretary of Native Affairs, 24 August 1946.

63 CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Deputy Commissioner (SAP) Transvaal Division to Commissioner (SAP) Nelspruit, 6 September 1946.

August 1947, and for the duration of three days, fifty four families were moved from Kalkfontein to the nearby trust farm Steelpoortdrift. The Africans offered no resistance to this substantial show of force, but Shulamoth Muller, S. Rappaport and Ruth First, all from the Communist Party, watched the proceedings to ensure that no irregularities took place.

By the 9th of February 1948 most of the people from Kalkfontein had left the smaller and very unproductive Steelpoortdrift and re-occupied 'their land'. A notable exception was Chief Petrus Masha, who decided to obey the NAD and remained on Steelpoortdrift. Labour tenants from white farms also continued to move to Kalkfontein, while members of the Kalkfontein 'committee' sought to expand the area of cultivation available to them by prohibiting neighbouring Indian tenants from ploughing. White farmers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with this situation and they threatened to form a 'commando' and attack the farm. The Pedi paramount Morwamotse Sekhukhune tried to intervene by offering the Kalkfonteiners land in the Nebo area. On the 19th October Morwamotse accompanied by the Native Commissioner, Frank Maserumule, Chief Kgolokoe and James Mabowe Sekhukhune addressed the people on Kalkfontein. All the speakers advised the people to leave Kalkfontein peacefully. These exhortations had no effect.[64]

The ANC then intervened in an attempt to 'obtain a peaceful settlement'. The ANC's solution was to look, with the assistance of the NAD, 'for a suitable property in the released area' as an alternative for Kalkfontein. The representatives of the Kalkfontein community agreed to this compromise and they eventually decided on the farm De Hoop. But farmers, some of whom were still considering a raid on Kalkfontein, refused to permit the purchase of this farm because it fell outside the 'released area'. The NAD then offered two other impoverished farms, which were later also rejected by other 'black spot'

[64] CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland to Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas), 19 October 1948.

communities, and thus the compromise solution broke down.[65]

After this solution failed the NAD labelled the Kalkfontein community as 'unreasonable'. The Kalkfonteiners, it was decided, had therefore forfeited their rights to compensatory land, and they could now be placed on any available 'trust land'. On the 27th of June 1949 the second removal was undertaken with the assistance of sixty armed policemen. This time the removal lasted four days and 150 families were settled in tents on the farm Geen Einde. Although the residents had held a meeting and decided to resist, they were overwhelmed by the size of the police force. They did not offer any opposition. People were given the opportunity to return and gather their crops and cattle, but most cattle and many bags of grain were lost. The Mashas, with the assistance of the ICU, tried to find ways to return to Kalkfontein, but the police patrolled the area on a daily basis. Those who returned were arrested and charged with trespassing. Even a Supreme Court decision stating that the removal was illegal failed to reverse the process. The NAD refused to yield. They claimed that when they were made aware of the court's decision, the removal was already a *fait accompli*.

In 1943, a year after the first people had joined the ICU, many of the Mashas working in Pretoria and Johannesburg had joined the ANC while still retaining ICU membership.[66] The reasons for this dual membership were described by members of the present Chief's Council:

> 'What we wanted was to build a concrete defence which would protect us from both sides. When one was weakened the ANC would come on strong. [They agreed enthusiastically that] by having both cards it helped us to be stronger because the ANC would be negotiating and ICU using lawyers. When you have problems you do whatever you think will help.'[67]

Clearly they regarded membership of these political movements as a resource to

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[65] CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, ANC Transvaal Branch to Secretary of Native Affairs, 11 November 1948; Secretary of Native Affairs Memo, 4 February 1949; Deputy Commissioner to Commissioner, South African Police, 14 March 1949; Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland to Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas), 6 April 1949.

[66] Interview with Masha Chief's Council, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993.

[67] Interview with Masha Council, Strydkraal, 15 April 1993; The intervention was made by Philip Mbiba.

be used in their local struggle for land. There is no indication that the Masha ANC/ICU members absorbed the ideology of these movements in the way that a few migrants from Sekhukhuneland were conscientised by the Communist Party in the 1940s and early 50s.[68] The Masha's membership had more in common with other Sekhukhuneland residents who joined ANC linked organisations in the late 1950s. Most of these rural residents 'remained doubtful about the ANC' and concentrated on dealing with local problems.[69]

The ANC and ICU were very different in the 1940s. During that decade Israel Moroe, the chair of many ICU meetings in Marabastad during the 1930s, first left politics and then joined the ANC. Consequently the already declining support for the ICU in Pretoria vanished altogether.[70] But a small group under Robert Malatji maintained the ICU in Marabastad, inspired by the tradition of anti-communism that had been a prominent part of many ICU platforms since 1927.[71] Linked to this was an attempt to represent the ICU to the state as a 'reasonable' organisation that should be encouraged as a way to divert Africans from radicalism.[72] The ANC, on the other hand, was gradually becoming the representative of 'radical' Africans. The extent and nature of their radicalism was constantly debated, but their growing commitment to mass action, demands for the franchise, desire to represent all African grievances, and their alliance with the Communist Party made their political position incompatible with the tactics favoured by the ICU.[73] Both organisations did, however, stress the importance of allowing Africans to have a say in their own affairs, and it is likely that this message resonated with, and was adopted by, people who were dissatisfied with chiefs who ignored their follower's concerns. This explains why the ICU members

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[68] P. Delius, 'Sebatakgomo and the Zoutpansberg Balemi Organisation', p. 15-16.

[69] P. Delius, 'Sebatakgomo', p. 613.

[70] N. Mokgatle, *The Autobiography of an Unknown South African* (Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1971), p. 222.

[71] See Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom*, pp. 128, 254-256; E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1948), pp. 167-168.

[72] CAD, NTS, No. 444/323, Vol. 7120, Stephen Mabula to Secretary of Native Affairs, 26 July 1949.

[73] Delius, 'Migrants Organisation', p. 148; showed that the Communist Party played an important role in radicalizing the ANC. Within the Lydenburg-Sekhukhuneland region specifically, the communist party migrants from Sekhukhuneland began to shift the ANC away from a rural policy based on consultation with chiefs, to a more popularly based policy.

at Kalkfontein circumvented their chief so readily, and connects the Masha's ideas to those expressed at Boomplaats, by ANC members who also opposed their chief.

Boomplaats

Links to Sekhukhuneland, in terms of a Pedi identity, enabled the Mashas to claim Kalkfontein as 'their land', but links to the paramountcy proved to be a hinderance rather than a help. Kalkfontein residents claimed that Morwamotse supported the removal because the Mashas were able to avoid his control while they stayed at Kalkfontein. The Dinkwanyane community, whose fight against removal began in 1949, was, on the other hand, able to draw strength from links to the paramountcy, because massive transformations occurred in Sekhukhuneland during the 1950s.

The shortage of land in Sekhukhuneland had become more acute in the 1950s. In 1952 the Native Commissioner estimated that about 10,000 families could make a 'reasonable' (although not secure) living in the area. This was based on the estimation that each family would require five morgen of land. The problem was that the implementation of such a scenario would require the displacement of 5000 families, or 25,000 people. Whereas hardly any extra land had been available in 1930, in 1952 people exceeded, by one-third of their number, the amount of land that should have been used per family.[74]

The concern about land within this regional situation was eloquently expressed by Chief Frank Maserumule, who was the only African from Sekhukhuneland consulted by the Tomlinson commission of 1952. Chief Maserumule told the commission:

> 'It would have been better if from the start we would have been given more land. Now things are wrong. You gave one tribe which is a thousand people a small place to live on, and how would a thousand people live in that small place? ... The Trust has taken the farms [outside our location]. If our people were given those farms which are now occupied by the Trust, it would be much better because they are

[74] CAD, NK, No. 2, Vol. 65, Native Commissioner's Evidence on Sekhukhuneland submitted to Tomlinson Commission, c1952.

next door to us. Now those farms are occupied by people who come from far.'[75]

Chief Maserumule also explained that Africans needed land to survive *in the present situation*. If blacks started getting jobs like those held by whites, he explained, then they would no longer need land to supplement their incomes. Thus the residents of Sekhukhuneland could identify with the kind of lifestyle, based on a migrant labour income supplemented by 'independent' access to agricultural crops, that many of the Lydenburg communities tried to defend. Due to the establishment of betterment policies, the state interfered with a new intensity in the lives of 'reserve' residents, many of whom began, as a matter of principle, to oppose state encroachments in any rural area. These Sekhukhuneland residents expressed support for the struggle against removals in Lydenburg. In the early 1950s they regarded, Delius argued, the removal of 'black spots' as an attack against the 'remaining economic props of their rural world'.[76]

A growing militancy emerged in Sekhukhuneland at this time, and its focus became the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act. When the state asked Morwamotse to agree to this Act in 1953 many people in Sekhukhuneland saw this as an attempt to undermine their independence and the dignity of the chief.[77] Their opposition was led by migrants who had become ANC and Communist Party members in the towns. These migrants returned to Sekhukhuneland and forced Morwamotse to accept a new Chief's Council, dominated by ANC members. The migrants, who were part of a political movement known as Sebatakgomo, promoted the idea that chiefs should represent the wishes of their followers, and should not collaborate with outside authorities such as the South African state. Morwamotse changed after the new Sebatakgomo dominated Chief's Council came to power. He rejected Bantu Authorities, and refused to help the state with their removal of Boomplaats.[78] Thus, when the time came for the Boomplaats community to resist

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[75] CAD, K, No. 20, Vol. 54, Evidence given to the Tomlinson Commission by Chief Maserumule, c1952, p. 840.

[76] Delius, 'Sebatakgomo', p. 22.

[77] Delius, 'The Tortoise and the Spear', p. 10.

[78] See Delius, 'Sebatakgomo' for details on these events; CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, NAD to Native Commissioner Lydenburg, 13 March 1958.

removal, their struggle was already part of a wider conflict in which defining the role of chiefs was crucial.

The perception that the conflict on Boomplaats was linked to Sekhukhuneland was enhanced by close ties between the chiefly families, which were reinforced when Thorometsane, a sister of Morwamotse, married Micha Dinkwanyane's son.[79] When Thorometsane became chieftainess and decided to go along with the removal in 1955 it was deemed by many members of the community as unacceptable behaviour and tantamount to agreeing to Bantu Authorities.[80] In retrospect, her behaviour is contrasted with Micha and Morwamotse, who were regarded as good chiefs. Michael Mashupje remembered:

> '[Boomplaats] was a peaceful place, there was no conflict. But because of marriage this woman [Thorometsane] destroyed all of that. Her brother is Sekhukhune. He disagreed with all this thing. He was taken away, banished to some area and when he came back he could not even talk.'[81]

Dinkwanyane (like Morwamotse who later refused Bantu Authorities because of the pressure exerted by Sebatakgomo) was not unambiguously opposed to co-operation with the state. He co-operated with the Native Commissioner in drawing up cards that registered new settlers on Boomplaats and he fought for recognition as a chief under the 1927 Native Administration Act, because non-recognition undermined his authority in the Lydenburg area.[82] It is thus not entirely clear where Micha would have placed his loyalties if he had been faced with the choices later faced by his daughter-in-law. When the NAD started its campaign to remove Boomplaats they were told that Micha was too old to adequately represents the interests of the residents. They had to negotiate instead with the Chief's Council. Micha's absences from these meetings might indicate that he was not strongly in favour of opposing the removal. However, this impression is contradicted by a letter he wrote in 1951, in which he spoke about the NAD's plan to clear Lydenburg of African farmers, and urged his followers to fight against this

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79 See H.O. Mönnig, *The Pedi*, p. 38.

80 For similar developments in the lowveld, see E. Ritchken, Forthcoming Thesis.

81 Interview with Michael Mashupje, Mashishing, 2 February 1992.

82 CAD, NTS, No. 274/323, Vol. 7109, Secretary of Native Affairs to Native Commissioner Lydenburg, 9 December 1933.

process.[83]

Two years earlier, on the 15th of February 1949, the Native Commissioner of Lydenburg, perhaps acting in terms of a more determined Apartheid initiative against 'black spots', had informed the people on Boomplaats that they had to leave their farm and should choose an alternative farm in the 'released area'.[84] Thomas Dinkwanyane, acting as spokesperson for the Chief's Council, explained that 'we [intend to] remain on the above-mentioned farm due to climatical and the heavy expenses entered into in improving the farm, i.e. making of the dams, planting trees etc.'[85] Thomas presented this resolution after the matter had been discussed with 'the people of Boomplaats'.[86] Subsequent meetings between NAD officials and the Council usually involved a large number of men and women spectators who participated by loudly voicing their collective approval or disapproval. During that time there was no indication that anyone on the farm supported the proposed removal.

The situation changed after Micha Dinkwanyane's death in 1952, which was followed by the deaths, in quick succession, of his son and grandson and the accession of Thorometsane Victoria Dinkwanyane. She worked closely with her brother James Mabowe Sekhukhune, who strongly favoured cooperation and was a key figure in the NAD's attempt to incorporate the Pedi Paramount into Bantu Authority structures.[87] James' importance to the state allowed him to intervene on behalf of his sister. He obtained the state's permission to find an appropriate farm for the Boomplaats community, and in October 1955 he examined the available farms with Thorometsane's committee of Boomplaats residents who

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[83] Letter handed to Author by Samuel Modipa, Micha Dinkwanyane to *Go* Bapedi Tribe, 14 December 1951.

[84] L. Platzky & C. Walker, *The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1985), p. 116.

[85] CAD, NTS, Vol. 3778, No. 2331/308, Meeting Between Native Commissioner Lydenburg and Dinkwanyane Tribe, 15 February 1949.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Victoria Dinkwanyane to Nkwale Skosana, May 1956; Interview with Samuel Modipa, Mashishing, 11 April 1992.

supported the decision to cooperate.[88] They chose the farm Sterkspruit, a choice that was at first opposed by the NAD's Chief Native Commissioner on the grounds that 'Sterkspruit [is] too valuable to offer to Natives who don't care about farming'.[89] But the need to placate cooperative people like Thorometsane and James Mabowe led the NAD eventually to approve Sterkspruit as compensation for Boomplaats.[90]

The supporters of Thorometsane on Boomplaats were mostly wealthy land-owners who were probably persuaded by the fertility of Sterkspruit, and the compensation that the NAD promised to pay for any 'improvements' that would be left behind on Boomplaats.[91] The rest of her supporters were established Boomplaats residents who were 'close to the chieftainess'.[92] But a large group of people remained strongly opposed to the removal. The earlier consensus broke down, which gave the chieftainess an additional reason to support the removal. The split in the community undermined the chieftainess' authority, and made her more dependent on the NAD. Initially she probably decided to go along with the removal because the danger of resistance seemed too great and because the NAD offered her a car, residence in the new farm's abandoned house, and, eventually, a salary in terms of the Tribal Authorities Act. But once she made this decision she gradually lost control of most of her followers. She realised that on the new farm, with the NAD's help, her control over those who decided to move with her was assured.[93]

The ANC first became involved in the Boomplaats conflict in 1955 through a migrant by the name of Hezekiel Mpjane. He worked in Johannesburg, where he

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88 Interview by P. Delius with James Mabowe Sekhukhune, 12 October 1987; My thanks to Peter Delius for giving me access to this interview.

89 CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas) to Secretary of Native Affairs, 6 November 1954.

90 CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas) to Secretary of Native Affairs, 15 October 1955: 'One moet haar tegemoet kom want die uitwerking van haar handeling op die res van die Boomplaats bewoners kan niks anders as heilsaam wees.'

91 See below, p. 249; Interview with Michael Monate and Jeremia Moleke, Mashishing, 10 April 1992; Letta Sekhukhune, Jane Furse, 23 January 1992.

92 Interview with Letta Sekhukhune, Jane Furse, 23 January 1992.

93 Interview with Samuel Modipa, Mashishing, 11 April 1992; Mrs Moleke, Mashishing, 12 April 1992.

contacted Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, who, in their capacity as lawyers, drew up a petition that Mpjane brought back to Boomplaats were it was signed by 137 protesting residents.[94] The petition was powerfully and eloquently phrased, and suggests that, despite the lack of a comprehensive ANC rural programme, Mandela and Tambo, at least, understood some of the issues that inspired rural people. The petition claimed that the removal was unacceptable, despite the offer of compensation, because 'Boomplaats is our social, economic and religious home and no substitute and/or compensation can ever suffice'.[95]

In the 1950s a greater number of rural migrants joined the ANC in towns like Johannesburg.[96] Young migrants from Boomplaats participated in this trend, and they joined an ANC that had extended its radicalism since the 1940s.[97] With the growing dominance of communists and youth-league members within, and the newly elected National Party threatening to wipe out even moderate political opposition, the ANC became wholly committed to extensive mass action. This context, it can be argued, gave ANC members hope of an approaching political victory and thus boosted the confidence of all those who believed in such a possibility.[98] In addition, youth league members' faith in 'the will of the majority', and communists' regard for 'grass roots issues' produced greater and clearer support for democratic forms of government that should represent rather than rule the majority. In Lydenburg, these ideas bolstered the opposition of communities against chiefs who ignored their 'majority'.[99]

The two most prominent leaders of the resistance on Boomplaats were migrants

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94 Interview with Mrs Mnisi, Acornhoek, 18 November 1993; Mandela remembered his involvement with the Boomplaats petition during a discussion with K. Schirmer, c1993.

95 CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Petition of Dinkwanyane-Bapedi Tribe, c1955.

96 Delius, 'Migrant Organisation', p. 150; This happened especially after the Communist Party was banned in 1951 and its members accepted 'the necessity of a close alliance with the ANC and the centrality of the national democratic struggle.' See 'Migrant Organisation', p. 149.

97 Interview with Michael Mashupje, Mashishing, 14 April 1993; Stefaans Moela, Mashishing, 14 April 1993. Interviews.

98 See L. Kuper, *Passive Resistance in South Africa* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1956), pp. 120-121.

99 For the 'mystic communion' between youth leaguers and 'the popular classes', see Lodge, *Black Politics*, p. 22. For the contribution of communists to mass-based politics see, Delius, 'Migrant Organisation', p. 148.

and ANC members called Petrus Magabe and Ananias Leshaba. They used the language of democracy that they had acquired from the ANC, by declaring that Thorometsane's position was illegitimate because she and her secretary, Sesthanius Phala, 'were not elected, but assumed the duties of administering the tribe without consultation with the tribe.'[100] It was Joseph Mashele who came up with the idea that there should be 'a regularly elected leader' on Boomplaats. Accordingly a general meeting was called on 15 June 1956 by Hesekiel Mpanya, a grandson of Micha Dinkwanyane who lived in Johannesburg.[101] At the meeting Petrus Magabe was elected by 'majority vote' to take over the position of chief. Ananias Leshaba became the chief's secretary. Thorometsane and Phala were 'asked to relinquish their position as office bearers of the tribe'.[102] Thus the chieftainess could now be condemned not only because she was involved in an unacceptable relationship with 'outsiders' but also because she did not represent the wishes of the majority. This language clearly helped people to articulate their opposition to Thorometsane and is still evident among those who condemn her today. Samuel Modipa, for example, remembered:

> 'Those people who were pro-Thorometsane held their meetings in secret at night. The other people would call meetings during the day so that there would be no splits. ... the chieftainess was aware that she could not exercise her power in the presence of the majority, its like they were obstructing her.'[103]

Michael Mashupje, an ANC member who later went into exile, also condemned Thorometsane's insensitivity to the views and demands of 'the people'. He explained:

> 'She was rude, she never understood the views of other people. She is just married to Boomplaats, the farm was bought by the people, but she would not listen to anyone. She sided with the Apartheid system.'[104]

Before those who were against the removal formally elected Magabe they became involved in a number of violent conflicts with those who refused to fight. On the 28 April 1956, at one-o-clock at night, a group of unknown people attacked

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100 CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Affidavit made by Petrus Magabe, Undated.
101 CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Native Commissioner Lydenburg to Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas), 18 July 1956.
102 CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Affidavit made by Petrus Magabe, Undated.
103 Interview with Samuel Modipa, Mashishing, 11 April 1992.
104 Interview with Hosia Phala & Michael Mashupje, Mashishing, 2 February 1992.

Sesthanius Phala's house and burnt it to the ground. Phala's dogs woke him up as the house began to catch a blaze and he was able to save himself and his family. There were rumours that this attack was part of a well-laid plan to kill both Phala and Thorometsane.[105] The violence did not escalate, however, because Thorometsane and her followers (consisting of 45 families) left Boomplaats and settled on the trust farm Sterkspruit in December 1956. After that they only returned to Boomplaats under police escort.

But even after Thorometsane and her followers left, the threat of violence against any co-operation with the state remained. When Agricultural Officers tried to get Boomplaats residents to sign validations of their properties, a number of women screamed at them to go away. They claimed that people would be killed if the officials' vehicles were seen in front of their houses. The officials themselves *were* attacked:

> 'A number of Africans ran at them with stones and metal weapons so they got in their cars and drove back. The Africans chased their car. On route out of Boomplaats they were intercepted by a hostile mob. They turned around and took a different route out of Boomplaats. This exit was barricaded with stones and logs. The officials had to remove these obstacles in a hurry as a number of Africans were still chasing them. They managed to escape.'[106]

These attacks against officials and 'collaborators' parallel the attacks on 'rangers' in Sekhukhuneland. The 'rangers', named after the Africans who policed the 'trust farms', were residents of Sekhukhuneland who supported Bantu Authorities. In 1958 nine were killed and many more injured. In Kenya during the Mau Mau conflict most Kikuyu attacks were also against collaborators. Lonsdale's recent assessment of Mau Mau examined the shared cultural values of the Kikuyu, which became increasingly relevant and the subject of hot debate as more and more Kikuyu's faced landlessness and marginalisation.[107] Knott argued, in the context of Irish agrarian resistance, that tenants would often attack and kill other tenants who accepted 'unacceptable terms' because they most clearly violated the moral

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[105] CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Victoria Dinkwanyane to Nkwale Skosana, May 1966.
[106] CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, NAD Memo, Undated c1958.
[107] B. Berman & J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa, Book Two: Violence & Ethnicity* (London, James Currey, 1992).

order: they shared these values and should have known better.[108] These examples shed light on the politics and violence on Boomplaats. There the threat of being torn from the land, coupled with Thorometsane's behaviour, made the moral order of the chieftainship a burning issue. Links to Sekhukhuneland and the ANC were then introduced into the debate on acceptable behaviour; and, in this instance, the outside influences reinforced and re-shaped the tendency to reject a 'rude chief'.[109]

After Thorometsane left, Petrus Magabe initiated two strategies of resistance. First he tried to boost the number of his supporters and his revenue by encouraging people who lived as labour tenants on surrounding farms to come and settle on Boomplaats. Those that arrived immediately after the departure of Thorometsane's group were allowed to occupy the dwellings and fields left unoccupied by the exodus. Once these spaces had been filled people were encouraged to move onto the less arable, rocky parts of Boomplaats. Here they were given small fields that provided a bare supplement to incomes that, as shown previously, were mainly earned in Lydenburg town. People who decided to move on to Boomplaats had to pay an entrance fee and an annual rent.[110] Magabe explained that the money collected in this way would be used to defend the people on Boomplaats against the removal. He also tried to get control of the Dinkwanyane Tribal Fund, which was kept in an account at the Barclays Bank in Lydenburg. Due to the NAD's support for Thorometsane, however, he never had a chance and his claim was rejected by the court on the 23 March 1959.[111]

The support for Magabe, despite the fact that he had been elected unanimously, was not overwhelming. Those who were unambiguously opposed to the removal were the new leaders, for whom the resistance had brought political and financial

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108 J.W. Knott, 'Land, Kinship and Identity: The cultural roots of agrarian agitation in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland', in *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, October 1984.

109 For the reasons why violent solutions were adopted in Sekhukhuneland, see Delius, 'The Tortoise and the Spear', pp. 20-22.

110 CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Affidavit signed by Jacobus Segoane, 15 August 1957.

111 CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Native Commissioner Lydenburg to Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas), 3 April 1959.

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Likwadi decided to leave Boomplaats. But Petrus Magabe opposed them and would not allow them to hold meetings. He countered their initiatives with his own meeting, where he collected money so that lawyers could be hired to defend the community against the NAD. The vacillating land owners went along with this plan and, rather than leave Boomplaats, they decided in October of 1959 to ignore the decrees of the state. Lukas Sapi told the NAD that, 'we bought the farm from Mr De Souza and it is our property. It is not something that we borrowed from the Government'.[118]

The land owners on Boomplaats were given one last chance in 1960 to claim their compensation money, but Stefaans Modipa told the Native Commissioner that their lawyers would defend them. Samuel Modipa, Stefaans' son, explained what happened next:

> 'The Magistrate said, "if you say this is your area then you must bring those lawyers. Who are your lawyers"? My father told the Magistrate the names of the lawyers and the Magistrate then told him "those people are already dead, the one is buried in Bloemfontein and the other one in Pretoria. We give you only three days to wake those people from the graves and if you haven't done that then you must disappear in three days".'[119]

There is no evidence to suggest that the lawyers were even able to get the Boomplaats case to court, and in 1961 the remaining residents were forced into trucks and their houses were bulldozed. The land-owners were taken to Rietfontein and the more recent arrivals were distributed amongst various trust farms in Sekhukhuneland. Most were taken to an area near the Jane Furse Missionary Hospital, where they were given the status of temporary residents. Many of them, including numerous land-owners who later left Rietfontein, still live there and have not yet obtained permanent residential rights.

CAUTIOUS AND ISOLATED RESISTANCE

Aapiesdoorndraai

The Manok community on Aapiesdoorndraai was also threatened with removal in

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[118] CAD, NTS, No. 2331/308, Vol. 3778, Meeting held at Boomplaats, 5 October 1959.
[119] Interview with Samuel Modipa, Mashishing, 11 April 1992.

the 1950s. The paper now examines their response to this threat; a response that had many continuities with their reaction to the 1913 Land Act. Despite facing removal threats throughout the 1950s the Manok community established no links to the struggle against removal on Boomplaats. Jacobus Manok died in 1922, but his son Christian continued the tradition of cautious advancement established by his father. Like his father he was also in tune with the intentions and ideas of whites. He clearly understood the implications of the 1936 Land Act. Although the Native Commissioner assured him otherwise, he knew that the state would eventually use this legislation to remove Africans off Aapiesdoorndraai. But, rather than resist this possibility in a head-on confrontation, he tried in 1939 to move, on his own terms, to a farm that he considered suitable.[120] This request was ignored by the state, but it is clear that the Manok community's response was already very different from the Dinkwanyane community's reaction to removal. The latter community either resisted the state, or were offered incentives to co-operate. The Manok family always tried to stay on the right side of the state, and in doing so minimise the negative implications of Segregation and racism. As Jacobus' grandson, Hendrik Manok, explained: 'My grandfather was very tactful in his dealing with whites'.[121]

In the 1950s Hendrik succeeded to the chieftaincy. He too tried to be as tactful as possible. When the Native Commissioner told Hendrik that there were illegal rent-tenants living on Aapiesdoorndraai in 1958, he responded as a meek and subservient black:

> 'I see that there are too many people but I am scared to push off the old people who came to live with our Grandfather. I am a child. If no one shows us the law we can not know it. I will try to get the people who should not be here away.'[122]

Hendrik Manok's use of the word tact, and his assertion that: 'no white man would

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120 CAD, NTS, No. 136/308, Vol. 3464, Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas) to Secretary of Native Affairs, 20 December 1939.

121 Interview with L.S. Kgane & Chief Hendrik Manok, Aapiesdoorndraai, 15 April 1993.

122 CAD, NTS, No. 936/308, Vol. 2464, Magistrate, Lydenburg to Chief Native Commissioner (Northern Areas), 15 August 1958: (Trans. in Text) "Ek sien die mense is te veel [maar] ek is bang om die ou mense wie by ons oupa kom bly het af te sit. Ek is kind. As geen mense vir ons wet wys kan ons dit nie weet nie. Ek sal probeer om die mense weg kry wie nie daar mag wees nie."

call my grandfather "kaffir" to his face', suggests that his dealings with whites were motivated by the same concerns as those expressed by American slaves:

> 'I endeavoured so to conduct myself as not to become obnoxious to the white inhabitants, knowing as I did their power, and their hostility to the coloured people ...'[123]

By performing in front of them in a way that white people thought Africans should behave, Manok was in fact able to influence state policy. When Hendrik was offered the farms Onverwacht and Kromellenboog as compensation for Aapiesdoorndraai he told the Native Commissioner in Sekhukhuneland that he could not accept this deal because the two farms were mountainous and second-rate. But, as the Commissioner informed his superiors:

> 'The chief made it clear that he personally does not want to put himself up against the Government, but it will be very difficult to move. His people have, in all their years faithfully followed the dictates of the Government.'[124]

By framing his opposition in these terms Manok made it difficult for the NAD. The law required them to find land that was of equal value to Aapiesdoorndraai. Although this was an impossible task due to the inferior land that made up the Trust Area, the NAD at least had to abide by the spirit of the law and could not offer land that was blatantly inferior. In the cases of Kalkfontein and Boomplaats the NAD had declared that the resisting inhabitants were 'unreasonable' and thus undeserving of the provisions of the law. But on Aapiesdoorndraai the residents did not present the state with this excuse. These circumstances meant that the NAD was unable to find suitable compensatory land. Consequently the removal of the Manok community was postponed and quietly forgotten about. They still live on Aapiesdoorndraai in the Lydenburg district today.

The Manok community consistently followed a policy of cooperation with white authority. Their strategies were never radically transformed because they did not establish links to alternative opposition movements. Consequently they remained isolated and, in some ways, were forced to confirm the power of whites. But, by

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[123] J.C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990), p. 2.

[124] CAD, NTS, No. 936/308, Vol. 3464, Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland to Chief Native Commissioner (Norther Areas), 24 September 1959.

working within the system, by establishing a successful black agricultural enterprise, and by keeping their land in a 'white area' during Apartheid, the Manok family did, in a small way, challenge racial prejudices in Lydenburg.[125] They also achieved their own short-term objectives more effectively than any other community in Lydenburg.

CONCLUSION

The resistance of Lydenburg's 'black-spot' communities presented the state with a discernable and determined obstacle to Segregation and Apartheid policies. The resistance also connected urban political movements to rural struggles, and shifted local concepts of authority and African rights in new directions. But these aspects were both an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage lay in the adoption of ideas that opened up new possibilities for rural Africans. But, for the short-term goal of retaining land in Lydenburg, the larger, more radical character of the communal struggle proved to be a disadvantage. By posing a direct, discernable threat to state policy, the communities in Lydenburg caused the state to respond with force, which, especially after the more determined National Party came to power, crushed the struggle against removals in Lydenburg.

These struggles nevertheless had important historical consequences. Because they fought hard for their land, members of the Masha and Dinkwanyane communities remembered their struggle with passion. Many strengthened their ties to the ANC, and both communities are in the process of demanding back their land as restitution for the injustices committed by the Apartheid state. The opposition offered by these communities was central in bringing the coercive state out into the open. Armed police invading farms in the early hours, pulling people out of

[125] Not a lot of evidence exists for this, but the leading farmer, Hendrik Neethling, appears to have been involved in a very ambivalent relationship with Jacobus Manok and his sons; See Schirmer, 'Racism and White Farmers', p. 40. Some of this ambivalence can be discerned from notes by Edith Jones, which were almost certainly based on conversations with Neethling: 'The old man Manok was evidently an exceptional character, not of a high chief status, but every bit a chief and made his power felt. He had a wife Sara who was renowned for her housekeeping throughout the low country and she evidently fed and mothered many of the bachelor settlers of the District in the old inaccessible fever days.' See, WHPL, AD843.53.7, Edith Jones' notes on a visit to Aapiesdoorndraai, February 1941.

their houses, clearing the way for bulldozers that turned houses to rubble while residents watched; these were violent responses provoked by African resistance. Such responses fuelled a striving for justice amongst both the communities who suffered directly, and those who saw coercive removals as a symbol of Apartheid's wickedness. The resistance of communities in Lydenburg and elsewhere therefore contributed, albeit indirectly, to the eventual destruction of Apartheid.

The Aapiesdoorndraai resistance failed to contribute to these processes. But, by following a small-scale, isolated strategy, they were able to retain their land, and they therefore also modified the policy of the state.

Lastly, the collaboration of chiefs and lanowners demonstrates that, despite the importance of the cultural framework in which decisions were made, promises of power and material rewards nevertheless had a crucial influence on people's behaviour. In addition, James Mabowe and Thoremetsane's fight for the farm Sterkspruit shows that even 'collaborators' modified the direction of state policy.