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Preserving Peace and Civilization: The Sofasonke Civic Union

Preface

This paper is taken from the last chapter of my thesis entitled: **Leadership and Conflict in Bushbuckridge (1972-1990) - Struggles to Define Moral Economies within the Context of a Rapidly Transforming Political Economy.** This paper should be read in relation to three themes that are introduced in earlier chapters. The first theme is that of the patrimonial state, which in Weberian terms is defined as a compromise between "rational" forms of domination and "traditional" forms of domination. In the Bantustans the compromise consisted of the cooption of the chieftainship into the bureaucracy, without giving the institution a clear administrative ambit. The presence of the chieftainship (as an institution that pre-existed the central state) in the bureaucracy resulted in a ambiguous political space: Were actions taken against the bureaucracy by residents motivated by the desire to replace the chief, to destroy the chieftainship (as an institution both within and outside of the bureaucracy), or to challenge the central state. The second theme is that of the ambiguity of (Pulana) ethnic and african nationalism. Pulana nationalist based their opposition to Apartheid on principles associated with their ethnic identity. These principles asserted that ownership of land came only through the shedding of blood in conquest, and the chief, as living representative of the most powerful lineage, owned the land on behalf of his subjects. In these terms, Pulana land was "stolen" by the "Shangaans" and the Apartheid state, when the state (following Apartheid principles of Separate Development) allocated land to "Shangaan" chiefs. Hence Pulana nationalists needed a "chief" to represent their ethnic claim to land, but recognised chiefs had "sold out" by accepting the terms of reference of Tribal Authorities. Matsiketsane Mashile, an unrecognised "chief" (involved in a secession dispute), jailed in the early sixties for sabotage, and then deported for fifteen years for opposing Tribal Authorities, became this "chief". However, Matsiketsane also formed an alliance with african nationalists, who opposed Apartheid because they were excluded from the central state because of their race. This alliance created a second ambiguous space: Were actions taken by people involved in the national liberation movement (who were invariably associated with Matsiketsane) aimed at furthering Matsiketsane's claim to the chieftainship, at furthering Pulana ethnic interests, or at overthrowing the central state. Thirdly, youth organisation was located in a similarly ambiguous space. On the one hand, their claim to be the "vanguard of the struggle" and "guardian of the nation" meant that they based their authority on their position with the national liberation movement. On the other hand, the moral economy of the war against Apartheid gave youth organisation the space to (implicitly) redefine chiefly, gender and generational relations through organising boycotts of the Tribal Authority, attacking alleged witches and abortionists, and through (asserting the right to) impregnate any woman. Furthermore, youth organisation was associated with Matsiketsane Mashile. Hence, the ambiguity: Was youth organisation acting to further their own sectarian interests, or to assist Matsiketsane Mashile in his chieftainship dispute, or to challenge the central state. The above three ambiguities (partially) played themselves out in the conflict surrounding the activities of the Sofasonke Civic Union.

Introduction

In late November 1989, the Sofasonke Civic Union was formed at a public meeting in

Brooklyn. The executive portfolios of the organisation were held by principals of High Schools in Boelang and Buffelshoek. Other prominent members included the Chair of the Sethlare Tribal Authority (who was a businessman) and a Nazarene Priest. The following day, under the banner of Sofasonke, eight hundred people, most of whom were women, with tacit police support, burnt six houses owned by parents of leaders of the Brooklyn Youth Congress. Sofasonke then organised groups to patrol the location at night, with the aim of ensuring that no youths were on the streets. The organisation spread to surrounding villages including Rooiboklaagte, Green Valley and Buffelshoek. On the 25 December the houses of five more youth leaders were destroyed in Brooklyn and Green Valley. Two days later, the homes of Sekgopela Mashile and a Buffelshoek youth leader were burnt. The following day, a Green Valley youth leader was killed. Early in 1990, Sekgopela Mashile approached Frank Chikane, the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches to intervene in the conflict. By the end of January, Chikane had successfully mediated a peace agreement between the Bushbuckridge Youth Congress and the Sofasonke. Despite the agreement, tensions continued to surface in Brooklyn, which culminated in the murder of the chair of Sofasonke. This was followed by three assassination attempts of Matsiketsane Mashile's life.

This Chapter demonstrates the processes that gave rise to the Sofasonke. It shows how initiated and literate youths, attempted to redefine the moral economy of Brooklyn village around the rhetoric of national liberation, and in the process, redefine chiefly, generational and gender relations at both a political and ritual level. There were two major components to the moral economy imposed by youth organisation. Firstly, morality depended on the ability to rationalise an action as contributing to the war against Apartheid. Secondly, as the youth "understood" Apartheid, they allocated themselves the authority to police the morals of the "community". This meant that youth organisation had the "duty" to ensure (by force if necessary) that those residents who did not understand the struggle, participated in campaigns called by the youth. This logic clashed head on with that of generational authority. Parents responded to the rule of youth organisation by forming the Sofasonke. The chapter also examines the social base of Sofasonke's various leaders and shows how the activities of the youth organisation were threatening these positions. The Brooklyn branch of Sofasonke was lead by school principals whose main agenda in becoming involved in the organisation was to discipline the youth and reimpose generational and school-based authority. In contrast, in Buffelshoek, the organisation was lead by members of the Molotele Royal Family, who were concerned to use the organisation to both discipline the youth and to attack the Mashile brothers. The role of the Lebowa Government in the violence will also be probed.

Development Projects and the Splitting of the Crisis Committee

All the executive members of the Mapulaneng Crisis Committee (MCC), along with the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Treasurer of the Sethlare Crisis Committee (SCC), and the two Mashile brothers were detained in mid 1986 and charged with terrorism. A year later, they were tried, acquitted and released, just as the state of emergency was renewed. Following their release, the Crisis Committee, eager to find ways of legally challenging the bureaucracy, assisted in the establishment of a legal advice office. Although the Centre was banned after three months on a legal technicality, it continued to operate defiantly for a few months from Matsiketsane Mashile's house. The chiefs saw the Advice Office as part of Matsiketsane's attempt to rebuild his chieftainship, and in the process, challenge their

authority. A former member of the Molotele Development Committee recalls:

> That was a sensitive issue where chiefs tried to unite. They used to say: "Now he is a chief. Are you aware Matsiketsane is running a court in his house. This man [Matsiketsane] is challenging the decisions of our councillors, landing us in many problems...." It became the main point of friction between the chiefs and the Mashiles. People are no more reporting cases to tribal office but are going to Matsiketsane's house. The government was also sensitive re pensions and Unemployment Insurance Fund.[1]

After the banning of the advice centre, the MCC executive members continued to research (cautiously) areas where they could facilitate the establishment of parent (as opposed to youth) organisations. A Zion Christian Church priest and businessman, Mr Nonyane, solicited advice from the Mashile brothers regarding water supply problems on behalf of a village in Craigsburn. The Mashiles, who had already unsuccessfully requested the Department of Works in Lebowa for assistance in the matter, approached the Crisis Committee. The Committee, in turn sought the help of the Rural Advice Centre, a service organisation based in Johannesburg, who specialised in development projects around water supply. The Rural Advice Centre's "community based" approach to water supply problems involved offering both technical advice and management training to "communities" to ensure that the "community" would be able to sustain the project.[2]

The Mashiles convened a "parliamentary report-back meeting" at Craigsburn where, after informing the assembly that the Lebowa Government had failed to respond to their requests for improved infrastructure, they introduced the Crisis Committee as a structure capable of solving the water problem. The Committee called for elections of a water-committee. The elections proved to be highly contentious: An unemployed youth vigorously argued for Nonyane's exclusion from the Water Committee. Nonyane, he asserted, was a busy man; he owned a taxi and a shop, he was a priest, and he was chair of the Lekete High School committee. The youth's speech was given a rousing reception by his peers. Nevertheless, a middle aged women stood up and calmly asserted that the Committee "needed" Nonyane, who was trusted, and in whose absence "things would not be straight". Nonyane was elected as chair of the Committee.

Nonyane used his position to ensure that the water supply project, as the Rural Advice Centre had conceived it, was a non event. The Advice Centre arrived for meetings or workshops with the Committee to discover that Nonyane was the only member present. Nonyane gave different report backs to the Advice Centre, the Mashiles and the Crisis Committee. There was nevertheless a logic to Nonyane's actions: either the Rural Advice Centre was going to work through him, and him alone, that is, he was to have personal control over the process of providing water, or there would be no water supply project. Ultimately, there was no water-supply project in Craigsburn.

Like Craigsburn, Brooklyn's water supply was inadequate. Women residents collected water from several shallow holes in the ground, a process which was tedious and unhygienic. To add insult to injury, the Tribal Authority had (illegally) been charging "water taxes" of ten rand a year, for approximately ten years, ostensibly to improve the supply. The water supply remained unchanged in this period and the taxes went unaccounted for.

Underlying tensions between the MCC and Jacques Modipane, the Chair of the SCC, surfaced over the organisation of a water project in Brooklyn. Modipane, as chair of the SCC, fell under the constitutional authority of the mother body, namely the MCC. As a means of asserting his independence from his Shatale counterparts, Modipane contacted the Northern Transvaal People's Congress (NTPC), an organisation, which, despite its grandiose name, had a negligible membership and presence in Bushbuckridge. But the NTPC was created by the United Democratic Front specifically to mobilize people in the rural areas. Rather than speak from his position as chair of the SCC, through his contact with the NTPC, Modipane began to speak with the powerful and nebulous authority of the "Congress".

Like Nonyane, Modipane set about ensuring that the Rural Advice Centre's approach to water supply had no future Brooklyn. Unlike Nonyane, Modipane employed rhetoric associated with the national liberation struggle to achieve his goals. Initially, Modipane informed the Rural Advice Centre that they were not welcome in Brooklyn as they proposed to get permission from the Lebowa Government to work in Brooklyn, and, as such, were collaborators. Those who were not pure, that is, people with any association with the system, could not be trusted in the "struggle". Then, the Advice Centre were told that their policy of providing boreholes was obscuring the real issue, which was the state's responsibility to provide taps. The Rural Advice Centre withdrew from the project.

Over the following months, the differences between the MCC's post detention approach to political organisation and that of Modipane became stark: Whereas the Crisis Committee did not claim to have privileged knowledge of residents' interests, and consequently, saw their role as creating the conditions under which residents could control processes affecting their lives, Modipane assumed that he, (and the youth), had privileged access to residents' interests, and consequently, could make and enforce decisions on behalf of the "community". Whereas the Crisis Committee emphasised the need to set up organisations under parental control, Modipane emphasised the need to mobilize the "community" against the state, with the youth, who "understood the struggle", at the vanguard of the process. And, in Brooklyn, the dominance of youth organisation translated into the dominance of Modipane.

The Rise of the Brooklyn Youth Congress

Modipane, with the assistance of a revitalised Brooklyn Youth Congress, set about mobilizing the "community" around the water supply. In contrast to the MCC's policy of building organisation through water supply projects, the Brooklyn Youth Congress started a protest campaign directed firstly at the most proximate form of local government, namely the Sethlare Tribal Authority, and secondly at the Lebowa Government in general.

The Sethlare Tribal Authority, lead by chief German Chiloane who was a chronic alcoholic, was particularly ineffectual. In 1984, Bonus Chiloane, German's brother, and Chair of the Tribal Authority, staged a palace coup by installing himself as chief during one of his brother's prolonged drinking bouts. Bonus immediately extended the residential areas and accepted up to ten payments for the same residential site. When his activities were discovered by the Magistrate, Bonus fled to Johannesburg and (an almost sober) German was reinstated. Matsiketsane Mashile, who was involved in a secession dispute for the Sethlare chieftainship, was a further source of alternative political authority to the recognised chief.[3]

Symptomatic of the progressive decline of the chieftainship under German Chiloane was the

reorganisation of a number of rituals, previously controlled by the chieftainship, around the household and church. The planting and harvesting ceremonies began to be held in each household. As the chieftainship was impotent to act around the issue of witchcraft, residents turned to Zionist and Apostolic churches to secure protection from witchcraft.[4]

The Sethlare Tribal Authority was also unable to forge a secure alliance with other sources of authority, such as successful businessmen, in its area of jurisdiction. The two biggest businessmen in Sethlare were both priests in independent churches, through which they had secured a stable following. Neither had any position or formal links with the Authority. Aplos Chiloane, the Chair of the Authority, and owner of a small cafe at Boelang, was the only businessman in the Authority. However, Chiloane was married to the Authority to the extent that, given the small consumer base around his shop, the viability of his business depended on his ability to control the granting of licences and the bribes he received in exchange for administrative favours.

The Youth Congress organised marches to the Tribal Authority offices and a boycott of Tribal Authority taxes. Initially, the protests found much popular support, as residents welcomed the chance to air their grievances. However, problems surfaced in the youth's understanding of their position as "guardians of the nation". As parents had access to the truth of the agnatic social order, generational authority was enforced through the elderly rights to thrash any youth, without having to justify their actions. Now that the youth believed they were the legitimate vanguard of the struggle, and that any action that contributed to the war against the "system" was moral, the sjambok changed hands: Sjambok wielding youths went from house to house in the early hours of the morning forcing parents and elderly people to attend the protests. Some youths filled waterholes with sand under the assumption that, when thirsty, residents would be more inclined to protest against inadequacies in the water supply.[5]

The Youth Congress became guardians over the village at night. Youths patrolled the village, singing a mixture of national freedom songs, and songs aimed at local targets (particularly alleged witches), all of which, contributed to an atmosphere of fear and anxiety amongst elderly people. A elderly resident commented:

> "I'm very scared of those who go around singing at night. We always feel threatened by the Comrades. Years ago members of our family could sleep outside when it was hot. Now we can't."[6]

The Congress held its meetings at night in the bush. Youths were forced to attend the meetings under the logic of, "if you are not with us, you are against us". Female school students were ordered to attend the night meetings, where many were impregnated (under the auspices of Operation Production).[7] Youths of both sexes returned exhausted from the meetings, unable to concentrate at school the following day. Those parents who were trying to ensure that their daughters completed their education, so as to have a high bridesprice or a high income earner in the household, were becoming progressively alienated from the youth congress. A retired migrant compares the situation in 1989 with that of his youth:

> Today everybody does what he thinks is right, which is wrong. Before no girl got pregnant before marriage. If she got pregnant she was married to an old man as second wife or someone whose wife is dead. Today a twelve or fifteen year old gets pregnant. There is no control, they do what they want. Children are starving, there

is no-one to support them.[8]

The message was hammered home to parents: The Youth Congress, rather than parents, had control over the movement, activities, sexuality and disciplining of children of both sexes.

The Congress took control over the political and spiritual lives of the "nation". In a context where generational authority was intrinsically linked to ancestral authority, the youth congress continued to assert its status as the guardians of the spiritual integrity of the "nation". Although the youth did not attack any alleged witches during this period, songs and speeches ensured that the threat of such attacks was ever-present. The following speech was made by Modipane after a funeral:

> If five people die every week, more than 20 will die in a month. If things go on like this we'll all die. You yourself may be the next... The priests should pray to God to stop these deaths. If these deaths are man-made the ministers should pray that the witches must stop... The witches think they are safe because I told my Comrades to stop burning them. If you don't pack your bags and leave I'll be unable to restrain my Comrades.[9]

Witchcraft accusations, however, continued to flourish, particularly within and between households. Moreover, youths labelled elderly people, who questioned the legitimacy of the youth movement, as witches. Residents began to realise that the only thing worse than having a Tribal Authority unable to set in motion "traditional" legal procedures for the investigation of witchcraft accusations, was a Youth Congress that disregarded those procedures and still attacked witches; a witchcraft accusation from people with privileged access to youth leaders, (especially the parents of youth leaders), was a threat that could be violently acted upon at any time.

As the church propagated a moral economy based on the bible, the institution stood as a potential threat to the authority of the youth. Priests, as sources of spiritual authority, were representatives of more than just a church. Like ancestral beliefs, the christian bible legitimated generational authority. As a resource that parents turned to discipline their children, certain priests were seen by the youth as bastions of conservatism.[10] Youths questioned the integrity of church congregations by interrupting church services, on the basis that witches were present in the congregation, and ordered the alleged witches to confess and leave the building.

The foremost response of youth organisations to the authority of the church was to propagate the message that Nelson Mandela, rather than God or Christ, would "show people the way to freedom".[11] Night vigils and funerals became compulsory events; those people not seen at a night vigil were summoned with a sjambok or stigmatised as being happy about the death (ie not belonging to the "community"). The serving of meat was abolished from night vigils as it "encouraged witchcraft". Night vigils and funerals became forums where residents could, indeed had to, prove their solidarity with the deceased's family, with the "community", and, of course, with the struggle. To subsume these events within the framework of the struggle, the youth further marginalised priests in the process of subsuming funerals and night vigils under the moral economy of the liberation struggle. Instead of the Priest leading the night vigil in prayer, the youth guided the mourners through an assortment of "freedom songs". A funeral was described as follows:

> At my cousins night vigil, the Minister was preaching this side, they were toy-toying [dancing] that side. The youth want to transport the coffin physically, the family had paid for a car... At the graveside there was a kind of pandemonium. One side, mourners were singing religious songs, on the other side they were shouting slogans and toy-toying.[12]

Initiation as a test of manhood was an important (although not an absolutely necessary) qualification for people to become a soldier in the "war" against Apartheid:

> There you become a man. When you are from ngoma you won't reveal any secrets when the police capture and torture you because you have already experienced torture.[13]

Within the context of the chiefdom, however, the youth's claim to a political voice was based on their status as initiates, that is men. Elderly people questioned the status of initiates as men (and consequently warriors) with the contention that "the youth of today have not passed the test that we passed and, as such are not real men".[14] Initiation, the elders argued, used to be a six month test of strength and endurance when it was controlled by the chieftainship; a boy when initiated was fit to become a warrior and fight to protect the nation. In the contemporary period, twelve year old boys were being initiated in a few weeks by businessmen resulting in the saying: "Koma ke tsjelete: Initiation school is money".[15] Not wanting to abolish the institution that gave the youth the authority to act, the Congress demanded that the initiation schools be reformed: The costs of initiation were to be dramatically reduced; if a boy could not afford it, he was to go for free, as the boy was being initiated to equip him in the struggle against apartheid, that is, he was going to initiation for the good of society.

The Brooklyn Youth Congress in the Schools

Principals and teachers inherited an ambiguous political heritage. On the one hand, they wielded authority because they were part of the bureaucracy. This meant, however, that they were associated with Bantu education, corrupt practices in the schools, and the Tribal Authorities. On the other hand, they commanded respect because of their educational qualifications, which meant they understood a broader literate world (particularly the "national" context), and they consequently represented "enlightenment" and "progress". This latter quality meant that teachers could challenge Modipane's and the youth's "privileged" understanding of the struggle. The following sections investigate how this ambiguity played itself out.

In the thirties and forties, Pulanas boycotted Swiss Mission schools because of the connection between church, school and "Tsonga" ethnicity.[16] The establishment of mass-based, state controlled schooling in the sixties and seventies was, however, by no means a simple process in Mapulaneng. Pulana chiefdoms faced the challenge of integrating a social hierarchy based on educational qualification with that of the chieftainship.

As formal members of the local bureaucracy, principals and teachers fell loosely under the ambit of the Tribal Authority. This gave them the "rank" of chiefly representative both within and outside of the schools. Chiefs had the right to veto the appointment of principals, and, before rampant corruption changed the system, school funds used to be "banked" with

the Authority. Chiefs, most of whom were poorly educated, in their turn, would often approach principals or prominent teachers to interpret government proclamation. Given their connection to the chieftainship, a challenge to the bureaucratic authority of principal was rhetorically expressed as a challenge to the authority of the chieftainship, which implicitly mobilised a broad alliance against the "dissident".[17]

State schools replaced initiation schools as the major means of socialisation outside of the household. As agents in the process of socialising children, teachers received the symbolic status associated with parents and became representatives of generational authority. "Traditionally we could not question our seniors. This was transformed into the school where teachers were regarded as seniors."[18] However, rather than have the relationship between student and teacher mediated by reasoned judgement, the principle of generational authority, that is unquestioned obedience, was demanded of students. To question the authority of a teacher meant to question the authority of parents, and as a result, the judgement of teachers was not to be questioned by either a students or a parent in the presence of students. Breaches of "discipline" from arriving late to failing a test were punished "according to the culture" that is, with a thrashing. Students could only wield political power within the schools when they acted on behalf of the school authorities.

Although the above implies that the tension between the status hierarchy in the chiefdom and that in the schools was resolved, this was by no means true. The status hierarchy within the schools, that is, the notion that the authority with which a person spoke was determined by their level of education, was literally and formerly transferred to the broader "community". Within the context of a literate bureaucracy, an uneducated person did not have the authority to challenge the judgement of a teacher or principal. Just as an unmarried initiate could not speak during cases related to marital problems, so uneducated people could not speak in relation to problems around the bureaucracy as they were "illiterate". As one informant succinctly summarised the situation: "a school principal is also principal in the community".[19] The above idea undermined the notion that illiterate chiefs, councillors and parents were equipped to understand the contemporary political situation.[20]

Although the formation of state schooling in the fifties severed the links between school and church, by the eighties some teachers still maintained the connection. A ex-student from Maripe High School recollects:

> When I arrived in 1983, there was a teacher called L who would punish you for no valid reason. I remember Std 6. We were learning under a tree. L was not teaching us but he came to the class and said: "Those of you who have accepted Jesus as personal saviour raise your hands." I did not as I am not a christian. We were told to go to the staff-room. We were then really punished. The strokes were countable but I can't remember how many he gave us.[21]

The most significant source of tension between teachers and students that sprang from the organisation of the chieftainship was the institution of initiation. In the context of the chieftainship, on being initiated a boy was formally a man, that is, he was able to speak at the chief's court. He had the right to scorn non-initiates and all women (including his mother). He also had the power to thrash non-initiates if he found them involved in any transgression. He had the right to intervene in a situation to ensure that communal laws were being obeyed. Within the schools, however, many teachers treated initiation with scorn, and

warned their students that it would make them "primitive and fail". The school hierarchy, which recognised only educational qualification as a source of authority, treated the authority of initiation with disdain: "In school we talk of a teacher child relationship, not of a teacher man relationship".[22] Initiates for their part, refused to recognised the authority of teachers who had not been initiated, particularly their right to beat initiated students.

> During my schooling, initiates had a problem with teachers from Pietersburg. Initiates used to think they had grown up. We used to think a non-initiate or a women did not have the right to punish an initiate or instruct him on how to take care of himself... One Mohalala, after initiation, he was doing Std 3 in 1979. He was punished for late coming. He informed teachers that they can't punish him any more for late coming. After being punished again he dropped out of school. He told me that he could not be punished by a non-initiate for late coming.[23]

These tensions were not confined to student teacher relationships, but also within the principal teacher community. The contradiction between principals who had influence both in and outside of the schools because of their position in the school hierarchy but were not initiated was sometimes resolved by force. In 1985, the principal of a Secondary School, who had a Masters Degree, was kidnapped by his fellow principals to attend initiation. A teacher recollects:

> The fact was that people respected him because he was a principal, but on the other hand, he was a child because he was uninitiated. Also, he used to drink with initiates at the shebeen. Now, when initiated men meet to discuss matters, that is called Makgotla. But the principal was not initiated. So they kidnapped him.[24]

Initiated students were confronted with further contradictions: Male teachers (both initiated and uninitiated) were often extraordinarily reckless. They would arrive at classes drunk, they sexually molested female students and would thrash students indiscriminately. Furthermore, conditions in the schools were often appalling: students were daily confronted with overcrowded classrooms, shortages of desks and chairs, and learning materials such as text-books. Yet, school funds and building funds remained unaccounted for and teachers did not appear to care. On being approached, parents refused to act as "teachers knew better".[25]

It was in this context, in 1988, that the Brooklyn Youth Congress challenged the administration of Maripe High school. Class representatives for a Student Representative Council (SRC) were elected, but the Executive Committee, of the SRC, which was dominated by members of the Brooklyn Youth Congress, "elected itself".[26] The SRC chose to challenge the principal on the (alleged) embezzlement of school funds. The principal had imposed a school building fee of forty rand a year per student for the previous three years. No new classrooms were constructed in the period, and the principal refused to present a financial statement at the year's end. The SRC called boycotts to force the principal to publish a financial statement. In one confrontation, the principal, in fear for his life, hid from the students in the nearby forest.

The campaign initially received widespread support from parents, most of whom were facing economic hardship without the added burden of lining the principal's pockets. However, from challenging the principal as a (corrupt) member of the bureaucracy, the youth congress began

to challenge the principal and teacher's authority in the running of the school. Modipane's younger brother, the President of the SRC, took over assemblies at Maripe High School. Student meetings were convened during classes without the permission of the principal. When SRC demands were not met, boycotts were called without consultation. The SRC alleged a teacher (who was a former soldier and who carried a gun into class) was a spy. A boycott was called for the teacher's dismissal. An uninitiated teacher from Glen Cowie was targeted for using corporal punishment on both male and female students. When teachers showed solidarity with their uninitiated colleague, the SRC demanded the total abolition of corporal punishment as "teachers were unable to govern the practice justly."[27]

The activities of the Congress started to spawn divisions in the student body. Matric students, frustrated by having their studies interrupted by sporadic boycotts, began to resist calls to boycott classes. The Student's Representative Council, whose positions were monopolised by members of the Youth Congress, discriminated against both students from Brooklyn who were not active members of the Brooklyn Youth Congress, and students from surrounding villages. In mid 1989, tensions within the student body reached breaking point and a fight broke out between students at Maripe and the Youth Congress.

The Brooklyn Youth Congress Marginalises Teachers

Principals and teachers, as residents who commanded respect because of their educational qualifications, were a potential threat to Modipane's (a telephone exchange operator who had achieved a matric) and the Congress'(most of whose leaders had dropped out before high school) claim to be the foremost authorities on the "struggle".

First and foremost, teachers could not be politically trusted as they were "part and parcel of the system of Bantu education". How, the Youth Congress reasoned, could teachers be employed by the Lebowa Government and wage a struggle against their employers? Teachers were excluded from Youth Congress meetings, and hence from oppositional politics on this logic.

Furthermore, if parents did not understand the struggle because they were illiterate then, as far the Congress was concerned, teachers did not understand the struggle because they were too literate. In a war situation, there was no room for intellectuals:

> "They told us, the people are illiterate, so you cannot understand the people and the people cannot understand you. If you try to criticise them [Modipane or the leaders of the Youth Congress], then they say you are intellectualising the struggle; If you challenge them further they say you are an impimpi [traitor] and threaten you with violence."[28]

Those teachers who continued to try to question youth leaders discovered that they were not "politicised". Being politicised meant having access to secret pamphlets distributed by the ANC underground which gave the reader privileged knowledge about the aims and strategies of the "movement". The pamphlets further excluded illiterate parents from the struggle:

> "The leaders of the Comrades used to give them pamphlets orientating them with developments. Because they were the only people who could read those things they said they were more informed than their parents who could not read... They were politicising each other. You are only educated when you are politicised. And you are

only politicised when you can quote from the pamphlet to show me that you are better placed than I am as regards politics. Those pamphlets also served as a launching pad to criticise us [teachers]."[29]

Both in and outside of the schools, the Congress obliterated the notion that the authority to speak as a political citizen was grounded on educational qualifications. Being politicised (as defined by the Congress), rather than being educated, gave the speaker qualification to participate in, and affect the course of, the "struggle".

Youth Organisation in Buffelshoek

In early 1988, a youth organisation was formed in Buffelshoek. Unlike their Brooklyn counterparts, the Buffelshoek Youth Congress was facing a chieftainship that had preserved its ritual character and had built a following through its involvement in the Zion Christian Church. Using its position in the Tribal Authority, the chieftainship had also established a firm alliance with the most influential and successful businessman in the Authority area.

The first Zion Christian Church congregation in the Lowveld was established in the early forties on Glen Lyden, the farm that formed the base of the Molotele chieftainship before its removal to Buffelshoek in the early seventies. The Priest was a close relative of the chief. Most of the Royal family and a significant proportion of the residents of Glen Lyden joined the Church. In 1967, the first group of households were removed from Glen Lyden to Arthur Seat. Two ZCC priests who were members of the Royal Family from Glen Lyden maintained the churches congregation in Arthur Seat. Two years later, a further group of households were removed from Glen Lyden to Boelang where the Rev Aaron Chiloane, the chief's brother, continued to hold services. In 1971, the remaining residents on Glen Lyden, including the Molotele chief, were removed to Buffelshoek.[30]

After his removal, Masoja Chiloane, the Molotele chief, was facing a potentially hostile situation. Buffelshoek, which had previously been allocated by the Commissioner to the Sethlare chiefdom, was already settled by families removed from Rooiboklaagte, including a Roka induna, appointed by Sethlare.[31] A group of "Shangaan" households removed from Champagne, were also settled on the farm.[32] The removals divided members of the chiefdom between those who wanted to resist removal to the last, who accused Masoja of selling the land, and those who accepted the removal as inevitable. Masoja Chiloane surrounded his household with ZCC members and settled the non ZCC members from Glen Lyden in a separate ward of Buffelshoek. Sethlare's induna controlled another ward where predominantly Roka people lived.

A year after the removal, the ZCC priests in Arthur Seat moved with their congregations from Arthur Seat to Buffelshoek, where they were given a seperate ward on which to build their houses. Three years later, Aaron Chiloane led his congregation to Buffelshoek. A ZCC member recollects:

> The family moved from Arthur Seat to Buffelshoek to follow their chief...The non ZCC members were few. The pride in the church is what made us to move because the chief was a ZCC member.[33]

In the mid eighties, three separate ZCC congregations met in Buffelshoek. Bishop

Lehanyane, the head of the ZCC convened a meeting and made Aaron Chiloane, the "High-Priest" of the Lowveld as a whole. The three congregations merged into one congregation under Chiloane.[34] In a potentially hostile environment, the ZCC offered the Molotele chieftainship a stable institutionalised following. Furthermore, within the ambit of the ZCC the chieftainship could function as a chieftainship outside of the ideological strictures of the Tribal Authority.

The Zion Christian Church reaffirmed the link between individual health and that of the social body, a notion central to the precolonial chieftainship. Prayers were held to protect the health of the chief as well as his subjects. Sick people were treated through the use of prayer and holy water. Devices and prayers offered members of the congregation protection from witchcraft. The churches also offered a forum for the members to confess to witchcraft without severe repercussions. Prayers were held for rain and at first harvest. Feasts or celebrations were blessed by officials of the church. Church elders were called upon to solve intra and inter household disputes between church members.[35]

Burial societies were organised under the ambit of the church. Migrant workers formed congregations in their urban townships which provided a powerful support network for church members. Members undertook to look for jobs for one another as well as assist unemployed church goers with travel costs to return to their rural homes. Priests in these townships were often members of the royal family.[36]

In short, the royal family developed a following they could depend on. The difference in the way a member of the ZCC relates to fellow church members verses non members is captured in the following attitude:

> "If I am driving around and I see someone hitch-hiking, if he is ZCC, I will stop and give him a lift because I know I can trust him. If he is not wearing the Star [the churches badge] then I will not stop.[37]

The ZCC also had effective control over the Tribal Authority (TA). The chief plus seven of the nine councillors in the Tribal Authority were ZCC members. The TA became a means of delivering patronage to members of the ZCC: Church goers were favoured in the delivery of Tribal Authority services, especially the allocation of business licenses.[38] Residents who were not members of the church had to depend on bribing councillors and clerks in order to have an application processed. Members of the church hired out their businesses and taxis and gave preferential employment to other ZCC members.[39]

In contrast to the Sethlare Chieftainship, the Molotele chief, Masoja Chiloane, used the Tribal Authority to forge a powerful alliance with the most influential businessman under his jurisdiction, W Inama. Inama arrived in the district in the early seventies from Elandsfontein. He had a matric, three years training at a teachers college and had previously worked as a teacher. On his arrival he built a restaurant. In the mid seventies he built a bottle store and hotel and Acornhoek that became a thriving businesses. In the early seventies, Inama entered into competition with another businessman, Reckson Mashile, to win the favours of the chief. Mashile built the chief a house in the mid seventies, which Inama countered by contributing towards the chief's car. Ultimately, however, Reckson Mashile's association with Matsiketsane meant that Molotele did not trust him. Furthermore, Mashile could not compete with Inama's brokering abilities. As an ex teacher with a matric and who was a fluent

English speaker, Inama was given the role of broking between the Lebowa Government and the Tribal Authority. Inama was called upon to entertain visiting bureaucrats and to interpret government directives to the Authority. He also ensured that the chief was never financially wanting. In exchange, the chief "consulted" with Inama before allotting business licenses. In 1987, Inama's control over the allocation of business licenses was formalised when he was appointed the chair of the Development Committee. By the late eighties he was employing thirty nine people and supplying most shebeens in the area with beer.

The Youth organisation launched itself by protesting about problems in the water supply. The youth gathered at the Moshate (chief's house) with 25 litre water barrels and alleged that the man responsible for the water supply was selling diesel meant for the pumps. The chief promised to investigate. The organisation continued to meet at night and sing anti-witchcraft songs.[40]

A few weeks later, five youths sitting on the side of the road were confronted by the chief and five other men in a van. The chief after accusing the youths of holding a meeting, began shooting at them. Two youths were injured. Following the incident, the South African Defence Force began to patrol the farm, temporarily halting the youth organisation's activities.

Matsiketsane's 1989 Election Victory

In early 1989, the activities of youth organisations were briefly overshadowed by elections for the Lebowa Legislative Assembly. In the course of the election a formidable alliance crystallised in opposition to the reelection of the Mashile brothers. Foremost in the campaign against the brothers was the Chief Minister of Lebowa, Nelson Ramodike. A former traffic cop, Ramodike retained his Hitler-like moustache, his blustering manner, and his aversion towards nonconformists in his new political position. As the only members of the Lebowa Legislative Assembly who were not members of Ramodike's Lebowa People's Party, the Mashile brothers were the major (if not the sole) voice of dissent within Parliament. While the Mashile's were MPs, Ramodike's absolute hegemony over the parliament was denied, a situation Ramodike found profoundly unsatisfactory.

In a classic political miscalculation, the campaign against the Mashile brothers was launched with the distribution of a smear pamphlet aimed at discrediting the brothers:

> "They [the Mashile brothers] hold illegal meetings especially before Christmas 1988, they scold, blame the chiefs, they even blame and accuse the Ministers, and the Chief Minister for not attending their meetings. The chiefs of Mapulaneng are tired about their seats in Parliament, they accuse the police, they accuse the local Magistrate without reasons. They have disturbed peace in Shatale township where they operate their comradeship. They accuse the Chief Minister for not implementing a 50-50, fifty fifty basis of representation in Parliament for equal representation of chiefs and commoners."[41]

Having unerringly voiced the Mashile's popular mandate, the pamphlet backfired. If the pamphlet had any effect at all, the chances are it bolstered the Mashile's campaign.

The chiefs and Lebowa People's Party threw everything they had into ensuring that the

Mashiles would not be re-elected. The chiefs held meetings in their Tribal Authorities, where they made it clear to their subjects how they wanted them to vote, and warned that they would be monitoring the voting booths. A youth caught taking minutes without permission at a meeting of the Molotele Tribal Authority was assaulted, his "minute book" confiscated, and his family fined. Ramodike, along with his entire cabinet, and all nine of the Pulana chiefs, held an election rally at Green-Valley to boost the Lebowa People's Party's campaign. To Ramodike's humiliation, the rally backfired: A massive crowd overwhelmed the speakers with songs praising the Mashile brothers.

The Mashile's were able to mobilise a broad alliance of Pulana and African nationalists around the election campaign. Both oppositional movements realised that the bureaucracy would form an unassailable bloc without the Mashiles as Members of Parliament. The Mapulaneng Crisis Committee managed the Mashile's campaign and monitored polling booths. The Leihlo La Naga successfully mobilised migrants to vote.[42] The Brooklyn Youth Congress, under Modipane also organised (albeit with the use of sjamboks) for Matsiketsane's re-election. Within the idiom of chiefly politics, Modipane's support for the Mashile's election reaffirmed the link between youth politics and chiefly secession dispute: Modipane was ultimately Matsiketsane's induna, seeking to ensure that Mashile assumed the chieftainship.

The Defiance Campaign and its Effects

In mid 1989, the United Democratic Front launched the Defiance Campaign. Overnight, Modipane became "coordinator" of the Bushbuckridge Youth Congress, which enthusiastically took up the Campaign. In September, Modipane led a march to the Acornhoek Police Station with the aim of presenting a memorandum to the newly appointed State President, F.W. de Klerk. The memorandum protested the lack of water and health facilities, called for the reinstatement of Tsonga from Sotho schools and vice versa, and demanded the withdrawal of troops and the lifting of the state of emergency.[43] Although the meeting was attended by ten thousand people, the sjamboks which youths had used to "mobilise" people for the march were also manifestly visible.

As Modipane's profile waxed, the Mashile brothers found themselves under attack from both ends of the political spectrum. Because of his historical association with the ANC and with Modipane, Matsiketsane was held responsible by the chiefs for the activities of the youth. The Mashile's lost support amongst teachers when Sekgopela, at a meeting at Tladishi High School, in the presence of students, criticised the way the teachers practised corporal punishment, thus undermining the teachers' authority. On the other side of the spectrum, Modipane began to question the Mashile's role as MPs within the "system"; in the last instance, Modipane speculated, could the Mashile's be trusted to destroy the institution that paid their salary. At a meeting in Buffelshoek, a youth leader questioned Matsiketsane's claim to the chieftainship, when the movement was trying to "destroy the institution". The Mashile brothers chose not to criticise or praise the activities of the youth, and as a consequence, haemorrhaged support to both sides.

As tensions mounted, a special meeting of the Regional Authority was convened in 1989 to discuss the "unrest situation in the area" with Brigadier Moloto, the commanding officer of the Lebowa's police force. A stark gulf materialised between the strategies put forward by

the chiefs and those put forward by the Police, Magistrate and the two Members of Parliament. In response to Sekgopela Mashile's suggestion that meetings be convened to discuss the "problem" with principals, parents and students, Chief Molotele commented:

> "I have heard one speaker said let us go to the school to a hold a meeting. That must never, never happen. The Comrades will tell the others to go and stone the Kgosi, And make you fools. Please Brigadier, give us Mankweng police, they are strong they can cure all this trouble with sjambok. Police and soldiers should use sjambok. And they must also go from house to house if they find children who does not go to school and hit them and force them to go to school.[44]

The chiefs discovered that Brigadier Moloto refused to speak their language, at least not in public. Moloto in reply to the chief's suggestion said:

> In the first place [the situation] is very bad and the Magosi admit they are powerless. The Magosi in Bushbuckridge have neglected the powers invested to them by the Government. In the past, the Magosi used to call meetings and discussed the problems of this area. As far as the police are concerned, we will try our best. But remember that you are given power to control. We will control, but what are you going to do? .. The latest issue has told us that we must never never use any sjambok. Even the Lebowa Government is against the use of sjambok. They said that the use of sjambok they say it is dangerous... In short I agree with Mr Mashile when he said that we must speak to the children.[45]

The Commanding Officer of the Acornhoek police station, pointed out to the chiefs that divisions existed within the student body. The Officer argued that the chiefs should be willing to call on students disenchanted with the "comrades":

> "At Acornhoek, some of the students are tired and are willing to hold meeting with you Magosi, Parents, Principals to solve these problems."

The Regional Authority meeting concluded with a discussion on the problem of unmarried pregnant women. The chiefs repeated their call that force be used to ensure that men marry women they impregnate. Again, the Magistrate responded by saying that force was impracticable. Chiefs should rather "call the father of the girl and ask him why his daughter [is] staying with a man while they are not married".[46]

The chiefs could not have left the Regional Authority meeting feeling reassured. The contradiction at the heart of the meeting was simple: The police were calling on the chiefs to use the power that the government had vested in them to resolve the situation. Yet the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the inability of the chiefs to deal with the situation. The chiefs were faced with a force who refused to acknowledge their [the chief's] legitimacy, and who were continuously violently asserting their power over the right of residents to move and meet in the villages. In this context, the chiefs argued, force had to be met with force.

The release of the Rivonia treason trialists in early October 1989 marked a turning point in South African politics. The implicit acknowledgement by the National Party that the South African state was not wielding power legitimately spawned a moral vacuum: If Rivonia trialists could be released from prison, then anyone could be released. Bantustan leaders, for their part, realised that they needed to fortify their power bases or risk being sidelined. In this context, Ramodike had two axes to grind in relation to the Mashile brothers. Their

opposition to his political party symbolised a repudiation of his claim to represent the Lebowa elite. And secondly, Ramodike's power base lay with the chiefs, and the Bushubckridge chiefs did not like the Mashile brothers. If Ramodike could remove the Mashile brothers from the political field, he would not only oust a personal opponent, but in the process, he would win the support of the Bushbuckridge chiefs.

Despite the apparently liberal stance taken by Brigadier Moloto at the special meeting of the Regional Authority, the Mankweng riot squad was transferred to Bushbuckridge, and the situation became progressively more confrontational as the police went on the offensive. Two "protest" marches organised by the Bushbuckridge Youth Congress were violently dispersed by the riot squad. Jacques Modipane's house was petrol bombed and shot at, allegedly by members of the South African Defence Force. On the 24 October 1989 approximately eighty youths of both sexes from Brooklyn were arrested, detained, and severely assaulted by the Lebowa police. Two days later the girls were released, and fifty five males were charged with public violence. An executive member of the Brooklyn Youth Congress, who was arrested on the 24 October, was released a week later having been brutally assaulted.[47]

In early November, Chief German Chiloane of the Sethlare Tribal Authority died. Following his death, Matsiketsane took over the Tribal Authority offices for two weeks, in a symbolic display of force. The political uncertainty in the village reached fever pitch: Were villagers going to be ruled by a chief who not only endorsed the activities of the youth, but had ultimately been controlling them? Was Modipane going to install himself as chief, or was he going to scrap the chieftainship entirely? In the vacuum, the chair of the Tribal Authority, proclaimed himself acting chief.

The Formation of Sofasonke

On the 25 November, a meeting of principals, teachers, chiefs, a priest and parents (mostly mothers) was convened in Brooklyn in the presence of the police to discuss the "problem of the students". In the absence of coherent leadership from the Tribal Authority, two school principals, who had supported Matsiketsane Mashile and had been active members of the Leihlo La Naga in the mid eighties, decided to full in the leadership vacuum. The principals had been alienated from the Mashiles by the activities of the students, Sekgopela's critical public statements about teachers and the Mashile's refusal to take a public stance against the activities of the Youth Congress. One of the principals was a first cousin of the heir to the chieftainship and was probably concerned with the preservation of the institution. At the meeting the Sifasonke [We are dieing together] Civic Organisation was formed. All the top executive positions in Sifasonke were held by former Leihlo La Naga members: The Chair and Secretary of Sifasonke were school principals. The Deputy Chair was a teacher. The Chair of the Tribal Authority, who owned a taxi and a small general dealer, was present at the meeting, along with the induna. A local butcher, fearing the Youth Congress because of his reputation as a cattle thief, also attended the meeting.

The following morning, after a prayer by a Nazerine Priest, (who implored "God to save the village from the Comrades"), eight hundred people, most of whom were women, attacked and burnt the houses of Jacques Modipane. All the windows were smashed and all the contents of the house, including furniture and clothes were destroyed. Modipane narrowly

escaped with his life. The crowd then went on to destroy the houses of six leaders of the Brooklyn Youth Congress. Following a brief conference with the police, the members of the crowd formed themselves in patrols and began to search the location for youth leaders.

The Sifasonke Civic Organisation soon changed its name to Sofasonke (we die together).[48] The Sofasonke assumed for itself all the powers previously wielded by the Youth Congress. The sjamboks changed hands back to the elder generation as armed members of the organisation patrolled the township at night, singing threatening songs directed against the Youth Congress. The patrols brutally assaulted any youths found on the streets at night. It became apparent that the Sofasonke were acting with indemnity from the police to the extent that the police often assisted in the evening patrols. The Acornhoek police station commander refused to accept statements taken by the lawyer employed by the youth leader's parents who had lost their houses. No arrests were made in connection with the burning of the houses.[49]

An atmosphere of acute anxiety pervaded the district as the arbitrary law of Sofasonke replaced the arbitrary law of the Youth Congress, (the difference being that Sofasonke had the protection of the police). Members of Sofasonke soon used their indemnity to violently resolve personal conflicts, such as competition over the favours of a woman.[50] Rumours of forthcoming and past attacks, far outnumbering the reality of such events, permeated the streets as Sofasonke grew quickly and aggressively in surrounding villages. Without police protection, most villagers could just wait helplessly for the rumoured assault to happen. When the attacks came, they were vehement and decisive: On Christmas Eve the home of Mathews Thibela, a youth leader in Tsakane location in Green Valley was destroyed. On the 28 of December, five households giving refuge to the families of youth leaders were burnt in Brooklyn. In Buffelshoek, Sofasonke found a powerful base in the Molotele Tribal Authority, who on the 28 December, attacked and destroyed Sekgopela Mashile's and a youth leader's homes. Two days later, Mathews Thibela, the Tsakane youth leader whose house had been destroyed the previous week, was found dead in Green Valley with bullet wounds. The subsequent day, Matsiketsane Mashile's nephew was discovered in nearby bushes, suffering from serious bullet wounds. The following statement captures the ambivalence of many residence about the choice between Sofasonke and the Youth Congress:

> "It has been much worse since Sofasonke has been around. They said they were better than the Comrades, but they also killed people."[51]

National Political Organisations Intervene

The following week, Sekgopela Mashile travelled to Johannesburg where he contacted the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and informed them of (his version of) the situation. The General Secretary of the SACC contacted Ramodike (who was also Minister of Police) the same day. It was one thing for Ramodike to be seen by the chiefs as being hard on the youth, it was quite another for him to be seen by national political organisations as arming an "Inkatha" like counter revolutionary organisation. The same night the police disarmed the Sofasonke patrols and told them to stay in doors until further notice.

Responding to the changed circumstances, Sofasonke produced a memorandum giving pre-conditions for "peace and reconciliation" in the district. Sofasonke defined itself as follows:

> (a) Sofasonke Civic Union is <u>not</u> a political organization. It is an organization which

stands for civil matters. Civil matters are not similar to political matters.
(b) Sofasonke Civic Union is affiliated by parents, Magoshi, Civil (Public Servants); Youth who surrendered from acts of the Comrades, as well as God.
(c) Sofasonke Civic Union stands for the preservation of law and order, peace and civilization.[52]

The memorandum was written in the rhetoric of chiefly politics, that is, every action was measured in relation to its effects on (actual or imagined) chiefly secession disputes. No mention was made of Pulana ethnicity. Rather the memorandum targeted Matsiketsane Mashile's secession dispute as the ultimate cause of the conflict in Mapulaneng without putting forward any evidence to substantiate the allegations:

> "These two members of Parliament should avoid to mobilize school students to serve as tools and weapons which to fight or struggle for Bogoshi as well as to struggle for the separation of Mapulaneng Constituency from the Lebowa Territory."[53]

The memorandum asserted that a local lawyer (who had been responsible for the interdict), six families of youth leaders, Jacques Modipane and the two Mashile brothers should leave Mapulaneng as a precondition to peace.

A press statement released in the third week of January by the Southern Transvaal region of the United Democratic Front bluntly accused Ramodike of employing "the very methods applied by the Apartheid colonial masters, that of repression, harassment, murder detention and terror."[54] Ramodike's hands were tied: On the 23 of January, he agreed to, alongside the SACC, facilitate a peace agreement amongst all affected parties.

Despite the preconditions to peace laid out in Sofasonke's memorandum, the following week, Chikane successfully brokered a peace agreement between the Bushbuckridge Youth Congress and Sofasonke. The Sofasonke delegation was lead by a school principal and a teacher. The Bushbuckridge Youth Congress was represented by Modipane. The MCC attended the meeting as observers. The agreement bound both sides to resolve their differences without the use of violence. Both sides, as well as the chiefs, agreed to recognise the right for any section of the population to form organisations. The Sofasonke agreed to allow people who fled their homes to return without fear of intimidation. In return the Bushbuckridge Youth Congress agreed to inform the Tribal Authority before they held any meetings.

Nevertheless, it was one thing for the Youth Congress to agree to certain principles at a public meeting, and it was another for them to respect those principles out of the public eye, particularly when those principles conflicted with the politics of monopolising the wielding of power. A month later, Sofasonke released a memorandum claiming that the BYC had broken the peace accord. In contrast to the rhetoric of the previous memorandum, which linked the activities of the Youth Congresses to the Mashile brothers without offering any concrete proof of such links, the second memorandum only made specific allegations regarding the actions of leading members of the Brooklyn Youth Congress. The memorandum was addressed to the following "mediators": the Lebowa Government cabinet, the South African Council of Churches and the Lowveld Council of Churches, the chiefs and the MCC. The memorandum alleged that:

> - The Brooklyn Youth Congress, without informing the Tribal Authority, went on night marches where they sang insulting and threatening songs about leading members

of the Sofasonke.
- The Sethlare chief elect had been threatened at his house by a crowd of about one and a half thousand youths.
- A member of Sofasonke received a letter which threatened the lives of the Sethlare chief elect, the Molotele chief, and some school principals.
- That youths, lead by Brooklyn Youth leaders, had prevented the Sofasonke from holding a meeting at Arthurseat.

The memorandum gave the mediators three weeks to rectify the situation, after which Sofasonke would take unspecified action.

The balance of power, however, had swung against Sofasonke. Ramodike was making overtures to the recently unbanned African National Congress, and probably did not want to have his national aspirations subverted by local conflicts. With the publicity surrounding the peace accord, the police were not able to intervene decisively against the Youth Congress. The Youth Congresses grew progressively more assertive, until in early April the houses of the Chair and Vice-Chair of Sofasonke were burnt down. The next day, the Chair was killed, and the vice-chair seriously wounded, after being attacked by youths in broad daylight at their schools. The principals closed all the schools in Mapulaneng for a month in protests against the murder of the Chair of Sofasonke. Three assassination attempts were made on Matsiketsane Mashile. Mashile narrowly escaped death on the third attempt, when his moving car was sprayed with bullets from an automatic weapon. Three bullets went through his headrest. His nephew was seriously injured in the incident. There was a complete stayaway for two days in the region in protest against the assassination attempt and the role of the police in the violence.

The situation then stabilised.

Conclusion

This paper demonstrated the processes which resulted in the formation of the Sofasonke Civic Union. First and foremost, these processes centred around the activities of youth organisations in general and the Brooklyn Youth Congress in particular. The moral economy of youth organisation had the effect of subverting generational authority; youth organisation challenged parent's authority to discipline their children, as well as elder's rights to control the political process. Similarly, youth organisation challenged the authority of chiefs, principles and priests. Although different factions within Sofasonke drew on, and were motivated by, different moral economies, the different groups were unified by the common aim of reasserting generational authority.

Secondly, Sofasonke represented an alliance of chiefs opposed to Matsiketsane's claim to the Sethlare chieftainship, as well an alliance amongst the bureaucracy who were threatened by the Mashile brother's activities as Members of Parliament. The association between the Mashiles and youth organisation, either as a consequence of the Mashile's status as African nationalist leaders or as a result of the perception that Matsiketsane was using the youth to claim his chieftainship, had the effect of focusing Sofasonke's anger on the two brothers.

Although Sofasonke flourished for the first few months of its existence, particularly given

its support from the Lebowa Legislative Assembly, the moment national organisations began to monitor and intervene in the situation, Sofasonke disintegrated. When negotiating with national organisations, Sofasonke could not draw on the logic of chiefly rhetoric to implicate the Mashile brothers in the activities of youth organisations. These allegations had to be proved, a task Sofasonke was not able to achieve. This failure enhanced the Mashile brother's standing as African nationalist leaders deserving the protection of national organisation. These splits in Sofasonke were exacerbated when Ramodicke withdrew his overt support for the organisation, leaving the leaders isolated. Furthermore, national organisation were not able to effectively police any peace agreements. In this context, the Youth Organisation were able to attack the leadership of Sofasonke without severe (extra-legal) repercussions.

Notes

1. Interview Tandios Mashile, Buffelshoek, 21/11/91.

2. I assisted in the process of contacting the Rural Advice Centre in both the Craigsburn and Brooklyn cases. The following paragraphs are thus based on personal observation.

3. Interview Chiloane, G., Green Valley, 26/7/93; and Mohlala, E., and Shokane, K., Green Valley, 26/7/93.

4. Interview Chiloane, G., Green Valley, 26/7/93; and Mohlala, E., and Shokane, K., Green Valley, 26/7/93.

5. The above paragraph is based on numerous conversations during this period. No formal interviews were held as the topic was too sensitive.

6. Elderly women resident quoted in Niehaus,I.A., "Witch-Hunting and Political Legitimacy: Continuity and Change in Green Valley, Lebowa", Paper Presented to the Department of Social Anthropology, University of the Witwatersrand, 1991, p16.

7. When confronted by the parents of pregnant school-girls the youths asserted that "it was the role of women to have babies", ignoring the social processes that were supposed to take place in order to have sexual access to women.

8. Interview, Mr F Machate, Brooklyn, 20/11/91.

9. Quote from Niehaus I, (unpublished) "Witch-Hunting and Political..." p??

10. Reverend Phako, Sofasonke's priest, had consistently opposed the activities of the Youth Congress since 1986, particularly attempts to make his sons attend meetings. See Interview, R M., Brooklyn, 12/12/86. See also Stadler J, "Domestic Authority and Intergrational Conflict", Paper to Postgraduate Seminar Series, University of the Witwatersrand, 1992, p12.

11. Phrase is taken from a freedom song.

12. Interview, Teacher, July 1993; Abner Cohen in "Political Symbolism", Annual Review of Anthropology, No 8, 1979, argues that as "life crises", (such as death) are irreducible and

universal aspects of the human condition, political movements struggle to load these events with meanings that function to develop and maintain the interests of that movement.

13. Youth quoted in Niehaus, "Witch-hunting and Political Legitimacy...", p16.

14. Interview Shokane, K., Green Valley, 20/07/1993.

15. Interview K, Shokane., Green Valley, 20/7/93.

16. See Chapter Four.

17. This dynamic is explored in greater detail in Chapter Five when the conflict between Willis Ngobe, a principal and the chief is described.

18. Interview L Mogakane, Pretoria, 5/8/93.

19. Interview, K Shokane, Green Valley, 3/8/93. Also Interview L Mogakane, Pretoria, 5/8/93.

20. This point is expanded upon in the previous chapter.

21. Interview Julius Mashile, Acornhoek, 9/7/93.

22. Interview Teacher, Green Valley, July 1993.

23. Interview S Thabane, Buffelshoek, 2/8/93.

24. Interview K Shokane and E Mohlala, Brooklyn, 26/7/93.

25. See Ritchken E, Survey of Secondary Schools In Mapulaneng, Education Policy Unit, Wits University, 1990.

26. Interview ex student at Maripe, Green Valley, 1993.

27. Interview Youth Leader, Green Valley, August, 1993.

28. Interview, Teacher, Green Valley, July 1993.

29. Interview, Teacher, Green Valley, July 1993.

30. Interview Chiloane, G., Green Valley, 26/7/93; Mohlala, E., (ZCC Priest), Green Valley, 26/7/93.

31. Interview Mahlakoane, O.B., Buffelshoek, 05/07/1992.

32. Interview Manzini, E., Buffelshoek, 6/7/92.

33. Interview Chiloane, G., Green Valley, 26/7/93.

34. Interview Mohlala, E., (ZCC Priest), Green Valley, 26/7/93.

35. Interview Mohlala, E., Green Valley, 3/8/93; and Mashile, L., Buffelshoek, 11/7/92. For a more detailed analysis of the church as a mediator between indigenous belief systems and colonial intrusion see Comaroff, Jean., Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. While Comaroff emphasises the counter-hegemonic meanings implicit in ZCC rituals and paraphenalia, she neglects to describe and analyse the political alliances that the church forges at a grass-roots and regional level.

36. Interview Mashile, L., Buffelshoek, 11/7/92. Of note is that the urban branch of Leihlo La Naga was never able to recruit a significant number of members from Molotele's following.

37. Conversation with ZCC member, Wits University, August, 1993.

38. Interview Chiloane, G., (Member of Molotele Royal Family) Green Valley, 26/7/93.

39. A snap survey conducted in 1992 revealed that 75% of trading stores in Buffelshoek were owned by ZCC members.

40. Interview Mashile, K.(Youth Leader), Buffelshoek, 21/11/91.

41. Anonymous "Slander" pamphlet brought out during Lebowa elections, April 1989.

42. See Chapter six for background to Leihlo La Naga.

43. See unpublished "Memorandum to the Honourable State President F.W.de Klerk". Ironically, Modipane had been one of the leaders of the movement which had Tsonga removed from Mapulaneng schools in 1985.

44. Molotele Chiloane at special meeting of Regional Authority. Minutes from Matsiketsane Mashile's personal diary.

45. Moloto's response taken from Matsiketsane Mashile's personal minutes of the special meeting of the Regional Authority.

46.ibid.

47. See Memorandum to Minister of Law and Order (the Honourable Chief Minister Mr Nelson Ramodicke) presented at the Acornhoek police station.

48. The name Sofasonke probably came from migrant experiences of the organisation in Soweto and Sophiatown in the fifties. See interview Chiloane, C., Soweto, 16/08/1989.

49. See Report on the Continuing Unrest Situation in the Area of Bushuckridge and Reluctancy by the Lebowa Police to Act Against Members of Sofasonke, Memorandum by Attorney M Legodi, 4/1/1990.

50. See for example Statement by Strekkie Ngobeng to M Mashile on 13/01/91.

51. Elderly resident quoted in Niehaus, "Witch-Hunting and Political Legitimacy..." p17.

52. Unsigned Memorandem titled "Sofasonke Civic Union: Mapulaneng", P1-2.

53. Ibid, p2.

54. Undated press statement re Bushbuckridge violence released by UDF Transvaal Affiliates.