University of the Witwatersrand

HISTORY WORKSHOP

The Making of Class

9- 14 February, 1987

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Title The Ndzundza Ndebele: Indenture and the Making of Ethnic Identity

Until the dramatic struggles of 1986 against "independence" for KwaNdebele the Southern Transvaal Ndebele were best known for their material culture. From the 1940s their intricate beadwork and their vivid wall decorations have attracted growing numbers of photographers, purchasers and researchers.(1) However another aspect of these communities which has often been commented on is their perceived conservatism. In 1914 a well informed commentator remarked "the tribe... holds to its tribal conditions closer than any other natives".(2) In 1920 an official wrote that they were "die mees konservatiewe naturelle ... wat in die Transvaal aangetref word. Hul hou nog met hand en tand vas aan hul ou gewoontes, drag en lewenswijze".(3) In 1949 the anthropologist Isaac Schapera commented on the fact that while other Transvaal Ndebele groups had virtually lost a separate identity the Southern Ndebele had "preserved to a remarkable degree their language and much of their traditonal culture".(4) Recent research has also yielded up an image of "strong traditonalism" amongst certain communities.(5)

The Ndebele have been seen as an example of a community with a vibrant ethnic or traditional culture. This predictably commended them to some of apartheid's ideologues. But even serious scholars have gone so far as to suggest that "Nguni pride and cultural aggressiveness" have shaped their history and society and concluded that as a result they have "embraced the idea of an independent homeland with enthusiasm".(6) A view which has been rather overtaken by recent events.

Popular resistance has made a mockery of the crude cultural determinism which has disfigured some analyses. But the problem remains of how to explain the cultural distinctiveness, tenacity and creativity of the Southern Ndebele.It cannot be accounted for in terms of a relatively undisturbed continuity with pre-colonial society. The main chiefdom, the Ndzundza, suffered a particularly brutal and disruptive process of colonial conquest. At first sight the suprising thing is that they survived as a distinctive community at all.

Neither can it simply be put down to the endorsement and manipulation of ethnic divisions by the state. In recent decades the state has vigorously sought to foster a distinct Ndebele identity. But until the 1940s little attempt was made from that quarter to either prop up Ndebele chiefly power or to maintain the Ndebele as a seperate group. Their requests for land were repeatedly refused and it was not until 1970 that provision was made for a seperate Ndebele "homeland". It is also not easy to detect the hands of anthropolgists and missionaries in shaping the outlines of Ndebele identity and culture for these professions paid relatively little attention to the Ndzundza until well into this century .Partly as a result an educated elite emerged relatively late from these communities and there is little evidence in the years before 1950 of such a grouping rediscovering and elaborating "tradition".

It seems at least plausible to suggest that the explanation for both the "traditionalism" and the artistry of the Ndzundza lies , at least in part, in their responses to the particular processes of conquest and disposession which they experienced. This may seems self evident to some but while scholars have gestured in this direction little attempt has been made to research the modern history of the Ndebele with this (or any other) proposition in mind.(7) This paper is an attempt to start to fill this gap by examining a central episode in their history - the defeat of the Ndzundza chiefdom in 1883 and the response of its sujects to division and indenture.

It is often assumed that the Transvaal Ndebele were stragglers left behind by Mzilikazi and this has led to speculation that a martial heritage accounts for their distinctive culture.(8) In fact their origins can be traced to the movement of Nguni speaking communities into the interior in or before the seventeenth century. The Ndebele have been classified in to northern and southern sections broadly divided by the Springbok flats. The former communities have been heavily influenced by" northern sotho" language and social forms while the latter groups show clearer evidence of their Nguni origins.(9)

The Southern Ndebele divide in turn into two main groups - the Manala chiefdom in the Pretoria area and the Ndzundza chiefdom which was located near the Steelpoort River.(10) Both chiefdoms suffered heavily in the years of the difaqane - not least of all at the hands of Mzilikazi's regiments. The Manala chiefdom barely recovered and by the early 1870s its remanants were living on the Wallmansthal mission station and the surrounding Boer farms.(11) The Ndzundza weathered these storms rather better and in the 1830s and 1840s re-emerged as a significant chiefdom under the leadership of Mabhogo Mahlangu and under the political umbrella of the Pedi paramount Sekwati.

The Ndzundza , like other societies in the region , developed fortified mountain strongholds. By the 1860s their capital Erholweni was probably the most impregnable single fastness im the eastern Transvaal. The security and the resources which the chiefdom offered attracted a steady stream of refugee communities to settle within its boundaries.

In the 1840s the arrival of parties of Trekkers presented a new challenge to the society. After an initial uneasy coexistence conflicts flared over land and labour. The Ndzundza refused Boer demands for labour and denied their claims to ownership of the land.Boer exactions ensured that the flow of refugees to the chiefdoms maintained its momentum and the Ndzundza also secured large numbers of guns through migrant labour , trade and raiding. A number of Boer attempts to subdue the chiefdom failed and by the late 1860s the tables had been turned on the settlers. Many who had settled in the environs of the Ndzundza trekked away in despair. Those that remained recognized the authority of the

Ndzundza rulers and paid tribute to them. A breach also developed between Mabhogo and the new Pedi paramount Sekhukhune who succeeded in 1861.

The external relations of the Ndzundza chiefdom are reasonably well known and described for these years but its internal sociology in this period is little understood. This is largely because no missionaries settled within it and there is thus a paucity of documentation. It is, however, possible to piece together some relevant impressions. The first and probably the most important of these relates to the composition of the chiefdoms population. Informed contemporary observers stressed the hetrogeneity of its subjects and commented that they were mainly a mixture of Sotho and Nguni speaking peoples.(12)

This heterogeneity is hardly suprising when one considers the role that in-migration played in the chiefdoms development after the difaqane. Communities sought security and resources rather more vigorously than they strove for cultural similarity in the areas to which they moved. And ruling groups intent on building up their power welcomed followers of diverse origins. There were processes of assimilation at work but the continuing arrival of new groups presumably kept cultural homogeniety at bay. The society also lacked the social institutions - like standing regiments - and the mobile way of life which made for very rapid and complete social incorporation and cultural assimilation amongst some of the societies spawned by the difaqane.The probable result was a chiefdom in which the aristocracy was most clearly " Nguni" but in which the commoner stratum was composed of a amalgam of Sotho and Ndebele speaking groupings. There were also a number of subordinate chiefdoms which ranged from being mainly Sotho to mainly Ndebele in compostion.(13)

This kind of interaction between Sotho and Ndebele groupings also probably had a considerably longer if less dramatic history. The Ndebele had also at various times been subject to broader, mainly Pedi, political systems and there is some indication of intermarriage with neighbouring Sotho chiefdoms. There is a good deal of evidence that Southern Ndebele norms and institutions had been influenced by this interaction. One crucial example is the practice of male inititiation and the formation of regiments.The Ndzundza capital as far as one can tell was also very similar to the various chiefly strongholds in the heartland of the Pedi paramountcy. There seems to have been a pattern of dispersed fields. And twentieth century evidence suggests that Ndebele homestead design and marriage preferences show some similarities to those of their Pedi neighbours.(14)

This is not , of course to deny that significant differences in political structures, the definition of local groups and other areas of social life existed. It is, however ,to insist that these communities must be understood in the context of a long standing process of the interaction of a wide variety of groups and cultures which so clearly shaped the nature of societies

throughout the central and eastern Transvaal. It is also to suggest that to see the Southern Ndebele as "pure nguni stock" and to posit that the key to their traditionalism, distinctiveness and creativity lies in the extraordinary vitality of "nguni culture" is more than a little misplaced.(15)

The late 1860s and the 1870s were the apogee of Ndzundza power and prosperity. The chiefdom had a population of about 10,000 and held sway over a considerable area. But by the late 1870s changes were taking place which had ominous implications for the future of the society.The British annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 resulted in a restructuring and strengthening of the state and in 1879 a British led army (with Swazi and Ndzundza assistance) finally defeated the Pedi paramountcy. As the balance of power swung away from the African states in the region, landowners and speculators started to press claims to formerly unoccuppied farms and to those which had only been worked on sufferance of the Ndzundza rulers. Shortly after retrocession, the Ndzundza and the restored Republican administration found themselves at loggerheads over competing land claims and whether or not the chiefdom fell under the authority of the Z.A.R. In 1882 Mampuru sought refuge amongst the Ndzundza after having murdered his brother Sekhukhune, Nyabela's refusal to hand him over to the Z.A.R. brought the wider conflicts to a head.(16)

The war that followed was one of attrition. The Boer force and their African - mainly Pedi - auxillaries baulked at direct attacks on the Ndzundza strongholds and adopted a policy of siege. Ndzundza crops were destroyed , their cattle were seized and a number of their smaller refuges were dynamited. By the middle of 1883 widespread starvation made it impossible for them to continue the struggle and in July Nyabela surrendered. His subjects streamed out in desperate condition while behind them their abandoned capital - torched by the victorious burghers - provided "glorious illumination" of their plight.(17)

The Z.A.R. now confronted the question of what to do with their defeated opponents. Mampuru, Nyabela and twenty two Ndzundza royals and subordinate chiefs were taken captive to Pretoria. Mampuru and Nyabela were tried convicted and sentenced to death. The British resident protested against these sentences and Nyabela's sentence was commuted to "levens-lange gevangenis-straf met harde arbeid in ijzers" But Mampuru went to the gallows. The twenty two remaining prisoners were sentenced to seven years with hard labour.(18)

The larger and more pressing problem facing the Z.A.R. was how to handle the remainder of the chiefdom. Emergency supplies of grain were brought from the Botshabelo mission station but the continued supply of relief was not a course of action which recommended itself to the burghers and their leaders. They also wished to avoid the Ndzundza finding refuge amongst the other chiefdoms in the region and thus slipping beyond their control.(19)

There were a number of considerations which shaped the policies which were finally adopted.Landlessness and labour shortages were perennial problems amongst the burghers of the Z.A.R. Many of those who had participated in the campaign probably suffered from one or both these disabilitied and anticipated that its succesful completion would bring them some respite. These issues were also constantly brought before the Volksraad and the Uitvoerende Raad. In addition the war had been long and costly and the state was determined to recoup some of its costs and to provide a salutary lesson to other African communities of the dangers involved in resisting its authority.(20)

The Volksraad decided on drastic measures. There remained 15,000 morgen of the heartland of the chiefdom to which farmers and speculators had not yet secured title. These were opened on a first come first served basis to all burgers who had done service on the commando. They were entitled to claim small holdings to which they could secure title if the land was occupied and improved. But "kaffer kraals or tribes large or small (would) not be permitted ...on this land".(21) The land was rushed in October of 1883 and although some speculation took place the area remained relatively densely settled by mainly poor farmers.

The Volksraad further decreed that the population of the chiefdom "in the interests of order , safety and humanity " would be dispersed amongst the burghers and indentured for a period of five years with preference being given to those who had fought in the war and those without labour. In order to distance this device from the infamous inboekseling system , to still criticism ,and to make the strategy effective , it was stipulated that families were not to be separated.(22) But what exactly constituted a family was not defined.

The state also attempted to cater to its own financial needs. The regulations laid down that each family's service was to be paid for in food , clothing and wages to an amount not exceeding £3 per anum. But each employer was also responsible for paying a £5 fine and the tax arrears since 1879 which the state demanded from each each family head. It was proposed, however, that these sums could be deducted from the wages due to each family and so in theory at least a finely meshed method of tax collection had been devised. By the 1880s the state was also aware of the choas that uncontrolled transfer and speculation could make of the best laid plans and individuals were barred from making over contracts of indenture. It also had more than an inkling of the problems of control involved and attempted to bolster the strategy by threatening severe consequences for any chief who gave shelter to refugee Ndzundza.(23)

The terms of indenture were drawn up with an eye to potential British objections. The Pretoria Convention prohibited any changes in "native" legislation without Imperial sanction and the Z.A.R. authorities feared renewed charges of slavery against the Republic.(24) In the event the British reaction was mild. The

Imperial authorities had no desire to become embroiled in a dipilomatic confrontation so shortly after retrocession. No real attempt was made to condemn the practice of involuntary indenture. The British had permitted similiar practices during the annexation period and the Z.A.R. had wasted no time in exposing this fact. The British Resident conveyed concern at the length of the indenture suggesting that the period should not exceed twelve months. But when his representations were rebuffed he urged his superiors that the matter should be dropped.(25)

The pattern in the Z.A.R. was that legislation in relation to "native affairs" was more often honoured in the breach than the observance. Certainly the view of the British resident was that the conditions would have little effect. He argued that "enforced service is a thing of the past... Her Majesty's Government need (not) feel any apprehension that any indentureship for a longer period than twelve months will practically be imposed on these people".(26) Some historians have taken their cue from this remark and suggested that these measures had little practical effect.(27) But other researchers have come to very different conclusions. One recent account suggests that the Ndzundza were

> utterly defeated,without a leader, scattered from friends and relatives, alienated from their own land and having to work on Boer farms for a mere pittance. It would be many years before they would have the energy and will to gradually find one another again.(28)

At first these views appear entirely contradictory. They do however have a common element which is that neither provides any real understanding of what the impact of indenture was on the Ndzundza. The years from 1883 to 1914 constitute a yawning gap in our understanding of the history of the society. To a considerable extent this is because after the defeat of the chiefdom the Ndzundza faded from both the official and the missionary view. The often fragmentary information that does exist has been insufficient to attract or sustain historians. But it is nonetheless adequate to provide a rather fuller account than has been previously available.

There is no surviving description of how the surrendered Ndzundza were parcelled out,but it is possible to give an impression of how this took place. The Boer commando, which had laid siege to the chiefdom, consisted of burgher contingents from the districts of Lydenburg, Middelburg, Standerton, Wakkerstsroom, Potcheftsroom and Pretoria.(29) These burghers had served on a rotational basis.By September of 1883 the Ndzundza had been taken to these districts. The bulk of them were removed to Pretoria, Middelburg, Lydenburg and Standerton whose burgers had made up the majority of the commando. They were then allocated to those who had done a stint of commando service. Those without labour also laid claim to families and those who enjoyed the favour of the local officials were also well placed to secure a share.(30)

Central to the process of division was the model of the family which was employed by the Boers. It is clear that this was of a nuclear family consisting of a man and his wife or wives and their unmarried children.A proportion of the families were polygamous ,but the overwhelming majority included only one wife. There is some evidence that husbands were divided from their wives and that parents were separated from their children but this does not apear to have been the dominant pattern. The records also show that significant numbers of "orphans" and "widows" were indentured. And, although the evidence is inconclusive, there is some indication that the aged and infirm were not often included in the definition of the "family".(31)

Division into nuclear families did not of course accord with the realities of Ndzundza society. In most instances nuclear families were embedded in wider units -homesteads (umuzi). These groups would have undergone changes in their scale and composition throughout their development cycle, but would often have centered on an extended family consisting of two generations of married adults. The rupture of homesteads may however have been partly ameliorated by the existence of extended families and localized clusters of kin within Boer society. The surviving registers of indenture show that in a significant number of cases three, four or more "nuclear" families were contracted to an equivalent number of Boer families with the same surname living on a single farm. It is possible that in these circumstances homesteads could regroup.(32)

The concept of an "orphan" was one which had long been used within the Transvaal as a specious justification for the seizure and indenture of children. Even where children had lost both parents there were a number of mechanisms within Ndzundza society which would have ensured that they were readily re-incorporated . And "widows" were clearly not always women who had lost their spouses. But where they were the Ndzundza also had a variety of means of absorbing them.(33)

These rather dry observations can convey little of the impact of these events on the Ndzundza. The full effect of defeat and indenture on their consciousness cannot now be recreated and, indeed, defies imagination. At the end of a bitter and prolonged war individuals who had belonged to a powerful and independent chiefdom with rich resources found themselves divided and scattered across the breadth of the Transvaal. Their villages had been destroyed and their land had been alienated. They had lost their stock and their weapons.

Some sense of the transition that they experienced and the values which dominated the world they entered is conveyed by the names that the heads of families were given by their masters when they were contracted.These were often derived from months of the year with "September", the date of indenture of many, the most common. "Stuurman" was also a popular name and presumably referred to the anticipated role of the labourer as wagon driver and plough leader. Perceived physical characteristics prompted names

like "Swartbooi ,Geelbooi and Kleinbooi". The continuity between land and labour in the thinking of some farmers was expressed in the names like "Swartland and Rooiland". The Bible also provided a source of inspiration and the character that came most readily to the minds of many was "Jonas"(Jonah). This was presumably because he was the first Hebrew prophet or missionary sent to a heathen nation and some of Boers rationalized indenture as a step towards christanizing the Ndzundza. The fact that Jonah had a very torrid time of it before he accepted his calling may also have suggested parallels. Units of currency, for example "Rijksdalder and Halfpond", provided a point of reference . Other names suggest language skills. Those named "Jack" were probably able to speak some English while those dubbed "Oorlam" presumambly had some command of Dutch. Many defeated by, or disinterested in, the exercise settled for "Booi" but a handful attempted to render a version of the Ndebele names of their new workers. Finally the recurrence of "Adonis" in these records reveals a sardonic humour which probably boded ill for the future of the indentured family.(34)

The Ndzundza clearly suffered considerable dislocation as a result of this experience. But the suggestion that it put an end to Ndzundza resistance for decades flies in the face of the evidence. No sooner was the process of division complete than reports and complaints started to pour in from the districts that labourers and families were fleeing from the farms. The Z.A.R. had no standing army or police force and this movement proved extremely difficult to control. Local commandos had to be mobilized to track down the fugitives, and burghers were often reluctant to spend time and energy on uncertain pursuits. Repeated requests from district officials that rewards should be offered and that local police forces should be created to deal with the problem were however refused by the central government on the grounds of the costs involved. The pattern that emerged was that in districts were considerable numbers of Ndzundza had been indentured it was possible to mobilize the burghers to pursue fleeing families. But those areas with few indentured labourers witnessed a corresponding apathy on the part of the bulk of the burghers to the problems of control. However, even in those districts which were relatively tightly policed, the problem remained acute as the Ndzundza developed increasingly sophisticated and co-ordinated startegies for escape. A number of families would flee from different farms in diverse directions on the same night or they bided their time until the burghers were engaged in activities - like ploughing - which they were loath to abandon.(35)

For a time it appeared that the British Resident would prove correct "that within months scarcely any of the people now indentured will be found to be still in their masters service".(36) But while there was considerable movement there was not in the end the predicted wholesale abandonment of Boer farms for African chiefdoms .There were a number of reasons for this. One already touched on was that commandos were mobilized and fleeing Nzundza from the central and eastern districts were

hunted down with some success. But the hazards involved in escape went beyond the dangers of immediate recapture. It was by no means as easy for them to find refuge in African chiefdoms in the 1880s as it had been for inboekselings to do so in the 1860s. The sharpest difference was, of course, that most of these had been conquered, collaborators had been entrenched and networks of informers had been created. Beyond this the major chiefdom adjacent to the heartland of indenture was ruled over by the Pedi paramount Kgoloko, who had actively assisted in the destruction of the Ndzundza, and who was closely linked to J.Abel Erasmus the Lydenburg Native Commissioner. Chiefs locked in local conflicts were also prepared to denounce their rivals for harbouring refugees.(37)

A case which demonstrates some of these dimensions involved the Zebedelia chiefdom. In January of 1883 Cornelis Erasmus appeared before the Public Prosecutor in Pretoria and said that while passing through Zebedelia's area his wagon driver had told him that he had seen two Ndzundza women. Then a neighbouring chief Klaas Makapan had repeated the allegation. Zebedelia was issued with a stern warning and Abel Erasmus approached Kgoloko who agreed to send spies to check on the validity of the allegation.(38)

African societies in the 1880s were not only defeated militarily but also either cooped up in inadequate locations or tenants on private land. The Ndzundza stripped of their cattle and fire-arms and without cash were not necesarily attractive additional subjects. In 1884 the costs of affording them sanctuary were made clearer still when a number of chiefs were heavily fined after refugees were reported amongst their subjects. Clearly some Ndzundza were absorbed into neighbouring societies but without resources to ease their entrance they would have had low and even onerous status . It also seems that women and children were more readily incoporated than were families or individual men.(39)

The domains of chiefdoms thus hardly provided areas in which the dispersed Ndzundza could easily shelter or regroup. To seek refuge there was also to accept fragmentation. The evidence suggests that many Ndzundza who had evaded capture in 1883 or who had fled the farms initially adopted an alternative strategy. This was to settle in rugged zones in the eastern Transvaal on the periphery of both Boer and and chiefly domains. But these areas afforded a very precarious freedom and a number of communities were located, broken up and re-indentured. Probably only those groups that remained relatively small and mobile survived for any length of time.(40)

Possibly the most important strategy was revealed by the complaints about the movement of Ndzundza between farms. This was shaped by a number of factors. Individuals struggled to locate and reclaim their spouses and children. Their efforts were sometimes facilitated by their masters who hoped to secure additional labour. Some used formal channels. For example in 1885 "September" indentured in the Middelburg district

petitioned the Uitvoerende Raad for assistance in securing the return of his five children who were in the possesion of J.Kock the Landdrost of Potchefstroom. This official surrendered one child but was determined to hold on to the rest. Others adopted more direct methods. In 1884 "Kameel" arrived at the farm of Jacobus Uys in the Ermelo district in the owners absence and fled with two Ndebele women and three children. Uys tracked down Kameel and one of the women and brought them back to the farm. But then Kameel- who was clearly a resourceful man - persuaded the farmer to let him go and fetch the missing woman and children. That night Kameel returned to the farm, rescued the women who had been captured with him, and fled once more.It also seems probable that the movement between farms facilitated a regrouping of homesteads.(41)

The overall effect of this mobility a conformed to a long standing pattern within the Z.A.R. This was the tendency for Africans to move from poor Boers, who had limited labour and made relatively heavy demands on them, to the lands of wealthier farmers whose exactions were less onerous. In some cases this involved settling on the second -sometimes bushveld winter grazing- farms of more prosperous burghers in exchange for seasonal labour or service on the main estate. One of the advantages of this tactic was that powerful burghers could offer some protection against capture and re-indenture. But for this to be possible the refugees needed to move away from the original areas of indenture. The result appears to have been a two way process. Nzdzundza indentured in the middleveld found refuge on highveld farms and vice versa. As this process continued poorer Boers, especially, despaired of maintaining control over the imdentured families. In consequence another old Transvaal strategy came to the fore. This was that while farmers were prepared to abandon the struggle to keep adults on their farms they attempted to keep their grip on children. The theory and to some extent the practice was that children socialized on the farms would become relatively skilled and malleable labourers and in time form part of the Oorlams stratum within rural society.(42)

Thus, while the Ndzundza fled from their contracted masters in considerable quantities, large numbers nonetheless remained on the farms.There also seems to have been a tendency for them to move back to the farms in the Middelburg and Pretoria districts . There were regular alarms amongst the burghers that Ndzundza were congregating in the Mapochsgronden but these proved to be without substance. These lands relatively densely settled by poorer Boers offered scant shelter. But Ndzundza did settle on farms adjacent to the old heartland of the chiefdom. This movement presumably reflected not only a return to familiar territory but also the extent to which the concentration of Ndzundza in these districts afforded the possibility of drawing on, and reviving wider social networks, and of partly overcoming the atomization which they had suffered.(43)

There is not only evidence that Ndzundza stayed on the farms but also that significant numbers in the Pretoria and Middelburg districts stayed with their original employers.One source of confusion are the replies to a circular sent out by the Superintendent of Natives in 1886 enquiring about rates of desertion in the districts. These responses painted a picture of mass desertion. But this evidence has to be treated with caution. By 1886 large numbers of burghers had failed to pay the fines and taxes due on their labourers and were being pressed to meet their obligations by the central government . Both burghers and local officials - who wished to avoid bitter disputes with their constituents - had reason to deny that indentured families remained in their districts. However the petitions to be freed from these obligations made to the Volksraad the previous year paint a rather different picture. Those who could demonstrate that their labour had absconded were relieved of these payments and significant numbers had paid substantial amounts at the time of indenture. Yet in six months of 1885, 263 individuals asked to be spared from having to pay. It was probably precisely the failure of these requests that shaped the response to the 1886 cicular.(44)

It seems safe to conclude that the British Residents predictions proved to be way off the mark. Equally the image of the Ndzundza as utterly demoralized and defeated is belied by the evidence of the extent to which they both resisted, and shaped the reality of, indenture.

Initiatives came not only from below but also from Ndzundza royals. Before his arrest Nyabela had made attempts to ensure chiefly continuity. In late 1883 a group of burghers searching for Ndzunzda who had evaded capture found an old man "Moentoe" with a child of twelve hiding in the Steenkampsberg along with eleven head of cattle. Their interrogation of their captives revealed that the child was a son of Nyabela who along with the cattle had been placed by the chief in the care of the old man. The cattle were divided between the burghers and the boy was indentured to a Lydenburg Veldcornet D.J.Schoeman.(45) But this official had no place for the old man and so the youth and his mentor were separated. The designated heir Fene Mahlangu the son of Nyabela's elder brother was a child at this time but later recalled that he and his mother "wandered all over the country like wild animals.(46) Ultimately they settled on a highveld farm in the Pretoria district. Messages were also conveyed from Nyabela to his subjects.(47) However a juvenile heir and messages from prison were tenuous supports for a society whose foundations were in peril.

A more secure focus of royal power started to emerge in the Middelburg district in the 1880s. The precise manner in which this took place remains unclear but there are some tantalizing though conflicting pieces of evidence. Fene Mahlangu speaking in 1917 (and with reason to down play the legitimacy and significance of this process) told how a man called Japhta (Matsitsi) was "elected" as headman.(48) But Matsitsi's

descendants tell a more dramatic tale and one that asserts Nyabela's sanction for this development. A tradition collected in 1984 recalls that in the early years of indenture

> These tribes people had no chief or leader ... so the Chief and council who were in prison decided that one of them must try to escape, so that he could return to look after his people. They chose Matsitsi (Nyabela's brother) to be this man. This was the plan of escape : every Wednesday they were given some snuff, of which they would only take a little and store the rest. One morning they went off to work, with all the snuff they had collected in Matsitsi's pocket. Matsitsi was the coffee boy ; he made coffee and gave it to the warder, who then told Matsitsi to clean his shoes. Matsitsi threw the snuff in the warders eyes, then ran away.
> (He hid for a period in a number of different places.) After this, he went to the white farmers at Kafferskraal where his family was living, and told them that he had been sent by Nyabela to rule his people in Nyabela's place. The whites agreed. Matsitsi called a big meeting of all the Ndzundza , who came from all the far away farms to hear what message Nyabela had sent them from prison. Matsitsi told them that Nyabela had sent him to be their ruler. They were all satisfied with this arrangement.(49)

There is evidence which lends credence to aspects of this account. At least two imprisoned Ndzundza leaders escaped in 1885 In one incident a group of four prisoners were taken to work in a quarry . For a period they were left with a single guard and one of them "Maschiela" took the opportunity to flee. But the escapes had severe consequences for those that remained in custody. Thenceforth they were kept in irons.(50)

The establishment of this political focus to some extent allowed chiefly ritual and juidicial functions to be resumed. But probably the most important step taken to maintain a degree of social and cultural continuity and cohesion was the holding of male inititiation (wela) and the formation of regiments. Initiation played a number of key roles within the society. It marked the transition from boyhood to manhood. During its course youth were schooled in the traditions and dominant values of the society. They even learned a special language which would allow them to converse without being understood by the uninitiated - especially women . Each school was led by a senior royal and the virtues of loyalty to their leader and the society's rulers were drummed into the young men. These schools were normally held every four years and the most intensive section lasted about two months. A short period after they were completed youths were usually given leave to marry.(51)

A wela had been due in 1883 but had to be postponed because of the war.Remarkably however in 1886 an outraged Abel Erasmus reported that youths were asking for, and getting, passes from farmers to go to initiation.It is unclear where the impulse for this came from or where the initiation schools were held. But it may be more than mere coincidence that male initiation was

restarted in early 1886, the year after the escapes of the Ndzundza royals. The tradition quoted above recalls that one of the first things that Matsitsi did was to call Ndzundza youths to an initiation school at the farm Kafferskraal fifteen miles from the old capital. And as important for communities which had lost all their stock was the sanction - presented as coming from Nyabela - which was passed from family to family on the farms for youths to marry without having to pay bridewealth. It is also probable that female initiation was continued but as this was conducted within individual homesteads it was less likely to attract attention and excite comment.(52)

Part of what is suprising about this development is that the farmers permitted it to take place at all. Abel Erasmus argued that these events constituted a threat to peace and order while the Superintendant of Natives P.J.Joubert was incredulous that a chiefdom which, in his view ,no longer existed , could hold initiation.Throughout the 1880s and 1890s sections of settler society reacted with very considerable alarm and vehemence to any sign of the revival of the Ndzundza chiefdom. The wela that was held in 1886 and those that took place in the years thereafter was a testimony of the extent to which Ndzundza resistance had changed the balance of power on the farms. By 1886 many farmers must have recognized that to deny youths permission to attend would almost certainly result in their desertion. A number of them may also have been to prepared to accept some manifestations of chiefly organization as long as this did not result in the permanent movement of their labourers off their land.(53)

In September of 1888 the period of formal indenture came to an end. Some Ndebele clearly waited for this day with keen anticipation. Reports quickly arrived in Pretoria that families were well aware that there contracts had expired and were asking for trek passes. It seems unlikely , however, that the expiry of their five years contracts had a major effect on the conditions under which they lived. There was no area of land set aside for them to settle on and it is unlikely that they had accumulated sufficient resources during the period of indenture to be able to buy or hire land. Farmers and local officials took a very frosty view of requests to leave farms and they had a formidable weapon which they could deploy against groups which attempted to gather on absentee landlord land. This was the Squatters Law of 1887 which stipulated that no more than five families could live on a farm occuppied by whites and that only two families could live on "unoccuppied" land. In the main this law proved ineffective because powerful Boers with large concentrations of labour under their control or on their land were able to thwart its implementation. Indeed they were often precisely the officials charged with the responsibility for its enforcement. There was also the threat of widepread and violent resistance on the part of the many African chiefdoms settled outside the locations to any real attempt to execute the policy. But the Ndzundza dispersed and disarmed where the one group who were vulnerable to the application of this

legislation.(55)

An incident in 1891 provides an illustration both of this reality and the actions taken to prevent any major regrouping of Ndzundza under royal leadership. In early 1891 the last imprisoned leaders -aside from Nyabela - were released. One of these was a subordinate chief known in contemporary documentation as "Tappies" who had commanded one of the major strongholds during the 1882-1883 war. Lurid stories about his activities soon started to circulate amongst some farmers.In November Abel Erasmus reported that "Tappies " had settled near the Steelpoort River and was gathering his former subjects about him. The Native Commissioner argued that this was in contravention of the squatters law and posed a danger to the surrounding white population. With the approval of the central government Erasmus despatched his assistant D.J.Schoeman with twelve burghers. On their arrival they discovered that the reports were considerably exaggerated as there were only nine families to be found. Nonetheless, six families, including that of "Tappies", were seized and divided amongst the burghers.(55)

It seems probable that the main impact of the end of the period of formal indenture was to facilitate a degree of movement of Ndzunzda between farms. Some took the opportunity to start - or renew the search for their wives and children.(56) Others moved to farms which provided less uncongenial terms of service but always at the risk that they would incur the wrath of the farmer whose land they left. A process of regrouping probably took place but this would have only been possible on any scale with the compliance of local officials and wealthy and powerful landlords who could withstand demands for the redistribution of labour emanating from poorer farmers.

Ndebele informants recall their grandparents accounts of the last decades of the nineteenth century as being a time of suffering when men who were thought to be "lazy" or "cheeky" were beaten within an inch of their lives and when men, women and children toiled long hours in Boer fields and kitchens. Farmers provided their tenants with land to work but gave no other payment. Thus one of the central struggles of these families was to restock and their main means of achieving this was trading. This may have involved some exchange of grain but the trade which informants describe was in feathers. The Ndzundza trapped finches and 'after catching them pulled out the tail feathers, skilfully binding them together into a beautiful object ... these feathers were in demand in Zululand, for two works of art you received one cow.'(57)

After 1891 Nyabela was the last Ndzundza royal in prison. He had petitioned in 1888 for his release promising never again to disturb the peace but this and subsequent pleas were rejected. Finally in 1898 the Z.A.R., partly prompted by the Government Surgeon's evidence that he was in failing health, released him. His freedom was conditional on him remaining under close

supervision, not leaving the Pretoria district and refraining from assembling his followers. And before he left the prison he had an interview with the Commandant-Generaal who told him

> The State President has decided to release you. You have had ample time to think about, and to learn to understand, what constitutes the difference between the Godless and idolatrous life lived by you and your councillors in the caves and murderers shelters of the Mapochsgronden, and the life of a town like Pretoria.(59)

But, even after the fifteen years Nyabela had spent incarcerated and in irons, some burghers in the Middelburg and Pretoria districts were outraged at his release. They feared that it would encourage rebelliousness amongst the labourers on their farms and they demanded that he should be re-arrested and kept in prison until he died.(60)

Thus neither the end of formal indenture nor the release of the royals breached the barriers erected against the Ndzundza moving off the farms. It was to take the massive rural upheaval caused by the Anglo-Boer war to undermine the farmers control of their captive labour force. As the fabric of rural society started to unravel the Ndzundza left the farms in large numbers. The majority gathered around Matsitsi at Kafferskraal but there was also a concentration of Ndebele round Fene and Nyabela in the Pretoria district. Initially despite this exodus from the farms the Ndzundza retained a peaceful relationship with the Boer forces and were even entrusted with Boer cattle. After all the Ndzundza with relatively few arms were in no position to challenge Boer authority too directly. But there was widespread, although by no means universal, support for the British amongst the Ndebele tenants. And as the war ground on Matsitsi and his followers moved towards more active forms of resistance. This shift in attitude was partly prompted by the arrival in the area of contingents of national scouts led by British officers who made contact with Matsitsi and supplied him with guns. Thereafter a number of bitter and bloody clashes occurred between Ndzundza and Boer forces and Matsitsi's regiments also participated with Pedi and British soldiers in a major battle against the local commando in the closing stages of the war. The Ndebele also lost considerable quantities of the stock they had so painstakingly acquired thorugh both Boer and British exactions. Nonetheless by the time that the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed many Ndzundza appeared to have made a decisive break with their circumscribed past. They had re-assembled and they had guns. But this recovery was to be short lived.(61)

The Ndzundza along with many other African in the Transvaal were to find that British rule had objectives wich were not compatible with a significant improvement or transformation of their pre-war situation. The Milner administration was intent on reviving the economy and securing the conditions for continued capitalist development. It also set out to create a political climate and

context with would ensure long terms British interests and influence. The consequence of this strategy was a marked disinclination to allow any challenge to the racial patterns of power and property which had existed before the war. In the countryside the point was hammered home that the Boers had not been dispossessed.(62)

Nevertheless at first the Boers appeared to have been broken by the war. An Ndebele tenant recalled,

> we received the report that the war was over. The rumour-mongers started saying that the Boers were returning home, those that had survived were coming back to their houses. Oh yes truly we saw our poor Boers arriving in a little wagon. Hawu, what a sorry sight, they were lean and emaciated. In they came and there they sat ... seeing that the cattle were captured by the English they were asking for donations of donkeys... as well as one small plough for each family - no matter in what poor condition the plough was. Starvation! They planted potatoes. The soil proved good for these potatoes. They were living on potatoes.(63)

But soon it was the Ndzundza who found themselves in a tightening vice. Hopes, and possibly promises, that the new administration would permit chiefly authority to be re-unified were dashed. In 1902 Nyabela visited the Middelburg district. On his arrival he was arrested ,lectured before his councillors, fined five pounds and removed to Pretoria. The Native Commissioner also "told him clearly that he would never go back to his old location". Nyabela died later the same year and was succeeded by Fene. In the ensuing years a rift between Fene and Matsitsi opened and widened.(64)

The Ndebele were also pressed by local officials to return the cattle that they had been given by, and had raided from, the Boers. Some three hundred head of cattle from the diminished Ndebele herds were handed over but the Boers refused to return stock they had seized and Africans had to take recourse to the courts. The Ndzundza were once again forced to surrender their arms and this time the process was particularly thorough.(65)

By 1903 they found that even their regrouping was under threat. The Sub Native Commissioner for Middelburg reported that

> it is quite true that natives have congregated on certain farms in this district. ... Efforts are now being made to prevail upon them to scatter (and) everything is being done to induce the natives to go back to the farms upon which they resided before the war but without much success as far as the Mapoch tribe under Jafita(Matsitsi) are concerned.(66)

Nonetheless steady pressure facilitated by the provisions of the squatters law and the limited carrying capacity of the farms on which groups had congregated did result in dispersal taking place. By the end of 1903 the local official could report that

"the natives who had gathered in large numbers on private farms...have now in great measure returned to their former masters". Although a considerably diminished concentration of Ndzundza did remain at Kafferskraal.(67)

The groups who remained on, and returned, to the farms found themselves facing mounting labour demands. Before the war farmers in the district had been mainly stock farmers concentrating on rearing cattle and sheep. But after 1902 those that remained on the land turned increasingly to the far more labour intensive production of cereals. Many of them were struggling to recover from the war and were strapped for both capital and cash. It was reported in 1903

> Farmers cannot afford to pay the high prices given for labour on the mines and must have native tenants who in return for ploughing ground, grass, wood , water and a place to reside on, give a part of a years labour.(68)

In 1904 most farmers were said to "pay native tenants no wages. They practically work gratuitously". But tenants were also prevented from becoming labour migrants and the only way the could secure cash to pay taxes was to send their children out to do seasonal work. But in "many cases" children were kept fully occuppied on the farms and farm labourers were the main tax defaulters in the district.(69) Not all the Ndzundza on the farms were subjected to terms as harsh as these. A handful in the Middelburg district were rent tenants and this was more common in the Pretoria district. Some of the more prosperous may even have been amongst the small number of sharecroppers in these areas.

The main prospect for the Ndebele of improving their situation seemed to lie in securing a location or in purchasing land. But neither of these paths proved to be open to them in the first decades of the century. Despite repeated requests by their chiefs and spokesman , pressure from farmers ensured that their claims were routinely rejected by both location and land commissions. The Ndzundza were also poorly placed to muster the resources to buy land - a strategy adopted by a number of communities in the Transvaal at this time. The Ndebele, politically divided, dispersed and short of cash, couldn't sustain the heavy payments which more cohesive communities with access to market and migrant income could carry. In the years before 1913 Fene "bought land several times on the instalment principle and failed to carry out his agreement in full and thus frittered away a lot of money". Contemporary commentators put this down to the fact that Fene "lacked in brains" and was a "poor hand at finance" but it seems clear that rather wider considerations than these have to be taken in to account.(70)

The end result of these processes was that while there was doubtless differentiation within Ndebele society , by 1914 the evidence suggests that it consisted mainly of farm labourers who were in a relatively disadvantaged position. Matsitsi

testified before the Beaumont Commission

> My people are in trouble. We are being driven from the lands, and even from where we reside. We are working on the farms without pay - for nothing ; every member of the family has to work, we receive no remuneration.(71)

And the Sub Native Commissioner of the Middelburg district gave a still more graphic account

> Compared with other natives, farm labourers in the Transvaal are very poor....Take a definite tribe - the Ndebele for instance; compared to other tribes , they are as poor as mice. They were broken up after they were subdued by the South African Republic; they work for no wages: and going out to the mines is to say the least, openly discouraged.(72)

Conclusion

It is the argument of this paper that the distinctiveness and conservatism of the Southern Ndebele which has so often been remarked on cannot be explained by notions of "nguni pride and cultural aggresiveness" . These characteristics are better understood in the context of the particlar processes of conquest and dispossesion which these communities experienced. The Z.A.R. set out to destroy the chiefdom and to disperse its subjects. One of the crucial ways in which the Ndzundza fought back was through their attempts to regroup and to revive key social institutions like the homestead and male initiation. The material basis of chiefly power had been destroyed, but the chiefdom and the cultural forms associated with it, continued to offer a model of an alternative and preferred social order to life on the farms. Ndzundza royals played a part in this process but they were in no position to enforce it. The traditionalism which developed was made possible and defended by the resistance and initiative of ordinary men and women. It is also probable that in this process a rather more homogeneous culture was created than had existed within the independent chiefdom.

The removal of many of the central supports of chiefly power ensured that emphasis was placed on its ritual and juidicial dimensions. But increasingly after the turn of the century maintaining elements of the chiefdom was also bound up with gaining accesss to land. Groups of farm labourers stood little chance of being allocated land by the state but a constituency defined as the Ndebele chiefdom had some prospect of securing a location.

But also crucial to sustaining a distinctive Ndebele identity was the particular place which these communities occuppied within the rural class structure. The fact that they had been stripped

of land, cattle and weapons, resulted in them ending up in a relatively disadvantaged position within rural society . Thus both a history of struggle and a particular economic position served to underwrite a distintive identity.

In some respects these responses are similiar to those of the "red" communities in the Transkei who developed an ideology of traditionalism as a means of coping both with colonial conquest and with the increasing centrality of migrant labour to their livelihoods.(73) The crucial difference is that the Ndebele were to a considerable degree excluded from labour migrancy. However, while they were thus less exposed to the socially corrosive effects of migrancy the intensifying exploitation on the farms created deep tensions within homesteads in the twentieth century.

In order to meet farmers demands for labour and to create some space for their own production, homestead heads had to have a secure grip over their wives and children. Traditional definitions of gender and generational roles provided them with powerful ideological ammuntion in struggles within the homestead.These norms were also part of a system of beliefs which underpinned royal status. As the twentieth century progressed there may well have been a tacit alliance between homestead heads battling to maintain their positions and royals seeking recognition. It is striking that by the 1920s initiation schools were drumming the virtues of generational as well as royal authority into youths. The struggle for control of their children was one that homestead heads lost with increasing frequency as the balance of power on the farms swung still harder against them. But the youths who fled intensifying exploitation on the land seldom returned to challenge the dominant values which they had left behind.(74)

Farmers, intent on extracting the maximum labour from tenant families and insulating them from outside influences, enforced their own version of traditionalism. This partly consisted of a deep hostility to any signs of "westernization". In the early decades of the century the Ndzundza wore

> skins...You were not even able to wear a pair of trousers. You dare not come onto the farm wearing ... clothes -You would be shot dead! A kaffir wearing clothes -No!(75)

Tenants were also discouraged from other forms of western consumption.

> For our meals we ate porridge mixed with fat. The whites just couldn't give us sugar, not even coffee, who were we to be given that? Even those who worked in the kitchen were not given sugar or coffee. Only whites ate those things.(76)

But the main struggle took place over education.

> There was no education for either the parents or their children. One person took his chidren to school unaware that the Boer farmer had been

keeping a record of his childrens' births. One day he called this man and asked him about his children, who were by then of working age. He wanted them to start working on the farm. The man replied that his children were staying with his sister in the town. After two days the Boer again enquired about these children and claimed that they were attending school, he said that if he was correct, then this man would have to leave the farm.(77)

This conflict simmered for decades and finally came to a head in the 1950s when large number of families were evicted from the farms. This

resulted from the children demanding to leave the farms because they were sick and tired of farm life and ill-treatment by the Boers. They said they wanted education... Then the Boers said we should go along with them. So we left.(78)

There were thus a number of strands which made up the traditionalism of the Ndzundza and these were combined differently by different constituencies. It was a form of resistance to defeat and life on the farms, a buttress to the position of chiefs and homestead heads, and the only means which farmers allowed to their tenants to express a degree of independence.

there may well have been a racial

Finally, it would be wrong to imagine that because an image of traditional chieftainship was retained and even celebrated as one element of their ideology that Ndebele communities would readily accept the co-optation of the chiefly strata by the state. Quite the reverse, as with the "red" communities in the Transkei, a popular model of the traditional role and duties of chiefs could provide a devastating critique of the modern degradation of chiefly office.

Notes

The genesis of this paper lies in comments I made some years ago when asked to explain the traditionalism of some contemporary [illegible] communities. See D.James, 'From co-operation to "co-operation"; changing patterns of agricultural work in a rural village' unpublished paper, History Masters Seminar , University of the Witwatersrand , Sept 1984 , personal communication cited on p.15. The refining and reworking of those ideas which this paper represents owes a good deal to conversations with Deborah James and to the generous access she has given me to her research material.

1. See for example , E.A.Schneider ,'Paint,Pride and Politics: Aesthetic and meaning in Transvaal Ndebele wall art',unpublished Ph.D thesis University of the Witwatersrand , 1986. and M.Courtney-Clarke,Ndebele:The Art of An African Tribe (New York,1986) for two recent works which give a sense of the range of the literature.

2.Report of the Native Land Comission (U.G.22-14), Evidence of Mr.T.Edwards, Sub-Native Commissioner Middelburg District,p.413. For earlier expressions of a similiar view see Transvaal Native Affairs Department Annual Report 1903,p.23.

3. 'the most conservative natives...to be found in in the Transvaal. They still cling tenaciously to their old customs , dress and life style'. H.C.M.Fourie,Amandebele van Fene Mahlangu en hun Religieus-Sociaal Leven,(Zwolle,1921)p.206.

4. I.Schapera, 'The Ndebele of South Africa'Natural History,Nov.1949,p.206. Schapera is heavily dependent on the work of N.J.Van Warmelo which is cited below.

5. Anthropological field-work conducted within a mixed Southern Ndebele and North Sotho village in 1983 produced evidence of a relatively, "strong traditionalism" amongst the Ndebele "not only in the respectfulness of their attitudes towards traditional authority, but also in things like the large size of extended families, the persistence of polygyny, the strictness of customs such as hlonipa which requires a woman to show extreme respect to her in-laws, and so on". See James ,'From co-operation',pp15-16.

6. E.A.Schneider, African Arts (1985) xviii, 3 p.66. The source for the comment on Nguni pride is given as a personal communication from D. Hammond-Tooke . See also Schneider, 'Paint, Pride and Politics', pp.214 ,218 -219. The concept of Nguni culture is, even in less determinist usage, a slippery one. Nguni is after all a broad linguistic category which encompasses a wide variety of societies and cultures. Another exponent of ethnic determinism, although of a somewhat narrower variety, is C.J.Coetzee,'Die Strewe tot Etniese Konsolidasie en Nasionale Selverwesenliking by die Ndebele van die Transvaal', unpublished

D.Phil. thesis, Potchefstroom University 1980.

7. Schneider makes an attempt to situate the Ndebele in historical context -in particular that of defeat and dispersal, see 'Paint, Pride and Politics' chapter vii but her work is marred by an unresolved tension between "Nguni" determinism and an awareness of historical process. It is also based on a narrow range of mainly published sources and thus can only provide a superficial account of Ndzundza history which is particularly weak on the late nineteenth century and which presents an overly monolithic view of the society in the twentieth century.

8. N.Haysom,Mabangalala: The rise of right-wing vigilantes in South Africa, (Johannesburg,1986),p62.; The Star

9. N.J.Van Warmelo,A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa,(Pretoria,1935),pp.88-89. North Sotho is also a highly artificial category which encompasses a range of societies and dialects

10. This overview of Ndebele history is based on F.A.Van Jaarsveld ,'Die Ndzundza-Ndebele en die Blankes in Transvaal 1845-1883,' unpublished M.A.thesis,Rhodes University, 1985 and P.Delius,The Land Belongs to Us (Johannesburg,1983).

11. Berliner Missions-berichte(BMB) 1875, pp132-133. See also N.J.Van Warmelo,Transvaal Ndebele Texts(Pretoria,1930) for discussion of Manala history and society. These groups despite living on mission land remained resistant to christianity.

12. A. Merensky,Erinnerungen aus dem Missionsleben in Transvaal (Berlin,1899), p.133.; Transvaal Archives(TA), SN1/105/75 Landdrost Lydenburg to SN ,31 May 1879.;BMB,1875,pp.132-133.

13. TA,SS487/R4978/80, G.Roth to Colonial Secretary,13 November 1880.;SS1097/R4128/89/R3287/80, H.Shepstone to Colonial Secretary 8 July 1880,;SN8/299/82, S.P.Grove to SN, 14 June 1882.; Delius, Land , p88-90.; T.Wangemann,Maleo und Sekukuni(Berlin,1868),p.61.; Van Jaarsveld,'Ndzundza-Ndebelez',p.212.; J.D.Omer-Cooper,The Zulu Aftermath(London,1966)

14.TA,SS1907/R4128/89/R4474/80, A.Kuhnissen to G.Roth,18 October 1880.; Delius,Land,pp.10-19,91-92.;Fourie,Amandebele,pp.124-139,200-202.; A.Kuper,'Fourie and the Southern Transvaal Ndebele' African Studies,37,1,1978,pp.114-115,120.; Schneider,'Paint,Pride and Politics',pp.16-30.;Schapera,'Ndebele', pp.408-411, which also makes the point that the wall murals which are often seen as a distinctive Ndebele art form owe their origins to 'north sotho' practices.

15. The first quotation reflects Fourie's view , see Kuper, 'Fourie',p.107.; The second is drawn from Schneider,'Paint,Pride and Politics',p.218.; See also N.J.Van Warmelo,'The Classification of Cultural Groups' in W.D.Hammond-Tooke (ed)

The Bantu-Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa(London,1974) ,pp.67,73-74.

16. Delius,Land,chapter 8.;Van Jaarsveld,'Ndzundza-Ndebele',chapter five.

17.Van Jaarsveld,'Ndzundza-Ndebele',chapter 6.; Schneider, 'Paint,Pride and Politics',pp.200-204.

18.C.3841,No.17,Derby to L.Smyth 18 August 1883.;No.22,Derby to L.Smyth 29 August 1883.;No.23,L.Smyth to Derby 13 August 1883 and enclosures.;No.49,L.Smyth to Derby 24 September 1883.; No.50, L.Smyth to Derby 25 September 1883.;No.53,British Resident to High Commissioner 27 September 1883.; No.62,L.Smyth to Derby ,9 October 1883 and enclosures.;No.63,L.Smyth to Derby 30 October 1883.;TA,CS7389/R10817/98, Speech by Commandant-Generaal 28 July 1898."life long imprisonment with hard labour in irons".

19. Van Jaarsveld,'Ndzundza-Ndebele',pp.235-237

20.P.Naude,'Boerdery in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek 1855-1899',unpublished D.Litt. thesis, University of South Africa 1954,pp.60-105 ,185-228.;TA,SS828/R3073/83 Krygsraad resolution 18 June 1883, minutes and enclosures.

21. TA,SS833/R3455/83, Secretary of the Volksraad to State Secretary 21 July 1883, minutes and enclosures.; Naude , 'Boerdery', pp.74-75.

22. TA,SS828/R3073/83,Krygsraad resolution 18 June 1883, minutes and enclosures.; SS833/R3455/83, Secretary of the Volksraad to State Secretary 21 July 1883, minutes and enclosures.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Staats-Courant(ZAR),I December 1881.; C.3841,No.48 ,British Resident to High Commissioner 7 Sept 1883 and enclosures.

26. Ibid.

27. S.Trapido,'Aspects of the Transition from Slavery to Serfdom : The South African Republic , 1842-1902.' Institute of Commonwealth Studies Collected Seminar Papers,No.20, 1974-1975, p.29.

28. Schneider,'Paint,Pride and Politics',p.205.

29. Van Jaarsveld,'Ndzundza-Ndebele',p.213.

30. TA,SN10/22/84, Answers to circular re run-away Mapoch kaffers.; SN10/305/84, Census of the natives of the tribe of Mapoch in the district of Pretoria.; These files contain the surviving lists of indenture of the Ndzundza and are fullest for

the Pretoria , Middelburg and Standerton districts.

31. Ibid.; SN11/396/85,Statement of September 21 July 1885.;KG,CR/653/89,L.C.Janse van Rensburg to Commandant-Generaal 14 March 1889.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.;Delius,Land,pp30-40,136-147.; Fourie , Amandebele,pp.101-103,157.

34. TA,SN10/22/84, Answers to cicular re run-away Mapoch kaffers.;SN10/305/84,Census of the natives of the tribe of Mapoch in the Pretoria district.;See note 30.

35. C.3841/No.86,British Resident to High Commissioner 12 October 1883.; TA,SN9/369/83,J.A.Erasmus to SN.19 Nov 1883.; KG,148/84 Landdrost Standerton to Commandant-Generaal 30 March 1884.; SN10/198/84, J.A.Erasmus to SN. 5 April 1884.; SS948/R2665/84, J.A.Erasmus to SN. 17 May 1884.; SS987/R4631/84, Landdrost of Lydenburg to SN. 27 September 1884.; SN12/259/86, Responses to circular BB 12/6/86.

36.C.3841/No.48,British Resident to High Commissioner 12 September 1883.

37. P.Delius ,'Abel Erasmus; Power and Profit in the Eastern Transvaal in W.Beinart, P.Delius and S.Trapido (eds) Putting a Plough to the Ground (Johannesburg,1986)

38. TA,SN10/54/84,Declaration of C.Erasmus before the Public Prosecutor 24 Jan 1884, minutes and enclosures.

39. TA,SN9/369/83, J.A.Erasmus to SN. 19 November 1983.; SS955/R2953/84, Minutes of a meeting between J.C.Winterbach, J.A.Erasmus and S.W.Burghers n.d.1884.; SS960/R3297/84, S.Grove to SN. 17/7/84.; SS987/R4631/84 D.J.Schoeman to J.A.Erasmus 17 November 1884.

40. TA,SN10/252/84, Native Commissioner Middelburg to SN. 2 May 1884.; KG,628/85, J.N.Boshoff to P.J.Joubert 5 September 1885.; Landdrost Lydenburg to SN. 27 September 1884.

41. TA,SN11/396/85, Statement of September 21 July 1885.; SN10/279/84, J.Uys to P.J.Joubert 19 Mei 1884.

42. Ibid.; Delius ,Land,chapter 6.; Naude,'Boerdery', pp.185-207,; TA,SN13/31/87 J.W.Luck to SN. 10 December 1887.; SN12/390/86,J.Boshoff to SN. 6 October 1886.; SN12/259/86, J.A.Erasmus to SN. 29 May 1886.;SN12/336/86 24 May 1886.; SS1166/R519/86, J.N.Herman to SS 1 Feb 1886.;

43. TA,SN13/31/87,J.W.Luck to SN. 10 December 1887.;SN12/259/86,Answers to circular BB12/6/86.; SS1166,R519/86 J.N.Herman to SS 1 Feb 1886.;David Mahlangu interviewed by

Pe[illegible] 22 June 1891.; SS3090/R14195/91, J.A.Erasmus to SN 9 [illegible]1891.

[illegible]TA,SS,855/97,L.C.Janse van Rensburg to Commondant-Generaal 14 [illegible]

[illegible]y of the Witwatersrand (UW),African Studies [illegible](ASI),Oral History Project(OHP),interview with [illegible]ne by V.Nkumane at Middelburg 4 September 1979. And [illegible] with J.Jiyane by V.Nkumane 3 September 1979. Some of the [illegible]ormation of these accounts is not entirely clear and it [illegible] that events which took place after the 1882-1883 war [illegible] with those that took place after the 1899-1902 war. [illegible] in heavy losses of cattle for the Ndebele.

[illegible]TA,[illegible]/R2740/38, Petition for release of Niabel 14 August [illegible]; [illegible]/R2572/97, Petition for release of Niebel 6 August [illegible]

59.TA,SC7389/R10817/98,Speech by Commondant-Generaal 28 July 1898.

60.TA,SS8060/R1374/99, Two petitions with a total of 146 signatures from the Middelburg district.

61.O.J.O.Ferreira (ed),Geschiedenis Werken en Streven van S.P.E.Trichard,(Pretoria,1975) pp202-206.;SNA,NA2204/02,E.Hogge sends minutes of meeting in Middelburg district 6 October 1902.; And NA226/03,Report of the Sub Native Commissioner Middelburg 5 January 1903.;UW,ASI,OHP,interview with E.Sibanyoni by V.Nkumane at Middelburg 4 September 1979.Interview with J.Jiyane by V.Nkumane at Middelburg 3 September 1979.And Interview with J.Motha by V.Nkumane 11 September 1979.

62. For a recent comprehensive discussion see J.Krikler ,'A class destroyed , a class restored', unpublished African Studies seminar paper , University of Cape Town, 1986.

63. UW,ASI,OHP,interview with E.Sibanyoni by V.Nkumane at Middelburg 4 September 1879.

64. SNA,NA/2204/02, E.Hogge sends minutes of meeting in Middelburg district 6 October 1902.; TNADAR 1903,p.22-25.

65.Ibid.;Krikler,'A class destroyed',pp24-30.

66.Ibid.;SNA,1459/03, E.Hogge to SNA. 9 July 1903.

67.TNADAR 1903, pp.22-23.;

68.U.G.22-14, Evidence of G.J.W.Du Toit ,p.261.; South African Native Affairs Commission vol 4,evidence of E. Hogge, p.467.

69.Ibid.

70. U.G.22-14, Evidence of H.Rose Innes p273 and W.King

Deborah James, Nebo, May 1983. I am grateful to Deborah James for drawing my attention to, and giving me permission to use, this source.

44.TA,SN/12/259/86,Answers to circular BB12/6/86. Despite the gloss placed on the returns they still indicate that the bulk of the Ndzundza that remained on the farms were concentrated in the areas adjacent to the old heartland of the chiefdom.;Staats-Courant(ZAR) Supplement 15 July 1885 these petitioners were mainly from the Pretoria and Middelburg districts. There are few population statistics of any reliability for this period or for the 1890s. Census data from 1904/5 however suggests that there were approximately 11,000 Ndzundza living on farms in the Middelburg district and approximately 9,000 Ndzundza living on farms in the Pretoria district. See INAD annual reports 1904 pp.69-71 and 1905 p.72. These districts were the only ones which contained any significant noted concentration of Southern Ndebele by the first decade of the twentieth century. Given that approximately 10,000 Ndzundza were indentured in 1883 these figures suggest that a considerable proportion of the society ended up living on farms in these districts.

45. TA,KG,144/84,D.Schoeman to CG. 20 Feb 1884.

46. Eastern Transvaal Natives Land Committee 1918(UG32-18), Evidence of Chief Mfene Mahlangu pp.110-111.

47. TA,SS1195/R1468/86, J.A.Erasmus to SN. 8 March 1886.

48.UG32-18, Evidence of Chief Mfene Mahlangu pp.110.

49. D.Mahlangu Interview Nebo, May 1983.

50. TA,SS1132/85,investigation into the escape of the prisoner Maschiela.; Staats-Courant (ZAR) 2December 1885

51. Fourie, Amandebele,pp.124-138.

52. Ibid,p.203. Fourie gives the date as 1887 and the leader as Magaduzula.; D.Mahlangu interview Nebo, May 1983. This account runs together three separate initiation schools which probably took place in 1886 , 1890/1? and 1894/5?

53. TA,SS1195/R1468/86 J.A.Erasmus to SN. 8 March 1886. This evidence suggests that 1886 is a securer date for the restarting of initiation than 1887.

54. TA,SS1721/R8578/88, G.S.van Vuren to Landdrost Heidelburg 19 September 1888 and R8744/88, J.A.Erasmus to SN. 20September 1888. See also Naude,'Boerdery',pp200-207.;B.J.Kruger,'Discussies en Wetgewing rondom die Landelike Arbeidsvraagstuk in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek 1885-1889 , unpublished M.A.thesis, University of South Africa,1965.

55.TA,KG,139/91, Tapis , Thoeba and Muis appear before the State

p.274.

71. Ibid, Evidence of Chief Jafita p.410.

72. Ibid,Evidence of T.Edwards p.411.

73. P.Meyer,'The Origin and Decline of Two Rural Resistance Ideologies' in P.Meyer (ed) Black Villagers in an Industrial Society(Cape Town,1980)

74. Fourie,Amandebele,pp.124-139

75. UW,ASI,OHP,interview with J.Motha by V.Nkumane at Middelburg 11 September 1979.

76.UW,ASI,OHP,interview with J.Jiyane by V.Nkumane at Middelburg 3 September 1979.

77.UW,ASI,OHP,interview with J.Motha by V.Nkumane at Middelburg 11 Septemner 1979.

78.Ibid