

**THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE APARTHEID  
REGIME IN THABAMOOPO DISTRICT OF THE LEBOWA HOMELAND, 1970 -  
1994: A CRITICAL HISTORICAL STUDY**

by

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**DECLARATION:**

I declare that this thesis is the product of my research and has been written by me. It has not been submitted by anyone in any university beyond and inside the boundaries of South Africa. To avoid plagiarism, where there are direct quotations I put quotation marks (“”).

**Signature:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**\_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my brothers Michael (Sanikie) Mogobadi and Matjelele (Sipho) Enerst Phaladi.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

It is not through my wisdom that I finished this thesis; it is through the will of God. So I have to thank Him for protecting and showing me the way while I was doing the research.

Words of gratitude to all people who helped with this research. People who gave me moral and financial support: my parents Mr. Sepitle Frans Phaladi and Mrs. Kanyane Phaladi and my sisters Ramakgahlele Cynthia (Molebogeng) Phaladi, Ramogale Phillistars (Reliever), Ramatsobane Eunice (Meisie) Phaladi. I also have to thank my brothers Mogobadi, Matjelele and Maruruwele Happy Phaladi for motivating me to further my studies.

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information used in this thesis also comes from interviews that I conducted in 1998 and 1999 for my previous work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Black youth struggled against the apartheid regime as the title indicates because as Blacks the policy made them to suffer. They were oppressed in the country of their birth. Before the militant youth involvement in the liberation struggle in the 1970s there were a few Black youths who tried to force the government to relinquish its policy. They were unsuccessful. This was because they were opposed to the government as members of the various Black organisations. They were not united. SASO with its Black Consciousness philosophy brought unity amongst all the Black youth and put them on the vanguard of the struggle. These youth did not just mobilize and unite Blacks (organisation and non organisation members) through public criticism of the apartheid system. They also mounted physical attacks on enemy targets such as police stations etc. South Africa became ungovernable. This resistance compelled the government to release political prisoners and to relinquish power in 1994.

## **PREFACE**

Chapter one focuses on the background and statement of the problem, aim and objectives of this study, major research questions, subsidiary questions and assumptions. The literature reviewed reveals the afrocentric nature of this study. It is about the experience of Africans and the way they tried to respond to the situation, environment and conditions in which they found themselves.

Chapter two tackles the geographical situation and the history of the various ethnic groups, which inhabited the Thabampo district such as the Kone, Tlou of Makgoba, Mathabatha and Molepo, the Mafefe people and the Ndebele of Ledwaba.

Chapter three which is about youth strikes of the 1970s has the introduction which highlights the reasons why the youth of the Thabampo district were against the Apartheid regime; how SASO influenced the youth of the district against the regime, the impact of the Soweto Uprising of 1976 in the district and the main causes of the district strikes.

Chapter four deals with the recruitment and mobilization of the youth of the Thabampo district; the role played by the Black Consciousness Movement and the UDF, boarding schools and the University of the North in organising the youth.

Chapter five concentrates on the formation and activities of the comrade groups in the district. The final chapter focuses on the way the comrade- groups defied the Apartheid government's rules and regulations.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ANC- African National Congress

AZAPO - Azanian People Organisation

BCM- Black Consciousness Movement

BCP- Black Community Programme

BPC- Black Peoples Convention

COSATU- Congress of South African Trade Unions

DAYCO- Dithabaneng Youth Congress

FRELIMO- Front for the Liberation of Mozambique

GSC- General Student Council

HLAEYCO- Hlagatse Youth Congress

HRSC- Human Sciences Research Council

ICCO- Inter Church Co-operation

LENGCO- Lenting Youth Congress and Lekurung Youth Congress

MAEYCO- Makurung Youth Congress and Mamatonya Youth Congress

MPHAEYCO- Mphahlele Youth Congress

MK- Umkhonto We Sizwe

Mt- Mountain

NAFCOC- National African Federated Chamber of Commerce

NOTAYO- Northern Transvaal Youth Congress

NKOYCO- Nkotokwane Youth Congress

NUSAS- National Union of South African Students

NP- National Party

PAC- Pan African Congress

S.A- South Africa

SACC- South African Council of Churches

SACP- South African Communist Party

SASO- South African Student Organisation

SAYCO- South African Youth Congress

SRC- Student Representative Council

TŠAEYCO- Tšiane Youth Congress

TOEYCO- Tooseng Youth Congress

UCM- University Christian Movement

UDF- United Democratic Front

USA- United States of America

UP- United Party

## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **THE YOUTH IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE APARTHEID**

#### **REGIME: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND THEORETICAL PROBLEM**

##### **1.1. Background of the Problem**

The role of the Black youth of Thabamoo District in Lebowa Homeland is a problem of historical concern. It is a national issue for all Blacks in South Africa. The struggle of the youth of Thabamoo district was part of the struggle of the youth of Lebowa Homeland and South Africa as a whole. Since all Blacks were affected by the Apartheid policy in all spheres of life, there were organisations of adults, students, women, workers and youth formed to oppose the apartheid policy.

According to Omer-Cooper, between 1948 and 1990, South Africa was a country, which was under the Apartheid regime. The Apartheid policy also known as colour policy was introduced by Dr. D. F. Malan when he became Prime Minister in 1948. Before 1948, it was called the South African policy of discrimination or segregation. Under that policy, various Acts were passed to separate Blacks from White South Africans, to divide the Blacks themselves into groups such as Africans, Coloureds and Indians. Africans were also subdivided into Ndebele, Sotho, Tsonga, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu to mention a few. These Acts were, inter alia, the Mixed Marriage Act, and the Morality Act passed in 1949 and 1950 respectively, the Group Areas Act passed in 1950, the Natives Law Amendment Act passed

in 1952, the Bantu Authority Act passed in 1953, the Homeland Constitution Act passed in 1971 and the Homeland Citizenship Act passed in 1973 to mention a few. Amongst the sternest Acts that affected the Black youth of Thabamooopo were the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act, the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the State Institution Act passed in 1957 and the Extension of University Act passed in 1959.<sup>1)</sup>

Davenport, also points out that Apartheid built up resentment amongst Blacks. That resentment contributed to the formation of the Black political parties which were banned by the government.<sup>2)</sup> They were the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) banned in 1960, the South African Communist Party (SACP) which was banned in 1950, and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) that was banned in 1977.<sup>3)</sup> According to Mufson, after the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) a group of youth who called themselves comrades emerged.<sup>4)</sup> According to Phaladi, the youth played an important role in resisting the Apartheid regime in the district.<sup>5)</sup>

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1) J. D. Omer-Cooper: History of Southern Africa, pp. 186, 196-198,200-2002, 212 and 214.

2) T. R. H. Davenport: South Africa: A Modern History, pp.250, 236, 396, 357 and 378-379.

3) Ibid., pp. 236, 333, 347, 359 and 378.

4) S. Mufson: Fighting Years. Black Resistance and the Struggle for a New South Africa, p. 118.

5) R. J. Phaladi: The Mphahlele People and the Uprising of 1986, pp.11-58.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although the struggle against Apartheid is widely reported in literature, there is no thorough study of the involvement of the youth in the struggle against the apartheid regime in the rural areas of Lebowa Homeland. Historians have focused mainly on the role of the black youth in urban areas. Most black students in South Africa were against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their schools. Mufson says:

“To black students Afrikaans is a language similar to Dutch that is used by Afrikaners, who make up just 8% of the country’s population. To Blacks it was the language of the police and employers, an instrument of giving orders. They believed that the imposition of Afrikaans was designed to train them for servitude. Afrikaans was, as one student put it, “A terrible academic pain.” “The kids are failing their exams in thousands,” recalls a black journalist. Mufson further notes that they saw Afrikaans as a means of suppression, suppressing them from advancing educationally.”<sup>6)</sup>

Protest against the language was initiated by students of Soweto before it could spread all over South Africa. Holland and Mufson observe that after the Soweto Uprising of 1976, unrest spread all over the country due to the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of

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6) S. Mufson: Fighting Years. Black Resistance and the Struggle for a New South Africa, p.14.

instruction in black schools.<sup>7)</sup> Holland notes that:

“The reports of violence and arson came from every corner of the country: the Eastern Transvaal, the Orange Free State, the Northern Cape and Cape Town itself. In July they spread through the Vaal Triangle and the Eastern Cape. By August, two months after the uprising began in Soweto, eight black townships had joined the furious revolt. By October the number had doubled”.<sup>8)</sup>

According to Meli, the uprising spread beyond Soweto even in the Bantustans where school buildings were burnt and there were school boycotts.<sup>9)</sup> Meli and Mufson, contend that the uprising spread all over South Africa. However, these two scholars did not expand their subject scope to those other parts of South Africa.<sup>10)</sup> Holland, recorded merely the activities of the Alexander students during the uprising.<sup>11)</sup> Holland, Meli, Mufson and Ndlovu, only

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7) H. Holland: *The Struggle: A History of the African National Congress*, pp.178-183; S.

Mufson: *Fighting Years*, pp.14-18.

8) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, pp.182-183.

9) F. Meli: *A History of the ANC*, pp.186-187.

10) F. Meli: *A History of the ANC*, pp.186-187; S. Mufson: *Fighting Years*, pp.14-18.

11) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, p.182.

provide a detailed account of what was happening in Soweto during the Soweto Uprising.<sup>12)</sup>

Ndlovu, states that, the uprising started as a peaceful demonstration by students of Soweto who were protesting against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. The students who had converged at Phefeni Junior Secondary School were to march to the Department of Bantu Education. The police turned the demonstration into a riot when they fired at the students. The students responded by throwing stones or any other object at the police. After the uprising some of the students decided to join the PAC and the ANC in exile.<sup>13)</sup>

According to Holland, after the formation of the United Democratic Front in 1983; there was violence in the Vaal Triangle, Crossroads, Evaton, and Langa near Port Elizabeth, which was caused by a group of youth called comrades. The group was fighting, killing and injuring the police and army; killing civil servants and the police informers and destroying properties with stones and petrol bombs in protest against governmental laws. The group which was singing the ANC slogan “Amandla” was also involved in boycotts of buses, shops and factories owned by Whites.<sup>14)</sup> Phaladi, stresses that; there were similar groups that were involved in the same activities, in the rural areas. In her extended essay she recorded the activities of the

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12) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, pp. 178-198; F. Meli: *A History of the ANC*, pp. 186-187; S. Mufson: *Fighting Years*, pp.13-18; S.M. Ndlovu: *The Soweto Uprising: Counter-Memories of June 1976*, pp.1-54.

13) S. M. Ndlovu: *The Soweto Uprising*, p.2.

14) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, pp.201-205.

comrades in the rural area of Ga-Mphahlele (in Thabamoopo District).<sup>15)</sup>

Historians have been selective in conducting research concerning youth resistance to the apartheid regime. This study fills part of the gap, which exists on youth resistance to the Apartheid regime. This study specifically focuses on the role of the youth in Thabamoopo district, which was a rural area. The problem, which is the focus of this study, concerns the actual form and content of the resistance of the youth in the district.

### **1.3. Aim and Objectives**

#### 1.3.1. Aim

The aim of the study is to provide critical understanding of the role of the youth in the struggle against the apartheid policy in Thabamoopo district in the period, 1970 to 1994.

#### 1.3.2. Objectives

- To identify and describe, the grievances of the youth of Thabamoopo district which contributed to their resistance against the apartheid regime.

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15) R. J. Phaladi: The Mphahlele People and the Uprising of 1986, pp.22-33.

- To analyse specific activities of the youth in the struggle.
- To analyse various organisational structures that were created by the youth to fight against the apartheid regime.
- To describe the relationship of the youth with political organisations such as the ANC and the UDF.
- To identify and analyse problems confronted by the youth in the struggle against the apartheid system.
- To describe and analyse the achievements of the youth of the Thabamooopo district in the struggle against the apartheid system.

#### **1. 4. Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following questions, classified under the major research question and subsidiary questions, respectively:

##### **1.4.1. The Major Research Question**

- What was the role of the youth in the struggle against the apartheid policy in Thabamooopo district between 1970 and 1994?

#### 1.4.2. Subsidiary Questions

- What grievances did the youth of Thabamooopo have against the apartheid rule?
- What specific activities did the youth engage in during their struggle against the apartheid regime?
- How did the youth of Thabamooopo form organisational structures in the struggle?
- What relationship did these structures have with the main political organisations such as the ANC and the UDF?
- What specific problems did the youth confront in their struggle in the district?
- What were the youth's achievements?

#### **1. 5. Assumption**

Through their resistance to the apartheid regime, the youth made Thabamooopo district ungovernable, a condition that contributed to the collapse of the apartheid regime.

#### **1. 6. Literature Review**

The role of the youth in the struggle in Thabamooopo district has not been documented. No serious historical study has been carried out by historians focusing on the role of the youth in this area. The only study available was done by Phaladi as part of her Bachelor of Arts

History Honours programme.<sup>16)</sup> Most of the literature reviewed in this section relates to studies conducted in other parts of South Africa, mostly by scholars in the disciplines of History and Political Science.

Phaladi tackles five issues: the political situation that prevailed in South Africa from 1910 to 1986, the Mphahlele area in 1986, the formation of the comrade groups; activities of the comrade groups and the impact of the uprising.<sup>17)</sup>

Phaladi, observes that South Africa was criticised for her segregation policy by both Blacks internally and the United Nations because of her violation of the human rights. The Mphahlele area was under Kgošigadi Ngwanamohube Mphahlele. Comradeship at Ga-Mphahlele started before 1986, in Seleteng village, when people like Michael Kadiaka joined the Black Consciousness Movement and transformed people's minds not to fight amongst themselves but against the apartheid regime. All comrade groups except the Mamatonya and Nkotokwane groups were all under the Mphahlele Youth Congress (MPHAEYCO) and were called youth congresses. According to Phaladi the objective of the congress was to overthrow the apartheid regime and the following were the aims: to unite all the Mphahlele comrades so that they might solve problems that concern their villages together; to help each other in the fight against the apartheid regime; to fight for the release of all political prisoners including Rolihlahla Mandela; to conscientise the people about their political rights and about the

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16) R. J. Phaladi: *The Mphahlele People and the Uprising of 1986*, pp.1-56.

17) *Ibid.*, pp.6-48.

political situation in the country. Membership was open to all the youth living in the area. Concerning the activities of the comrades, Phaladi also observes that they killed pro-government agents through committed arson attacks, destroyed government property such as police vans and buildings as well as the property of police informers. The uprising contributed to the high failure rates in schools, the disintegration of families and social chaos in the villages. After the struggle the MPHAEYCO leaders and its members joined the ANC Youth League and other black organisations.<sup>18)</sup>

Ndlovu provides a detailed account of the June 16, Soweto Uprising of 1976. The uprising started at Phefeni Junior Secondary School by students who were against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. The uprising spread to other schools in Soweto and the rest of South Africa. No organisation was involved, during the uprising. Students were supported by their teachers because they were not well equipped to teach all subjects in Afrikaans, parents, the Meadowlands School Board and the local newspaper, 'The World'. The newspaper provided a detailed account of the uprising. Students were wounded and killed by the police while others joined the ANC and the PAC. The day (June 16) was declared a youth day as from 1995. The ANC commemorates the day as a day of reconciliation and nation building and no longer a day of resistance like it was during the apartheid regime. The Azanian People Organisation (AZAPO) considered it to be a day on which we remember the Blacks who died during the liberation struggle, especially those who died in exile or in police custody like

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18) Ibid., pp.8-9, 11-21, 30-32 and 39-54.

Steve Biko, Mapetla Mohapi and Onkgopotse Tiro, to mention a few.<sup>19)</sup>

Buthelezi describes three issues such as the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM); the central concepts and ideas that influenced and shaped the ideology of the movement, social forces represented by the Black Consciousness Movement, and the ways in which they determined its ideological orientation. The Black Consciousness Movement was a product of the South African Student Organisation (SASO). Black students at universities were experiencing segregation like all Blacks in South Africa. Consequently, they formed SASO, whose members identified with the Blacks and started adopting the Black Consciousness Philosophy. There were two methods of affiliating to SASO, such as centre affiliation through student representative councils, and individual affiliation for students studying by correspondence and those who had completed their studies. SASO wanted:<sup>20)</sup>

- “To promote contact, practical cooperation, mutual understanding and unity among all black students in South Africa.

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19) S.M. Ndlovu: The Soweto Uprising, pp.1-54.

20) S. Buthelezi: The Emergence of Black Consciousness: An Historical Appraisal (Pityana et, al: Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement, pp.111, 114-118); L. Wilson: Bantu Steven Biko: A Life (Pityana et, al: Bounds of Possibility, pp. 22 -25); C.R.D. Halisi: Black Consciousness Philosophy (Pityana et, al: Bounds of Possibility, pp.100, 104 and 105).

- To represent the interests of students on all issues that affect them in their academic and community situation.
- To heighten the sense of awareness and to encourage them to become involved in the political, economic and social development of black people.
- To project at all times the Black Consciousness image culturally, socially and educationally.
- To become a platform for expression of black opinion and present this internationally.<sup>21)</sup>

SASO 's objective was to liberate all the Blacks in South Africa, to have a non-racial society (multi-racial society), a unified South Africa and it believed that all these could come with the overhaul of the apartheid system. The Coloured and the Indian students responded positively to the Black Consciousness campaign, as they were also oppressed.<sup>22)</sup>

Buthelezi defines the Black Consciousness as an attitude of mind and a way of life. The awareness by blacks of the potential power they could wield as a group politically and economically and hence group cohesion was regarded as the most important facet of the Black Consciousness Movement. The word "black" was used to

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21) S. Buthelezi: The Emergence of Black Consciousness: An Historical Appraisal (Pityana et, al: Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement, p.122).

22) Ibid., pp. 121 - 123.

refer to Africans, Coloureds and Indians as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their own aspirations. The word “struggle” is defined as conscious resistance against the dehumanising and demoralising effects of the apartheid ideology and practice.<sup>23)</sup>

Ramphele shows that it was through community development that the Black Consciousness Movement wanted to empower and liberate the Blacks economically. In order to do this, the BCM adopted the Tanzanian models of self-help and self-reliance and the Freirian conscientisation approach in Latin America, which was found to have great relevance to the problems that the Black Consciousness leaders had identified amongst the black people in South Africa. It was through SASO and the Black Community Programmes (BCP) that the BCM managed to achieve its goal of becoming a leader in the field of community development. Various projects that were established by SASO and the BCP were mentioned. These were the New Farm Project, Dudu Project, Winterveld Project, Research and Publication, health projects such as Zanempilo Community Health Centre and Solempilo Health Centre; child projects such as the Ginsberg Crèche in King Williams Town, home

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23) Ibid., pp. 120 and 122.

industries, Zimele Trust Fund and the Leadership Development project.<sup>24)</sup>

On the evaluation of the Black Consciousness' community development strategy, Ramphela argues that SASO succeeded in popularising self-reliance as a viable liberation strategy. However, SASO did not succeed in its application of self-help as a community development strategy because projects were planned on the basis of the willingness of the community to work together for their common good, without considering the internal differentiations within the communities and the ability of some Blacks to exploit other Blacks. The BCM succeeded in developing new role models for a new professionalism because of leadership training programmes and initial projects undertaken. Ramphela further states that, it was from 1970 to 1977 that the Black Consciousness Movement began to get financial support from the International Exchange Fund, the World University Service and the local church groups such as the Christian Institute and the ICCO (Inter- Church- Co-operation) in Netherlands. It was only after the Soweto Uprising that the United States of America (USA), Europe and Britain began to help the Black Consciousness Movement.<sup>25)</sup>

Wilson focuses on Steve Biko's death. She observes that he died in prison. After being arrested, Biko was placed in Walmer police cells in Port Elizabeth. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1977, he was taken to Sanlam Building where he was interrogated by Major Harold Snyman

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24) M. Ramphela: Black Consciousness and Development (Pityana et, al: Bounds of Possibility, pp.154-169).

25) Ibid. pp.169 and 170- 177.

(was appointed to interrogate 'Black Power' detainees). On 7<sup>th</sup> of September, Biko had head injuries that contributed to a stroke. After he suffered the stroke, he was taken to Pretoria prison where he died on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, 1977.<sup>26)</sup>

Wilson demonstrates that Biko's educational life made him to adopt the Black Consciousness philosophy. He attended his primary education at Charles Morgan; his secondary school at Forbres Grant, Lovedale Institution and St Francis College (the Catholic school run by nuns and monks), in Marianhill (Natal). As a medical student of the University of Natal he attended a Congress of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in Grahamstown where African, Coloured, Indian and White students were offered separate accommodation and English was the only language that was used. Biko realised that it was the usage of English at the NUSAS meetings, which inculcated the spirit of inferiority amongst the Blacks, because they could not express themselves in it so well.<sup>27)</sup> Wilson quotes Biko as saying,

“You tend to think that this is not just a matter of a language; you tend to tie it with intelligence. This stirred within his consciousness the germ of an idea. This was to flower into a student movement which conscientised Blacks to analyse their socio-political condition by recognising that they could be their own liberators through resisting apartheid with a different mental attitude. It was this attitude, which was to

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26) L. Wilson: Bantu Stephen Biko: A Life (Pityana et, al: Bounds of Possibility, pp. 115 and 16).

27) Ibid., pp. 19-23.

flower into the student movement, which became known as the Black Consciousness (BC).”<sup>28)</sup>

Wilson observes that a student movement called SASO was formed in July 1969 at the University of the North (presently the University of Limpopo) after the Black Consciousness campaign. The campaign was conducted by Barney Pityana who was expelled from Fort Hare in 1968 and who was also the director of the University Christian Movement (UCM) and Steve Biko. During the campaign they were conscientising the African, Coloured and Indian or Asian people that they are “Blacks” which meant the oppressed. As a leader, Biko ensured that people were heard, their opinions considered and potentials developed. He was against individual leadership and domination and no SASO president was in office for more than a year. He was banned in 1973 together with the Black Consciousness members such as Bokwe Mafuna, Drake Koka, Harry Nengwekhulu, Jerry Modisane, Pityana, Sath Cooper and Strini Moodley. But the BCM defied the banning orders. When the leadership of SASO, and BPC was banned, it was quickly replaced by another leadership. Although Biko was banned, he edited the Black Review and prepared material for the Black Consciousness Point of View. He could drive with his friends and visitors who came to see him in defiance of the banning orders. The BCM was successful because it published the Black Review, Black Viewpoint and Black Perspective. The movement established various projects such as the leadership development project, home industries and health centres to mention a few.<sup>29)</sup>

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28) Ibid., p. 23.

29) Ibid., pp. 24- 30, 34, and 42-52.

Wilson focuses on the effect of the BCM, on its members after Biko's death and after its banning in October 1977; the role that the Black People Convention (BPC) (one of the BCM organisations) had to play, and the SASO-BPC Trial. He observes that those who worked with Biko did not let things die. Ramphela built Ithuseng clinic near Lenyenye. Mpumlwana continued her mediation work through the churches. Pityana went into exile and became a priest working to combat racism in the international arena at the World Council of Churches. Thoko also expanded Ginsberg Educational Trust to include the whole border region and it became known as Zingisa Educational Project. Nohle Mohapi joined Mpumlwana and worked for Zingisa until 1990 when she began a new branch in Port Elizabeth called Khanyisa. They all fell under the umbrella of a national trust called Trust for Christian Outreach and Education which gave support to a variety of grassroots programmes under the directorship of Nontobeko Moletsane. Thenjiwe Mtintso went to exile where she joined the MK and became the ANC ambassador to Uganda. The BPC was to unite and create a national consciousness of all the existing historical political movements against the common enemy (the Apartheid regime).<sup>30)</sup>

During the SASO-BPC Trial (trial of the Black Consciousness members who were arrested during the pro-FRELIMO rally in September 1974), Biko defined the Black Consciousness as an organisation that inspired people with pride and dignity; SASO and BPC were concerned with the whole development of the human being and the black person, discarding his/her own

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30) Ibid., p. 51-53.

psychological oppression.<sup>31)</sup>

Mokoape, Mtintso, and Nhlapho describe the activities of the Black Consciousness Movement and its preparation for an armed struggle. The preparation came after Onkgopotse Tiro who had criticised Bantu Education at his graduation in 1972 was expelled from the University of the North that same year. The BCM activists decided to go to exile for military training under the three black organisations such as the Unity Movement, the PAC and the ANC but it was the PAC, Ntantala group, which provided military training to them. Few activists who received military training were those who had gone for further training in Syria when the PAC forced the Libyans to expel the BCM from Libya after the dissension between the BCM, PAC and the Basuto Congress Party trainees. Most of the BCM members, including its leaders and those trained militarily went to exile to join the ANC after the 1976 Soweto Uprising and the banning of the BCM in 1977.<sup>32)</sup>

Biko points out that SASO was formed at the University of the North in 1969 after 40 Black students, who had attended a conference of the UCM at Stutterheim in July 1968, decided to form a Black student organisation. The organisation, which was to cater for the needs of non-white students, was also the organisation through which they would think for themselves. The

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31) Ibid., pp. 31, 52-53 and 56.

32) K. Mokoape, T. Mtintso and W. Nhlapho: *Towards the Armed Struggle* (Pityana et, al: *Bounds of Possibility*, pp.137-142).

aims of SASO were the following:

- To crystallise the needs and aspirations of the non- white students and to seek to make known their grievances.
- To put into effect programmes designed to meet needs of non-white students and to work on a collective basis in an effort to solve problems, which beset the centres individually.
- To heighten the degree of conduct not only amongst the non-white students but also amongst these students and the rest of the South African population.
- To make non-white students accepted on their own terms as an integral part of the South African student community.
- To establish a solid identity amongst the non-white students and to ensure that these students are always treated with the respect that they deserve.
- To protect the interest of member centres and to act as a pressure group in all institutions and organisations for the benefit of the non-white students.
- To boost the morale of non-white students and to heighten their confidence in themselves.
- To contribute largely to the direction of thought taken by the various institutions on social, political and other current topics. SASO would be concerned about the needs of the non-white students, and was the only student organisation still concerned about contact between various colour groups.<sup>33)</sup>

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33) S. Biko: I Write What I Like, pp.3-5.

In his letter to the student representative councils (SRC), presidents of the English and Afrikaans medium universities, to national unions and others (including overseas) organisations, Biko introduced SASO as a one year old organisation established at the University of the North in July 1969. He further mentioned all factors that contributed to the formation of the organisation such as the Fort Hare Transfer Act of 1959, which brought Fort Hare under direct government control—that, dealt a blow to student contact between the university and the rest of the student population. This brought an end to freedom of speech at the university; the establishment of Sister Universities such as the University College of Durban (for Indians), the University College of the North (for the Sotho), the University College of the Western Cape (for the Coloured) and the University College of Zululand (for Zulus) that same year which brought an end to an independent SRC.<sup>34)</sup>

Biko states that the rector had power to disallow the decisions of the SRC. It was the UCM, which brought black students together because contact and dialogue began again amongst them. Both NUSAS and the UCM were white dominated, concerned with the aspirations of the white students and paid little attention to problems peculiar to the Black community; separate accommodation provided to NUSAS affiliates was another factor. During the NUSAS conference of 1967, Blacks were accommodated in a church hall in Grahamstown location while Whites were accommodated in the residences around the conference side.<sup>35)</sup>

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34) Ibid., pp. 8-10.

35) S. Biko: I Write What I Like, pp. 10-11.

Biko mentions the aims of SASO. In terms of structure, SASO operated like a national union. Its members were to affiliate through two methods such as centre affiliation through the SRC and individual affiliation. The governing body of SASO was the General Student's Council (GSC), consisting of delegates from the various centres and branches. The executive which was the official policy making body of SASO was to govern in between the GSC sessions and worked according to mandates given to it by the GSC, while the president was to be the sole interpreter of policies between sessions. After the formation of SASO, Black students were ready to join and direct the thinking of the organization. They began to oppose non-racial organisations (multi-racial organisations, organisations that were opened to people of all races).<sup>36)</sup>

Biko conscientised Blacks that the liberal whites delay their liberation. These encouraged Blacks to be members of non-racial organisations (multi-racial organisations) and also befriend Blacks who might lead the liberation. All Whites, including the Nationalist, the United Party and the Liberals wanted White supremacy to be maintained in South Africa and therefore, they had to be excluded from the Black liberation struggle.<sup>37)</sup>

Biko further indicates that after the banning of the ANC and the PAC, there was no longer resistance emanating from the blacks. People who had to lead the struggle were working within the apartheid institutions e.g. Gatsha Buthelezi was the chief executive officer of the

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36) Ibid., pp. 12-16.

37) Ibid., pp.19-26.

Zululand Territorial Authority and the Coloured Labour Party formed in opposition to the All Coloured Representative Council was using that body to air their grievances. Blacks were fighting for their rights in the Bantustans and no longer for their South African rights e.g. Xhosas wanted their Transkei; the Zulus their Zululand and etc.<sup>38)</sup> Through the Bantustans the government wanted to do the following:

- “To create a false hope amongst the black people so that further attempts by the blacks to collectively enunciate their aspirations would be dampened.
- To offer a new but false direction in the struggle of the black people. By making it difficult to get even the 13% of the land, the powers that separated our (Black) struggles into eight different struggles for eight false freedoms that were prescribed long ago. This was the overall effect of making us forget about the 87% of the land.
- To cheat the outside world into believing that there was some validity in the multi racial theory so that South Africa could then go back into the international sport, trade, politics etc with a soothed conscience.
- To boost up as much as possible the internal competition and hostility that was bound to come up so that collective strength and resistance of the black people could be fragmented.”<sup>39)</sup>

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38) S. Biko: I Write What I Like, pp. 34-38.

39) Ibid., pp. 83-84.

According to Biko, there was a spirit of inferiority and fear amongst Blacks since 1960, but that fear was diminished by the BCM. Fear was brought by problems of unemployment because Blacks were killing each other; there was harassment and intimidation of the Blacks by the police, security and traffic officers. Blacks were scared to be involved in politics because those who tried to protest against the government were intimidated with security visits, banning orders and house arrests. It was through political articulation of the aspirations of the Blacks that the BCM diminished fear in the minds of the Blacks.<sup>40)</sup>

Biko focuses on the church and on his memorandum to U.S official; Senator Dick Clack titled “The American Policy towards South Africa”. In the memorandum Biko asked the US to embark on trade, arms and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa. Biko conscientised Blacks that it was Christianity that was used to undermine their culture and religion. People amongst whom Christianity was spread had to cast away their indigenous clothing, customs, and beliefs, which were all described as pagan and barbaric. Usage of the spear became the hallmark of savagery. Black church ministers of religion were conscientised that the government was responsible for what they claimed were the sins of the blacks such as thieving, house breaking, stabbing, adultery, murder etc. He also asserts that all these problems were brought by poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, lack of education and migratory labour. Black ministers of religion had to consider Black Theology, which sought to relate the present-day Black man to God, within the given context of the black man’s

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40) Ibid., pp. 73-79, 88 and 89.

suffering and his attempt to get out of it.<sup>41)</sup>

Both Holland and Meli discuss the same issues: Mandela's early days; the ANC; the defiance campaign of 1952; Freedom Charter; the Treason Trial and the Sharpeville massacre.<sup>42)</sup>

Holland observes that the ANC was formed in Bloemfontein in 1912 after the exclusion of Blacks from the South African Parliament, which was made during the inauguration of the Union of South African in 1910. The aims of ANC were to agitate for the removal of racial discrimination in parliament, in the public administration, schools and factories of South Africa and to further the interest of the "dark races" of the sub-continent. The ANC planned to use peaceful propaganda in the first instance and passive action or continued movement along the lines of Mahatma Ghandi, who had lived in South Africa since 1893. The ANC strategies were useless and the leadership was full of moderation, compromise and appeasement as the ANC Youth Leaguers complained in latter years. For instance, the petition to the South African Prime Minister, General Louis Botha, protesting against the Natives Land Act (the act which left the blacks in possession of only 8% of the South African land) and its delegation led by Dube to appeal once again to the British had failed. In addition, the ANC document called the "African Claims" drafted in 1940, which demanded the freedom of African people from all the discriminatory laws and the 1944 petition against

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41) Ibid., pp. 54-60 and 138-142.

42) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, pp. 73-198; F. Meli: *A History of the ANC*, pp.34-188.

the intensification of pass law arrests forwarded to the prime minister were all ignored.<sup>43)</sup>

Holland further confirms that the leadership of the ANC wanted compromise, moderation and appeasement. After Hertzog was Prime Minister, he introduced a succession of minor reforms, such as the provision of first class railway accommodation for Blacks who could afford it. The ANC leaders who were mostly educated, middle class men agreed to the reform in the hope that the new government would begin to offer differentiation of treatment between those who were educated and civilised and those who were yet to reach that stage.<sup>44)</sup>

According to Holland in 1930, after Seme became the ANC president, the ANC stopped all its protests. Seme was intimidated by the Riotous Assemblies Amendment Act, which banished any person from any district if he caused any feelings of hostility, and the ANC could not even support pass-burning demonstrations organised by the communists in Johannesburg. The leadership supported appeasement. This was after Professor Tengo Jabavu who was president of the All African Convention, a body formed in Bloemfontein in 1935 to oppose the bill which allowed Blacks to elect seven white parliamentary representatives and twelve black representatives to a government advisory body called the Native Representative Council had agreed that this be an Act. Xuma showed his moderation after he discouraged a group of young professionals who wanted to organise a Congress Youth League and a campaign of action designed to mobilise mass support when he replied that- Africans as a

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43) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, pp.38-52.

44) *Ibid.*, pp. 43-52.

group were unorganised and undisciplined and that a programme of action would merely lead to exposure.<sup>45)</sup>

Holland is also concerned about the ANC Youth League, especially its formation and its activities, which contributed to the formation of the ANC Youth League. He emphasizes that it was because of the weaknesses of the ANC that the Youth League was formed in 1944, in Johannesburg. Its founder members Peter Mda, Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, Jordan Ngubane and William Nkomo were against Congress leadership and against its white members. They favoured a programme of action and mass mobilisation and were advocates of an Africanist philosophy. They switched to non-racialism and accepted communists such as Moses Kotane, JB Marks and Dan Tloome to the Youth League after the successful workers strike that was organised by the Communists and the successful Indian resistance of 1946, in Natal. After that, they cooperated with the Communists and the Indians in the May 1, workers strike of 1950, the 26 June 1950 protest against the Suppression of the Communism Act (passed that year) and in the defiance campaign of 1952.<sup>46)</sup>

Holland indicates that the campaign was organised by the Joint Planning Council, which consisted of leaders and secretaries of the Indian Congress such as Yusuf Dadoo, Yusuf Cachalia and three Congressmen such as Dr. Moroka, JB Marks and Sisulu. The campaign to

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45) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, pp. 46-52.

46) *Ibid.*, pp. 52 and 59-87.

defy the Apartheid Acts started in Port Elizabeth before spreading all over South Africa and resulted in deaths of both Blacks and Whites and the arrest of its leaders including Dr Moroka, Nelson Mandela, Sisulu, JB Marks, Dadoo, Cachalia, and Ahmed Kathrada but they were released on bail.<sup>47)</sup>

Holland further observes that after the campaign, the ANC together with the Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Organisation and the Congress of Democrats formed a National Council called Congress Alliance in order to draw a Freedom Charter. The Charter was drawn from demands and grievances collected by volunteers from all people of South Africa during the Congress of the People Campaign. It demanded the right of all citizens to vote, hold office and attain equality before the law, equal status for all the national groups, an end to discrimination, redistribution of land and public ownership of mines, banks, monopoly industries; free education, medical care, welfare for the elderly as well as minimum wages, universal peace and friendship.<sup>48)</sup>

Holland states that towards the end of the Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955, the police launched raids, which continued throughout the country, and seized everything associated with the violation of the Suppression of the Communist Act and the Riotous Assemblies Act. About 156 people were arrested for the act of treason including Reverend Calata, Professor Matthew, Chief Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo,

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47) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, pp. 76-81.

48) *Ibid.*, pp. 89-99.

Tshungwana and Yusuf Dadoo. They were brought to trial in December 1956 in Johannesburg, but were all granted bail. In 1957, charges against 61 and 64 of the accused were suspended in 1957 and 1958 respectively, and 31 of those who remained were discharged.<sup>49)</sup>

According to Holland after the Freedom Charter was drawn, an Africanist group led by Robert Sobukwe broke away from the ANC and formed the PAC in April 1959. The anti-pass protest of March 1960 organised by the PAC led to the arrest of its leaders including Sobukwe; deaths of 69 protesters at Sharpeville who died of police bullets while 178 were wounded. This was followed by the banning of the ANC and the PAC that year. After both the ANC and PAC were banned, the ANC with the help of the Communist Party formed the Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) in 1962 as its military wing. Its objective was the overthrow of the government by force and violence as reflected on the MK plan, Operation Mayibuye.<sup>50)</sup>

Holland further indicates that the MK high command senior operatives such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Joe Slovo, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlaba, Kathy Kathrada, Arthur Goldreich, Dennis Goldberg, Jack Hodgson, Mac Maharaj, Elias Motsoaledi, Oliver Tambo, Lionel Bernstein, Bob Hepple, a Johannesburg lawyer and Harold Wolpe were arrested. This was after the MK headquarters were discovered by the police at Liliesleaf farm in Johannesburg. The arrested, except for Arthur Goldreich and Harold Wolpe

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49) Ibid., pp. 99- 115.

50) H. Holland: The Struggle, pp. 110 and 118-125.

who escaped from Marshall Square Police Station and flew to Dar-es-Salaam, were brought to the Rivonia Trial. Leaders such as Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Kathy Kathrada, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlaba and Elias Motsoaledi were sentenced to life imprisonment in Robben Island.<sup>51)</sup>

Holland also portrays the 1976 Soweto uprising and the South African political scene during the 1980s. The uprising started in Soweto where school children were against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools. It was the Black Consciousness Movement that contributed to the uprising. Holland says that the Black Consciousness Movement was sweeping campuses throughout the country; and achieving an unprecedented level of political education, it spread beyond the universities into thousands of schools. The violence of the 1980s contributed to many deaths, destruction of black homes, buses and other vehicles. There were class boycotts all over the country. This violence was mainly caused, by a special group of the youth who called themselves comrades. The group existed after the formation of the United Democratic Front in 1983.<sup>52)</sup>

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51) Ibid., pp. 149-177.

52) Ibid., pp. 178-198 and 205-223.

## 1.7. Theoretical Perspectives

Amongst the major school theories that frame South African historiography there are the following: The Liberal School, The Afrikaner School and the African Nationalist School.

Both Smith and Saunders point out that there were minor schools that existed before: the Settler School and the Imperial School which were absorbed by the first two dominant schools. The first minor school, the Settler School was against British imperialism while the Imperial School concerned itself with the role of the British Empire in spreading Euro-Christian civilisation to Africans. The school viewed Africans as barbaric and settlers as obstacles to the spread of the civilisation because of their conflicts with the blacks and with each other (Dutch and English settlers). These scholars both deal with the Marxist School, which emphasise class struggle as a motive force of history. To this school both Black and White South Africans acted as either capitalists or workers in history. This school could not have a great influence in the South African history because of repression.<sup>53)</sup>

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53) C. Saunders: *The Making of the South African Past: Major Historians on Race and Class*, p.23; K. Smith: *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historical Writing*, p. 17.

### 1.7. 1. The Liberal School

According to Smith even though the liberal school views history as the interaction of the Britons, Boers and Bantus, Britons and their culture are put in the centre of history. According to this school, Africans are barbaric and uncivilized; therefore, they have to be developed to the stage of the British, and adopt the British culture, as theirs is evil. This school is Eurocentric.<sup>54)</sup>

### 1.7. 2. The Afrikaner School

According to Saunders the Afrikaner school promotes Afrikaner culture and puts the Afrikaners at the centre of history. It concentrates on Afrikaner historical activities such as the Great-Trek and the Boer-Wars and also on their achievements such as the founding of Afrikaner republics: the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. According to this school, Africans were primitive people and without history as they did not contribute to any development in South Africa. The school has supported the apartheid system and white supremacy in South Africa.<sup>55)</sup>

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54) K. Smith: The Changing Past, p.19.

55) C. Saunders: The Making of the South African Past, p.35.

### 1.7. 3. The African Nationalist School

According to Temu and Swai, this school emerged with the rise of African nationalism, the African anti-colonial struggle and coming to power of the Western educated elite in Africa. According to this school, Africans have a history. They resisted colonialism and took power from the colonialists. The school borrowed European concepts and theories of change. Scholars use notions such as ‘civilized’ and ‘to act in a civilized manner’. This might be due to the fact that these scholars were educated in European universities and colonial schools. The African nationalist school takes European nationalist history as its model.<sup>56)</sup>

## 1. 8. Theoretical Framework Development in the Study

### 1. 8.1. Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity is an appropriate frame for this study. According to Asante, Afrocentricity is the relocating and repositioning of the African and African culture at the centre of history. It draws its concept from and bases itself on the culture of the African and totality of African experience. Asante states that Afrocentricity has five main characteristics such as the following:

- Protection of African cultural elements in the context of art, music and literature and

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56) A. Temu and B. Swai: *Historians and African History: A Critique*, p.30.

also of the Pan Africanist cultural elements as based on responses to situation, environment and conditions.

- A devotion to finding the subject place of Africans in social, political and religious phenomenon with implications to the question of sex, gender and class.
- A concern in psychological relocation as determined by ritual, symbols and signals.
- A devotion to lexical refinement to avoid gender and sex pejoratives of any other person including the Africans and also celebration of centeredness and agency.
- Imperative from historical sources concerned with revision of collective texts of Africans as one in constant and consistent for liberation and maat.<sup>57)</sup>

### **1.9. Operational Definitions**

In this sub-section the contextual meanings of the key terms used in the study, rather than their literally meanings are provided.

- Apartheid Policy - according to Cooper and Thompson, the South African Policy of separateness was designed to divide the South African population into four racial groups: Whites, Coloured, Indian and African which was also subdivided into several

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57) M. K. Asante: Afrocentricity, p.23.

distinct nations or potential nations. The goal was the maintenance of White Supremacy and control in South Africa.<sup>58)</sup>

- Bantustans - according to Biko were independent/ autonomous African homelands.<sup>59)</sup>
- District - in Wikipedia (the Free Encyclopedia, 2 February 2009) is an area of a country or city with a particular feature or regarded as administrative unit.<sup>60)</sup>
- Homeland - in Thompson were reserves grouped into eight (eventually ten) territories and each potential African nation, administered under white tutelage by a set of Bantu Authorities, consisting mainly of hereditary chiefs. Each African “Nation” was to develop along its own lines.<sup>61)</sup>
- Youth - in this study refers to the Black students in schools, those who dropped out of schools and the unemployed black youth.

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58) L. Thompson: A History of South Africa, pp.190-200.

59) S. Biko: I Write What I Like, p. 80.

60) Wikipedia (the Free Encyclopedia, 2 February 2009).

61) L. Thompson: A History of South Africa, p. 191.

## **1.10. Research Design and Methodology**

### 1.10.1 Research Design

The design of this research is historical and the approach is qualitative. It must be observed that in historical research, the researcher in no way interferes with, or intervenes in the events and typically does not observe them directly, but analyses, describes and interprets those that have already taken place. Past events cannot be brought to life.<sup>62)</sup> Historical research, as conducted in this study was primarily reconstructive. The qualitative dimension of the study is related to the fact that the focus of interpretation, analysis and description are the meanings and the values that the participants themselves attach to the events under interrogation. The researcher immersed herself in the lives or world of outlook and captured faithfully their lived conditions in the past. In this qualitative historical research the participants speak for themselves.

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62) K. Smith: The Changing Past, p.57.

### 1.10.2. Sampling

This research relied on both the purposive and snowball samplings. The youth who fully participated or were leaders in the struggle were selected to participate in the study. As they were the leaders who fully participated in the struggle, these youth had knowledge of the inside (plan) and the outside (action) of the events. In order to access these youth the snowball sampling was used. In the Thabamopo district, people were asked about the youth who fully participated or were leaders during the struggle. The initial subject (knowledgeable participant) identified, was asked to give the names of the other participants. In this way, an expanding web of contacts was established who constituted the sample. Since this study is qualitative, at least 10% of the participants were interviewed.

### 1.10.3. Other Sources of Data

Apart from oral sources, original both official and unofficial written documents were used. These materials were either still in private hands or were preserved in public archives in the province or at the national archives in Pretoria.

#### 1.10.4. Method of Data Collection

An interview schedule was prepared. This schedule was made up of the key issues to be investigated. The following issues constituted the basis for the interviews: the political and economic grievances of the youth, youth organisational structures that fought apartheid, the activities of the ANC, PAC and UDF, problems and achievements. These issues were constituted on the basis of an initial pilot interview programme. To interrogate written documents in the process of data collection, a series of questions were constructed. These questions were similar to those in the interview schedule.

#### 1.10.5. Method of Data Analysis

In analysing data it was necessary to determine its authenticity and accuracy. The qualitative analysis was used. Under the biographical tradition of inquiry the researcher determined whether variables such as the age of the interviewee and his occupation were connected with the context and the events itself. The information given by the interviewees was compared to see if it was reliable and valid. It was also compared with that in unpublished and published literature to see if it was similar or related. If the information was similar, a method of negotiation was used. The information was arranged into themes and sub-themes for the presentation purposes.

### **1.11. Ethical Considerations**

In conducting this research, the researcher upheld four basic principles, derived from the code of research ethics of the Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC). These are the principles of participation, transparency, professionalism and accountability.

The principle of participation involves, among other things, the notion that all research should be undertaken with and not merely on the research community. In addition to this, the principle insists that research and purpose of the knowledge should never be regarded as supreme goal at the expense of the participants' personal, social and cultural values. The principle of transparency requires that the participants should be briefed on the aims and application of research. The principle of professionalism requires that research be conducted in accordance with the professional code of the association of which the researcher is a member. With regard to this, the researcher complied with the requirements for research articulated by the Research and Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo. The principle of accountability insists that the researcher ensures that she or he has an explicit written mandate from the sponsors in which the general conditions and terms of the research mandate are set out clearly. The researcher got such a mandate from the School of Social Sciences of the University of Limpopo.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE THABAMOPO DISTRICT: SOCIO-CULTURAL HISTORY**

### **2.1. The Geographical Position and the Various Ethnic Groups of the District**

The Thabamopo district was one of the districts that constituted the Lebowa homeland. For the first time, the homeland was divided into twelve districts: Bochum, Bolobedu, Practiseer, Mapulaneng, Mokerong, Namakgale, Naphuno, Sekgosese, Sekhukhune, Sešhego, and Thabamopo. Later, the last district was divided into two districts such as Mankweng and Thabamopo while a new district called Phalala was added to the number of districts. Consequently, there were about fourteen districts in the homeland. Under the present government the Mankweng, Thabamopo, Sekgosese and Seshego districts ceased to exist. All the areas that were under the districts are now in the newly established Capricorn district.<sup>63)</sup>

During the period of our study 1970-1994, Thabamopo was one of the biggest districts. Like all the mentioned districts it comprised of different ethnic groups that were living in different

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63) Captain N. P. Lempuru, Lebowakgomo Police Station, 13-3-2005; Mr. B. Molepo, Lebowakgomo, 13-3-2005; Chief S. Dikgale, Dikgale Traditional Authority office, 22-01-2006.

tribal areas under different kings (kgoši) and queens (kgoši-gadi). They were the Kone of Dikgale next to Ga-Mamabolo under Kgoši Edward Dikgale, who was succeeded by William Dikgale, the Ndebele of Ledwaba (next to Lebowakgomo location) under Kgoši-gadi Rangwato Priscilla Ledwaba, Mafefe area (next to Dongwane) under Kgoši-gadi Mamasegare Thobejane, the Kone of Maja (next to Chuenespoort) under Kgoši Ditsepu Cecil Maja, the Tlou of Makgoba were living at Ga- Molepo as they had no area of their own (presently they are living at Ga-Makgoba next Dikgale area under Makopa Garibald Makgoba). The Mamabolo area of the Kolobe (on the eastern side of Pietersburg) was divided into two sections such as Mankweng section under Kgoši-gadi Sophie Mamabolo and Sekwala section under Kgoši Molapi Philip, the Tlou (elephant) of Molepo (next to the Mamabolo area) under Kgoši Setlakalane Alfred Molepo, the Kone of Mathabatha (next to Mafefe area) under Kgoši Malegodi Mathabatha, the Kgakga of Mothapo (next to Mothiba area) under Kgoši-gadi Refilwe Madipuane Mothapo, the Kone of Mothiba under Kgoši Lesiba Christopher Mothiba, the Kgakga of Mphahlele (next to Zebediela) under Kgoši-gadi NgwanaMohube Mphahlele, the Tau of Seloane (next to Zebediela and Mphahlele area) under Kgoši-gadi NgwanaMohube Dina Seloane whereas the Kgakga of Tšhwene (next to Chuenespoort) was under Kgoši-gadi Ramadimetje Angeline Tšhwene.<sup>64)</sup> Thus except for the Ndebele of Ledwaba all the tribes that inhabited the district were the Northern Sotho.<sup>65)</sup>

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64) Headman L. K. Mphahlele, Kgwadiamoleke High School (Ga-Mphahlele), 08-9-2005; Chief D. C. Maja, Maja Traditional Authority Office, 12-11-2005.

65) S. M. Mahlare: A History of the Kone with Special Reference to Phokwane People C.1450-1882, pp. 7-9.

## 2.2. The Sotho People

The people who are the subject of this study belonged to the Sotho language family. The group had four sub-groups such as the Eastern Sotho, the North-Eastern Sotho, the Central Sotho and the Northern Sotho. The Eastern Sotho comprised of the Kutswe, Pai and the Pulana. The North-Eastern Sotho was constituted of the Mamabolo, Lobedu and Phalaborwa areas; whereas the Northern Sotho encompassed the Birwa, Kgakga/ Kone and Tlokwa people. The Central Sotho consisted of the Pedi, Kwena, Roka and Tau.<sup>66)</sup> The dominant group in the district was the Kone.

### 2.2.1. The Kone

The Kone originally came from the Great Lakes of Central Africa in Tanzania. After their departure from Tanzania around 1450, they inhabited a place called Zimba in Malawi where they swamped over a wide area that stretches to Mozambique.<sup>67)</sup> They parted from the Kone of Malawi under the leadership of Mokone of Mabula hence they are called Bakone ba Mabula in their praise song which is recited “Mokone! Mokone wa Mabula! Mokgalaka wa Legola! (Kone! Kone of Mabula, Zimbabweans of the field!).<sup>68)</sup> From Zimba they settled in Bokgalaka (Zimbabwe) before they crossed the Limpopo River around 1550 A. D. As a result they were called the Kgalaka or Polantane as reflected in the praise song, before they could

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66) Ibid., pp. 7-9.

67) Ibid., pp.7, 8, 9 and 10.

68) M. C. Boshielo: Mokone wa Mabula, pp.4 and 5.

be assimilated into the Sotho speaking people, in accordance with the place which they came from. After crossing the Limpopo river they settled in what became known as the Transvaal in Zoutpansberg.<sup>69)</sup> In the Transvaal, they made ‘Tlhantlhagane’ one of their totems because of their admiration for the bird but Kone remained their principal totem.<sup>70)</sup> From the Zoutpansberg they settled at the following places respectively: North-West Swaziland at a place called Bokone or Ngonini in Swazi, Sekhukhuneland (Bopedi), at Bokone also near Lydenburg, Tshutshwe on the farm Rooiwater, North-west of Leydsdorp and they finally made Bokgakga (Ga-Maake on the Eastern side of Haenesburg) their residence.<sup>71)</sup>

#### 2.2.1.1. Dispersal of the Kone People throughout South Africa

##### 2.2.1.1.1. Split of the Kone at Ga-Maake

The first group of the Kone to split in 1700 at Ga-Maake led by Matlatlabole contributed to the dispersal of the Kone people throughout South Africa. They roamed and settled at different places before they could settle at Ga- Matlala-a- Thaba (Matlala-a- Thaba-Bogoši) that was in Sešhego district.<sup>72)</sup> They settled at Molaotsi (Blood river) in the present day Mašhašhane area, Khorolwane near Marabastad, Thabatšweu (next to Tubatse river) and Polokwane (Pietersburg). From Polokwane they split into three groups that took different

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69) S. M. Mahlare: A History of the Kone, p. 11.

70) M. C. Boshielo: Mokone, pp. 5 and 6.

71) S. M. Mahlare: A History of the Kone, pp. 11-13.

72) Ibid., pp.14-17.

directions namely southern, western and northern. The last group broke from the one that took the southern direction as was considered to be the rear guard group. This group moved and settled at a place, which is presently called Ga-Mothiba. The Southern group thereafter settled at a place of Bakgatla of Mosetlha near Hammanskraal. Later they moved to places such as Rustenburg (around North West), Brits (around Pretoria) and Sefakaole (the area presently under Chief Vaaltyn) before they could rejoin the group that took the western direction at Makgabeng near Mogalakwena river in circa 1790 and 1800. These groups merged, migrated and settled at different places before they could finally settle at Thaba-Bogoši.<sup>73)</sup> During their arrival at the place, Chief Matlatlabole's son Matlala was already a chief, therefore, the place was named after him. It was at the place that another split occurred, which contributed to their further dispersal.<sup>74)</sup>

#### 2.2.1.1.2. Split at Ga-Matlala-a-Thaba

The split occurred because of dissension between chief Mokoko (also known as Matlala -a-Thaba)'s son and his brother Mogadima (Thoke). The dissension existed as a result of the former's killing of the latter's daughter. The chief's son had killed her, after she opposed his love proposal. After the burial, Thoke split with a certain group of the Kone and they made phiri (hyena) their totem. The group first settled at Mogodumo - high mountains overlooking Chueniespoort - where the Mohlala, Mokgwatšana and the Dikgale groups split. The first two

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73) Ibid., pp. 15-17.

74) M. C. Boshelo: Mokone, pp. 6, 8 and 9; S. M. Mahlare: A History of the Kone, p. 17.

groups sought refuge with the Bapedi of Sekhukhune in Sekhukhuneland. They returned to the Phokwane people (around Marblehall) during the Sekhukhune Wars of 1876 to 1879. After the split, the Kone moved to Tswaaing near the Olifants river and to Nyaane (on the farm Kleinklippot between Moutse and Mohlabetsispruit) where they were under Rakgwadi, Thoke's son and successor. This was because Thoke died while they were on the way to Tswaaing. While at Nyaane, Rakgwadi died and was succeeded by his son Leswena. From Nyaane, the Kone moved to Lebopong (the banks of Mabjana-Maswanaspruit and south of the hill, Malope) and retreated to Nyaane where the Mampana and Tiisane kraals split. The former split from the Kone because of the dissension with the royal house, now they are living at Ga-Mampana next to Ga-Masemola while the Tiisane kraal is situated at a place called Tiisane (around Marblehall). After the split, the Kone moved to Lebopong again.<sup>75)</sup>

At Lebopong, the chief was Ntsweng, Leswena's son who passed away while Lehlagare his son and successor was killed by a rhino. Lehlagare's death furthered the split because his son Thoke II was born from a woman who was supposed to be his favourite wife. So as she was to be his favourite wife, the Kone married Mokgeretli as his candle wife. The regent Mahlare, brother of Lehlagare's father and the principal wife gave birth to Maserumule I and Lehwelere for the deceased Lehlagare, as his brother Šhikwane I was still a minor. Šhikwane I who took over from Mahlare also passed away. After his death, there were the Kone who wanted to be ruled by Thoke and who considered Maserumule I as their chief. The former group split and moved to Beletlwa (Ga-Rahlagane). The Lehwelere and Ditšweung kraals

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75) M. C. Boshielo: Mokone, pp. 10-20 and 54-55.

also split. They are now living at Ga-Lehwelere and Ditšweung (next to June furse) respectively.<sup>76)</sup>

After the split, the Kone people moved to Mount Phatametsana next to Mae river- opposite Mount Mafatla. At Phatametsana another split occurred. At the time of the split, Lekgoloane who was Maserumule I's wife was a regent as Maserumule II was still a minor. This was because Maserumule I who was also Phokwane's father was deceased. Dissension within the royal house forced Phokwane-Maserumule I's son and his followers to move near a place that was nicknamed Kgalauwane on 15th March 1879. From Kgalauwane the Phokwane people inhabited Molapong (around Marblehall) where they fought and defeated the Kone at Phatametsana that was nicknamed (Mmašadi). After the defeat the Kone of Mmašadi - fled to Mašhišhing (around Lydenburg) while the Phokwane people moved to Mount Lefakong in 1882. The mountain was named after the chief, it was called Phokwane.<sup>77)</sup>

At Mount Lefakong, Phokwane married Lehlake whose only son was Maserumule I, deputy wife, from Beletlwa and his favourite wife, Somo who was Marutle's mother. After his death, Marutle acted as a regent as the rightful heir Maserumule I was still a minor. Maserumule I who took over after completing his tertiary studies at Botšhabelo (Mohlotsi) died in 1923 while Phokwane II and Lešhabane's mother was married as a favourite wife, not a candle wife. The candle wife married for Maserumule I gave birth to Lehlagare Herence

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76) Ibid., pp.21-22, 55 and 56.

77) Ibid., pp. 22-34 and 40.

Maserumule but Herence never became a chief as Lešhalabane Michael came and claimed the chieftainship of his father. He became a chief as from 1939 to 1970. During his rule Phokwane was a home of the various tribes: South Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa to mention a few who came and sought refuge.<sup>78)</sup>

At Mount Lefakong, there were two groups that split from the Phokwane people: the Mokgohlwa kraal that split in 1934 and the Christian group. The last group parted because of Sekhukhune's execution of the Christians. The chief was threatening that any chief that tolerated Christianity at his place would be attacked by the army of the other tribes. Thus the Christianised Kone fled and settled at Mohlotsi (the place named Botšhabelo next to Middleburg).<sup>79)</sup>

#### 2.2.1.1.3. Split of the Mphahlele

The second group that contributed to further dispersal of the Kone was the Mphahlele. By the time of their split in 1750, the Maake people were no longer called the Kone. They were called the Pangoleon (BaKgakga). This is because the Mphahlele people split with the totem Kgakga from Ga-Maake (the eastern side of Mahufše Mountain).<sup>80)</sup> They are still referred to as the Kgakga people as their praise song is recited: "Bakgakga wee! Bakgakga ba Maake, a Makubela a Moratha, šaba lešo, le fologa dithabeng, Mogodi Ga-

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78) Ibid., pp. 36-52.

79) Ibid., pp. 13, 40, 41, 46, and 56.

80) S. M. Mphahlele and S.M. Phaladi: Ba Xa-Mphahlele, p. 10.

Mampa a Matšwelela.” (“The Kgaga wee! The Kgakga of Makubela of Moratha, my nation descends from mountains, Mogodi Ga-Mampa of Matšwelela”).<sup>81)</sup> The praise song also confirms that they were the Mphahlele people who parted from those of Maake as it says: “Bakgakga ba Maake” (“The kgakga of Maake”). Thus it was after the split of the Matlala people that the Maake people changed their totem to Pangoleon and the place name to Bokgakga. They now live at a place called Ga-Mphahlele next to Ga-Tšhwene. All separatists from the Kone of Matlala and the Kgaga of Mphahlele were all the Kone of Mabula.<sup>82)</sup>

Mphahlele was chief Maake’s son. He parted from the Maake people because of the love that the chief had for him. Chief Maake had realised that his favourite son would not succeed him as his mother was his favourite wife not a (principal wife) candle wife. Chief Maake decided to give Mphahlele a horn of chieftainship which was also called a horn of protection.<sup>83)</sup> With the horn, he was giving him chieftainship but not at Ga-Maake as he told him “tšama o iphahlelela” (“Go and protect yourself”).<sup>83)</sup> He wanted him to go and be a chief outside the boundaries of Ga-Maake.

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81) Ibid., p. 11.

82) S. M. Mahlare: A History of the Kone, pp. 10-11 and 14; S. M. Mphahlele and S.M. Phaladi: Ba Xa-Mphahlele, p. 11.

83) S. M. Mphahlele and S.M. Phaladi: Ba Xa-Mphahlele, p. 11.

#### 2.2.1.1.4. The Migration of the Mphahlele People to their Present Location

From Ga-Maake, the Mphahlele people knew that they were going to chief Makgahlele's place. Chief Makgahlele was directing them to her place.<sup>84)</sup> Chief Makgahlele was not originally Mokgakga but Ndebele as her praise song says "Makgahlele wa Mapapo Letebele" ("Makgahlele of Mapapo Ndebele")<sup>85)</sup>. He and his followers fled to Bokgakga after the onslaughts of the Swazis. At the time of their arrival, chief Maake was ordering his son to move away from Maake area. She decided to accompany and direct him to her place where they might settle together. This shows that chief Makgahlele also liked the place. Except for his followers, Mphahlele was accompanied by his brothers - Šhaku and Phaše (they were also fathered by chief Maake but not mothered by Mphahlele's mother). From Bokgakga, Mphahlele's mother was acting as a regent as Mphahlele was still a minor.<sup>86)</sup> They settled at Mount Kirimane (between Ga-Maake and Ga-Mphahlele and Mount Mahlatši (next to Mašhite Village, Ga-Mphahlele) before they could settle at a place of chief Mmowe and Mbadzi (the place that was possessed by chief Makgahlele before she fled to Bokgakga). Because of these occupants of the place, Mphahlele could not be chief of that place.<sup>87)</sup>

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84) Ibid., pp. 15-16.

85) Ibid., p. 15.

86) Ibid., pp. 15-16.

87) Ibid., pp. 11, 13 and 16.

#### 2.2.1.1.5. How Mphahlele became Chief of the Place

It was because Chief Mmowe believed that Mphahlele was a rainmaker that Mphahlele ultimately became the solemn ruler of the place. After his arrival at the place, which was known to be that of starvation and hunger, it turned to be that of prosperity and rainfalls. Seeing that, Chief Mmowe began to send tributes to Mphahlele as a gesture of acknowledging his rule. Chief Mbadzi who was subordinate in position to Chief Mmowe did not approve of his superior's action. He knew that if Chief Mmowe submitted to Chief Mphahlele he was automatically subdued as he was under him. Chief Mbadzi lately submitted after chief Mmowe poured a traditional medicine (he got the medicine from chief Mphahlele) in tributaries where the Mbadzi people were drawing water. The water turned red and Chief Mbadzi regarded that as a defeat and considered Mphahlele his chief.<sup>88)</sup>

#### 2.2.1.1.6. Separatists from the Mphahlele People

The Shaku kraal split peacefully from the Mphahlele people and made hyena their totem. The second kraal to part was Nkwane's kraal (Phaše kraal). The kraal parted while at Mogodi, next to Chuenespoort and Mphogodima. The Mothapo kraal also separated peacefully from the Mphahlele people at Smitsdrift (Dongwane) and they are presently at Ga-Mothapo. The Tšhwene and Maja people also separated from the Mphahlele people.<sup>89)</sup>

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88) Ibid., pp. 20-23.

89) Ibid., pp. 12, 30, 36-37.

### 2.2.2. The Mafefe People

The Mafefe people are the Pedi who were part and parcel of the Kgatla who separated from the Hurutse. The Hurutse was the fifth group of the Sotho that arrived in Southern Africa. The first group, the Kgalagadi settled in Botswana. They were followed by the Digoye, who were followed by the Rolong, Fokeng and the Hurutse.<sup>90)</sup>

One of the people who led the Hurutse was Malope son of Masilo. Masilo gave birth to Mohurutse, Mokgatla and Kwena. Mokgatla separated with his followers and established the Kgatla tribe. The Kgafela section separated from the Kgatla that was left in Rustenburg (North West). Mokgatla was succeeded by his sons: Legodi, Pogopi and Botlolo. Botlolo was also succeeded by his sons such as Tabane and Mohale whose tribe name was switched to Moseitlha. Tabane migrated with his tribe to Schilpadfontein (around Pretoria). He was succeeded by Motsha whose successor was Diale. Diale was polygamist, so when his favourite wife Mmathobele became pregnant his other wives alleged that, the baby of his pregnant wife was crying in her womb. Consequently the child was given the name Thobele and nicknamed Lellelateng (one who cries in a womb). The occurrence was considered to have brought omen; so Diale's elder son Modise who was born from the principal wife separated with his followers and they changed their name to Mmakau tribe.<sup>91)</sup>

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90) H.O. Monnig: The Pedi, p. 12.

91) Ibid., pp. 13 and 14.

Realising that Thobele's chieftainship would not be acceptable; Diale ordered him, mother Mmathobele and followers to split. After the split Diale's tribe's name was changed to Motšha. Thobele and his followers migrated till they crossed the Lulu (Leolo) (around Sekhukhune) mountains after which they settled at Mogokgomeng south of Steelpoort station next to Tubatse (Steelpoort river) in 1650. There they changed the tribe's name to the Pedi and totem Kgabo (monkey) to Porcupine (Noko). Thobele's successor was Kabu who gave birth to Thobele and Thobejane. Thobele fled to Ramapulana in Venda. This was after he had sexual relation with his father's wives. Thobejane who succeeded his father was succeeded by Moukangwe whose successor was Mohube. Mohube was killed by the Komane subjects of Mongatane. Thus Mampuru, his brother acted as a regent as Morwamotšhe the rightful heir was still young. Mampuru avenged his brother's death when he fought and defeated the Komane and Mongatane people. Under Mampuru the Pedi managed also to defeat and subdue the Mamaila, Koni and the Tau tribes thus creating the large Pedi Empire.<sup>92)</sup>

After Moukangwe's death Mampuru claimed the chieftainship of the Pedi. Moukangwe was buried by Mampuru, an act that was done by a chief's successor according to the Pedi tradition. This contributed to a very serious conflict between the rightful heir Morwamotšhe and Mampuru. The Morwamotšhe group began to defy the regent's orders. This resulted in a war whereby Morwamotšhe wounded and defeated his uncle Mampuru but because of the respect that he had for him (he was founder of the Pedi Empire) he could not kill him. Instead

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92) Ibid., pp. 14 and 18-20.

Morwamotšhe allowed Mampuru with followers to move to the north.<sup>93)</sup>

After the split of Mampuru, Morwamotšhe moved the tribe north of the Steelpoort river. Morwamotšhe's death contributed to the division of his chieftainship between his sons: the rightful heir, Dikotope whose mother was Morwamotšhe's principal wife and Thulare whose mother was one of the favourite wives. The dissension compelled Dikotope and his followers to move back south of Steelpoort but Thulare who was left with a large following pursued and attacked him till he fled to Mongatane people. Thulare, through the assistance of Mampuru launched another attack on Dikotope and Mongatane people. After he defeated and killed Dikotope he reunited the tribe. Mampuru's performance in the war gave his tribe the name Magakala to distinguish them from the Pedi of Thulare.<sup>94)</sup>

After Mampuru's death there was a conflict between his son, Molamoso and Thulare. This was because Mampuru chose Thulare to be his successor as he requested Thulare to bury him and sit on his throne after his death. After Molamoso was defeated his tribe crossed the Olifants river where they settled at a place called Moroke (the place is presently in Sekhukhuneland). At the place, the Magakala divided into two sections such as Magakala of Ntwampe and Magakala of Mafefe because of the conflict between Ntwampe and Mafefe who were fathered by Legadimane, son of Ntwampe. The Mafefe people who were attacked by Sekhukhune II (Ntwampe's cousin) were forced to migrate until they finally settled at a

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93) Ibid., p. 20.

94) Ibid., p. 21.

place presently known as Mafefe, where they found the Mampa people as inhabitants of the place.<sup>95)</sup>

### 2.2.3. The Makgoba, Molepo and Mathabathe People

According to oral tradition the Makgoba, Molepo and Mathabathe people were brothers. The Mathabathe people parted from the Makgoba. This implies that originally they were the same group, so the Mathabathe people never parted from the Mphahlele people as stated in S.M. Ramahlare's thesis.<sup>96)</sup> Like all the Sotho people they came from the Great Lakes of Central Africa. From the lakes they also settled in Zimbabwe and Venda as emphasized in the praise song of the Molepo people, which is recited:

Tlou ya KgatlaKhungoane (Elephant of Kgatlakhungoana),  
ya mpona ya inamainama (upon seeing me it bows bows),  
ya re ke mogwe (as if the son-in-law),  
a bona mogwegadi (seeing the mother- in -law).

Mo go tšwago papa (where my father comes from),  
ga ke lobe (ga ke fihle) (I cannot hide),

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95) H.O. Monnig, The Pedi, p. 21; Councillor P. Thobejane, Mafefe Tribal Authority Office, 11-07-2007.

96) Mr. G. Molepo, Molepo Tribal Authority Office, 29-06- 2007; Mr. S. Molepo, Molepo Tribal Authority Office, 29-06- 2007.

Mma otšwa Kgatlakhungoane gabo Ngwako (mother comes from Kgatlakhungoana home of Ngwako),

Papa o tšwa Tswetla, Ha-Ramapulana (father comes from Ha-Ramapulana).<sup>97)</sup>

The Molepo people totem is the tlou (elephant). The totem is reflected in the first line of the first stanza of the praise song. The last line of the second stanza tells us that they came from Venda at a place called Ha-Ramapulana. It says “My father came from Tswetla” (Tswetla is the Sotho name for Venda) Ha-Ramapulana. At the place they were living in Nzhelele where they parted and left a group that shared the same totem-tlou (elephant) with them.<sup>98)</sup>

The Makgoba praise song is recited:

Bašunkwane sa Kgatla (shrubs of Kgatla),

sa mpona sa inamainama (upon seeing me it bows bows),

e ke ke mogwe (as if it is the son-in-law),

a bona mogwegadi (seeing the mother-in-law)

Ke batho ba ilego ba diša kgomo (they are people who were cattle herder),

ba nweša meetse Selema, (they drink water in Selema),

sa Mamagwele a tlou. (of Mamagwele of elephant)

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97) Mr. M.G. Molepo, Molepo Tribal Authority Office, 29- 06-2007; Mr. S. Molepo,

Molepo Tribal Authority Office, 29- 06-2007.

98) Ibid.

Ke monoka wa Marumo (It is a river of spear),  
ke monoka wa Mma-Seema sa matoko (river of Mma-Seema of matoko),  
sa emela (should it wait),  
motse o a swa (houses burn down)  
Aye mediko wee!<sup>99)</sup>

From Venda the Makgoba people settled at Mount Kgatla around the Mamabolo area. It is for this reason that the Molepo people refer to themselves as Tlou ya Kgatlakhungoana (Elephant of Kgatlakhungoana) while the Makgoba people call themselves “shrubs (mešunkwane) of Kgatla” in the first line of their praise song. Thus from Venda to the mountain they were still the same group. According to the Makgoba praise song, the Makgoba people never lived peacefully at the place as they were always fighting with the other tribes. This is because in the second line of the third stanza of their praise song their river “Selema” whose water flowed to Israel dam (next to the University of Limpopo) was considered “the river of spears” (“monoka wa marumo”) in line 1 of the third stanza. The words denote that it was a place of bloodshed. It was because of those wars that the Molepo people parted away from the Makgoba people and switched their surname to Molepo rather than retaining the Makgoba surname. They took the surname of a woman who accompanied them so that they could not be followed by their enemies. From Mount Kgatla the Molepo people settled at Bošega (the

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99) Mr. S. L. Makgoba, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007; Mr. P. M. Makgoba, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007; Mr. R. Matema, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007.

present day Molepo area).<sup>100)</sup>

The Mathabathe was the second group to part from the Makgoba group. From Mount Kgatla they were migrating from one mountain to the next one before they could finally settle at Malepisi (presently called Ga-Mathabatha). As a result they were given the surname Mathabathe.<sup>101)</sup>

From Mount Kgatla, the Makgoba people also moved to Malepisi and Makgobaskloof (Haenesburg). At the place and under the leadership of Mphoku Makgoba, they never lived peacefully because of the Whites who were fighting with different tribes with a ploy to conquer their land. He fought with these whites for a period estimated to be seven years. Clashes with the Whites came to an end after the chief committed suicide. The chief had made Lake Mabele (the lake is in Makgobaskloof) a hideout. The chief's councilor Magadima showed the Whites who promised him the chieftainship, the hideout. The chief shot three men that were sent to catch him with a gun. The gun had four bullets so with the fourth bullet he shot himself. The Whites cut his head and went with it to Monicca next to

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100) Mr. S. L. Makgoba, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007; Mr. P.M. Makgoba, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007; Mr. R. Matema, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007; Mr. M. G. Molepo, Molepo Tribal Authority Office, 29-6-2007; Mr. S. Molepo, Molepo Tribal Authority Office, 29-6- 2007.

101) Mr. M.G. Molepo and Mr. S. Molepo, Molepo Tribal Authority Office, 29-06-2007; Mr. J. Mathabatha, Ga-Mathabatha, 11-07-2007.

Ga-Sekgopo. The Whites had scattered all over, so after arriving at the place they started to look for each other. The place was given the name Soekmekaar. The Afrikaner name Soekmekaar denotes that the Whites who fought with Makgoba were the Afrikaners not the English people. It was alleged that the chief's body was burnt at Talmata (the place is on the way between Pietersburg and the University of the North or Ga-Mamabolo).<sup>102)</sup>

The chief's subjects together with his daughter were taken hostage and placed at a place called Ga-Mosehla (Hammanskraal). They later fled away from the place to Bushbuckridge (Mapulaneng) before they could retreat to Makgobaskloof. Because of the ensuing conflicts with the whites they had to move to Lwalalemeetse (Houtbushdorp). From there they moved to Molepo area where they stayed for a long time until Ramodike who was chief minister of Lebowa granted them land next to Dikgale area.<sup>103)</sup>

#### 2.2.4. The Mamabolo People

##### 2.2.4.1. Their Migration

Like all the Sotho people, the Mamabolo people are from the Great Lakes of Central Africa. From the lakes, they had been part of the Venda group that moved to Zimbabwe and the

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102) Mr. S. L. Makgoba, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007; Mr. P.M. Makgoba, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007; Mr. R. Matema, Ga-Makgoba, 3-07-2007.

103) Ibid.

Transvaal and settled in the Zoutpansberg Mountain at a place called Nzhelele. At the place, the Lobedu were living near the Tshavhalovhedzi hill. From the hill they moved south and a group led by a warrior Manamela split next to the present day Modjadji (next to Tzaneen) before Sekgopo, Mamaila, Rakgwadu, Moila and Mahokoni split. That group under the warrior (Manamela) called itself the Mamabolo people. From there the group stayed at Tshitelele, south-east of Tzaneen where Seolwana was their chief. After his death Mamabuduša, his wife led a tribe further eastwards to a place called Seepe (east of Tshitelele)<sup>104)</sup> as it appear in their praise song which is recited, “Mma-Seepa sa go rema.”<sup>105)</sup> They were trying to avoid conflicts that might arise between them and the Lobedu, as the split was not a peaceful one. From there, the Mamabolo moved further eastwards to Tholwe where they led a miserable life (they were infected by malaria). They began to think that their ancestors had turned their backs against them therefore, they had to retreat and rejoin the Lobedu.<sup>106)</sup>

On their way back to the Lobedu people, they migrated to Ga-Letsoalo (next to Ga-Maake) as their praise song says “Mamabolo a Letsoalo” (Mamabolo of Letsoalo). The praise song tells that they were the Mamabolo people who sought refuge from the Letsoalo people. Consequently, they were considered the Letsoalo children or subjects. After they intermingled, they began to intermarry and because of this, Letsoalo names like Marothi,

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104) M.E. R. Mamabolo: The Origin and Development of the Mamabolo Tribe: A Historical Perspective of Dikolobe-Tša-Bjatladi up to the 1960s, pp.3-8.

105) Ibid., p.8.

106) Ibid., pp. 3-8.

Phutlane, Podile and Mohloding are found amongst the Mamabolo people. From Ga-Letsoalo they migrated to Ga-Mongatane in Sekhukhuneland and to the present day Bjatladi (Haenesburg) where they settled at Mahufše Mountain (Iron Crown). Thus they called themselves Dikolobe-tša-Bjatladi (Pigs of Haenesburg). At the place they subdued two tribes: Mampa and Kgopa and made a peace treaty with the Tlou (elephant) tribe of Makgoba.<sup>107)</sup>

Bjatladi was a fertile, beautiful and prosperous place (naga e tala, ya go holega, ye botse kudu, ya lehlabula). So the beauty of the place and the discovery of gold at Mahufše Mountain attracted the Whites to the place from the time of the Great Trek 1836-1858. Consequently, the Mamabolo like all the blacks were forced to be labourers, as they could not be allowed to own farms. Under the leadership of chief Maribe, the Mamabolo people moved away from the place around the 1860s and settled at Ga-Rakopi (Spietzkop now in Mamabolo area). Those who remained at Bjatladi, and were working for the Whites were under Katane Mamabolo who became their induna (sub-chief). At Ga-Rakopi they found and subdued the Thema tribe alias the elephant of Bolepše who later moved westwards to Monywaneng (also called Donhill) after which chief Makete became the Mamabolo induna. From Ga-Rakopi, chief Maribe migrated to Mafarane on the Hwiti Mountains. The Mogašhoa and Matlebjane families on the western side of the mountain asked for peace and considered Mamabolo their chief.<sup>108)</sup>

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107) Ibid., pp. 8-16.

108) Ibid., pp.8-18.

#### 2.2.4.2. The Split of the Mamabolo People

The split occurred because of the royal conflict. This was after the candle wife (principal wife) could not bear a heir for the Mamabolo people. Thus a deputy wife was married from the Sehlapelo's house. According to the Mamabolo tradition, Sekwala who was chief Maribe's son and who was born from his favourite wife had to have sexual relations with her (deputy wife) so that they could give birth to the successor. Against the tradition, chief Maribe decided to have sexual relations with her. This contributed to a serious conflict between the chief and his son. Consequently Sekwala was driven with his followers to a place called Kgwara (five kilometers from Mafarane). That did not mark the final split.<sup>109)</sup>

The final split occurred after Sekwala accused the Maribe people of the death of a white boy (Whites from Houtbosdorp had camped next to Senobatwana river between the present Mankweng royal house and the villages of Malahlela and Mailula). The boy who was playing with the herd boys of Maribe tribe was drowned in the river. The Sekwala people accused the Maribe people of being perpetrators. Because of the accusation, Maribe considered Sekwala a betrayer and came up with a ploy to destroy him. Hence, Sekwala moved and sought refuge from the Letsoalo people.<sup>110)</sup>

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109) Ibid., pp. 18-19.

110) Ibid., pp. 20 and 21.

After Maribe's death around 1864 and 1865, Ramohwibidu alias Lekau acted as regent while Mankweng I was still a minor. The regent moved the people from Mafarane to Legoleng (plains overlooked by Hwiti Mountain, the place which became known as Mohlakeng). After Mankweng's death, his half brother Legodimo alias Lekau acted as a regent while Mankweng's son Nkošhilo was still a minor. From Mohlakeng the Mamabolo people moved to Ga-Lethaba - south east of Mošate. Nkošhilo took over after Legodimo came of age. Nkošhilo married junior wives from the Mamabolo and Mogašhoa kraals. During his rule, the chieftainship of Mankweng had already moved to Mošate (the present domain). He ignored the councillor's advice that he had to marry his candle wife from the house of his maternal uncle in Dikgale area. Sehlo-mola his brother, who also took over the chieftainship after his death, married a candle wife for him. Thus he married Tlhotlhonya from the house of Nkošhilo's maternal uncle. So both Sehlo-mola and the candle wife gave birth to Mankweng II. After Sehlo-mola's death in 1925, Makhudu the youngest son of Mankweng I took over as the rightful heir (Mankweng II) was still a minor. In 1936 Mankweng II married Motlakaro Mphahlele of Chief Phatudi Mphahlele as a candle wife. They were both blessed with a daughter who predeceased them. Because they could not bear a heir who had to be his father's successor after Mankweng's death in 1966, Sophia had to act as a regent. She then married a deputy wife on her own.<sup>111)</sup>

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111) Ibid., pp. 22-26, 27, 29, 31 and 3.

#### 2.2.4.3. The Sekwala Tribe

From Kgware, the Sekwala group settled at Mathunyeng and Mokolobje (Ga-Letsoalo) where they left after clashes with the Letsoalo people. They moved and finally settled at Kgotong (next to Turfloop farm). Sekwala died in 1890 not in 1900 as stated in thesis of M. E. R. Mamabolo: *The Origin and Development of the Mamabolo Tribe: A Historical Perspective of Dikolobe-Tša-Bjatladi up to the 1960s*. This is because in 1900 it was during the rule of his son Seswai who succeeded Sekwala as his brothers: Kgabedi and Mamotjau died before their father. He married his wife from Botlokwa (next to Bokgomo) and married a candle wife (Mathosa's daughter) within the tribe for his brother Kgabedi. From Kgotong the tribe moved to Ga-Kama South of Kgotong on Turfloop farm, Tlhahlaganya (where the present Mankweng Hospital is situated) on the farm Syferkuil while his other followers were at Ga-Motholo, Ga-Thoka on the eastern side of Tlhahlaganya (still on the farm). From Tlhahlaganya, they moved eastwards and settled at a place called Mmalesa (the place is next to the University of Limpopo). They finally bought a farm - Doornfontein (Segopje) and moved to that farm in 1921. After the death of Seswai, Sefelege alias Lekau acted as a regent as Maribe Kgabedi's son who was born in 1912 from the candle wife and Seswai was still a minor. Maribe became a chief in 1942 and married Mmasemadi from the Machaka people as a candle wife. She mothered Mohlopi Phillip who became heir to the throne.<sup>112)</sup>

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112) Ibid. pp. 36-40.

## 2.3. The Ndebele People

### 2.3.1. Ledwaba People

There were two groups of the Ndebele people that inhabited the Northern Transvaal: the Langa and Kekana. Both groups: the Langa under Langalibalele and the Kekana under Msi separated from the Hlubi tribe in Zululand. The cause of the split might be the royal conflict as they parted simultaneously after the death of their father chief Langa. The former group migrated to the following places: Lowveld, Bosega east of Pietersburg before they could finally settle at Mapela district. The latter group migrated to Pretoria. After Msi's death his chieftainship was divided amongst his sons: Manala, Ndzundza, Mhwaduba, Dlomu and Mathombeni. Mathombeni together with his followers fled to Moletlane in Zebediela district, east of Potgietersrus. Dlomu went back to the Hlubi tribe while Manala joined the Mabena family. Ndzundza and his group migrated to the present day KwaNdebele. His other son Masombuka leader of the Kekana group was in Hammanskraal.<sup>113)</sup>

Mathombeni's group gave birth to other Kekana tribes. He had three sons such as Kekana, Phukana and Chumana. Chumana inherited his chieftainship. Chumana's sons Khoopa and Khaaba contributed to the further dispersal of the Ndebele after his death. The former remained chief at Moletlane while the latter and his followers migrated till they inhabited the

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113) M. J. Ledwaba: A Critical Approach to the Makapansgat Siege 1854, pp.6-7.

present day Potgietersrus near the present day Pruisen next to the cave of Gwasa, later called Makapansgat. They retained the name Kekana. Khaaba was followed by Mokopane. The Moraba near Pietersburg, Ledwaba (Schuinsrand) and Vaaltyn (Makapan's followers) are subjects of Moletlane.<sup>114)</sup>

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114) Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTH PROTEST IN EDUCATION SINCE THE 1970s

### 3.1. Introduction

In Germany Hitler purified the Germans by putting the Jews to death (they were put in concentration camps where they were not fed and used to make experiments).<sup>115)</sup> In South Africa the apartheid policy was used to purify the Whites while segregating Blacks politically, socially and economically to mention a few.

In 1913 the Land Act provided areas called reserves to the Blacks.<sup>116)</sup> As mentioned under background of the problem, the Blacks were further grouped and sub-grouped by the Population Registration Act and because of the 1950 Group Areas Act they were to live in different residential areas. These groups and sub-groups were required to have sexual relations and marry members of their sub-group and to use different unequal objects. For instance, a North Sotho was to marry and have sexual relation with a North Sotho; to use objects that were different to that of the other sub-groups and groups because of the Marriage, Morality and Separate Amenities Acts.<sup>117)</sup> Thus there were separate White beaches, buses,

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115) Auschwitz Concentration Camp (The Free Dictionary 2007).

116) M. H. Kanyane: Corruption in South Africa with Specific Reference to Former Lebowa and Gazankulu Governments, pp.33-34.

117) D. J. Omer-Cooper: History of Southern Africa, pp.196 and 198.

cinemas, doors, drinking fountains, entrances, railway compartments, restaurants, post offices, toilets, and waiting rooms to mention a few.<sup>118)</sup> It was believed that better things were for Whites. For instance, if a Black person wore white or beautiful clothes, a White person would destroy them deliberately because of their tenet that only whites were supposed to be clean.<sup>119)</sup>

The Native Law Amendment Act, Illegal Squatting and Resettlement Acts allowed only Whites to stay in towns and farms. Blacks were to live in locations. To enforce the laws the government passed the Abolition of Passes and Consolidation of document Act in 1952. The act allowed a Black man to carry only one reference book called “Dompas” which had his/her residential address to tell the police about the home place of the possessor; employment details provided information such as the type of employment, employer and if not employed the possessor was to have a work permit which allowed him to look for a job in town. The age of the possessor appeared under personal details so that if he was not employed and without a pass he would be arrested; or if he was old he would be taken back to his

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118) N. Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom. The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, pp.46 and 52; L. Thompson: A History of South Africa, p.197.

119) Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10-2005.

homeland.<sup>120)</sup>

Under the 1959 Bantu-Self Government Act reserves were granted self-government and became homelands. Each African ethnic group was living in the homeland. The North Sotho were living in Lebowa, South Sotho in Qwaqwa, Tswana in Bophuthatswana, Tsonga in Gazankulu, Venda in Venda, Xhosa in Transkei and Ciskei Homelands. The 1971 Homeland Constitution Act granted independence to each of them. In 1973 the Bantu Homeland Act granted Blacks citizenship of the homelands. Thus they were to elect chief ministers in their homelands rather than voting as South African citizens. Each homeland had its parliament and emblem.<sup>121)</sup> The Lebowa parliament was in Seshego before it could be moved to Lebowakgomo location.

In the field of education the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the State Institution Act of 1957 and the Extension of University Act in 1959 were passed. According to the Bantu Education Act, Blacks were to be semi-skilled labourers; Whites were to be trained as skilled labourers

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120) T. R. H. Davenport: A Modern History, pp.344, 373, and 379; D. J. Omer-Cooper: History of Southern Africa, pp.183, 196 and 197; N. Parsons: A New History of South Africa, pp. 272 and 274; Reference Book, pp. 1, 2, 10-19 and 37.

121) L. Thompson: A History of South Africa, p.191; N. Parsons: A New History of South Africa, p. 294; M. H. Kanyane: Corruption in South Africa, p.41.

and better posts were to be reserved for the Whites. As semi-skilled labourers, Blacks were to work for or under a white man.<sup>122)</sup> Verwoerd had said:

“I will reform it (black education) so that a Native child would be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans was not for them. People who believe in equality are not desirable for the Native. There was no place for Blacks outside reserves about certain forms of labour. So what is the use of teaching a black child Mathematics when he cannot use it in practice? Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life.”<sup>123)</sup>

Mission schools were providing equal education to both Blacks and Whites so to prevent this, the government put all the mission schools under its control and they were to teach in accordance with the syllabus designed by it. Under the act, at primary school level a black child was to learn three vernaculars and their mother tongue while at secondary level both English and Afrikaans were compulsory. The State Institution Act further provided separate

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122) D. J. Omer-Cooper: History of Southern Africa, pp. 200, 201 and 202; S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa with Specific Reference to the University of the North 1960-1990, pp.25-26.

123) N. Parsons: A New History of South Africa, p.292; S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa with Specific Reference to the University of the North 1960-1990, pp.26-27.

libraries and places of entertainment to different population groups.<sup>124)</sup>

The Extension of the University Act offered separate universities to different population groups: the Afrikaans Medium universities were for the Afrikaners, the Black Universities were for the Blacks and the English Medium Universities were for the English people. The black universities were in turn divided into three: the Coloured University (the University of the Western Cape), the Indian University (the University of Durban Westville) and the African Universities which were sub-divided on the basis of their ethnic groups and were called tribal or bush colleges. Initially the three African Universities that were introduced in 1959 were Fort Hare, the University of the North and the University of Zululand also known as (Ngoye). Thus Blacks were to have their education separated from other racial groups from the lowest level to the highest level, the tertiary level as Verwoerd had said.<sup>125)</sup>

The University of the North was for the Northern Sotho even though for the first time it encompassed the South Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga and the Venda. It had a branch in Giyani, the

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124) D. J. Omer-Cooper: History of Southern Africa, pp. 200, 201 and 202; S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa with Specific Reference to the University of the North 1960-1990, pp.25-26.

125) S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa 1960-1990, pp. 1, 2, 33-41, 45 and 49-50; N. Parsons: A New History of South Africa, p. 292.

home of the Tsonga people and in Qwaqwa where the South Sotho people were living. Later, it gave birth to the University of Venda. Each homeland except Kangwane and Kwandebele had their own universities. There were also universities of Transkei and Bophuthatswana. Fort Hare in the Ciskei initially was an open university (multiracial university) but with the introduction of the Act that came to an end. It began to admit only Xhosa people but the name was not changed. It was because of the idea that each and every population group or homeland had to have its own institution that the University of the North which was called the Bantu Normal College (Kolege ya Bana ba Africa) was moved from Pretoria to Mankweng (Turfloop) township, in the Northern Transvaal in 1959. The college was established by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa in 1946. After it was moved, its name was switched to the University of Lebowa (the University of the North).<sup>126)</sup>

Colleges of education that were in a particular homeland were for that particular population group. E.g. Kwenamoloto, Mamokgalake Tšhwene, Modjadji, Mokopane, Thabamopo, Sekgosese, Sekhukhune and Setotolwane colleges of education in Lebowa homeland, were for the Sotho people and not for any other population group. Other institutions where the Northern Sotho received further training were C. S. Barlow Technical Institute, Maake Technical Institution at Lenyenye Location, Namakgale Technical Institution and

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126) S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa, 1960-1990, pp. 1, 2, 33-41, 45 and 49-50; N. Parsons: A New History of South Africa, p. 292.

Tsekemaboe Technical Institution in Sešhego.<sup>127)</sup>

Black's rights were also constricted in the work field because of the 1951 and 1956 Industrial Coalition Act, which prohibited Blacks to be members of registered trade unions. The Native Labour Settlement of Dispute Act of 1953 prohibited Blacks to strike. The Native Law Amendment Act that was also passed by Vorster prohibited Blacks to work in certain areas, under certain employees and even employment. They could work only as domestic and farm workers, delivery workers, petrol attenders and waiters not as cashiers, clerks, professional or commercial receptionists, counter assistants in shops, factories and offices and typists. They were only to work in their own areas where white entrepreneurs would help to create employment by constructing industries for them. Blacks were not to work under certain employment even in the homelands e.g. in the Lebowa parliament administrative heads posts were held by whites.<sup>128)</sup>

To avoid Black opposition to its policy the government passed the following: the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950 to ban the Communist Party in South Africa. Any person who was against the government was considered a communist. As a result just like the

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127) T. J. Malete: The Influence of the Environment on the Administration of Development- the Experience of Lebowa, pp.171-172.

128) T. R. H. Davenport: A Modern History, pp.409-410; M. H. Kanyane: Corruption in South Africa, p.41; D. J. Omer-Cooper: History of Southern Africa, p.199.

communists they were to be banned, prohibited to join political parties or to attend any gathering, prohibited to be within a group of more than one person, were to be confined to their houses and they could not publish anything. Other Acts similar to the above were the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1956, the Unlawful Organisation Act of 1966, the Terrorism Act of 1967 and the Internal Security Act of 1976. The acts compelled the police to arrest and detain opponents of the regime without trial and those people could not be seen by anybody while in jail. A black who wore a political T. Shirt on which was printed names or pictures of the black political leaders, organisations or words with political messages e.g. injury to one, is injure to all (COSATU slogan), was victimised by the police and army. Another act passed in 1953 and through which the government could declare a state of emergency and detain the opponents of the regime, was the Public Safety Act.<sup>129)</sup>

Because of the above-mentioned Acts, Blacks were without freedom of speech and movement:

“Those amongst the Blacks who bother to open their mouths in feeble protest against what is going on are periodically intimidated with security visits and occasional banning orders and house arrests, so the rest of the black community lives in absolute fear of the police.”<sup>130)</sup>

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129) L. Thompson: A History of South Africa, p.191; N. Parsons: A New History of South Africa, pp.198-199; Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10-2005.

130) S. Biko: I Write What I Like, p.75.

Every time blacks had a meeting:

“Policemen were clustered around the perimeter, armed with guns and pencils, the latter to take notes of who was speaking and what the speaker was saying”.<sup>131)</sup>

In the country there was resentment that was brewing because of the apartheid system. The resentment was amongst the Black students and the Black community in general. It was transformed into active action in the 1970s when the Black students demanded their rights in the field of education. They wanted the abolishment of Bantu education and its substitution by equal education for all South Africans.<sup>132)</sup>

### **3.2. The Role Played by SASO Leaders in the District**

SASO leaders were the ones who inspired the students to be involved in public criticism of the apartheid laws especially the Bantu Education. One of them Onkgopotse Ramothibi Tiro was expelled from the University of the North (presently the University of Limpopo) after he criticised the act on the graduation ceremony of April 1972. He said:

“Mr. Vice Chancellor and Rector, ladies and gentlemen allow me to start off by borrowing the language from our Prime Minister, Vorster. Addressing ASBC congress in June last year, Mr. Vorster said: “ No Black man has landed in trouble

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131) N. Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom, p. 54.

132) S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa, 1960- 1990, pp.84 and 109-110.

for fighting what is legally his". Although I don't know how far true this statement is, I make this statement my launch pad. R.D. Briensmead an American lay preacher says, "He who withholds the truth or debars men from motives of its expediency is either a coward, a criminal or both... Phatudi, a Lebowa Traditional Authority Officer, said that in as far as there is American Education there had to be Bantu Education. Ladies and gentlemen I am conscientiously bound to differ with him. In America there is nothing like Negro Education, RED Indian Education, Coloured Education and European Education. We do not have a system of education common to all South Africans. What is there is European Education, which is not good for the Africans. We want a system of education common to all South Africans."<sup>133)</sup>

### **3.3. The Impact of the Soweto Uprising in the District**

The introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in 1976 became a spark that lit the resentment that build up among black people as Winnie Mandela said. The same as English, Afrikaans was to be a medium of instruction in black schools. Half the subjects were to be done in Afrikaans while the other half would be done in English. Black students were against Afrikaans due to the following reasons: Afrikaans was the language of the oppressors, the Afrikaners who were in a minority in the country; it was used by the government employees,

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133) Ibid., pp.90-91

the police and employers, so the idea was that with the language, the government would train them to be its employees whereas they did not want to work for the government. The language contributed also to high failure rates in schools.<sup>134)</sup>

The students were not only against Afrikaans but also against the Afrikaner and their rule. They were shouting, “We are not Boers”. Down with Afrikaans, Bantu Education- to hell with it.”<sup>135)</sup> One of the songs that were sung that time was ‘*Ezwelethu la Thata ka Mabhunu*’. The word ‘*Mabhunu*’ in the song referred to the Whites. The song means that their country (“*ezwelethu*”) was taken (“*thata*”) by the Whites or was in the White hands. The song was sung on days of protests. Hence the students were dissatisfied with the White rule. The Soweto students were the first to go on strike against the introduction of Afrikaans in 1976. In the district, the University of the North, Hwiti High School, Phirikolobe High School and Tshebela High School (Ga-Molepo) went on strike in solidarity with the students of Soweto. This is because they had the same problem as students of Soweto. Pupils of these schools boycotted Afrikaans lessons, burnt books, schools and their properties, as they were viewed as the symbol of oppression. During the strikes, teachers were fleeing. They were afraid that, they could be attacked. At Phirikolobe High School, an inspector’s car was burnt, while he

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134) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, p.181; Mufson: *Fighting Years*, p.14; Circuit Inspector P. M. Mothapo, Mankweng Circuit, 12-03- 2006.

135) H. Holland: *The Struggle*, p.179.

had gone to see if the school master and the teachers were not injured.<sup>136)</sup> Students of the University of the North were chanting slogans: “The people need you; remember Soweto, remember Soweto in sorrow and Soweto needs you”.<sup>137)</sup> The students were concerned with what was happening in Soweto. They were supporting the Soweto students. To show that the university students could also not tolerate Afrikaans and the Afrikaners, on 17 July they attempted to burn the office of the Head of Department of Afrikaans even though that endeavour failed.<sup>138)</sup>

### **3.4. The Main Causes of the District Strikes after 1976**

#### **3.4.1. Students or Learners in the Rural Areas**

After the Soweto Uprising strikes continued in the urban schools. During the strikes parents whose children were schooling in rural areas were threatened by pupils from urban schools who were at home. They were complaining that their children were schooling whereas they

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136) Mr. W. Mokhari, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Miss S. Mothapo, Solomondale, 22-01-2006.

137) S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa, 1960-1990, p. 112.

138) S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa, 1960-1990, p.112.

were not schooling. As they were not schooling, the pupils were expecting these parents to withdraw their children from the rural schools so that they might be in par with them. Knowing that it was the government that compelled their brothers to boycott classes through its application of the aspects of Bantu Education, pupils from the urban areas incited those of the district to embark on strikes so that they might be the same as those in urban schools. During the strikes targets were government institutions and beer halls.<sup>1 39)</sup>

#### 3.4.2. Students Demands for Free and Compulsory Education

Between 1977 and 1978, there was dissension between a school principal Mr. Setati who was from Moletji next to Sešhego location and the pupils of Ranti School in Dikgale area. The pupils wanted that their sports fund be refunded because they did not have a trip during those years. It was thought that that dispute would be resolved at the courtyard but ultimately the police intervened. Pupils fled to different places; slept on the mountains and at the banks of the rivers. The principal was substituted by Rapoti Ngwako who was inhabitant of the area. It was believed that the pupils were inspired by the teachers of the area who were also influenced by the royal house to be against the principal. The dictum of “Ngwanamobu” (the soil child) was still applicable. It was believed that they adopted the dictum because the appointed principal was also teaching at Ranti; but immediately after he was appointed

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139) Circuit Inspector P. M. Mothapo, Mankweng Circuit, 12-03- 2006.

everything went back to normal. Pupils no longer demanded back their sports fund.<sup>140)</sup>

After the formation of the youth congresses in the 1980s; the youth of the district began to demand free education from their schoolmasters. They wanted free exercise books, notebooks, pencils, pens, rulers and textbook. They became uncontrollable. Like chiefs, indunas and parents who lost control of their children, schoolmasters also lost control of the students. Learning areas turned to political centres. Political meetings were held in school premises wherein scholars were singing political songs. Songs were intended to disturb educational activities. Teachers could not teach if the songs were chanted. They were afraid that they could be victimised. Upon hearing the song “*Joiner Mosabalaso*” (Join the struggle) scholars would get out of their classes without the teachers’ approval. In other schools e.g. Thakgaetala School, pupils like Lekgalake Leshilo did not wear school uniform but political T-shirts. Scholars were also acting as the decision making body.<sup>141)</sup>

In Ngwanamohube School students’ demands were: exercise books, free textbooks, pencils and pens but as the principal could not meet the demands, they embarked on a strike. During the strike, some students were arrested. On subsequent days instead of going to the school, the remaining students marched to Lebowakgomo Police Station till all the detained students

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140) Mr. M. Mašangwana, Ga-Dikgale, 11-02-2006.

141) Miss L. Mphahlele, Mankweng, 16-10-1998; Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998; Mrs. K. D. Modiba, Rekhutšitše High School, 06-10-1998; Mr. K. Ramodike, Ga- Mothapo, 12-01- 2006.

were acquitted. After investigations, pupils of Thagaetala School concluded that they would not pay school fund in the two subsequent years: 1987 and 1988. They also decided that after these two years, the school fund should be reduced from R25, 75 to R6, 00. This was after they discovered that the school principal had misused the sports fund.<sup>142)</sup>

Scholars of Mothimako High School also went on strike in 1989. This was after the school managers did not respond to their demands such as “the previous financial statements and the lost properties”. The scholars were compelled to make these demands because every time they had a sport trip, they had to pay more money from their parents’ pockets whereas they were paying a sports fund. The learners also focused on the issue of “the lost properties” because each and every year the sportswear was stolen. It was discovered that the principal of the school was the one who offered the sport uniforms to his club members. Kobe Thupane, who was a learner at the school, identified the sportswear that was worn by a club member at Mankweng during a soccer game. The Mankweng police also confirmed that the clothes were of the Mothimako School because they were marked with a marking pen. Though somebody tried to remove the marking pen; a person could still see that a name on one of the T- shirts was that of one of the Mothimako scholars. The sport clothes were returned to the school

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142) Mrs. K. D. Modiba, Rekhutšitše High School, 06-10-1998; Mrs. L. Mphahlele, Mankweng, 16-10-1998; Miss M. F Lekgau, Mankweng, 16-10-1998; Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998.

but no one knew how they were brought back.<sup>143)</sup>

Since the principal of the school, Mr. KwaKwa was not prepared to talk to the learners, they went on strike. After the strike the following were suspended: Kobe Thupane, Michael Mabasa, Hellen Mabala, Seima Lekwane, Solly Dikgale, and Myboy Thabe, Nana, and Makwide brothers, Peter Nkobane, Shilabe Somo and Percy Mboweni. They were accused of inciting the scholars to go on strike. The scholars decided not to go to school until those suspended were also allowed to attend their classes. It took two weeks. After going back to school; the scholars continued with their demands and failure to meet the demands contributed to the attack of the school principal, Mr. Kwakwa. After the tragedy the pupils fled to their different homes so that the police could not get anybody on the scene. They arrested any scholar that they got in the streets even those of Ngwanalaka who were not involved in the strike. Consequently they had to be released because the police did not have evidence to prove that they were the perpetrators.<sup>144)</sup>

Mankweng circuit, through orders of the Department of Education decided that the school had to be closed. After negotiations with the parents' representatives, the school was not

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143) M. Modiba, Ga-Mothiba, 12-12-2005; Mr. K. Thupane, Ga-Mothiba, 12-12-2005.

144) Mr. M. Modiba, Ga-Mothiba, 12-12-2005; Mr. K. Thupane 12-12-2005.

closed. It was discovered that people who would suffer greatly were those of Makotopong because those who were living around the Mothiba area could go to Ngwanalaka School. Therefore, it was decided that the principal of the school had to be substituted. The pupils decided that Mr. Magagane (Head of Department at the school) be their acting principal. That year the pupil adopted the slogan “Pass one; pass all”. Mrs. Motsai was appointed to the post in 1990. The school committee sent protest letters to the circuit showing their dissatisfaction concerning the principal. The principal was opposed to their decision that the sport fund be cancelled. The circuit sent another principal, Mr. Modiba in 1991. He was liked by the scholars because he called a meeting wherein he told them about his plans for the school. Differently from the other principals he showed them financial statements while the pass rate was also high.<sup>145)</sup>

### 3.4.3. Corporal Punishment

The scholars had also adopted the slogan of “Injury to one, injury to all”. It was because of the slogan that pupils of Kgwadiamoleke School in Tooseng Village went on strike in 1984 (the principal was Mr. Michael Makgabutle Sebake). The strike occurred after one of the scholars who was brother of Morutse living in Morotse Village was bathed with soap and steelwool by one of the teachers whose name is Mr. Sepitle Mphahlele. The learners were angry because the teacher did not contact the parents of the learner or advice him to bath himself before he could act that way. They attacked the teachers but Mr. Mphahlele was the

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145) Ibid.

target. He was beaten but he managed to escape because of the Lebowa police who arrived before he was severely injured. The strike contributed to the expulsion of Mr. Solomon Maphutha. He was expelled after he and the other ringleaders viz Mr. Enos Thobejane of Lenting Village, Mr. Kganki Disofane Leshilo and Mr. Moses Ratau of Morotse Village were interrogated by the schoolmaster and school committee (whose its members were also the parents' representatives).<sup>146)</sup>

In 1986, students of the school who were from Marulaneng Village attempted to reinstate Mr. Maphutha even though they never succeeded. They demonstrated at the school, showing placards and singing freedom songs but they could not get support from the other students. The main reason was that the demonstration was planned by pupils of the village only. They did not involve all the learners of the school. Mr. Maphutha came to the morning assembly where he tried to address all the scholars. Ntona Kgwadiamoleke, a teacher at the school, propelled him to go. That marked the failure of the demonstration because they could not get the support of their fellow learners. This is because as the other learners were not invited in the planning, they did not know about the aims and the objectives of the demonstration. Most of the learners who belonged to the village (Tooseng) thought that the intention of Marulaneng scholars was to destroy the school that was built with the money that was donated by their parents.

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146) Mr. K. D. Leshilo, Tooseng Village, 07-8-1998; Mr. S. M. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998.

## **CHAPTER 4: RECRUITMENT AND MOBILISATION OF THE YOUTH IN THABAMOPO DISTRICT**

### **4.1. The Role of the UDF and the Black Consciousness Movement**

After the formation of the UDF in 1983, a group of youth who called themselves comrades emerged. This was a result of the activities of the UDF and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) members amongst them Mr. Michael Kadiaka (member of the Black Allied Workers Union who lived around Mphahlele area) continued to spread the BCM philosophy even after the organisation was banned. In the 1970s and 1980s they conscientised the Mphahlele people that they were the same people, consequently they had to discontinue the fight amongst themselves. They advised them to fight their common enemy, which was the apartheid regime. This was because the Mphahlele people were tracing and burning people who were suspected as witches.<sup>147)</sup>

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147) Mr. M. Kadiaka, University of the North, 5-11-1996.

The UDF was one of the organisations formed to continue the activities of the BCM. Its aims were:

“To organise and mobilise all community organisations, to contact and discuss with people their views and aspirations, to build and strengthen all the organisations of the people, to educate all on unity and dangers of apartheid and to unite in action against the proposed constitution” (the constitution was giving Coloureds and Indians a limited role in the legislature but excluding Africans).<sup>148)</sup>

All the affiliates of the UDF such as the sports bodies, members of the black political organisations, civic organisations, women and youth organisations, churches, trade Unions and student organisations became involved in the mobilisation and recruitment of the youth against the apartheid regime.<sup>149)</sup> The youth were recruited and mobilised from underground

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148) F. Meli: A History of the ANC, pp. 192-193; L. Thompson: A History of South Africa, p.191; N. Parsons: A New History of South Africa, pp.198-199, 228, 229 and 230.

149) F. Meli: A History of the African National Congress, pp. 192-193.

so that the government might not uncover their mission.<sup>150)</sup>

In the district, political leaders like Peter Mokaba (a teacher at Makgoka High School), Frans Mohlala, Louis Mokuni, Pitsi Moloto, Reverend Raphesu Mamabolo (leader of the Presbyterian Church around Dikgale area), Castro Louis Pilusa, Frans Sekgobela, and Mašhike Jones Thobejane were offering political workshops to the youth of the district from underground. At the workshops, the youth were told about the banned organisations, the Black political leaders who were banned and the banned political literature such as the Freedom Charter. The youth were also conscientised about the government policy of apartheid. These leaders convinced them that the government could not leave the policy unless militant action was taken against it. They encouraged them to be united. The conscientised youth were lobbied to join the MK. At the workshops they were also taught to have critical, decision-making and public speaking skills and about good behaviour so that they could be disciplined. These politicians visited each and every village where they met the

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150) L. Thompson: A History of South Africa, pp. 228, 229 and 230; Mr. B.

Mamabolo, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006; Mr. J. Maponya, Ga- Mamabolo, 5-02-2006. Mr. B. Mamabolo, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006; Mr. J. Maponya, Ga-Mamabolo, 5-02-2006.

youth at secret places.<sup>151)</sup> At Makgoka School, Peter Mokaba had formed a sports body called Karate. He used this body as a cover for politisation.<sup>152)</sup>

In churches Bible scripts were interpreted within the political context of that time. For instance, script that says that, the Israelites (the Hebrews) were suffering in Egypt because of the Egyptians and their king was given a South African context. Egypt was associated with South Africa, the Egyptians and their king with the Afrikaner and their rule and the Blacks of South Africa with the Israelites that were in Egypt. This implies that what was happening to the Israelites in Egypt under the Egyptian rule was exactly what was happening to the South African Blacks under the Afrikaner rule. Preachers were saying that, as was the case with Blacks in South Africa, the Hebrew were in the majority in Egypt. Like the Afrikaner, the Egyptian king considered them a threat because of his prediction that they might take control of that country in future. To avoid the Hebrew's rule, the Egyptian king like the Afrikaner

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151) Mr. P. P. Magagane, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006; Mr. W. Mokhari, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Mr. B. Mamabolo, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006; Mr. T. J. Maponya, Ga-Mamabolo, 5-02-2006; Mr. D. Maja, Ga-Maja, 22-11-2005.

152) Mr. P. P. Magagane, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006.

oppressed, ill-treated and enslaved the Israelites while others were put to death.<sup>153)</sup> The king ordered his people to kill the Hebrews: “Take every new-born Hebrew boy and throw him into the Nile, but let all the girls live.” However in South Africa, it was not every boy who was killed but every one opposed to the government, be it a male or female person. The preachers were saying that as God had said to Moses (Hebrew son adopted by the King’s daughter): “Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people from his country.”<sup>154)</sup> The church leaders believed that just like Moses the Black freedom fighters that were in jail and exile were also sent by God to lead and free them from the oppressive Afrikaner rule. While preaching, church leaders also identified the youth who understood them so that they might be offered political workshops after church services.

Sometimes workshops were held in the bush. In Dikgale area, the politicised youth would invite those not recruited to a hunting expedition. Those who joined the expedition would hold a meeting in a bush and at the meeting they were addressed by the underground political leaders such as Frans Mohlala, Peter Mokaba, Louis Mokuni, Castro Louis Pilusa and Mašhike Jones Thobejane to mention a few. That meant that the expeditions were organised

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153) Mr. W. Mokhari, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Mr. S. Mothiba, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Exodus 1 and 3: Good News Bible. Today’s English Version, Bible Society of South Africa, pp.59-60 and 61-62.

154) Exodus 1 and 3: Good News Bible. Today’s English Version, Bible Society of South Africa, pp. 61-62.

after arrangement were made with the leaders. In Maja area, the youth would go to a bush as though they were herding the cattle while the intention was to hold a meeting somewhere in the bush. They also used to meet at night at Mphotong next to Matipe river. The youth also used nicknames so that they could not be recognised. For instance, Abram Tleane was called Raps; Leonard Maja was called Kop; Maja Jack was called Toy, while Senamela Jerry was nicknamed Belle. Mashike Thobejane was one of those who provided political workshops in this area. He was assisted by Collen Mogadimane from Lebowakgomo.<sup>155)</sup>

#### **4.2. Boarding Schools**

The youth of the district were also recruited or became aware of the politics of South Africa because of the boarding schools. In the Thabampo district there were boarding schools such as Phirikolobe at Ga-Dikgale, NgwanaMohube High School at Ga-Mphahlele, Hwiti in Mankweng location next to the University of the North, Makgoka and Marobathota in Mamabolo area and Tshebela (Ga-Molepo), to mention a few. These schools admitted pupils from different places in South Africa. Pupils from places such as: Botlokwa, Lebowakgomo, Sešhego and as far as Gauteng (Johannesburg) and Tshwane (Pretoria), where protests

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155) Mr. D. Maja, Ga-Maja, 22-11-2005; Mr. L. H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005;  
Mr. W. Mokhari, Solomondale, 22-01- 2006; Miss. S. Mothiba, Solomondale,  
22-01- 2006.

against the governmental laws were common. Hence, there were political talks not only amongst the pupils but also amongst the youth of the district. Day scholars had contact with the youth who dropped out of schools or unemployed youth and pupils who schooled in other areas.<sup>156)</sup>

In Dithabaneng Village, people heard from pupils of Thagaetala that there was “Black Power” (Black resistance to the apartheid rule) which was coming. This was because of the contact of the Dithabaneng pupils with pupils from Seleteng village who got the information from the day scholars of NgwanaMohube High School. To show that the Dithabaneng people were not conscious of the politics of their country after they were told of the “Black Power” they became surprised and they began to imagine what it might be. Without asking scholars from Seleteng village they had began to group themselves. Black Power was the topic discussed by the groups. Initially, some people viewed “Black Power” as people who were wearing black clothes, moving from place to place, killing people on their way. In their meetings, they were also trying to find a resolution of what would be done if those people could come to their school; force them to break their school and kill each other or their teachers. The decision was that they would fight against them. After discussions they went back to the same people who told them about the “Black Power” to give their decision. Thus they became politicised.<sup>157)</sup>

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156) Circuit Inspector P. M. Mothapo, Mankweng Circuit, 12-03-2006; Mr. M.

Kadiaka, University of the North, 5-11-1996.

157) Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998.

### 4.3. The Role of the University of the North in Organising the Youth

The students of the University of the North played a crucial role in mobilising the youth against the regime. The student's organisation - SASO - was inaugurated in the university.<sup>158)</sup> The university was meant for the Sotho people. This means that the youth of the district or of the homeland like the organisation members were also involved in the Black Consciousness activities, spreading its philosophy. The students of the University conscientised the Apel Youth that they were oppressed. The Apel Youth, who were schooling at Madithame School (in Apel Village) conscientised pupils of the school amongst whom there were those from Nkotokwane about their political position in South Africa. In turn, pupils from Nkotokwane spread the Black Consciousness message to the unemployed youth of their village and those from their village who were schooling at Lesetsi Village so that they might spread it further to the other youth.<sup>159)</sup>

During teaching practice at schools, students of the University also conscientised pupils by interpreting books such as *Animal Farm* (Manor Farm) within the context of that time. In the book a pig which was called Major, conscientised animals of the Manor farm that they were

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158) S. Biko: *I Write What I Like*, p.12.

159) L. Wilson: *Steve Biko: A Life* (Pityana et, al: *Bounds of Possibility*, p.25); Mr. L. P. Mathabatha, Nkotokwane Village, 12-08-2000.

treated unjustly by their master Mr. Jones.<sup>160)</sup> It says,

“Now comrades what is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it; our lives are miserable, laborious and short. No animal in England knows the meaning of happiness or leisure after he is a year old. No animal in England is free. The life of an animal is misery and slavery. Man is the only real enemy we have. Almost overnight we could be free and rich. What then must we do? Why work day and night, body and soul, for the overthrow of the human race.”<sup>161)</sup>

The students associated Major with the Black political leaders that were in jail because they were arrested for conscientising the Blacks that they were oppressed. This implied that the Blacks like the animals wanted to free themselves from the apartheid regime that was unjust to them. Just like the animals that saw a man as their only enemy, the Blacks had to see the Boers and their government as their common enemy, which had to be overthrown.<sup>162)</sup>

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160) Circuit Inspector P. M. Mothapo, Mankweng Circuit, 12-03-2006; G. Orwell: Animal Farm, 1983, pp.1, 2 3, 4 and 5.

161) G. Orwell: Animal Farm, 1983, pp. 3, 4 and 5.

162) Circuit Inspector P. M. Mothapo, Mankweng Circuit, 12-03-2006; S.E. Mphahlele: Student Unrest at Black Universities in Southern Africa, p. 50; G. Orwell: Animal Farm, 1983, pp.1, 3, 4 and 5.

The students of the university were not afraid to do that because they were also offered political workshops in the university campus. Louis Castro Pilusa who was working on campus had rooms in the university that, he used to offer political workshops. As he was offering political workshops in the university, they realised that educational institutions were the best place where people could be workshopped politically. As teachers they would pretend to be offering educational lessons so that the government would never uncover their mission.<sup>163)</sup>

Just like all SASO members, the university students embarked on the public criticism of the apartheid laws. Thus, students became involved in class boycotts and strikes. During these strikes and boycotts the university students got support from the youth of the district. The district was used as a hideout by the students who were followed by the police. The youth of the district, especially those living around the Mamabolo area had to organise accommodation for the students in the church buildings; provide them with food and money for fares, especially those who were from places such as Kgapane and Gauteng. The money and food were from the business committee called Traders Association. Their contact with the university students did not only teach them to be responsible people but also kept them updated concerning politics of the area.<sup>164)</sup>

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163) Mr. T. J. Maponya, Ga-Mamabolo, 5-02- 2006

164) Mr. F. Sekgobela, Ga-Makanya, 16-12-2005; Mr. K. Ramodike, Ga- Mothapo, 12-01-2006.

## **CHAPTER 5: THE FORMATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COMRADE-GROUPS IN THABAMOPO DISTRICT**

After being conscientised the youth began to form the comrade groups or youth congresses. These youth congresses were: the Mafefe Youth Congress, Maja Youth Congress, the Mankweng Youth Congress and the Mphahlele Youth Congress (MPHAEYCO).<sup>165)</sup>

### **5.1. The Mafefe Youth Congress**

There were signs of disunity amongst the youth of the Mafefe area before 1985. That disunity was related to the history of the people. Though the Magakala of Mafefe separated from those of Ntwampe as one group after they settled at Mafefe they called themselves with three distinct names such as the Chinese, Communist and Mafefe of Mataung. There was the Mampa group called the Tlou (Elephants), which was considered a totally different group to all the Mafefe groups in the area. During soccer games the youth were calling themselves with the names. Because of that spirit the games were always ending with clashes. In 1985

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165) Mr. M. P. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 12-07-1998; Mr. W. Mokhari, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Mrs. S. Mothiba, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Mr. P. P. Magagane, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006; Mr. F. Sekgobela, Ga-Makanya, 16-12-2005; Mr. D. Maja, Ga-Maja, 22-11-2005; Mr. L.H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005; Mr. G. Mohlatlego, Mafefe, 10-07-2007.

the Mafefe Youth Congress was formed to close the gap that was amongst the youth and to unite them against the apartheid regime.<sup>166)</sup>

## **5.2. The Mankweng and Maja Youth Congresses**

Comrade groups were also formed in various areas around the district. Around Mothiba area the umbrella was the Mothiba Youth Congress. In Dikgale area the umbrella was the Dikgale Youth Congress. There was also Solomondale Youth Congress in Solomondale location. At Ga-Mothapo, different comrade groups contributed to the formation of the Mothapo Youth Congress. There was also the Molepo Youth Congress around the Molepo area. At Ga-Mamabolo, comrade groups alias youth congresses never formed the Mamabolo Youth Congress, each village congress was independent. All the youth congresses around Mamabolo area, Dikgale Youth Congress, Mothapo Youth Congress, Mothiba Youth Congress, Molepo Youth Congress, and Solomondale Youth Congress were under the Mankweng Youth Congress. This umbrella was formed in 1984. The umbrella body around

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166) Mr. G. Mohlatlego, Mafefe, 10-07-2007.

Maja area was the Maja Youth Congress.<sup>167)</sup>

### **5.3. The Mphahlele Youth Congress**

Around the Mphahlele area there were comrade-groups that were formed. The groups were formed in most of the villages of the area around the 1980s. They were the Tooseng Youth Congress (TOEYCO) in Tooseng Village, Dithabaneng Youth Congress (DAEYCO) in Dithabaneng Village, Tšiane Youth Congress (TŠAEYCO), Makurung Youth Congress (MAEYCO), Mamatonya Youth Congress (MAYCO) in Mamatonya Village, Hlagatse Youth Congress (HLAEYCO) in Marulaneng Village, Lenting Youth Congress (LENGCO) in Lenting Village, Lekurung Youth Congress (LENGCO) in Lekurung Village and the Nkotokwane Youth Congress (NKOYCO) in Nkotokwane Village. All these congresses except the Mamatonya and Nkotokwane Youth Congresses were all under the Mphahlele Youth Congress. The Nkotokwane Youth Congress was under Apel Youth Congress. This was because the youth of the village were recruited and conscientised by the youth of Apel Village. The Mamatonya Youth Congress had no leadership of its own. It relied on the

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167) Mr. P. P. Magagane, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02- 2006; Mr. D. Maja, Ga-Maja, 22-11- 2005; Mr. L.H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005; Mr. J. Masiakwala, Ga-Mothapo, 16-12-2005; Mr. W. Mokhari, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Mr. F. Sekgobela, Ga-Makanya, 16-12-2005; Mr. G. Mohlatlego, Mafefe, 10-07-2007.

leadership of the HLAEYCO. The appointed leaders were scared of the police and always turning down the appointment. Thus, they were not represented in the MPHAEYCO. The congress formed part and parcel of the HLAEYCO as it relied on its leadership for any information.<sup>168)</sup>

The MPHAEYCO headquarters were in the main royal village of Ga-Mphahlele, the Seleteng village. The leaders of the congress were, Mr. Madimetja Maphutha who was the general secretary, Mr. Michael Kadiaka who was the president, Mr. Phatudi Mphahlele was the treasurer and Mr. Steve Bambo who was the additional member.<sup>169)</sup> It was this leadership which contributed to dissension and split within the MPHAEYCO. The Dithabaneng Youth Congress decided to withdraw from MPHAEYCO, after attending the congress conference at which they realised that the leadership of the congress was constituted only by the youth of

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168) Mr. M. P. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 12-07-1998; Mr. L. P. Mathabatha, Nkotokwane Village, 12-08-2008.

169) Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998; Mr. S. M. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998; Mr. M. B. Leshilo, Tooseng Village, 29-12-1998; Miss T. P. Mphahlele, University of the North, 05-11-1998; Mr. M. T. Mphahlele, Makurung Village, 23-07-1999; Mr. P. Takalo, Mamatonya, Village, 07-07-1999; Mr. S. M. Mphahlele, Lenteng Village, 17-08-1999.

Seleteng Village. Except for Maphutha, all the leaders were from that main royal village. The dissatisfaction shows that they were not democratically elected. If they were democratically elected, the DAEYCO would have known the reason why most of the leaders belonged to the royal village. Because of that, the DAEYCO decided to be independent. The DAEYCO members believed that they were no longer under the rule of the queen Ngwanamohube Mphahlele as her delegate who was their sub-queen Mohube Mphahlele had fled after they tried to solve problems of their village with her.<sup>170)</sup>

The Lenting Youth Congress also broke away from the Mphahlele Youth Congress. The congress was also dissatisfied with the leadership. All the affiliates of the MPHAEYCO submitted money that they collected from their villages at its offices but they could not be given financial statements or be informed about how the money was used. The congress leaders were only concerned with problems that concerned the youth of their village, not of all its affiliates. The money submitted at the offices could only be used to release only the arrested congress members of Seleteng village. When the affiliates of the other villages were arrested, the MPHAEYCO could not take any action. They were to be bailed out with the money donated by the various village members. As a result, the LENGCO decided to part

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170) Mr. S. M. Mphahlele, Lenting Village, 17-08-1999.

from the congress which according to their view was created for the benefit of the Seleteng youth.<sup>171)</sup>

#### **5.4. The Congresses under the UDF**

The Mafefe Youth Congress, the Maja Youth Congress, the Mankweng Youth Congress, the Molepo Youth Congress and the Mphahlele Youth Congress were all under the Northern Transvaal Youth Congress (NOTAYO). The NOTAYO was under the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), which was under the UDF. It was because of that, that while demonstrating the youth were singing songs that were praising the Front. One of the songs was “*Makhaya, makhaya, iye makhaya, we are the UDF, iye makhaya*” (“*Home, home, yes home, we are the UDF, yes home*”). The Youth Congresses were formed by the Black youth who were members of the Black political organisations such as the BCM, ANC, AZAPO and PAC, to mention a few. It was not the black organisations that were affiliated under the UDF but the organisation members. They remained the organisation members under the UDF. The organisations “retained their identity and independence under the UDF”. Thus the UDF succeeded in mobilising, recruiting and uniting the youth against the regime. The youth

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171) Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998; Mr. M.T. Mphahlele, Makurung Village, 23-07-1999.

buried their organisational difference in order to face their common enemy which was the apartheid regime.<sup>172)</sup>

Other youth were not organisation members. In areas such as Mphahlele every black youth was compelled to join the struggle. There was a belief that as they were all oppressed; no one had to deviate from the struggle. It was just that others were scared of the government. So to make them fearless they were summoned to political meetings where they were offered political workshops. The leaders had realised that the first thing that they had to do before they could go to the political meetings was to organise a demonstration. The demonstration was designed to summon all the youth. While demonstrating along the streets and passing next to each and every household they would call the youth of that house by his or her name. By calling the name they meant that, that particular youth had to join the demonstration because they were singing a song *“I say join, join, join, joiner, joiner, join mzabalaso (“I say join, join, join the struggle”)*<sup>173)</sup>

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172) Mr. D. Maja, Ga-Maja, 22-11-2005; Mr. L.H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005; Mr. J. Masiakwala, Ga-Mothapo, 16-12- 2005; Circuit Inspector P. M. Mothapo, Mankweng Circuit, 12-03-2006; Mr. S. M. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998.

173) Mr. S. M. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998; Miss R. C. Phaladi, Tooseng Village, 23-03-2007.

Most members of the youth congress were members of the ANC. During the youth congress meetings ANC freedom songs were chanted. The songs were praising the organisation; its exiled, arrested, underground leaders and also the ANC military wing (the Umkhonto We Ziswe). Among the songs that were sung was “*Oliver Tambo, Oliver Tambo theta no Botha a khulela u Mandela*” (“*Oliver Tambo, Oliver Tambo talk to Botha to release Mandela*”).

### **5. 5. Aims of the Youth Congresses**

The youth congresses wanted to intensify the struggle against the apartheid regime. The youth had realised that, the political organisations such as the ANC, BCM, PAC and SACP that were involved in the struggle against the apartheid regime were banned by the government. The youth formed the congresses in order to revitalise the freedom struggle of the banned organisations. They realised that they were the only people who could free the Blacks from the constraints of the apartheid rule.<sup>174)</sup>

The youth of the district also wanted to participate in the “Free Mandela Campaign”. They also wanted the black political leaders to be released from jails and the Black political parties to be unbanned. By demanding their release and the unbanning of the parties the youth wanted to show that, the language that the leaders were speaking was theirs. This implied that

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174) Mr. S. W. Mathabatha, Tšiane Village, 11-07-1998; Mr. M. P. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 12-07-1998.

their words were their words (the words were that “they were oppressed”). So like the leaders and the organisations they wanted the apartheid regime to be relinquished.<sup>175)</sup>

The intention was also to unify all the youth in the struggle. The Black students and unemployed youth were united via the congresses, to close the gap that was created by the apartheid regime. They realised that they were oppressed not only as students or unemployed youth or as members of the black organisations but as Blacks. These congresses were the black youth network with which they would tackle the oppression.<sup>176)</sup>

#### **5.6. Objectives of the Youth Congresses**

The youth wanted the apartheid regime to be overthrown or the government to relinquish its policy so that there might be equality in South Africa. It was for this reason that they encouraged members to join Umkhonto we Sizwe. In order to achieve that objective, the youth intended to render the country ungovernable. Their mass involvement in the struggle was envisaged as a strategy that could be used to make things uncontrollable for the

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175) Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998; Mr. B. Mamabolo, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006; Mr. L. H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005.

176) Mr. D. Maja, Ga-Maja, 22-11-2005; Mr. M. P. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 12-07-1998; Mr. L.H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005.

government. It could also help in case some members were arrested, as those detained would continue the struggle. That would further draw the government's attention to the youth so the Black political underground and exiled leaders would have an opportunity to slip into the country. Another thing was that if they were arrested in majority they would fill the South African jails. If they filled the jails the government would be forced to set them free because it would be unable to feed and accommodate them all. To make things uncontrollable they decided to defy the apartheid laws; destroy government and private properties to lead the government into state a of bankruptcy.<sup>177)</sup>

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177) Mr. P. P. Magagane, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006; Mr. L.H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005; Mr. M. P. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 12-07-1998.

## CHAPTER 6: THE COMRADES STRUGGLE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

### 6.1. The Defiance of the Apartheid Laws

By being united as Blacks, the comrades had already defied the apartheid Acts especially the Group Areas Act, the Homeland Citizenship Act, the Homeland Constitution Act and the Population Registration Act to mention a few. Contrary to the acts they considered themselves as Black South Africans no longer different tribes or non-whites who were citizens of the homelands. Besides these acts, other apartheid acts that they defied were: the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Internal Security Act of 1976, the Riotous Assemblies Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, the Terrorism Act and the Unlawful Organisation Act. The mentioned acts outlawed government opposition <sup>178)</sup> but through the comrade-groups alias youth congresses, the Black youth defied the acts by being united in opposition to the apartheid rule. Therefore the comrade-groups were illegal. The youth were opposing the government because during the demonstration they were singing songs such as “*Se ya ya ya ko Pitori, se ya ya ko Pitori*” .The song meant “*We go to Pretoria, we go to Pretoria.*” Another song was “*Se ya khaya ko Orlando, se ya khaya ko Pitori, re tumula motšhatšha, re tumula motšhatšha, tšhatšhe tšhatšhe re tumula Motšhatšha.*” The second song means that the youth wanted to go to Pretoria to uproot (tumula) a bitter vegetable (motšhatšha). The

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178) L. Thompson: A History of South Africa, pp. 190, 191, 194,198 and 199.

vegetable was associated with the apartheid laws because they were also bitter to the Blacks. They wanted to go to Pretoria because it was believed that it was one of the places where the apartheid laws were passed.<sup>179)</sup>

## **6.2. The Comrade's Opposition to the Traditional Rulers**

Chiefs were seen as servants of the apartheid government. This means that chiefs in power collaborated with the then government and were also prepared to implement its laws. They had a cordial working relationship with the then government and the government also listened to them. It was for this reason, that they were also called the National Party (NP) members. Just like the National Party that ruled in the country, they were also oppressive to their subjects. In order to oppress their subjects, the chiefs adhered to the old African traditional dictum : “Go nyatša kgoši ke go tloga” (disrespecting a chief is to go), ‘Mantšu a kgoši a agelwa morako (the chief's word is final) and that whatever had gone to the royal house could not be returned were greatly practiced that time. These cultural ideas made chiefs to see themselves as superior people; who ought to live a superior life.<sup>180)</sup> They also adhered to the following principles:

- Chief's farm (tšhemo ya kgoši) - the royal house had ploughed a very big farm where

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179) Mr. S. M. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998; Mr. Kadiaka, University of the North, 05-11-1998.

180) Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10-2005; Mr. L. V. Bokomo, Ga-Mothiba, 10-12-2005

a commoner from each and every house in his area had to work (plough). Although the farms were generating a lot of money, those who worked in the farms could not be compensated.

- Chief's hat (mongatse wa kgoši) - every year each and every house had to pay a certain amount of money to the royal house. At Ga-Tšhwene, there used to be chief's hat in front of the inhabitants of the place every time they had converged at the royal courtyard. The hat denotes that every person at a meeting had to pour money into it. No man was allowed to ask why he had to donate that money.
- Loafen (money donated to develop tribal areas) - this was the money that was supposed to be used to construct schools and for water supply. In the district if a particular ethnic group had donated money for school buildings or for something; even if the school was already constructed each and every youth who was growing, their children and grand children also had to pay that money. Because the money was donated for something, which was achieved or completed, it was offered to the chief.
- Tributes (dibego) - tributes could be in the form of money or beer. Every time traditional beer was cooked, there was supposed to be a token for the chief. If someone wanted to talk to the chief, that person also had to pay a certain amount of money before he could see him or considers his grievances. That way, he would be greeting the chief.

- The nappies of a chief's child (malairi a ngwana wa kgoši) – this was money that was donated for nappies (not just nappies but clothes) of a chief's child.<sup>181)</sup>

The kgoši or kgoši-gadi would always come up with devices of making money from their subjects. There were six taps at Ga-Tšhwene. Every time, a drawer of water had to pay ten cents for a tin and that money was taken to the royal house. There was also what was called 'feta mo' ('pass here'). These were fines that were supposed to be paid by tribal members who failed to pay local levies, taxes and rates. The tribal members, who could not pay all the mentioned fines, were not allowed to bury their deceased and could not get any help from their local authorities. If one had not paid the fines, chiefs would say, "This is my soil." This meant that you would not do anything on his area without his permission. At Ga-Tšhwene, Simon Tšhwene (nicknamed Sharp) belonging to the royal house had a building construction company that was building Thokgwaneng Primary School at Thokgwaneng Village (Ga-Tšhwene). There was a day on which human waste was found in the school. Simon decided that his construction company would discontinue with its work so that a traditional doctor could be consulted on the issue. To consult a traditional doctor according to the orders given

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181) Mr. M. Mašangwane, Ga-Dikgale, 11-2-2006; Mr. K. Mašangwane, Ga-Dikgale, 11-2-2006; Mr. F. Talakgane, Ga-Dikgale, 11-2-2006; Mr. T. Mogale, Thabamopo Mental Hospital, 2-11-2005; Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10-2005; Mr. P. Mothiba, Ga-Maja, 11-12-2005; Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998; Mr. K. Thupane, Ga-Mothiba, 12-12-2005.

by the royal house, each and every house had to pay R100, 00. Because people used to donate money and the royal house could not account on how that money was used, the villagers defied the orders. The construction continued to built the school and nothing happened.<sup>182</sup>

- The Surplus (madutla) - any person who was working was believed to have a lot of money. So every time he came home, he had to give the surplus to the royal house.<sup>183)</sup>

Just like their masters, chiefs were against any form of opposition, meetings and political organisations. Like the government they made use of the police and soldiers to trace, imprison and kill those opposed to their rule. They were getting information from their spies as to who were ringleaders so that those government employees might use the list. Chiefs who felt threatened also hired thugs to kill their opponents.<sup>184)</sup>

Chiefs, like the government, had unlimited power in their areas. They had control over everything and everywhere in their areas. They had influence over decisions that were made also in schools. They had the right to appoint and dismiss school committee members,

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182) Mr. T. Mogale, Thabamooopo Mental Hospital, 2-11-2005; Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17 -10-2005.

183) Mr. P. Mothiba, Ga-Maja, 11-12-2005; Mr. K. Thupane, Ga-Mothiba, 12-12-2005.

184) Mr. T. Mogale, Thabamooopo Mental Hospital, 2-11-2005; Mr. L. V. Bokomo, Ga-Mothiba, 10-12- 2005.

teachers and principals. As a result, people were without freedom of speech. If they said something, which contradicted with the government or a chief, they were interrogated at the royal house. This is what was happening at Ga-Tšhwene. The Principal, Masola, Deputy Principal, Mrs. Lekoloane and Mrs. Lekganyane, used to be summoned to the royal house where they were interrogated concerning what they were saying or telling learners in class. Because Mrs. Lekganyane was against-the royal house, she could not get the post of principalship in the area. The royal house was opposed to her appointment. After she performed well in the interviews, the royal house approached the circuit inspector who was informed that the ethnic group wanted a male as principal.<sup>185)</sup>

Her post was given to Nicolas Mašhiane who was from Mogodi Village (Ga-Mphahlele). Some school committee members who, queried about the decision such as William Leso were forced to resign. After his dismissal Mr. Sello Mokonyama was appointed as chairperson and Mr. Maluleka as a deputy. The former was to be substituted by Maluleka because he also supported Mrs. Lekganyane's reinstatement to the position of principalship. The matter was taken to the sub-royal house where the induna blamed Malose Tšhwene for what was happening and asserted that meetings be held at a school rather than at his place. Malose did not attend the meeting because he knew that he was guilty and that people were angry with him. The comrades started to hold meetings at the school. The principal who knew that they were against his presence felt intimidated and threatened especially after David Baloi, David

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185) Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10-2005.

Malahlela and Mr. Mokonyama were sent to him. He reported them to the police and they were arrested.<sup>186)</sup>

The above matters contributed to a very serious conflict between the comrades and the chiefs. The comrades realised that they were not only oppressed by the government but also by their traditional leaders. Consequently, they realised that the first thing that they had to do was to oppose them as well as the government. The conflict with the chiefs affected most of the royal members, especially the royal councillors who were also working for the government in Traditional Authority offices. To make matters worse the comrades adopted the slogan: “Spirit of no surrender.” This meant that they would not give up until their objectives were met.<sup>187)</sup>

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186) Ibid.

187) Mr. M. Mašangwane, Dikgale, 11-02- 2006; Mr. K. Mašangwane, Dikgale, 11-02- 2006; Mr. F. Talakgane, Dikgale, 11-02- 2006; Mr. T. Mogale, Thabamooopo Mental Hospital, 2-11-2005; Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10-2005; Mr. M. Phatudi-Mphahlele, Seleteng Village, 05-05-1999; Mrs. J. M. Phatudi-Mphahlele, Bakgakga Shop, 05-05-1999; Mr. K. Ramodike, Ga-Mothapo, 12-01-2006.

### 6.3. The Defiance of the Traditional Rules and Sabotage of Projects

In Maralaleng Village Ga-Mphahlele, the DAEYCO members closed the tomato project of the induna Kganki Mphahlele. He was compelling his subjects to work in the project without remuneration. He could only provide them with tomatoes, that they could not use to buy household needs such as clothes, maize meal and other essentials. The comrades made that decision after their fellow Maralaleng comrades reported the matter at their meeting. Except for the closing of the project comrades loathed and boycotted his shop, which was in the Dithabaneng Village so that he goes bankrupt. The chief was accused of being arrogant and oppressive since he was also selling water to his people.<sup>188)</sup>

The DAEYCO members burnt the three-roomed house of ntona-gadi (sub-queen) - Mohube Mphahlele - in Dithabaneng Village. She had embezzled money that was donated by the villagers over many years. According to the consensus, the money should have been used to trace a witch in the village. Adults were dissatisfied because in the beerhalls they were telling the youth about the money. At a meeting that was held at the Copperbelt soccer ground, the DAEYCO members decided that they should demand back their money. Her house was burnt down because instead of giving back the money to her subjects, she decided to flee. After the burning the youth were arrested.<sup>189)</sup>

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188) Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998.

189) Ibid.

In Makurung Village, there was a similar problem. It was for a period of a decade that the villagers had donated money with the intention of tracing the witches, at the royal house. For that period the Ntona-gadi NgwanaMohube, her councillors and people elected to lead the mission could not provide the villagers with the any outcomes. That angered the villagers and they accused the royal house of being unaccountable. At a meeting that was held after the soccer practice, the comrades decided to storm the induna's place. They stoned her car first; petrol from the car was poured onto her thatched house and while placed inside the house she was given a burning candle to set the house alight. She followed the instructions of the comrades and within ten minutes the house was set alight. The police arrived speedily but the fire had already engulfed part of the house. The police dispersed the comrades with teargas and rescued the sub-queen from the burning house. Nobody was arrested.<sup>190)</sup>

The MAEYCO members were arrested after they handed themselves at the Lebowakgomo Police Station. Their action followed the police appeal that, those regarded as ringleader had to avail themselves at the station. According to the comrades there was no leader during the event so they all went to the station. The police knew that jails were packed to capacity so they were compelled to arrest a few. The police wanted to arrest the leaders. To get their names from those who submitted themselves at the station, they intimidated them with pistols and arrested the remaining 85 that could not flee. The villagers donated money to bail them out and to hire a lawyer. They hired advocate Collins Ramusi from Botlokwa. At the trial that took place in the regional court, Pietersburg, they were all acquitted and only one got three

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190) Mr. M.T. Mphahlele, Makurung Village, 23-07-1999.

lashes. As from that time the police began to monitor the village to ensure that they did not continue with their political activities. Despite the presence of many police officers and army stationed in the village the MAEYCO members managed to attend the funeral of comrade, Peter Nchabeleng, the president of the UDF, in the Northern Transvaal (Limpopo Province). He died after he was tortured by the police in Schoonord Police Station in Sekhukhuneland.<sup>191)</sup>

In the Mothiba area, the comrades had realised that parents were obeying the rules of their chief. Consequently, they could not succeed in opposing the rules. They decided to influence their parents to oppose the rules. That decision was activated by a decision of the royal house. The royal house accused Mahuma house of witchcraft. The accusation came after the royal house had found a woven hair in a traditional beer that was brought as tribute by various community members. As Mahuma was the last to pour the beer, it was believed that they wanted to kill the chief with that woven hair so the house decided to give them leave permit (with that permit the royal house ordered the Mahuma to leave their place). Angered by the royal action, the comrades invited their chief, indunas and parents to a meeting. The chief who was interrogated concerning the above principles said that it is their culture therefore he was bound to adhere to it, as it was laid down by his predecessors. The comrades declared publicly that they were against the above principles therefore, the chief had to refrain from its

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191) Ibid.

practices.<sup>192)</sup>

In Tšhwene area, the comrades began to demand money that was donated over the years from the royal house, with the intention of developing their area. People of the area were drawing water from streams. They did not have enough taps. Others could not afford to buy water as the royal house required. In order to facilitate that development they asked for books that had record of the money paid. It was discovered that the house was withdrawing the money, using it for its own purposes rather than for the benefit of the people. It was decided that the money that they were donating at that time be taken straight to the magistrate's office where the money for development in the district was banked rather than to the royal house. At that time, money for school buildings was donated and was embezzled. Conflict ensued between the comrades and the sub-chief who insisted that the money be taken to the royal house. After the money was lost, he could not allow the holding of meetings. He accused them of holding meetings to discuss him. He fled to Ga-Maja (Ngwanamago Village) where he married his wife. His fleeing created the impression that he also knew about the money that was lost.<sup>193)</sup>

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192) Mr. K. Ramodike, Ga-Mothiba, 12-01- 2006; Mr. K. Thupane, Ga-Mothiba, 12-12-2005.

193) Mr. T. Mogale, Thabampoopo Mental Hospital, 2-11-2005; Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10- 2005.

There were further clashes between the comrades and members of the royal because the latter could not allow the former to hold meetings in community halls. Since they were against meetings; they were informing the police every time the comrades had a meeting.<sup>194)</sup>

The comrades at the Mphahlele area had the same problem. Mr. Motlokwe, the brother of Dr. C. N. Phatudi, the former chief minister of Lebowa and also the royal councillor at Ga-Mphahlele, was against all the comrades' activities. He asserted publicly that he was against their meetings. He called them "commoners." He did not allow them to meet in the Solly Coleman's Hall (the community hall) and he destroyed all the roadblocks that they erected. Comrades considered him a police spy. He first destroyed a blockade that they built at Matime bridge in Seleteng Village to prevent the entry of the police into the village. They could not stop him because he was intimidating them with a gun. He destroyed another blockade that they erected with pine trees to block the police entry to the royal courtyard in order to make it difficult for the police to enter Solly's Coleman Hall where they were holding their meetings. The destruction of the blockade angered the comrades who in turn disrupted a meeting of the royal councillors, which was to be held in the hall. The councillors changed the venue and held the meeting in one of Lekganyane's room in Podingwane. Realising that Motlokwe had angered the comrades and that they could attack him, the

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194) Mr. L. H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005; Mr. M. T. Mphahlele, Makurung Village, 23-07-1999, Miss M. F. Lekgau, Mankweng, 16-10-1998, Mr. S. W. Lekgau, University of the North, 09-10-1998; Mrs. J. M. Phatudi-Mphahlele, Bakgakga Shop, 05-05-1999.

councillors overloaded their colleague's car instead of driving in his own car on their way back home. The angry comrades revenged themselves by burning his Bakgakga shop on 19 January 1986. The cost of the loss was estimated at R45000, 00.<sup>195)</sup>

In Maja area, the royal house's opposition to political activities contributed to the death of Frans Maakamedi in 1990. This death was caused by one of the royal members whose name was Leafy Maja who deliberately killed him in a car accident. The accident was intentional because it was during a political march. He drove his car swiftly facing the marchers that it hit Maakamedi who died immediately. After his burial and after a meeting that was held at Ditsepu School, the comrades decided to burn the houses of the perpetrators, Leafy Maja and Matala Maja. The mother of Leafy apologised to the comrades. The woman feared that the comrades would burn her house, as her son had no house. Her apology was accepted and she offered an amount of two thousand to the comrades. After, the burning of the house, three comrades including Jack Maja and Oupa Tleane were arrested while Ledimo Maja fled to Gauteng. It was because of Seth Cachalia and Seth Nthai, lawyers for human rights, that the arrested managed to get a less severe penalty. Each a bail of R200, 00.<sup>196)</sup>

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195) Miss M. F. Lekgau, Mankweng, 16-10-1998; Mr. S. W. Lekgau, University of the North, 09-10-1998; Mrs. J. M. Phatudi-Mphahlele, Bakgakga Shop, 05-05-1999.

196) Mr. L.H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005; Mr. B. Senamela, Ga-Maja, 11-11-2005.

In Tšhwene area, the comrades were arrested for holding political meetings and for forming political organisations. The arrested could not take a long time in prison because Chief Magistrate, Seshai was supportive to his fellow comrades. The comrades of the area were not permitted to hold meetings in Matšhidi Tribal Hall or in schools of the area; instead they held meetings under trees. The royal councillors also spied on the comrades and that contributed to a serious dissension between the two groups. The comrades boycotted the Mazwethi Enterprise because its owner (also of the royal house) was a spy, who informed police about their activities. Gololo Bottle Store owned by the royal house member was also burnt down even though there was no evidence to prove that the comrades were involved in the act. The comrades believed that the bottle store was burnt by its owner as a trick to take them to jail. The royal house hired the police, army and people to kill the comrades. One of the hired people was Billy Sehlapelo, one of the ANC leaders, who was living in Lebowakgomo location. The royal house knew that he was a trusted leader. As planned, he organised a political workshop that was held in a shanty house in the area. After the workshop that started at 10:00 p.m and ended at 2:00 a.m, Billy informed the comrades that he was hired by their royal house to shoot both Mogale and Mokonyama but as a comrade he could not kill his fellow comrades. After the workshop he fled to Soweto because he could not fulfill his promise but had used the royal money. The police and army officers also confessed that they were killing the cattle of the royal house for feast but they could not kill the comrades, as the house hired them to do.<sup>197)</sup>

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197) Mr. T. Mogale, Thabampo Mental Hospital, 2-11-2005; Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10-2005.

#### **6.4. Opposition to the Government Appointed Chiefs, Sub-Chiefs, Queens and Sub-Queens.**

At Ga-Seloane, comrades found themselves in the royal conflict. The conflict started after the death of Kgoši Sepeke Seloane III. The deceased had married a deputy wife who was the mother of Ngwato, as the principal wife could not give birth. After his death, the tribe married a queen from Manganeng Ga-Sekhukhune in 1984. The queen was married as Ngwato's wife, as he was his father's successor. The queen allowed the chief's paternal uncle Hennock Seloane to have sexual intercourse with her instead of her husband Ngwato. As that was against tradition, the tribe sent her back home (where she was born) so that her people would advise her about the purpose of her marriage. This contributed to a conflict over royal succession between the queen and his legal husband. This was because the queen's relationship with Hennock jeopardised her chance of being a queen, as she could no longer bear a future chief. <sup>198)</sup>

The matter was taken to court where judgment favoured the queen. It was believed that this was because at the time her father was one of the cabinet ministers of Chief Minister C. N. Phatudi in Lebowa Parliament. It was believed that the judgment was against the chief because he had the support of the comrades who were against the government. They believed that government hoped that the chief would serve the comrades rather than being its servant. The comrades who wanted to maintain their traditional rules or who knew their traditional

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198) Mr. K. Kgoroši, Ga-Seloane, 24 -11- 2005.

rights could not agree with the government's decision. The majority of the people favoured their traditional chief while only 2% of the people were in favour of the government appointed queen. Sure of the government support those under the queen tried to compel those under the chief to submit to the queen. Consequently, conflict ensued between the two groups. Four of the queen's group members had guns and during the conflict they were shooting. The conflict resulted in the murder of many youth, amongst them Elias Riva and Molemane Ngoatoane. After their death, the comrades destroyed the houses of the murderers. The police arrested most of the comrades while others escaped. It was easy for the comrades to receive bail because lawyers for human rights such as David Monakedi and Seth Nthai defended them. On trial days the comrades hired their own lawyer, Kgao Mahlatse who represented them in court.<sup>199)</sup>

After the trial, the comrades persisted with their protest. They demonstrated and sent petitions to the magistrate office in Lebowakgomo where they could not get a positive response. The memorandum that was submitted at Lebowakgomo parliament was also ignored. Ethnologists from Pretoria were also called to make a "tree" of chieftainship. The investigation proved that according to the tree, the sub-chief was the ruler. The government rejected the findings.<sup>200)</sup>

In Dikgale there was a similar problem of the appointed chief. The Dikgale people asserted publicly that they were against the chief not only because he adhered to previously mentioned

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199) Ibid.

200) Ibid.

government regulations which were oppressive, but because he was not their blood chief. Chief William Dikgale was a tax collector for the Dikgale people who were working beyond the boundaries of the area (in places such as Johannesburg in Gauteng and Tshwane or Pretoria). After the death of Ranti Edward Dikgale in 1981, he was appointed to act as regent as the rightful heir was still a minor. The people of the place kept counting his mistakes. They believed he was doing the mistakes, as he was not a born chief. He did not know anything concerning chieftainship. Opposition to his rule contributed to the death of Manyoro Lekota who was a leader of the chief's opponents. He was killed by two Coloured men. It was believed that they were sent by the acting chief. The men were arrested but were released within a short time. The people believed that the release was due to the fact that the perpetrators were sent by the government's servant, the king. The comrades made a ploy to revenge themselves. They were interrupted by the police who intimidated them in order to take William out of his burning house.<sup>201)</sup>

In the same area, at Sebayeng village there was also a problem of sub-chief (M. F. Molapo) who could not listen to their grievances. They thought that, it was because he was not supposed to be a sub-chief. His father was not a first born in that sub-royal house. Consequently, the rightful claimant to the throne was his father's elder brother's house. They boycotted his shop called Molapo General Dealer. It was boycotted until his death in 2000. In

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201) Mr. M. Mašangwane, Dikgale, 11-02-2006; Mr. K. Mašangwane, Dikgale, 11-02-2006; Mr. F. Talakgane, Dikgale, 11-02-2006.

2003 the rightful heir Masalesa Joseph Molapo was put on the throne.<sup>202)</sup>

At Ga-Ledwaba, there was a problem of water scarcity. All the people of the area were drawing water from one bore hole. Pupils were suffering because they could hardly get water to wash their clothes and to bath themselves on school days. In 1986, after a soccer match between Madebele Real Fighters and Matome Stone Breakers, the youth of the area held a meeting in which they agreed to march to the royal house where they would raise their problems. They did not write the problems down or on placards. They used songs to raise them. Even though they were not violent, the queen called the police that arrested the two comrades namely: Frans Ledwaba and Phellix Ledwaba. The two gave names of the other 20 comrades. Most escaped and climbed over the mountain. On the mountain they decided to march to the royal house to enquire about the informer who called the police. It was found that it was the queen who had called the police. She did that way because of an old woman who reported that the comrades who accused her of being a witch were intruding her house. It was discovered that, the woman was just scared by the noise of the comrades. On the next meeting that was held on Wednesday of that week, the police arrested the listed comrades though the intention of the meeting was to make attempts to release those arrested. They were charged with public violence and each got a bail of R200, 00.<sup>203)</sup>

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202) Mr. P. Segoapa, Ga-Dikgale, 19-02-2006.

203) Mr. F. M. Ledwaba, Lebowakgomo, 29-12-2005.

On Good Friday the same year another meeting was held where it was decided that the queen had to be returned to her birth place Moletlane, Zebediela, where it was believed that she would be taught to serve the tribe that married her rather than serving the government. She returned to the Ledwaba area after a long time. It was the COSATU political activists Paul Mathole of Lebowakgomo who advised the arrested to get two lawyers such as Mekgololo Ramodipa and Tom Nkadimeng. They were released towards exams and each was sentenced to seven lashes, suspended for seven years and prohibited from engaging in political activities.<sup>204)</sup>

### **6.5. The Involvement of the Comrades in the Royal Conflicts**

Most of the comrades found themselves in the royal conflicts. The cause for that was that chiefs were enjoying the fruits of apartheid so much that they deviated from the traditional rules. They had forgotten the cultural dictum that “a chief is a chief because of his subjects”. This principle compelled the chiefs to be democratic. They were supposed to rule according to the wishes of their subjects as they appointed them to be their chiefs. However, the chiefs of that time saw in the apartheid rule an opportunity to do things their own way.<sup>205)</sup>

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204) Ibid.

205) Mr. J. S. Mokonyama, Ga-Tšhwene, 17-10-2005; Mr. K. Ramodike, Ga-Mothiba, 12-01- 2006.

At Ga-Mothapo, the comrades found themselves in conflict with two royal groups known as the Big Five and the Mobu. The first group supported Chief T. J. Mothapo's idea of marrying the favourite wife as a candle (principal) wife. The second group was against that idea. They wanted traditional rules to be maintained. It wanted the tribe to marry a candle wife for the chief who according to their culture was supposed to come from Ga-Mphahlele. The second group, together with the tribe married the candle wife without the chief's approval. He refused to enter her house (to have sexual relations with her). Thus he was rejecting to be father of the tribe as he was rejecting the mother of the tribe. The Big Five held a meeting with the Mobu group where they asked all particulars of the royal house so that the queen could continue with the royal duties (ruling the tribe that married her).<sup>206)</sup>

At the meeting, the Big Five threatened to disrupt the royal duties if the chief could not offer what they wanted. Thus the Mobu group reported the Big Five at Mankweng Police Station. The trial that took place at the police station favoured the Big Five. So queen Madipuana was declared the official ruler of the place. The dispute of the two groups ended up in Pretoria High Court after the Mobu group made an appeal, but still, the trial was in favour of the Big Five. During the conflict the two groups were lobbying for support of the comrades. The comrades refrained from that royal conflict after the underground black political leaders's conscientisation that their duty was to fight against apartheid rule rather than engaging in the

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206) Mr. Z. Letsoalo, Ga-Makanya, 10-12-2005.

royal conflicts.<sup>207)</sup>

## 6.6. Comrades Involvement in Witch Execution

The comrades also became involved in the witch hunting and burning activities. That was violating the South African law, which outlawed the execution of the alleged witches. The South African government was against the act because those who accused others of witchcrafts or punish them were to be imprisoned for 10 to 20 years. The youth defied the governmental law because of underground orders from their black political organisations<sup>208)</sup> e.g. a commander of the ANC Youth League said, “He could order or stop the homicide as he wished: “The witches think they are safe because I told my comrades to stop burning.”<sup>209)</sup> His pronouncement denotes that the organisation had an influence on the comrade’s activities. One might conclude that the organisation was inciting the comrades to be involved in the acts. Hence, leaders of the organisation supported the defiance from underground while publicly pretending to be against it as they said, “It diverted the struggle from the real enemy.”

“A functionary of the ANC Women’s League stated that she did not believe in witches.

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207) Ibid.

208) J. Harnischfeger: State and witchcraft in South Africa: Accessed from [www.Africana. Ru/biblio/Afrocentricism/12\\_Harnischfeger.htm](http://www.Africana.Ru/biblio/Afrocentricism/12_Harnischfeger.htm)., on 12-12-2005, pp. 3 and 10.

209) Ibid.,p. 10.

But in a private interview she admitted not having spoken her true opinion. Rather she wanted to prevent escalation of violence.”<sup>210)</sup> In 1990 both Chris Hani and Winnie Mandela praised the youth for the role they played in making the country uncontrollable.<sup>211)</sup>

In the burning of the alleged witches, the comrades were singing the ANC freedom songs. One of the songs was: “*Se ya khaya ko Orlando, se ya khaya ko Pitori, re tumula Motšhatšha, re tumula Motšhatšha, tšhatšhe tšhatšhe re tumula Motšhatšha*” (“*We go to Orlando, we go to Pretoria, we uproot Motšhatšha, we uproot Motšhatšha*”). In this song, the witches were associated with the bitter African vegetable “Motšhatšha”. Just like the apartheid policy, which was bitter to the black people, the witches were also bitter to the village members because of their evil deeds. As they wanted to eliminate the vegetable and apartheid acts, by burning the witches they were also eliminating them from the community. Thus the youth were not only emancipating themselves from the apartheid rule, but also from the witches.

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210) Ibid., p.16.

211) Mr. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998, Miss T. P. Mphahlele, University of the North, 05-11-1998; Mr. P. P. Magagane, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006.

The suspected witches were stoned, burned with firewood, paraffin, petrol and tyres.<sup>212)</sup>

At Ga-Mphahlele, lightning that struck in the area, compelled the comrades to trace and burn those suspected of witchcraft. They believed that the lightning might put their lives in danger because in fighting against the government; targets were civil servants. They were scared that these people might use lightning to kill them. To preclude the act, they traced the witches through the use of traditional healers, who identified the alleged witches in different villages. Villages such as Marulaneng, Nkotokwane, Seleteng and Tšiane, to mention a few, became actively involved in the witch hunting and burning activities.<sup>213)</sup>

In Tšiane Village, Ngwato Maswi who was suspected to have stricken his neighbor's goats with a lightning was beaten and burnt by a group of combined comrades from Lekurung and

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212) Mr. M. P. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 12-07-1998; Mr. S. M. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998; Miss T. P. Mphahlele, University of the North, 05-11-1998; Miss M. F. Lekgau, Mankweng, 16-10-1998; Mr. S. W. Lekgau, University of the North, 09-10-1998; Mr. L. P. Mathabatha, Nkotokwane, 12-08-1998.

213) Miss T. P. Mphahlele, University of the North, 05-11-1998.

Tšiane Villages. This was after his neighbour had consulted a traditional diviner who told her that he was the perpetrator. The comrades had also discovered that the diviner was telling the truth because they summoned Mr. Ngwato to their meetings. At the meeting, he declared that he had “sown seed”. Thus it was believed that he meant, that he taught others his witchcraft. Those seeds were believed to be his children because according to African belief a witch could teach only his children witchcraft.<sup>214)</sup>

During one of the meetings he took out a small bottle and a red coat while it was raining. People became scared, ran away and dispersed thinking that those were things that he used to strike his neighbour’s goats. The LENGCO members were also involved in his burning because they were the ones who caught him at their village while he was fleeing. After he was caught, he was taken to Tšiane Village where they summoned the TŠAEYCO members through the singing of freedom songs and also by ringing the royal bell of Tšiane Village. Through the songs the TŠAEYCO members knew that those were their fellow comrades who wanted to be joined. After the amalgamation of the groups, he was taken to his house where he was “necklaced” and burnt to death with petrol. Most of the arrested comrades were released but the owner of the goats and active participants during his burning such as the two

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214) Ibid.

LENGCO and the two TŠAEYCO members were detained.<sup>215)</sup>

In Marulaneng Village (Ga-Mphahlele) two people who were stoned and burnt to death were Mrs. Ramakgahlele Selema and Mr. Makgatše Sefala. The burning occurred after the comrades saw what they believed to be “Zombies” in their houses. They thought that, that was the exposure that a traditional diviner Skandule Mabaso prophesied. The healer was consulted at Ha-Malamulele (around Giyani) after lightning that struck Tleane’s house in the village. After “throwing” his bones, he promised that witches would be exposed. After the tragedy (burning) the comrades spent most of their life in the bush, such that it became difficult for the police who had a list of suspect arsonist comrades’ leaders to arrest them. They were arrested after the police had gone to the sub-royal house where they requested tona-gadi Ramatsimele Mphahlele to hand over her children at the Lebowakgomo Police Station.<sup>216)</sup>

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215) Mr. S. M. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998; Mrs. L. M. Dinala, Marulaneng Village, 12-07-1998.

216) Mr. S. M. Mphahlele, Lenting Village, 17-08-1999; Mr. S. M. Maphutha, Marulaneng Village, 13-09-1998.

Their parents solved the matter by taking them to the police station rather than leaving them to suffer in a bush. After the arrest, 16 comrades were acquitted and 14, amongst them Mr. K. K. Mampa and Mr M. Maphutha were sentenced differently. The highest sentence was 21 years imprisonment. The Lenting and Mamatonya comrades held meetings with Marulaneng comrades but witch burning and tracing was considered a village problem. Consequently, they refrained rather than get involved in the act.<sup>217)</sup>

The DAEYCO members consulted a traditional healer at Phafola (around Giyani) in an attempt to trace and identify witches, after a lightning struck a house in the village, but they did not kill anybody. The decision was that the traditional healer had to kill the suspected witches of the village with his medicines. The diviner could not succeed as a result they demanded their money back. After the demand, another attempts to kill the suspected witches failed. He ordered each and every villager to jump over his medicines but nobody died.<sup>218)</sup>

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217) Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998.

218) Mr. S. W. Lekgau, University of the North, 09-10-1998; Mrs. M. Maesela, Seleteng Post Office, 5-05-1999; Mrs. M. Phaladi, Tooseng Village, 22-12-1998.

In Seleteng Village, it was alleged there was a lightning striking people and zombies that were scaring the comrades. “They saw them while going to their meetings” so this made them to reconsider the issue of witch burning. After lightning struck, they consulted a traditional diviner at Phafola. The diviner supposedly “identified” the witches of the village by using a mirror. It was a white cloth on which the people (the comrades) could see the witches and how they performed their magic after they were given traditional herbal medicines). Most of the supposedly “identified” witches who were living at the Mašhoene section of Seleteng Village were the first to be burnt to death. They were Mr. Mphašha Mašhoene, Mrs. Ramaesele Mphašha Mašhoene, Mr. Ranka Mašhoene’s mother and Mr. Phaphe Mašhoene. It is alleged that the comrades were convinced that these were real witches because one man in the group asked to bath himself before he could be burnt. It is alleged that the bath in which he was bathing flew high like an airplane. Mr. Ranka Mašhoene’s mother also said that even if she may be killed, she will leave behind a gun that will continue her duty. It was believed that by her “duty” she was referring to her witchcraft and that by “a gun”, to her daughter. She was understood to mean that even if she could be killed; her daughter would perpetuate her witchcraft. After the burning, both Mr. Thoka Mathabatha and Mr. Shove Mašhoene were arrested and jailed for six years.<sup>219)</sup>

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219) Mrs. M. Phaladi, Tooseng Village, 22-12-1998; Mrs. P. Rašhwene, Mašhite Village, 13-01-2000.

In Maijane section of Seleteng Village, they saw in 1986 as an opportunity to rectify the 1978 mistake whereby Ngwana-Mangene Ntsoane escaped when she was supposed to be burnt with two people who were regarded as witches. In 1986 she escaped again and fled to Mampiki section of Mamaolo Village (Ga-Mphahlele). The section became known as Baloing (Witches) section because it was built by people who fled during the witch burning activity.<sup>220)</sup>

In the Mašhite section of Seleteng Village, Mrs. Maswi of Mabele, Mrs. Mogatša Bjokwane, Ngwana-Mamphere and Mrs. Ngwana Mošwane were burnt to death. The first was burnt after lightning that struck a person. She was accused of the crime because after the lightning, she was found bathing herself. It is believed that a person who strikes others with lightning goes to the river or uses water to bath off medicines that he or she used to strike. It is alleged that she did not die immediately after being burnt because when the police arrived, she was half burnt and they took her to Dr. Matšhupe Mphahlele Hospital (Groothoek - in Zebediela area) where she died after a week. She is alleged to have mentioned the names of other witches together with that of Mr. Moleke Maleka who fled away. It was during the burning of Mrs. Maswi a Mabele and Mošwane's daughter that a group of young men was arrested. Except for one person within the group they all got free bail. The detained was the one who gave Mrs. Mampere's child petrol and compelled him to burn his mother.<sup>221)</sup>

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220) Mrs. P. Rašhwene, Mašhite Village, 13-01-2000.

221) Mr. L. P. Mathabatha, Nkotokwane, 12-08-1998.

In Nkotokwane Village, it was the death of a teenager, which inspired the comrades to trace witches. The teenager was drowned in the river while she had gone there to do laundry with other teenagers of the village. Even though she was dead her corpse was flexible like that of a living person. Africans in the area believe that a dead person must be stiff. If it is not stiff that means she was bewitched and made a zombie. Thus the comrades decided to consult a traditional diviner at Giyani who gave them herbal medicines that they had to bury so that those who were perpetrators could become insane. This did not satisfy them and they decided to consult another traditional diviner who used a mirror to identify the witches. The “identified” namely Mrs. Kanyane Phogole, Mrs. Masibe Mphahlele, Mr Morore Mphahlele, Ngwana Kupa Madigoe, Mrs Raisibe Madigoe, Mrs. Rabokale Ntsoane and Mrs. Soome Ntsoane were burnt to death.<sup>222)</sup>

After the burning many people were arrested, both young and old. Mr. Lesiba Paki Mathabatha was arrested together with his father. Amongst the arrested, there were three men who were not the village members. One was from Madilaneng section of Seleteng Village, one from Tšiane Village and the other from Mosetamong together with the old man of the village, they got free bail. Other comrades were later arrested when they went to listen to cases of their fellow arrested comrades. Mr. Mathabatha was jailed on 16 January 1986 and released in the middle of August 1986 because his parents could not afford a bail of

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222) Ibid.

R1500.00 that was imposed to him.<sup>223)</sup>

The Dikgale area was one of the areas where witch burning took place. At Sebayeng Village, the burning occurred after a man whose name was Makgaba Mojapelo reported Mrs Mailula and her daughter at the royal courtyard of the village. He accused them of demolishing a tree, which was in a forest which he, considered to be his house. At the packed courtyard where they were interrogated, the man asserted publicly that he would kill the woman and hurt her daughter a little bit because she was already hurt (she was disabled). It is alleged that within a week everything happened as he had said. The woman was struck by lightning while her daughter was admitted at a hospital because of severe boiling water injuries. It was on this ground that Mojapelo was considered a perpetrator.<sup>224)</sup>

The angry youth of the village were compelled to summon their parents and Ntona M. F. Molapo to a meeting that was held on the ground of Zebra Soccer Club where the issue was discussed. At the end of the discussions it was agreed that Mr Mojapelo be called for an

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223) Mr. P. Segoapa, Ga-Dikgale, 19-2-2006; Mrs. S. Mokwalakwala, Ga-Dikgale, 6-07-2007; Mr. P. Mokwalakwala, Ga-Dikgale, 6-07-2007.

224) Mr. P. Segoapa, Ga-Dikgale, 19-2-2006; Mrs. S. Mokwalakwala, Ga-Dikgale, 6-07-2007; Mr. P. Mokwalakwala, Ga-Dikgale, 6-07-2007.

explanation but instead he sent his wife. All the people who had gathered there except the elders of the village went straight to his house. The man, who was rude and arrogant, locked himself in his house. People threw stones at his house. In retaliation he stabbed one of the villagers called Lebepe with his spear. The crowd stoned him and cut his head with an axe. They also killed his wife believing that she was a witch like her husband. She swore that if they kill her husband before the sunset she would have killed seven of them. After the tragedies many people including the sub-chief were arrested. Others were acquitted on bail money that was donated by the villagers. Both Patrick Malaka and Wilson Makgoka were arrested for a long time. The former had pumped petrol that was used from the deceased car whereas the latter cut off the man's head with an axe. They were ultimately offered parole.<sup>225)</sup>

The school strike in Mafefe area coincided with a witchcraft related issue. A man named Mahlolo Motebejane went missing from Mahlatšane Village. It was suspected that Mr. Mašhile Manyaka had bewitched him. It was after a royal councillor Mr. Makoti reported to have seen Mr. Manyaka pouring something in the missing man's beer after which a lizard got out of the beer container. The area prophets and traditional diviners were assembled at the royal courtyard of Ntona Serepa Mampa to confirm the report. After the prophets and the diviners prophesied that he was bewitched and was on a mountain where he was eating dung,

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225) Mr. G. Mohlatlego, Mafefe, 10-07-2007.

they were asked to do everything they could to ensure that the bewitched man come back to the village. The missing man returned after a few days and he was not normal. Prophet Mogaboke Mohlatlole prayed for the man who after the prayer told the people that it was Mašhile who took him to the mountain where he was eating the mountain fruits for survival. Mašhile was taken out of his house at about six to seven o'clock in the morning to Lehlabatšane valley (around Mafefe) where he was burnt to death. After the tragedy the police arrested everyone they could meet around the area. Those arrested went to court. Only three, Monakasela Thobejane, Slow Maphalla and Zulu Seroko were sentenced to six years imprisonment.<sup>226)</sup>

After the tragedy of Mahlatšane, another incident occurred after a lightning hit at Ngwaname Village. There was a woman who was believed to be a witch so after consulting a traditional healer that woman was burnt with petrol. Many other youth were arrested again.<sup>227)</sup>

Around Mamabolo area, in Mense Village, the youth burnt women to death in 1986 after the death of a primary school child. They believed that one woman contributed to her death

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226) Ibid.

227) Ibid.

because the child had bought bananas from her. The death of that child was attributed to that one woman who was believed to have poisoned bananas. At a meeting that was held on Disco Mountain (around the area), the comrades agreed upon 'eye for an eye.' The woman was burnt but the police never arrested anybody because the culprits fled and slept in different villages around Mamabolo area including Komaneng. The tragedy coincided with that of Ga-Šhilwane section of the same village where it was alleged a woman was found riding on a baboon simultaneously accompanied by a person who could not talk (zombie). After the burial of the child, the comrades decided to continue with witch burning. They had tyres, petrol and paraffin. Their intention was to burn the woman who was seen climbing a baboon. They were interrupted and scattered by the police. The Mankweng police arrested many people on the spot while the leaders had fled to Sekhokho Village next to the gate of St. Engenas church. Mr. Magagane and the other leaders were arrested after coming back home. Each house in the village donated R20.00 for bail to pay Mr. Molapatedi Collins Ramusi, a lawyer who represented them. That case ended in 1988 but no one was sentenced.<sup>228)</sup>

At Makgwareng Village (Ga-Mothapo), a woman was necklaced after a lightning had struck and killed a person. She was identified by a group of traditional healers who were called by

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228) Mr. P. P. Magagane, Ga-Mamabolo, 10-02-2006.

the comrades after the catastrophe. One person who was struck by the lightning and survived also accused her. Before she could be burnt she was asked if it was true that she caused the lightning. It was alleged she agreed and said that she was not alone but before she could give names of people who prepared the lightning with her, a stone from somewhere struck on her mouth and she could no longer talk again. She was burnt to death. Three days later a lightning also struck at Phuti village at the same area. Traditional healers identified the perpetrator. It was alleged that they tried to burn her with petrol in her thatched house but she could not burn. Even though petrol was poured on her she could run inside a flame without burning. It is alleged that she burnt after she was beaten with a stone and after a snake came out from her body was killed.<sup>229)</sup>

### **6.7. Destruction of the Government and Private Properties**

Attacks by the comrades were not only directed at the government properties but also at the private properties. In Dithabaneng Village, the comrades agreed that they had to destroy (burn) police vans. They burnt an Ellerines Furniture truck and a bus but the attempts to burn the vans were unsuccessful. The Bapedi Trading Store in Apel Village was boycotted for six months after the decision that was made by the comrades of Nkotokwane Village and the

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229) Mr. Z. Letsoalo, Ga-Makanya, 10-12-2005.

nearest villages. The main reason was that the shop belonged to a white man who formed part and parcel of the apartheid regime. They knew that he would lose financially because foods in the shop would expire. In Solomondale location in Dikgale area the superintendent's office was burnt several times in 1984, 1986 and 1989. The office was managed by a police and was also seen as a symbol of the apartheid regime. The office was collecting money for the services that were not rendered. The rent paid was for water, refuse removal, dog and cat taxes. People were arrested but no one was sentenced because there was not enough evidence.<sup>230)</sup>

In 1986 electricity was installed only in the royal house of Ga-Mothapo. The area members were also promised that electricity but the promise was never fulfilled. In protest against the royal house decision, the Mothapo Congress members burnt two electric poles at the royal house in 1987. The royal house responded positively because the same year towards September, Lebowa electricity was supplied to any one who wanted and could afford it.<sup>231)</sup>

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230) Mr. W. Mokhari, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Miss S. Mothiba, Solomondale, 22-01-2006; Mr. L. P. Mathabatha, Nkotokwane, 12-08-1998; Mr. L. Leshilo, Dithabaneng Village, 22-12-1998.

231) Mr. Masiakwala, Ga- Mothapo, 16-12-2005; Mr. K. Ramodike, Ga-Mothiba, 12-01-2006.

In the 1980s there were many people who were dying on the road from Polokwane (Pietersburg) to Boyne due to the lack of road signs. Most Blacks were dying in car accidents caused by spiteful whites who were just “hitting and running”. The amalgamated comrade groups of Mothapo and Mothiba decided to make road signs that were removed by the police. Ultimately, a decision was made that they had to remove the only tarred road that was there but they were stopped by the police who dispersed them. In the 1989 meeting they decided to do roadblocks. The reason was that their fellow Black brothers were dying on the road because of Whites so they had to revenge by killing and burning cars of any white person who was using the road. During roadblocks they also looted properties, which belonged to the Whites. If the car had food this was eaten but if carrying things like cement, furniture etc. they were burnt down. Geen and Richards’s furniture and trucks were burnt. If a driver was a black person he was taken out before it was set alight. The intention was that these Whites, who formed part and parcel of the government, who had a say in it would complain and pressurise the government to relinquish its policy.<sup>232)</sup>

## **6.8. The Comrade Courts**

These were disciplinary courts established with the intention of solving problems in different areas. The comrades had adopted the policy of non-collaboration with the apartheid

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232) Mr. K. Ramodike, Ga-Mothiba, 12-01-2006.

institutions. The courts were viewed as alternatives to police stations. That was another way of defying the apartheid law. The people both young and old began to put their faith in these courts. Government courts lost legitimacy. Most of the problems that they were solving were family disputes. They disciplined misbehaving family members.<sup>233)</sup>

In Seleteng Village, the comrades whipped Mr. Maaga's daughter whose father reported that she disrespected her. Mr. Maaga's daughter opened a case at Lebowakgomo Police Station, which led to the arrest of Mr. Nkopodi Phatudi and Mr. Phatudi Mphahlele both of the main royal house of Ga-Mphahlele. They had long sentences. In the same village again, a woman reported her husband who could not take care of his children as he was living with another woman in Solomondale location. The comrades were arrested before they could find him. They were reported by a spy that was afraid that they might injure the man as they had tjamboks. They were released immediately after being interrogated.<sup>234)</sup>

In Tooseng Village, the TOEYCO members punished the late Mr. Reeks Leshilo. Mr. Leshilo was selling "Patše" ('Marijuana'). His sister the late Mrs. Nkatile realised that the product

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233) Mr. L.H. Maja, Ga-Maja, 10-10-2005; Mr. B. Senamela, Ga-Maja, 11-11-2005.

234) Miss M. F. Lekgau, Mankweng, 16-10-1998.

might lead to his arrest because it was prohibited by the government. Leshilo was lashed but he never reported the matter at the police station. In Dithabaneng Village, the comrades were not only punishing people but were also fighting crime. There groups of comrades escorted workers at bus stops to prevent robbery.<sup>235)</sup>

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235) Miss R. C. Phaladi, Tooseng Village, 23-03-2005.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

The central issue in Chapter One is the statement of the problem. The role of the youth in the struggle against Apartheid has not been fully recorded by historians. The background of the problem provides reasons why the youth of Thabamopo and South Africa were compelled to struggle against the apartheid regime. Government passed various Acts that were constricting only Black lives whereas the Whites who were also living in South Africa were not affected by the Acts. According to literature reviewed in the same chapter, the Black youth of both urban and rural areas were involved in the struggle against the apartheid regime but historians focused attention mostly on what was happening in urban areas. The research questions used during the interviews helped to achieve aims and objectives of the study.

In this chapter there is also theoretical framework that frames the study. This theory is Afrocentricity. I choose the framework because the study focuses on the African experience. The study confirms that Blacks have a History like all the racial groups in South Africa. The study contests the liberal and Afrikaner schools according to which Blacks have no history and culture of their own. The research design and methodology makes one understands qualitative research and the way in which I have conducted my research. There is also a section on operational definitions in which words or terms are defined in accordance with the way they are used in the research.

Chapter Two focuses on the people of Thabamooopo district who they were, where they came from and where they were living. The research reveals that most of the inhabitants of the district were the same people with exclusion of the Ndebele of Ledwaba who are originally Zulu people. Most were from the Great Lakes of Central Africa. Most of them had been Kone people before they could part with that parent group. For instance, the Kone of Matlala, Phokwane, Mphahlele, Dikgale, Mothapo, Mothiba, Tiisane, Maja, Tšhwene, and Ditšweung people, to mention a few, were all the same Kone before they split. The Makgoba, Mathabathe and Molepo people were also related. They all have the same totem because they were brothers.

Chapter Three shows how the youth were affected by the apartheid regime as Blacks and as black students. It demonstrates that the youth in schools and universities were the ones who initiated resistance against the Apartheid regime and that the youth of the urban areas were the ones who influenced the youth of the rural areas to be against the regime. According to the chapter SASO played the biggest role in conscientising the youth not just of the district but of South Africa as a whole. In the same chapter we are also made aware of the fact that the Soweto uprising stirred the youth of the district and South Africa into action against the regime. The youth of the district became involved in a series of strikes as a protest against the regime.

Chapter Four continued to concentrate on the role of the Black Consciousness Movement, especially its impact on the youth of South Africa and that of the district. The chapter reveals

that even after the Black Consciousness was banned its spirit did not die because it contributed to the formation of the UDF. This is because the Front as was the case with the Black Consciousness Movement encouraged unity amongst the Blacks in the struggle against the Apartheid regime. As a result of the Black Consciousness and the UDF boarding schools in the district and universities like the University of the North played an important role in organising, conscientising and mobilising the youth of the district against the regime.

Chapter Five shows that the apartheid regime brought unity amongst the youth of both urban and rural areas. The youth of urban areas conscientised the youth of Thabamooopo district about the political situation prevailing in South Africa. The conscientised youth of the district became united in the form of youth congresses. These youth congresses networked with the youth congresses of other districts in Lebowa under the Northern Transvaal Youth Congress. The youth under the Northern Transvaal Youth Congress also networked with the youth of the other homelands and they all affiliated under the South African Youth Congress. The youth of the district became involved because of the youth of the urban areas and because of the activities of the Black Consciousness Movement and organisations like the UDF. Youth resistance started in educational institutions.

Chapter Six deals with the way in which the youth of the district resisted the Apartheid policy. This chapter shows that the resistance of the youth of the Thabamooopo district differed with that of the youth of the urban areas. In the district the youth opposed their chiefs and the government, government appointed chiefs and Queens, concentrated on witchcraft related issues, destroyed government and private properties and defied Apartheid Acts. It was

not only the government that suffered but also their own people (civil servants). Thus the youth of the rural areas contributed to the freedom of all Blacks in South Africa. This implies that we are free not only because of the role of the urban youth but also because of all the Black South African youth including those of the rural areas. Their activities in the struggle made South Africa ungovernable.

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