

**A CRITICAL HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF BLACK YOUTH
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON THE COMMUNITY OF MOGALAKWENA LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY OF WATERBERG DISTRICT IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, 1976-1994**

BY

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

In the Department of Cultural and Political Studies

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

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DECLARATION

I, **Malesela Shadrack Marotola**, declare that “The Youth in the Struggle against the Apartheid System in Mogalakwena Municipality of Waterberg District of Limpopo Province, 1976-1994: An Exploratory Historical Study” submitted to the University of Limpopo, has been written by me. It has not been presented for higher degree in any other University. All quotations have been acknowledged and distinguished by footnotes and quotation marks.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Samuel Sakkie Marotola. May his soul rest in peace. Despite financial problems in our family, he worked hard to take me to the university. Through his efforts I became the first university graduate in my village. Furthermore, this thesis is dedicated to all my children, Mohau Prince Marotola, Mosa Christopher Marotola and Reratilwe Mahuhudi Tselana. May God bless them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of research is always based on interaction with people and different environments. It was through my interaction with the following people that this study became possible.

At first I would like to acknowledge the major assistance I received from my supervisor and mentor, Dr A.V Dhliwayo, University of Limpopo. When I completed my MA degree, I had no interest of continuing with any academic study, but he encouraged me to continue and, I developed the interest. I conducted this research at a time when I was engulfed by numerous personal and family problems. Despite those predicaments, Dr Dhliwayo became a source of strength in my endeavour to complete the study. The academic friendship which developed during the study helped me to tolerate the difficulties which went with this study. May God spare him longer for other students.

I would also like to thank my parents, Johanna and Samuel Marotola. They raised me in conditions of poverty but created a conducive environment for my studies. Had it not been for their parental love I would not be where I am today.

I appreciate the assistance I received from the staff of Lebowakgomo Archives, especially Mr Mavuso. He assisted me in locating many relevant primary sources for this study.

I also thank Mr Japhta Madimetja Mahwete for his assistance in technological matters. He sacrificed his job on many occasions to assist me whenever I had difficulties operating a computer during this study.

I sincerely thank all the people I interviewed during this study. I thank them for the time they created for me and the humanity they expressed during that time. This kindness is greatly

appreciated since other people disappointed me by not honouring my appointments while some refused to be interviewed.

I would be insensitive and unfair if I do not acknowledge the cooperation, support and humility I received from Rabasotho Primary School Community (teachers, parents and learners). They made me feel at home, which helped me to complete this study.

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on youth political activities on the community of Mogalakwena Municipality, in the period 1976-1994. This period marks the intensity of the political struggle of black people against apartheid in the entire South Africa and Mogalakwena community in particular. The study reveals the youth as agents of change and catalysts in the struggle against apartheid in Mogalakwena.

The study unpacks the factors that led to the mobilisation of the youth in Mogalakwena. It reflects on various factors such as the oppressive conditions of apartheid in South Africa and Lebowa in general. Above all, the study reveals that the banishment of Mosibudi Mangena of AZAPO to Mahwelereng in 1978 marked the beginning of conscious struggle in Mogalakwena. AZAPO became the bringboard of political mobilisation in Mahwelereng and the entire Mogalakwena Municipality. The study reveals the gradual assimilation of AZAPO members into UDF, which ultimately enabled the UDF to take the centre stage in the political struggle in Mogalakwena. The period from 1980 to 1989 saw dramatic upsurge in youth political activities characterised by education, rent and consumer boycotts against the apartheid government. During this period, the community of Mogalakwena was engulfed by politics and gradually became politically aware.

The study utilised its research questions properly and that made it easy to achieve its aim and objectives. As a result, the main research problem was addressed hence the impact of youth political activities in Mogalakwena was discovered. The study applied a purposive sampling and snowballing technique to identify informants. It further used both internal and external criticism to test the reliability of data from both oral and written sources. The use of the

methodology stated above helped in selecting data to address the research problem. However, the study shows that more research can still be done on both political and economic aspects.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	African National Congress
APLA	-	Azania People's Liberation Army
AZAPO	-	Azania People's Organisation
AZASM	-	Azania Student Movement
BCM	-	Black Consciousness Movement
CAWUSA	-	Commercial Allied Workers Union of South Africa
CODESA	-	Convention for Democratic South Africa
COSAS	-	Congress of South African Students
FRELIMO	-	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
MCSRC	-	Mokerong Confederation of Student Representative Council
NAFCOC	-	National African Federated Chamber of Commerce
NOTTU	-	Northern Transvaal Teachers Union
NUM	-	National Union of Mine Workers
PAC	-	Pan Africanist Congress
SACC	-	South African Council of Churches
SACP	-	South African Communist Party
SADF	-	South African Defence Force
SADTU	-	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAMWU	-	South African Mineworkers Union
SAP	-	South African Police
SASM	-	South African Student Movement
SOYCO	-	South African Youth Congress
SRC	-	Student Representative Council
SWAPO	-	South West African's People Organisation

TC	-	Trust Council
TSC	-	Transvaal Student Congress
TUATA	-	Transvaal United African Teachers Association
UDF	-	United Democratic Front
UN	-	United Nations Organisation
ZANU PF	-	Zimbabwe African National Union People's Front
ZAPU	-	Zimbabwe African People's Union

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CHAPTER ONE

THE IMPACT OF YOUTH POLITICAL ACTIVITIES: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL, METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When the National Party came to power in 1948, it introduced the system of apartheid. Black political organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC), Azanian People Organisation (AZAPO), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist party (SACP) launched massive protests against the South African government. The ANC Youth League, which was established in 1944 by young political activists, including Nelson Mandela, also came up with the “Programme of Action” in 1949 to confront the apartheid system. A scrutiny of the historical literature on the role of South African youth in the struggle against apartheid has, with a few exceptions, concentrated on large urban areas. This is not surprising. The Soweto Student Uprising of 1976, with a picture of a young boy carrying the bloody lifeless body of Hector Peterson, is deeply etched in the minds of most South Africans and academics in the international community interested in the history of South Africa.

Soweto, where Hector Peterson was gunned down by the South African police during the Soweto Student Uprising, is in Johannesburg. The gory event has come to symbolise two critical processes which have characterised the history of South Africa. It symbolises the racist apartheid system which dehumanised Africans, as well as the bitter and courageous struggle of South Africans for freedom. The courageous uprising of Soweto youth of 1976 spread to other urban centres such as Thokoza, Alexander, Phelendaba in Pretoria and others. However, the uprising also impacted on semi-urban and rural African communities, including Mogalakwena. A few professional historians such as Delius and Lodge have, however, conducted perceptive studies on rural struggle. An incomplete historical picture of the role of the youth in the struggle in rural and semi urban areas, however, remains. This exploratory study, seeks to contribute towards adding more knowledge to this huge gap. The focus of the study is Mogalakwena in Waterberg District in Limpopo Province. There is hardly any serious and detailed professional study of the role of the youth in this area by professional

historians. This is why this study is exploratory. The goal is to lay some credible foundation for future research.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been hardly any detailed study of youth political activity on Mogalakwena Municipality from 1976 to 1994. Only few studies touched on Mahwelereng in the 1980s, peripherally. Those studies included Gumbi, Delius and Lodge. Gumbi's article focused on the various areas of Lebowa. He analysed how the people of Mahwelereng experienced damage of their property and how innocent people were sjamboked by the police due to the activities of the "Comrades."¹

Lodge and Nasson also discussed youth political activities. Their area of focus was the Transvaal. They described the education boycotts in Lebowa, the extent of the consumer boycotts in Mokopane and the way in which the Lebowa government officials and Lebowa police were isolated by the people of Mahwelereng in Mokopane.² Delius focused on youth political activists in other areas of Lebowa such as Sekhukhuniland, and this motivated the researcher to conduct similar research in Mogalakwena Municipality.³ He described phenomenal aspects such as school boycotts, rejection of the tribal authorities by the youth activists and the clash of the youth activists with the Lebowa police. He also dealt with the role of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in Mokopane and the way in which the Lebowa police were ostracised by the communities.

Other general history books which have discussed youth protests in South Africa in general include Adler and Steinberg, Sechaba and Ellis. Adler and Steinberg showed how Black organisations such as the Civics, Street Committees, People's Courts were formed, and the way in which they implemented the campaigns of the UDF such as the rent boycotts and consumer boycotts. They also described the manner in which those organisations were against local authorities. Sechaba and Ellis also focused on how the UDF was formed and the Committees which implemented consumer boycotts, rent boycotts, education boycotts

¹ M. Gumbi. "Death in the weeping cells of Lebowa", **African Law Review**, Vol.1, 1987.

² T. Lodge and B.Nasson. **All, Here and Now: Black politics in South Africa in the 1980s.** Cape Town, Fort Foundation-David Phillip, 1986.

³ P.Delius. **A Lion Amongst the cattle; Reconstruction and Resistance in Northern Transvaal.** Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1996.

and the brutal manner in which the boycott violators were punished by the youth activists.⁴ Sitas focused on youth protest by portraying the Comrades as young Africans who had no future, no homes and who destroyed property such as shops, schools and infrastructure. He blamed lack of parental authority on youth political activities which he regarded as barbaric.⁵

He explained that Comrades were comprised of different types of youth such as those who were unemployed, university students and graduates, political activists and school children. His study portrayed the Comrades as trouble makers rather than freedom fighters. Callinicos interpreted youth protest from an educational perspective by focusing on the need for People's education, which was a popular demand by school children. By People's education the students wanted their education to be based on the values of Black culture. Students felt that people's education could be realised through the teaching of people's history and their cultural values. According to the youth, people's history is the history that focussed on their Black heroes who fought against apartheid such as Nelson Mandela.⁶

Bonner covered the struggle against colonialism by various African chiefdoms in the Northern Transvaal, including Mogalakwena. He discussed that the discovery of minerals such as diamonds created labour markets in the republics.⁷ There was a huge labour shortage which forced the republics to recruit labour from the black chiefdoms. The whites collaborated with some African chiefs to raid slaves in rural areas to address the acute labour shortage.⁸ The slave raid caused conflict with the black chiefs which also happened in Mogalakwena. The conflict between the whites and the blacks was heightened by the fact that the white people competed with the black for the same economic resources. He also showed that the need to get black labour was accompanied by their other form of economy such as hunting and trading.⁹ This was justified by the hunting of elephants which acquired them gains in the sale of tusks. Pretorius even used the black mercenaries in his slave raid and

⁴ S. Ellis and T. Sechaba. **Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and SACP in exile.** London, Indiana University Press, pp.143-144.

⁵ A. Sitas. "The Comrades", **Reality**, Vol.23, 1991, pp.6-8.

⁶ L. Callinicos. "Learn and Teach-popular History in the Eighties", **Radical Historical Review**, Vol4, 1986, pp.288-289.

⁷ P. Bonner. **Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires-The Evolution of the Nineteen Century Swazi State.** London, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 70.

⁸ Ibid, p. 70.

⁹ Ibid, p. 71.

hunting.¹⁰ The hunting expedition compelled the boer leaders such as Pretorius to reach a place such as Mokopane in Mogalakwena. However, he traces Pretorius's hunting expedition in places around Mogalakwena such as Moletji, Zebetela and Ghanana in Blaauwberg. Due to the conflict caused by the need for labour and hunting, the boers were killed by Chief Mokopane of the Matebele of Kekana.¹¹

Setumu also explained the Matebele of Mokopane and that of Langa in their fight against colonialism in the 1850s.¹² Like Phillip Bonner, he did not particularly cover the youth but showed that the fight against colonialism in Mogalakwena did not start with the youth. He covered the Matebele's fight against colonialism from 1850 to 1869. He showed the way in which Chief Mokopane was opposed to the encroachment of the white people on his land.¹³ He was against labour recruitment on his people and the indenture system which he thought permanently attached the black children to white farmers. He saw the indenture system as a form of slavery.¹⁴ Setumu also revealed that Chief Mokopane did not like the manner in which the white people despised the culture of his Matebele people.

This complaint was made when the leader of the Voortrekkers by the name of Hermanus Potgieter killed a big snake which, according to Matebele culture, harboured the spirit of their late king.¹⁵ Mokopane was also angered by the fact that Hermanus Pretorius seemed to be at liberty to kill many Matebele people out of his short temper. He explained that about fourteen white people were killed by the Matebele of Mokopane at Moordrift or Murder drit while another fourteen whites were killed by the Matebele of Langa at Fothane Hill in Mapela area.¹⁶ He further showed the extent to which the Matebele people were ruthlessly attacked and killed in a cave by the boers in 1855.¹⁷

¹⁰ Ibid, p.71.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 71.

¹² T. Setumu . **Our Heritage: Wars of Resistance in Limpopo- Kgosi Mokopane of the Matebele of Kekana.** Volume 4, J.P Publishers, Polokwane, 2005. P.7.

¹³ Ibid, p.7.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.8.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.8.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁷ T. Setumu . **Our Heritage ; The wars of Resistance in Limpopo-Kgosi Mankopane of the Matebele of Langa.** Volume 7, J.p Publishers, Polokwane, 2005, p.10.

Setumu further showed that the Matebele of Langa and those of Mokopane fought against the boers on the same grounds. He further explained that the Matebele of Langa and the boers had conflicting interest on land, grazing and game.¹⁸ He exposed the war tactics used by Chief Mankopane of Matebele of Langa during his fight against the boers at Fothane Hill. He discussed how Chief Mankopane sent his warriors to the boers with a big elephant tusk. They also carried their short spears and hid them under their clothes. When they reached the white soldiers they put the tusk down a distance away from their wagon and invited them to inspect it.¹⁹ The white soldiers left their rifles behind and went to inspect the tusk. They were killed and the body of their leader Hermanus Potgieter was used to make rituals.²⁰ He discussed the manner in which Chief Mankopane defeated the white soldiers who were under Schoeman, Paul Kruger and Barend Vorster at the battle of Maruputlane on Magagamatala mountains.²¹ Setumu further discussed that a peace treaty was signed by Paul Kruger and Chief Mankopane in 1869. Due to that treaty, Paul Kruger abandoned his demand that Chief Mankopane paid indemnity and that he left his mountain stronghold of Magagamatala area.²²

Marks analysed the way in which the Comrades were organised in terms of their code of conduct and how they punished those who violated the code of conduct.²³ He further explored how some Comrades took the advantage of that political situation to advance their own personal interests such as compelling people to collect money as if they were mandated by the comrades. The strength of literature on this study was its focus on educational boycotts, consumer boycotts, rent boycotts, the formation of Street Committees and the people's courts. A major weakness of this literature on this theme lies in the fact that sources did not pay attention to the impact of those political activities on the day to day lives of the people.

Those who recorded the events did not write how the people were forced to attend meetings, how the people were killed by the police for being suspected of being Comrades, how it was difficult for teachers to do their work, how the hawkers were dispossessed of their goods and

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.8.

²⁰ Ibid, p.8.

²¹ Ibid, p.8.

²² Ibid, p.8.

²³ M. Marks. **Young Warriors Young Politics, Identity and Violence in South Africa.** Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2001.

how domestic workers were punished for being suspected of buying in town during the boycotts. Another study on the political activities of the youth in Mphahlele area in Limpopo Province was undertaken by Phaladi.²⁴ She investigated the formation of youth political organisations in Mphahlele area. In her view, apartheid was a direct violation of human rights and condemned internally by Blacks and externally by the international bodies such as the United Nations Organisation.

She discussed how some Comrades in Mphahlele were able to mobilise the youth in that area not to fight against each other but to fight against the system of apartheid. She also showed how the Comrades tried to unite all the youth in Mphahlele to assist each other in solving problems which they were experiencing in their respective villages. Phaladi further described how the Comrades made the people of Mphahlele aware of their political rights and to fight for the release of all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela. She also discussed the extent to which the people of Mphahlele were negatively affected by youth political activism.

Another work which focused on youth political activities was written by Marotola for his master's degree with the University of Limpopo.²⁵ In his work, Marotola focussed on the impact of the youth political activities on the people of Mahwelereng location in Mokopane. He showed the manner in which the youth developed political awareness and the development and impact of that awareness among the youth and the entire Mahwelereng community. In his study, he showed how the youth spearheaded political campaigns of UDF and Azapo and showed how youth protests destabilised African traditional values such as respect, humanism or (ubuntu) etc. The study further showed how the Mahwelereng community was constantly raided and attacked by the Lebowa Police, the South African police, the White Commandos and the South African Defence Force. On the other hand, officials of Lebowa government who resided in Mahwelereng were also attacked by the community. The study also depicted how those youth activities influenced the people of Mahwelereng to mobilise themselves in the struggle against apartheid.

The strength of the literature on youth political protest was further increased by the fact that many general history books such as Murray, Hirson, Frankel, Nkosi etc focused on the

²⁴ R.J. Phaladi. **The Mphahlele People and the Uprising of 1986.** B.A Hons, 2002.

²⁵ M.S. Marotola. **A Critical Historical study of the impact of Youth Political Activities on the Community of Mahwelereng in Limpopo Province, 1976-1990.** MA, 2007.

Soweto Uprisings of 1976. Ndlovu presented an account of youth protest with specific reference to the Soweto Student Uprisings of 1976. The uprisings were primarily caused by the students' refusal to be taught exclusively in Afrikaans. He explained the fact that students enjoyed the support of the teachers as they also found it difficult to teach in Afrikaans.²⁶ Bonner and Segal provided an eyewitness account of the Soweto uprisings by interviewing those who were involved in the uprising in 1976. He advanced the view that at that time Soweto was divided into ethnic groups. Even schools were categorised in terms of ethnicity. However, he showed that students from different ethnic groups disregarded their ethnicity and worked together in their struggle against the use of Afrikaans.²⁷ They saw Afrikaans as a dividing language. He showed the extent to which students were militant in that they continued to throw stones even when the police were shooting them with live ammunition. Students destroyed government property and private property. They burnt municipal beer halls and liquor stores since they regarded them as destructive to their people. He further stated how students were searched and interrogated after the uprising to reveal the leaders of the riots. Students were punished severely and released when they were swollen and wounded in order to terrify others to show what would happen to them if they took part in the riots.

Meli discussed the Soweto Students Uprisings in the light of the influence made by the attainment of independence by some Southern African states. In the early 1970s, some neighbouring states such as Angola and Mozambique achieved freedom. There was also a possibility of independence in Zimbabwe at that time. According to Meli, Southern African countries encouraged Blacks in South Africa to realise that it was also possible for them to achieve their freedom, hence the Soweto Students Uprisings of 1976.²⁸ Lodge stated that the Soweto Uprisings united the whole community in the struggle against apartheid, further stating that the workers had grievances even before 1976.²⁹ The Soweto Uprisings gave them an opportunity to embark on strikes and stayaways in support of the students. Parents also took part, forming the Black Parents Association to support their militant children. According to Lodge, that showed how the community was united in their struggle against apartheid.

²⁶ S.M Ndlovu. **The Soweto Uprising: Counter-Memories of June 1976.** Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1998.

²⁷ P. Bonner and L. Segal. **Soweto: A History.** Johannesburg, Maskew Miller Longman, 1998.

²⁸ F. Meli. **A History of the ANC: South Africa belongs to Us.** London, Indiana University Press, 1988.

²⁹ T. Lodge. **Black Politics in South Africa since 1945.** Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983.

Pam Christie argued that the government blamed the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) as having influenced students to embark on the uprisings.³⁰ He also showed that all the BCM organisations were banned after the uprisings. He further showed how the uprisings spread to the homelands and to the Black universities such as the University of the North.³¹

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The production of African history in South Africa is rooted on Eurocentric theoretical frameworks. African culture was severely demonised and labelled as barbaric by many European historians. The history of South Africa glorified and promoted the culture of the European masters at the expense of African culture. South African historiography has been dominated by three major Eurocentric schools such as the Afrikaaner school, Liberal school and the African Nationalist school. All these schools did not interpret the history of Blacks positively, and those who tried did not interpret the history of the Blacks in their own right. The only framework which attempted to interpret the history of Blacks in the context of an African culture was Afrocentricity.

1.3.1 The Afrocentric Approach

In terms of this approach, the production of history must be based on African culture. This approach places Africa at the centre of analysis of all historical and contemporary African issues, while African people are treated as agents in their context. This approach advocates that the African people be the subject of historical experiences rather than objects. The approach castigates the Eurocentric approach for imposing itself on every subject and theme as if it was the only human and universal view. This is a racial interpretation of history. The Afrocentric approach was inspired by African scholars such as Obenga and Diop who believed in the efficacy of African culture and values for the advancement of Africa.³² They believed that the people's soul is dead when it can no longer breathe its own philosophical air and when the air of other cultures seems to dominate every aspect of conscious life.³³

³⁰ P. Christie. **The Right to Learn: The struggle for Education in South Africa.** Johannesburg, Ravan , 1985.

³¹ Ibid.

³² A. Diop. **The Cultural Unity of Black Africa.** Paris, Africaine, 1959.

³³ M. Asante. **The Painful Demise of Eurocentricity.** Treton, African World Press, 1999, p.7.

Afrocentricity was against Eurocentricity as the latter claimed to be the only superior model of intellectual development than others. It advocated the ideology that civilisation and philosophy started in Egypt rather than in Europe and that the Greek philosophers such as Plato and Socrates studied in Egypt.

Although they saw the Greeks as children compared to the Egyptians in terms of the production of knowledge in the ancient world, they still acknowledged the Greeks for their own extraordinary achievements. An Afro-American scholar named Asante became the main exponent of Afrocentricity in the sense that he applied it in the production of history. Obenga argued that the writing of African history must be based on the world view and theory which avoids binary oppositions such as primitive/civilisation, tradition/modern, emotion/reason, which characterise the European interpretation of human experience. According to Afrocentricity, human reality is made up of the complimentary pairs which Obenga regarded as the complementarity of duality. Due to that complementarity, the relationships that would be based on superiority and inferiority would not exist since Africans believed in the idea of reciprocal and mutual dependence. According to Asante, Afrocentricity consists of five characteristics. They are :

1. An intense interest in the psychological location as determined by symbols, motifs, rituals and signs.
2. A commitment to finding the subject place of Africans in any social, political, economic or religious phenomenon with implications of sex, gender, and class.
3. A defence of African cultural elements as historically valid in the context of art, music and literature and a defence of a pan-African cultural connection based on broad responses to conditions and situations over time.
4. A celebration of centredness and agency and a commitment to lexical refinement that eliminates pejoratives including sexual and gender pejoratives or other people.
5. A powerful imperative from historical sources to revise the collective text of African people as constant and consistent for liberation and maat.³⁴ However, the main weakness of Afrocentricity is that it is an academic concept since it emerged in the 1980s from Black Studies Movement to give an alternative perspective to the dominant Eurocentric world view.

³⁴ M. Asante. **The painful Demise of Eurocentricity.** p.4.

Afrocentricity advocated for the “Black view” since there was a “White view.”³⁵ The major exponent of Afrocentricity, Diop, believed that the history of Africa cannot be written correctly unless African historians connect it with Egypt. An Afrocentric approach would then structure this study on the impact of the youth political activities on the people of Mogalakwena, in Waterberg district.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The study aims to provide an exploratory account of the impact of the rural youth’s political activities in Mogalakwena Municipality during the period 1976 to 1994.

1.4.2 Objectives

The following are the objectives of this study:

- To investigate the factors which contributed to the formation of rural youth political organisations in Mogalakwena.
- To investigate the political impact of youth political activities on the lives of the people of Mogalakwena.
- To investigate the economic impact of youth political activities on the people of Mogalakwena Municipality.
- To investigate the socio-cultural impact of youth political activities on the people of Mogalakwena Municipality.

1.5 MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

What was the impact of the rural youth political activities in the struggle against apartheid in Mogalakwena Municipality during the period 1976 to 1994?

³⁵ M.M. Kadalie. **Internationalism, Pan-Africanism and the struggle of Social classes**, Georgia, Quest Press, 2000, pp.33-34

1.5.1 Subsidiary Questions

- What were the factors that contributed to the emergence of youth political organisations in Mogalakwena Municipality?
- What was the economic impact of youth political activities on the people of Mogalakwena Municipality?
- What was the socio-cultural impact of youth political activities on the people of Mogalakwena Municipality?
- What was the political impact of youth political activities on the people of Mogalakwena Municipality and the reaction of Lebowa government to youth political protests?

1.6 METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research Design

The study is an exploratory historical research. The qualitative approach was used. Historical exploratory research is the systematic and objective evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to reconstruct past events. In historical research the researcher locates the existing sources such as old newspapers, correspondence, old court records and a variety of archival sources to draw conclusions about the past. The relevant research approach for this study is the qualitative approach which is concerned with perspectives of human experiences within a particular context. This approach is a vital approach for social sciences such as history, anthropology, sociology, political science, psychology etc. Moreover, the analysis of historical data is almost completely qualitative.

Data were collected for a particular theme under investigation. Different forms of data were collected and examined from various sources to construct the picture of a complex event. By using this approach, the researcher had to be familiar with the issues related to the topic so that important information is separated from unimportant information. In qualitative research, data are collected from different sources such as interviews, written documents, audio-visual materials, objects and anything that helps the researcher to answer the research problem. This approach is relevant to this study since both written and oral sources were used to investigate the impact of youth political activities in Mogalakwena Municipality.

Qualitative research further shows that there is no single ultimate truth. It acknowledges that different perspectives of different individuals have equal validity or truth. It further shows that oral stories about the past help many people to understand what was previously observed or experienced. It is also through such oral sources that the experiences about the impact of youth's political activities in Mogalakwena was clearly captured. Therefore, this approach is the most suitable one for the type of phenomenon to be studied.

1.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

This study focussed on the population of Mogalakwena municipality. Purposive sampling technique was deployed to create a sample of people who have knowledge of the events and who existed at the time under study. Prominent people who served in the former Lebowa government such as teachers, policemen, businessmen, political activists, former Lebowa government officials who lived in Mogalakwena were identified. The names of some of these people appear in the Verbatim Reports of the former Lebowa legislative assembly.

These informants were chosen because they are known and experienced the events first hand. The snowballing technique was used to create the sample. The researcher first identified an information rich participant. This participant identified other people. This in turn provided the researcher with information rich people. In this way, the researcher continued to search for participants until a sufficient number of people for this study was obtained. To avoid a situation whereby the researcher would have found it difficult to identify other informants, the researcher asked each respondent to give more new informants. Gender sensitivity was taken into consideration, although women were reluctant to assist despite efforts to convince them to help. Thirty five informants were selected for this study.

1.8 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This study used official written records. The official written documents from the various departments in the former Lebowa homeland were consulted in both Limpopo archives in Lebowakgomo as well as the national archives in Pretoria. National and local newspapers such as "Die Bosvelder", "Podium" and "The Northern Review" were also consulted in

search of the information required. Before going to the archives a schedule comprising of the main issues to be investigated was constructed.

Archival sources were essential as they provided detailed knowledge about important events and the dates which were used for interviews. They further provided the materials used in evaluating the recollections of the identified informants. The use of written sources provided first hand information required for this research. Secondary sources such as general books and journals were also used. These sources provided secondary information that was useful because they gave the background against which the protests occurred.

Oral testimonies in the form of interviews provided primary information required for this study. Only individual face-to-face interviews were conducted. Arrangements were made with the identified informants to make themselves available for the interviews.

The informants were interviewed in their homes and at places favourable to them. Before the interviews were conducted, an interview schedule comprising the main issues that were investigated was constructed. An audio cassette recorder was used to record primary oral information. However, limitations that are associated with oral research are as follows:

- Human memory at times is unreliable

The informants sometimes distort the truth due to the fact that they either have an interest or personal prejudice against the event. Informants can exaggerate one's role in the event or the organisation's role in the event. These limitations also manifested themselves in this study and were dealt with by subjecting oral sources to both internal and external criticisms.

This methodology is not new to South African history, having been used by Belinda Bozoli in her book which was largely written on the basis of oral research.³⁶ This oral research was facilitated by the fact that the researcher knows the home language of the people of Mogalakwena Municipality. Their home language is Sepedi. This enabled the informants to respond freely. The questions were prepared in advance for the interview. The interview was

³⁶ B. Bozoli. **Women of Phokeng**. Johannesburg, Longman, 1988.

open to allow the informants to provide additional information related to the problem which helped the researcher to acquire more information.

1.9 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

As the research unfolds, the main aspects and patterns of the data usually begin to emerge. It was important for the researcher to position data in their relevant codes. Coding helped to identify themes in the data and the relationship between the themes. The researcher identified the codes and arranged them in a proper chronology as directed by the research itself. Content analysis is essentially a coding operation. Oral and written sources or others were coded or classified according to their conceptual framework. Every piece of information fitted in its own category. Since data analysis and data collection are inseparable, data was analysed during the process of collection.

1.10 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND OBJECTIVITY

Data collected from written documents and oral sources were tested and compared before being used to determine its authenticity, accuracy and reliability. Historical critical methods such as internal and external criticism were applied for both written and oral sources. Internal criticism helped in determining the veracity of the information produced by the respondents. On the other hand, external criticism helped in criticising the background of the informants. The method of triangulation was used to compare the information from various sources. This method was suitable for the study because data were deduced from various sources such as interviews, questionnaires, and written documents and were synthesised to increase their validity and reliability.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research process acknowledged the human rights of every person who was involved. Every informant was informed about the purpose, the nature and reason for undertaking this study. They were also interviewed only after they had agreed to do so. Informants were further respected in terms of their right to privacy, association, confidentiality etc. Those who asked to be released from the research process were allowed to do so. An informed consent

form was given to the informants to justify that no person was forced to participate in this study. This further helped to justify the originality of the study so that no person may claim any information used in the study. In line with the transparency of courts in South Africa, the information contained in the court records was used without tampering with the facts of each case relating to the accused and defendants.

1.12 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because it informs the national and the international community that not only people living in urban areas fought against apartheid. The rural population also actively participated in the struggle for liberation. This also showed how big a task it was to fight against apartheid. Everyone had to be involved to contribute to its demise. The study informs the existing and the coming generations that the rural people of Mogalakwena in particular, also took part in the struggle against apartheid.

1.13 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study pays special attention to youth political activities in Mogalakwena from 1976 to 1994. It investigates the emergence and development of youth political awareness and consciousness in Mogalakwena, which helped to galvanise the people of Mogalakwena in the struggle against apartheid. Mogalakwena is one of the municipalities of Limpopo Province situated in Waterberg District. It is named after Mogalakwena River which runs through the villages of Mogalakwena from east to west up to Limpopo River. The study is a recognition of the fact that even the rural people of Mogalakwena took part in the struggle against the apartheid government in South Africa.

The thesis comprises six chapters.

Chapter 1 focuses mainly on the methodology that was used when I conducted this study. It has a literature review which shows that there has not been any detailed professional study conducted by professional historians focusing on Mogalakwena area from 1976-1994.

Therefore, the chapter shows this exploratory study as a basis for future research on Mogalakwena. The chapter also provides the theoretical framework which guides this study. Unlike the previous historical studies which are Eurocentric in their orientation, this one is Afrocentric. Afrocentricity is a theory of social change which was articulated by Molefi Kete Asante in the 1970s.

Chapter 2 unpacks the political conditions in South Africa and Lebowa in particular, since 1948. The apartheid government passed a series of oppressive legislations such as the Group Areas Act and the Native Urban Areas Act. In Lebowa the passing of the Internal Securities Act of 1976 demonstrates, inter alia, the oppressive nature of apartheid. These political conditions propelled the emergence of African political organisations in Mogalakwena.

The chapter demonstrates how the 1976 Soweto uprising rekindled the spirit of resistance in Mogalakwena. It shows how the house arrest of Mosibudi Mangena of AZAPO in Mahwelereng contributed to the rise and development of youth political activities in Mogalakwena. It also shows the emergence of the UDF and how AZAPO members were transformed into UDF members. The spread of the UDF was assisted by trade union activity. All in all it shows how the liberation of Zimbabwe and Namibia influenced the people of Mogalakwena in their struggle against apartheid.

Chapter 3 focuses on the fact that the passing of the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 and the Native Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1952 made it difficult for the people of Mogalakwena to get jobs as they were compelled to stay in the rural homeland of Lebowa. Despite the prohibition of that act, they had to go to urban areas for employment as they had to pay tax in the form of money. The chapter analyses the causes of consumer boycotts in both rural and urban areas of Mogalakwena. It also deals with the impact of consumer boycotts of Indian and white businesses.

Chapter 4 investigates the socio-cultural impact of youth political activities on the people of Mogalakwena with specific reference to education. It investigates the causes of education boycotts in Mogalakwena and shows how students acted against various levies that they had to pay, such as school fees, sports fees, and building fees. It also shows their opposition to corporal punishment. This chapter reveals that students' boycotts were also caused by the non-provision of textbooks and stationery by the Lebowa Department of Education in schools. Students' boycotts were also fuelled by SADTU teachers' strikes in the early 1990's.

Chapter 5 focuses on the youth opposition to Town Councils, Councillors and the payment of rent. It shows how the rent boycotts resulted in the burning of municipal and magistrate offices by the youth. The reaction of government authorities is also described.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

THE EMERGENCE OF YOUTH POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS IN MOGALAKWENA 1976-1990.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one explained the problem statement, literature review and the methodology used in conducting this research. This chapter focuses on the oppressive conditions of apartheid in South Africa as experienced by the African population in Lebowa homeland and Mogalakwena in particular. It shows the extent to which the Black people were negatively subjected to inhumane legislations of the apartheid regime. It also shows how those oppressive conditions forced the people to organise themselves politically to challenge the system of apartheid. The chapter examines the influence of the Soweto student's uprisings of 1976 on the people of Mogalakwena. It depicts how the house arrest of Mosibudi Mangena at Mahwelereng contributed towards youth political awareness and the emergence of political organisations such as AZAPO and UDF and youth organisations such as AZASM, COSAS and Mokerong Confederations of Students Representative Council (MCSRC). It further explains how all those political organisations held their meetings, how they planned, how they worked, who their leaders were and their principles etc. The chapter also shows the influence of "witch hunting" on the mobilisation of the youth, especially in rural areas of Mogalakwena, indicating that even if "witch hunting" was not a political matter, it helped at first to put the youth together. Their togetherness resulted in the formation of Youth Congresses to challenge the superstructure of the apartheid government in rural areas. The chapter discusses the influence of the trade union movement on the mobilisation of the youth in rural areas whereby the youth who worked in urban areas used their trade union political experiences to organise village youth. The chapter also discusses the provisions of the Stock Limitation Act and how it impacted on the people of Mogalakwena. It also discusses the manner in which the independence of the Black neighbouring countries which shared the borders with South Africa motivated the people of Mogalakwena in their struggle for freedom. Moreover, it shows the dominance of youth in political activities of Mogalakwena and what the true characteristics of a true comrade were.

From 1948 the South African National Party government passed a number of legislations to justify the policy of apartheid. It passed the Group Areas Act in 1950 which compelled Africans to stay in reserves which were later called homelands.³⁷ The Group Areas Act was reinforced by the passing of the Native Urban Areas Act in 1952 which regulated the movement of Africans in urban areas. It also ensured that Africans who were not employed in urban areas were compelled to be confined to the rural areas or homelands.³⁸ The government passed a series of laws and policies such as that of forced removals, evictions from white farms, deliberate non provision of houses for Africans in towns and the harsh implementation of pass laws to force Africans to the homelands.³⁹ Africans were denied voting rights in the central government. They were only granted limited voting rights in their respective homelands. Those homelands were underdeveloped and regarded as the dumping grounds for the unemployed, the aged and political homes of Africans. Many homelands such as Lebowa had limited economic resources such as industries, harbours, mines, dams and cities. Homelands were given powers to generate their own income or funds.⁴⁰

However, that was never enough as they continued to depend on the central government for financial support. The inadequate financial supply from the central government made it difficult for them to feed 13 million people in those homelands. They also failed to provide the required infrastructure, pensions and better services in the departments such as education and health.⁴¹ Homelands were further divided into districts. The people of Mogalakwena were located in Mokerong District which had offices in Mokopane. Mogalakwena had 8 chiefs or tribal authorities with 178 villages and 1 semi urban area.⁴² All the villages were subjected to the inhumane apartheid legislation such as the Stock Limitation Act, the Internal Security Act, the Terrorist Act of 1969, the Tribal Authorities Act and a number of other apartheid laws. Most of those oppressive legislations were also adopted by the homeland governments. The homelands also passed legislations that were harsher than those of the central government. The homeland of Lebowa passed the Internal Securities Act of 1986.

³⁷ W. Beinart. **20th Century South Africa**. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.96.

³⁸ R.Davenport and S. Saunders. **South Africa: A Modern History**. London, 5th Edition, Mcmillan Press LTD, 2000, pp.235 and 236.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Catholic Institute for International Relations. **Rule of Fear: Human Rights in South Africa**. United Kingdom, Russel Press, 1989, p.37.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.38.

⁴² **Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Intergrated Development Programme, 2012-2016**, p.24.

This legislation gave the police extensive powers to deal harshly with anti government elements without being questioned. The enactment of that act contributed to torture, police brutality, arbitrary police and army shootings, detention without trial, death in the cells, arbitrary detention and arrests that became the order of the day.⁴³

The difficult political, social and economic conditions in homelands contributed to the emergence of youth political protests which was also the case in Mogalakwena. The emergence of those youth political organisations in Mogalakwena was spearheaded by the agents of AZAPO in 1978 and The United Democratic Front from 1985 until 1994. That political mobilisations were carried out secretly in most cases as the Internal Security Act of 1976 gave the police extensive powers to arrest and detain those who were regarded as dangerous to state security. It was only in prisons where political mobilisation and political education was conducted openly.⁴⁴ The Act further prohibited people to have political gatherings, work stoppages, students' boycotts, and stayaways. Community leaders were arrested and charged on offences of conspiring with the African National Congress and planning to overthrow the state by making communities ungovernable.⁴⁵ In Mogalakwena the leadership of the UDF was always traced and searched in their homes and arrested for mobilising the youth. UDF leader Godfrey Molekwa's home was searched almost daily by the special branch of Lebowa police. His political materials such as books, T-shirts and tape recorders were confiscated by Lebowa police.⁴⁶ Community members were told to ostracise him. As a result, the community members were afraid of relating with him or even coming near him as he was labelled a terrorist by the government of Lebowa.⁴⁷ The home of Ngoako Ramatlhodi at Segole village was also visited and searched constantly.⁴⁸ They demanded to know his whereabouts after he went into exile in 1984. They alledged that he was a terrorist and a threat to the savety of the people.⁴⁹ His mother Elizabeth Ramatlhodi vehemently refused to divulge any information about her child.⁵⁰

⁴³ Catholic Institute for International Relations. **Rule of Fear: Human Rights in South Africa**. p.40.

⁴⁴ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/ 01/ 2012, Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

⁴⁵ Catholic Institute for Intrenational Relations: **Rule of Fear: Human Rights in South Africa**, p.13.

⁴⁶ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/ 01/2012, Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Sowetan, 06 November 2015, p.25.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibi

The youth political protests in Mogalakwena did not take place in a vacuum as political parties had emerged nationwide from the early 1950s and again in the 1970s to the 1980s. The Soweto student uprising of 1976 in which students fought against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction had an impact nationwide, including Mogalakwena.⁵¹ Even if there was no actual student uprising in Mokgalakwena as in Soweto, the mood of protest existed because both students and the community in general began to voice out their grievances against the Lebowa homeland government.⁵² This was justified by the fact that in semi urban townships such as Mahwelereng, the community complained about poor services such as high bus tariffs. On the other hand, the students complained about lack of facilities such as books, furniture, libraries etc.⁵³ Unlike in Soweto, students did not directly demand the removal of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in Mogalakwena. They only developed a negative attitude towards Afrikaans and Afrikaans teachers. According to Friddah Modiba (the former school principal of Ntata Secondary), the protests of the 1980s were a continuation of the 1976 Soweto Students Uprising.⁵⁴ Despite the mood of protest emanating from Soweto uprising, there were no political parties visible in semi-urban areas such as Mahwelereng. Nothing was done in Mahwelereng prior and post 1976 to organise the youth.⁵⁵

However, in other parts of Mogalakwena such as Bakenberg and other villages such as in Matlalané tribal authority, the people had been involved in the political struggle against apartheid since the 1950s. In Bakenberg, the first branch of the African National Congress was formed in Lenkwane area of Magagamatala village. It was called Ga-Laka branch.⁵⁶ The branch was named after the place ruled by Chief Langa of the Matebele people of Bakenberg. They decided to call it Ga-Laka instead of Ga-Langa because the branch was basically situated in villages populated by the Pedis. The first chairperson of that branch was Ntate (old man) Marakalala from Malapile village while Ntate Sekhaolelo became its first secretary. The branch had some links with other branches of the ANC nationwide, since the

⁵¹ Interview with Aubrey Ledwaba, 12/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵² Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng .

⁵³ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵⁴ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Limburg.

⁵⁵ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

⁵⁶ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05 /01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

secretary spent most of his time in urban areas as an activist in trade union politics.⁵⁷ Most of the branch members resisted the provision of the Tribal Authorities Act, which compelled the village people to stay in the new residential stands which were introduced from 1961.⁵⁸ The Ga-Laka branch of the ANC even sent people to represent it at the Congress meeting in Kliptown for the drafting of the Freedom Charter. The members sold some of their animals to ensure that their delegates attended the congress meeting.⁵⁹ Another village that was actively involved in political struggle against apartheid was Lekhureng village, which was ruled from Matlala a Thaba tribal authority but which was closer to Matlalane tribal authority. Lekhureng village is under Mogalakwena Municipality and many of its people took part in the ANC's resistance against the apartheid government from the 1950s to the 1980s.⁶⁰ The Soweto student uprising of 1976 thus rekindled the spirit of resistance against apartheid in those areas of Mogalakwena.

Due to the 1976 Soweto student uprising, the people of Mogalakwena started confronting the white regime openly. All parts of the country became politically aware and even children began to challenge the government, which was unusual in African culture.⁶¹ From the late 1970s, the people of Mahwelereng complained about the naming of their streets after white leaders such as Potgieter and Pretorius. They wanted their streets to be named after prominent political figures such as Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu.⁶² There were also individuals who were arrested at Mahwelereng after 1976 after being accused of influencing the youth to engage in politics. A case in point was a man who was only known as Khass.⁶³ The influence of the Soweto uprising of 1976 prepared the youth and the Mogalakwena community in general to accept emerging political organisations in the late 1970s.

The political awareness and struggle intensified when the leader of the Azanian People Organisation (AZAPO), Mosibudi Mangena was put under house arrest in Mahwelereng

⁵⁷ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Interview with Eric Matlala, 06/07/2011, Lekhureng village.

⁶¹ L. Thompson. **A History of South Africa**. Johannesburg and Cape Town, Jonathan Ball publishers, 2000, p.207.

⁶² Verbatim Report of the Fourth Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Part 1, Vol. 18, 27 April-10 May 1984.

⁶³ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

Zone 1 after his release from Robben Island in 1978.⁶⁴ The South African government banished him to Mahwelereng because the township was relatively quiet and not very active in politics. The government wanted to isolate him from active politics.⁶⁵ His detention in Mahwelereng enabled him to secretly mobilise the youth during the struggle against apartheid.

AZAPO was formed in 1978 after the South African government banned the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) on 19 October 1977. AZAPO inherited the ideology of Black Consciousness. It also was against the participation of Black people in the “dummy” government institutions such as homelands, urban councils, Coloureds Representative Councils and related things.⁶⁶ According to Tshehla Hlahla (a medical doctor and a close friend of Mosibudi Mangena), political parties became visible in Mahwelereng from 1978 with AZAPO as the front runner. According to Mosibudi Mangena, the presence of AZAPO in Mahwelereng should be ascribed to the involvement of the youth in politics. Since the youth knew he was there, they visited him individually and in groups and he gave them political education.⁶⁷ He also invited AZAPO speakers from Gauteng to address them during meetings. Though he was not attending their meetings, he gave them directions as to what to emphasise in the meetings. He instilled the ideology that wherever you are as an individual you have to teach people about politics.⁶⁸ Though Mangena was under house arrest, he was given permission to make medical consultations at Hlahla’s surgery for his illnesses.⁶⁹

Hlahla was also given permission by the local magistrate to look after Mangena and to even employ him at his surgery as a receptionist.⁷⁰ Mangena had contact with the youth whom he gave political direction on a full time basis. During school breaks the youth visited him at the surgery. Even girls were eager to listen to his political education.⁷¹ Since both the ANC and PAC were banned, that gave AZAPO an opportunity to expand itself as the most powerful political organisation in Mahwelereng. Mahwelereng became the stronghold of AZAPO

⁶⁴ M. Mangena. **The Quest for true Humanity**. Johannesburg, Bayacha Books, 1996, p.1.

⁶⁵ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

⁶⁶ M. Mangena. **The Quest for true Humanity**. p.32.

⁶⁷ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

⁶⁸ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

⁶⁹ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁷⁰ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁷¹ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

under the leadership of Tshehla Hlahla.⁷² Mahwelereng also became the base of political activities and influenced almost all areas in the Waterberg region, including Mogalakwena. According to Mosibudi Mangena, Mahwelereng was one of the bases of political activities in Lebowa and northern Transvaal in general⁷³

AZAPO's ideas were spread to almost all the rural areas of Mogalakwena by teachers from Mahwelereng who taught in schools based in rural areas. An activist of AZAPO, Perry Kekana, was a teacher at Senoane Secondary School in Bakenberg area.⁷⁴ He distributed AZAPO pamphlets to students and at times assembled students and spoke to them about AZAPO.⁷⁵ His activities revived politics in rural areas. That practice continued despite opposition of school principal and the school committee.⁷⁶ Even though the branches of AZAPO were not formed the youth became aware of the political conditions in the country. In Mahwelereng the Azanian Youth Organisation (AZAYO) was established. At school level the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM) was also formed. Because of that, powerful and popular youth leaders of Mahwelereng such as Elija Selolo, Jeff Mogale, Louis Baloyi, Perry Kekana, Tswaledi Thobejane, Makompo Kutumela and Moses Makgai, among others, were groomed.⁷⁷ AZASM played a major role in organising students at school level through student representative councils (SRC) since they were provided with offices at prominent secondary schools in Mahwelereng such as Gojela, D.G Tsebe and Ntata.⁷⁸

Students kept AZAPO materials such as books, pamphlets, stickers etc in the SRC offices. They also played a vital role in distributing pamphlets of AZAPO in the location to inform the people about meetings or campaigns. Since it was difficult to hold open meetings, most meetings were held at night and at secret places. One of such secret places was at Hlahla's surgery. They spent nights at the surgery planning and drafting placards and pamphlets which were subsequently distributed to the people. That was the place where Mangena had enough time to give the youth political lessons. Hlahla's surgery was even called the headquarters of

⁷² Interview with Tente Morallane, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

⁷³ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

⁷⁴ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

⁷⁸ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

politics in Mahwelereng.⁷⁹ Other meetings were held at Mahwelereng Hotel owned by Molala, who also owned a dairy farm, so he was seen as a rich man. He was not politically active, but he was able to understand politics and assisted political organisations and harboured political activists.⁸⁰ The youth of Mahwelereng were also politically active at the funerals of activists. At these funerals, the people were able to wave flags of AZAPO and they wore AZAPO T-shirts openly. Political speeches were the order of the day in such funerals.⁸¹ AZAPO also identified strongly with the people of Mahwelereng in that when the AZAPO youth activists were killed by the police, they would be part of the family from the beginning and assisted the family with all the funeral arrangements.⁸²

Another political organisation that emerged at Mogalakwena in the early 1980s was the United Democratic Front (UDF). Nationally, the UDF was established in 1983. In Limpopo it was established in 1984 with Peter Nchabeleng as the first president. It was established as a direct opposition to the establishment of the tricameral parliament which included whites, coloureds and Indians.⁸³ In January 1979, President Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress (ANC) delivered an annual speech in exile. The speech was for the celebration of the battle of Insindlwana where the Zulu regiments defeated the English forces.⁸⁴ In that speech, President Tambo declared the year 1979 as the year of the spear.⁸⁵ He emphasised the unity of the black people in both rural and urban areas in fighting against apartheid to make South Africa ungovernable.⁸⁶ That speech encouraged political organisations which were fighting against apartheid to intensify the fight against the white South African regime. The UDF started to mobilise the people seriously from the early 1980s. One of the major political activities of the UDF in Limpopo, as a response to the directive of the ANC in exile, was the anti-election rally held at Seshego location near Polokwane in August 1984.⁸⁷ That rally encouraged the youth to take part in the struggle against apartheid and to boycott the

⁷⁹ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁸⁰ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 27/09/2006, Mokopane.

⁸¹ Interview with Edwin Nyatlo, 28/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁸² Interview with Edwin Nyatlo, 28/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁸³ D.R.H. Davenport and S. Saunders. **South Africa: A Modern History.**

⁸⁴ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ J. Seekings. **The UDF. A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991.** P.180.

municipal elections in all the black townships of Lebowa.⁸⁸ Since that rally, youth congresses were established in various parts of Lebowa, including Mogalakwena.

The UDF in the Northern Transvaal was apparently not active as expected. On the contrary, the youth became active in the branches of the UDF as “Macomrade” (Comrade) including in Mogalakwena.⁸⁹ On 3 March 1985, the UDF held a conference at the University of the North. In that conference, they decided to form regional structures and branches of the UDF in all sections of the Northern Transvaal.⁹⁰ That resulted in the establishment of a committee under Rejoice Mabhudafhasi, who worked in the library of the University of the North. Mabhudafhasi was mandated to set up structures of UDF in the form of branches in the Northern Transvaal.⁹¹ As a result, young activists in Mogalakwena, such as Godfrey Molekwa, Imran Hassan, Dudu Madisha and Lekwapa Lekalakala, were tasked with establishment of branches of the UDF in places such as Mahwelereng, Modimolle, Belabela, Mokopane, Polokwane and the surrounding areas.⁹²

The idea was to recruit many youths into the UDF to form a new layer of the most dedicated comrades who would be able to challenge the government of apartheid in the long run.⁹³ Due to the efforts of these activists, many branches of the UDF were formed. The Mahwelereng Youth Congress was formed under Stan Kgosana, Akasia Youth Congress was formed under Imran Hassan, Mmapela Youth Congress under Mashamaite and Bakenberg Youth Congress under Kekana.⁹⁴ The UDF was established in almost all villages in Mogalakwena area. In Mahwelereng, the UDF nurtured popular leaders such as Madisha and Sophonia Mamabolo.⁹⁵ The presence of the UDF at Mogalakwena brought about a conflict of ideology since AZAPO was already there, especially in Mahwelereng, which was the stronghold of AZAPO in the whole Lebowa. The UDF was a charterist organisation since it believed in the Freedom

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ S. Gastrow. **Who's Who in South African Politics**. Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1990, p . 215.

⁹¹ Interview with Imran Hasaan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza Johannesburg.

⁹² Interview with Imran Hasaan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza Johannesburg.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

⁹⁵ Interview with Mapula Seoloane, 12/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

Charter, whereas AZAPO believed in Black consciousness, meaning “black man you are on your own”.⁹⁶

Azapo was under a serious threat as it was competing with the UDF for the same political space.⁹⁷ The UDF was gaining political grounding since it was seen as the ANC in a new dress. Agents of the UDF wanted to inculcate the spirit of UDF from Mahwelereng as it had already identified itself as the centre of struggle in the Waterberg district.⁹⁸ Many Azapo members in Mahwelereng were converted to the UDF. In 1986 the government of South Africa declared a state of emergency. Many young activists were arrested for taking part in political activities in South Africa, including in Mogalakwena. This created an opportunity for the transformation of AZAPO members into the UDF in prisons.⁹⁹ Many youth activists were detained in Pietersburg prison and Nylstroom prison where they met with the top leadership of the UDF.

Imran Hassan of Akasia Youth Congress was arrested during the state of emergency, and was held in solitary confinement at Mokopane police station for a period of 10 days.¹⁰⁰ He was then transferred to Pietersburg prison where he found one of the leaders of the UDF Elias Nong. At Pietersburg prison it was difficult to recruit many people to join the UDF as majority of them were from Seshego location which was the stronghold of AZAPO by then. Even when the UDF was launched in Seshego the attendance was very poor as the people of that place were pro AZAPO.¹⁰¹ Godfrey Molekwa was also arrested during the state of emergency and detained in Nylstroom prison where he found the leaders of the UDF such as Frans Mohlala, Peter Maake and the deputy president of the UDF in the Northern Transvaal, Lovis Mnguni.¹⁰² The youth activists were given political education in prison called “mokgabolo” (it was a political lesson based on political theory of the ANC) by the senior politicians of the UDF.¹⁰³ Those teaching sessions would take the period of 130 minutes. Moreover, political education in these prisons were conducted openly. The activists were taught about the national democratic revolution, the history of resistance against apartheid,

⁹⁶ Interview with Edwin Nyatlo, 28/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁹⁷ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

⁹⁸ Interview with Imran Hasaan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza Johannesburg.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012 / Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

the struggle of liberation in Europe, Latin America and Africa.¹⁰⁴ The prison- based political education was aimed at building the consciousness of young comrades so that they do not see themselves as criminals but as political freedom fighters.¹⁰⁵ Youth activists were taught about major prison campaigns of the ANC such as hunger strikes. The longest hunger strike they embarked upon at Nylstroom prison was organised in 1987, lasting 27 days.¹⁰⁶

Political education played a major role of changing the majority of AZAPO members to join the UDF. At the centre of that transformation of AZAPO members was the deputy chairperson of the UDF, Lovis Mnguni. As a result of his efforts, many young comrades joined the UDF in prison in Mogalakwena.¹⁰⁷ Owing to the political education in prison, the majority of the people in Mahwelereng became members of the UDF. Mahwelereng became the stronghold of the UDF as well. According to Imran Hassan, when the UDF was introduced in Mahwelereng and other parts of Mogalakwena, there was no strong opposition from AZAPO.¹⁰⁸ Some of the activists of AZAPO even assisted in the introduction of the UDF in Mogalakwena. This was justified by the activist of AZAPO Joe Maila, who was also a local teacher at Mahwelereng.¹⁰⁹ He contributed immensely to mobilise the people in support of the UDF. He also helped in implementing the campaigns of UDF in Mahwelereng but he never took any leadership position in the UDF.

The presence of the UDF in the political landscape of Mogalakwena met little resistance of AZAPO at times. This little conflict manifested itself amongst the youth at school level. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) aligned itself with the UDF, whereas the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM) aligned itself with AZAPO and Black Consciousness. This ideological difference between students was very serious at some schools. The president of the SRC would be a COSAS member, and the deputy president an AZASM member, or vice-versa.¹¹⁰ This division at times resulted in actual fighting at schools, especially at assemblies, fighting over the control of learners.¹¹¹ At Gojela High School, fights mostly occurred when one student organisation had many followers. The minority

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Imran Hasaan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza Johannesburg.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

student organisations felt undermined and caused conflicts.¹¹² From 1984 COSAS also came to many areas in Lebowa, including Mahwelereng. By then some of the COSAS activists from urban areas were already in Lebowa following the political activities that disturbed schooling in urban areas. Such students were admitted to schools that had hostels or boarding schools, as they were called that time. In Mahwelereng, most such students were admitted at Gojela High School and Mokopane College of Education. In Steilooop area, many students from urban areas were admitted at boarding schools such as Nakonkwetlou and Malebo Secondary School. Bakenberg High School also had hostels for students from urban areas. The presence of students from urban areas played an important role in influencing the youth of Mogalakwena to become active in politics. One such student in Mahwelereng was Sophonia Mamabolo, popularly known as “Comrade Kolobe” (his clan name) from Attridgeville in Pretoria.¹¹³

Although he was a college student, he had close contact with youth leaders in the location. On many occasions, he organised students from Mahwelereng schools to disrupt lessons at Mokopane College of Education by forcing students to participate in community matters.¹¹⁴ COSAS demanded democratically elected SRCs, the abolition of age limit rule in schools, the abolition of corporal punishment, opposed sexual harassment of female students by teachers, demanded the withdrawal of troops from townships, fought for the release of all detainees and opposed rent increase etc.¹¹⁵

Although there were conflicts, the youth were united by the emergence of the Mokerong Confederation of Student Representative Council (MCSRC) in the mid 1980s.¹¹⁶ This organisation was composed of all SRC’s from Mahwelereng, Bakenberg and Zebetla under the presidency of Elija Selolo, who was by then the SRC president of Gojela High School.¹¹⁷ The organisation was operating under the umbrella of the Transvaal Student Congress

¹¹² Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

¹¹³ Interview with Mapula Seoloane, 12/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Ditsepu Maboia, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

¹¹⁵ J.F. Seekings. **Quienscence and Transition to Confrontation: South African Townships 1978-1984. PhD Thesis.** p231.

¹¹⁶File Ref No.7/11, 1983/01/28, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives,Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Secretary of Mokerong Confederation of Student Representative Council to Mahwelereng Circuit Inspector.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

(TSC).¹¹⁸ It played a vital role in ensuring that students from different political organisations with different ideological backgrounds came together and became one organic unit in the struggle against apartheid. The main objectives of the MCSRC were to demand the withdrawal of military troops from the Northern Transvaal, to remove soldiers from school premises, to stop police and soldiers from harassing people, to force the government to release all detainees, to oppose the killing of people in prisons and to release all students from custody.¹¹⁹ According to this organisation, all schools under its control had to show the spirit of solidarity. As a result, whenever one school was affected by political problems all were automatically affected. Most of the meetings were held at the SRC offices of the old Mahwelereng schools such as Gojela, Ntata and D.J. Tsebe Secondary School.

The organising committee of the UDF in Mogalakwena started to hold secret meetings in community halls, people's houses or homes and churches. Most of these secret meetings were held by less than 10 people.¹²⁰ Most of these secret meetings were held at the Mahwelereng Roman Catholic Church and Mahwelereng Hotel, which was owned by Mr Molala.¹²¹ One of such meetings which took three days was also held in the family of Nduna (Headman) Lekalakala of Masehlaneng village near Mahwelereng.¹²² They did not want the police to suspect or know about the meeting as Nduna Lekalakala was a traditional leader. The main aim of the meetings was to revive all the structures in Mogalakwena that were against apartheid, such as civic organisations, school representative councils and trade unions.¹²³ They also wanted to create new structures which would also assist in the fight against the apartheid government. A secret meeting was also held at Mokopane Hospital by few activists who wanted to form a teacher trade union as there was no militant teacher trade union in the 1980s in Mogalakwena.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ File Ref. No.7/11, 1986/05/20, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowa kgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Segoa to Lebowa Department of Education.

¹¹⁹ File Ref. No. 7/11, 1986/05/20, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowa kgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Segoa to Lebowa Department of Education.

¹²⁰ Interview with Imran Hasaan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza Johannesburg.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

The meeting was attended by activists such as Godfrey Molekwa, Fanyane Vusa, Mashilo Kgati and Billy Ramokgopa.¹²⁵ They realised that the teachers at Mogalakwena were not properly organised and their participation in the fight against apartheid was low. At that time the majority of teachers in Mahwelereng developed the idea of forming an Azanian Teachers Organisation since the majority of teachers in Mahwelereng were pro AZAPO.¹²⁶ However, these activists formed the Northern Transvaal Teachers Union (NOTTU).¹²⁷ The union was launched in 1989 at the old Mokopane Teachers Training College during the state of emergency. In Mahwelereng and the surrounding villages, the UDF agents went from house to house to inform the communities about the UDF. Some agents were sent to the villages to establish structures of the UDF.¹²⁸

Activists like Godfrey Molekwa were instrumental in establishing UDF structures in villages around Mmapela and Bakenberg. Through his efforts, the Mmapela Youth Congress was formed under the leadership of Malesela Langa.¹²⁹ Godfrey Molekwa was also elected as an additional member tasked with the responsibility of co-ordinating the branch. The Bakenberg Youth Congress was also formed under Kekana, who was a local teacher in the area. It was launched at Nkidikitlana village under chief Ledwaba because the state of emergency was very hostile in Bakenberg.¹³⁰ The Matebeleng Youth Congress was also established under Hendrick Ngwepe.¹³¹ Although it was difficult to launch youth congresses in every village due to the state of emergency, every village had an unofficial youth congress operating under the banner of the UDF.

The introduction of the youth congresses in villages was welcomed by the majority of young people. It provided them with an opportunity to address community problems in their respective villages and in their traditional authorities.¹³² The formation of youth congresses was assisted by the fact that the youth were already mobilised by witch hunting activities. Mobilisation is the most important aspect of political struggle. There was a forced mobilisation of youth in the 1980s in various villages of Mogalakwena to resolve their

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Interview with Imran Hasaan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza Johannesburg.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

community problems brought by witchcraft. In such meetings, other political problems caused by apartheid were raised. The youth who were orientated in politics from urban areas and workers who were informed about trade union politics, found an opportunity to guide the youth to challenge problems that were caused by apartheid in their villages. From the 1980s, witch hunting was politicised in many parts of Lebowa. From 1996 Limpopo Province even set up a commission of inquiry to investigate violence which was caused by people who accused and killed each other on witchcraft. This resulted in the promulgation of the witchcraft act.¹³³ At that time old people were accused of being witches. Young people believed that their failures and misfortunes in life were caused by witchcraft. They also believed that the people who died mysteriously were bewitched. The killing of witches was politicised and helped to bring youth together as they were forced to attend meetings. The youth of that time identified themselves as the comrades of the UDF.

Political expressions such as “Amandla a wethu” (power belongs to us) were introduced in the minds of the village youth for the first time.¹³⁴ In their meetings and practices of killing witches, they sang political songs such as “siyaya e pitoli” referring to the fact that they were going to Pretoria which was the capital city of the apartheid government.¹³⁵ This was justified by the youth of Pudiakgopa village in Bakenberg where the youth who called themselves comrades had a meeting to discuss a lightning incident which killed a youth. The youth were worried by the fact that every year young people were killed by lightning in that village. At that time one of the youth Samuel Langa, was terribly struck by lightning. The youth called a traditional doctor to find out who was actually responsible for killing Samuel Langa with a lightning.¹³⁶ They sent their representatives to fetch a traditional doctor at Mabaladihlare village. His name was Mboweni, one of the most powerful and trusted Sangomas in the area of Bakenberg.¹³⁷ He was so powerful that he always established a circumcision school every winter.

As a result, everybody was bound to trust his revelations. The traditional doctor revealed that Mr Manamela and his wife, Mrs Maloka and Mrs Rosina Mahwiting were responsible for striking Samuel Langa with lightning. The comrades were angered by that revelation and

¹³³ Northern Province Suppression of Witchcraft Act 1996.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Court Case Number 58/03/91, Mokopane Police Station.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

captured both Mrs Maloka and Rosina Mahwiting. Both of them were old women who found it difficult to run away. Mr Manamela and his wife were searched in the whole village but they were never found. Both old women were taken to the nearest mountain where they were stoned, tied on their necks with tyres soaked with petrol and burned alive.¹³⁸ After necklacing the old women, the comrades waited for the police at the village primary school.

They sang political songs until the police came and arrested them.¹³⁹ Their mobilisation played a huge role in assisting their people who worked in urban areas to influence them to start challenging apartheid legislation at the local level. From that time, political awareness gradually grew amongst them. They began to follow the orders of their leadership. Pudiakgopa Youth Congress was formed. The youth congress became very strong and enabled the community members of that village to further challenge other apartheid discriminatory practices which were enforced by the traditional authorities. The people of Sekuruwe village near Mokopane were also forcefully mobilised to solve their witchcraft problems. The youth of Sekuruwe were angered by the striking of lightning at Mr Baloyi's house.¹⁴⁰ The youth compelled all the villagers to attend a meeting at the traditional court place where they decided to find a traditional doctor to find out who was responsible for the lightning. The traditional doctor revealed that Mr Mokgalapa, Mr Mapoge, Mr Mabina and Sepanya Mosibihla were responsible for the lightning.¹⁴¹

The youth "necklaced" (the political method of killing people by putting a tyre soaked with petrol around their necks and burning them) all those who were revealed.¹⁴² During the process of burning them they sang political songs such as *siyaya e Pitoli* (we are going to Pretoria). At another nearby village called Molekane, the youth were also compelled to attend a meeting after the killing of Mosima Mothopi by lightning. They called a traditional doctor who told them that Piet Railo was responsible for the lightning.¹⁴³ The comrades locked Piet Railo in one of his houses and set it alight.¹⁴⁴ The police found the comrades singing political songs when they arrived. The majority of those comrades ran away when

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Court Case No. 17/01/83, Mokopane Police Station.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Court Case No.09/01/83, Mokopane Police Station.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

they saw the police. The villagers were surprised by the fact that the youth were militant and led all the proceedings which they saw as unusual. The people gradually realised that something was wrong with the government.

Witch hunting also played a role in mobilising the youth of Rapadi village to be active in politics. The youth of that village held secret night meetings on many occasions to discuss the old woman who had been struck by lightning while working in her field.¹⁴⁵ Those meetings were at times attended by the youth of that village who worked in urban areas. They called a traditional doctor who revealed that Mr Sebueng, Mrs Moatshe and Mrs Marakalala were responsible for the lightning. All those who were found to be responsible were old people of that village. The comrades tied them with a tyre soaked with petrol and burned them during the day.¹⁴⁶

The police found that all young boys alleged to have killed those old people were under the age of 16.¹⁴⁷ Rapadi Youth Congress forced all residents of the village to contribute money to bail out those who were arrested. They also hired a lawyer to defend those who were arrested. Those who refused to contribute money were threatened with “necklacing” or expulsion from the village. Those who were arrested were sentenced to community service as they were young and criminally not responsible.¹⁴⁸ Since then, Rapadi Youth Congress grew from strength to strength and began to challenge village matters that were perpetuated by the government of Lebowa and apartheid. The youth of Rapadi who worked in urban areas once came home at night and told the headman that he was a sell out by forcing the people of that village to pay levy tax.¹⁴⁹

At Sodoma village the youth nearly killed an old woman by the name of Monkey Thaba for being accused of bewitching one boy who was in love with her grand child.¹⁵⁰ This was caused by the fact that the clothes of that boy were taken away while he was asleep at her grand child’s home. The youth concluded that the old woman took them so that she could kill or bewitch the boy. The youth took the old woman from her home and assaulted her until

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11/07/2011, Rapadi village.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Ratshilana Digashu, 07/03/2011, Bakenberg-Mmotong.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11/07/2011, Rapadi village.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Mawisha Mashiane, 17/06/2012, Sodoma village.

she lost consciousness.¹⁵¹ When they left her they thought she was dead but she later recovered. The police were called and all the youth ran away from home. They spent most of their time either in the bush or at the mountains as they were afraid of being arrested by the police. Some of them were arrested but the youth forced the whole community to collect money to bail them out of prison.¹⁵² The youth anger was transferred to politics in that from that incident, a youth congress was formed. The congress gradually gained momentum and opposed apartheid legislations which were only applied to the Blacks such as levy tax, dog tax and hunting prohibitions imposed by the government.

At Taueatsoala village, the youth congress collected money from the community and wanted to pay a traditional doctor who promised that he would bring a swarm of bees which would sting all the witches of that village.¹⁵³ Fortunately, some of the senior comrades in the village advised them to abandon that action. The Taueatsoala Youth Congress became one of the most vibrant branches of the UDF in Steilooop area.¹⁵⁴ Through the transferred militancy from witch hunting the youth were able to mobilise their communities and conscientised them politically. Many people in villages began to realise the inhumane conditions of apartheid which they initially thought was a given way of life. Village people also realised that to unchain themselves from the bondage of apartheid, they had to support and work together. That was evidenced by the fact that the communities were able to collect money when ordered by comrades to assist those who were arrested or injured during attacks by the police. Furthermore, many parents allowed their children to join military structures such as Umkhonto We Sizwe (the spear of the nation), Poqo and Azanian people's Liberation Army (APLA). This was further evidenced by the fact that many youth from Taueatsoala village joined Umkhonto We Sizwe in the late 1980s and early 90s.¹⁵⁵

Political mobilisation in Mogalakwena was further fuelled by the influence of trade union politics brought home by community members who worked in urban areas. They came home with newspaper clippings indicating workers's struggles in urban areas. They also brought tape cassettes of political orators and poets to inspire the youth in politics. At Sodoma village, Mawisha Mashiane, who worked as a security officer in urban areas, organised youth

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala village.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

meetings whenever he came home. He was a member of South African Mine Workers Union (SAMWU) and used his trade union political knowledge to mobilise the youth of Sodoma village.¹⁵⁶

All the youth at Sodoma were compelled to attend meetings. The marshals were formed and their responsibility was to look for people who did not attend meetings. He always brought the youth newspaper cuttings of the newspaper called “The New Nation” which was vocal against the government in the late 1980s.¹⁵⁷ He also introduced to the youth the poetic music of Mzwake Mbuli (the South African Black poet whose poetic music opposed the apartheid system) to arouse political interest amongst the youth.¹⁵⁸ His home was mostly surrounded by young boys whenever he was around. Through the support of Sodoma Youth Congress, the whole community was influenced to boycott the payment of levy tax.¹⁵⁹ In Mokopane the Commercial Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CAWUSA) was very active and organised town workers. People such as Boisy Thole, James Seota and Induna Lekalakala were instrumental in organising workers of Mokopane to join CAWUSA.¹⁶⁰ The struggles of CAWUSA manifested themselves mostly at “OK Bazaar” in Mokopane town.¹⁶¹

The leadership tried to link the workers and students campaigns with those of the community. In August 1976 about 60 percent of workers supported student march to John Vorster Square in Johannesburg.¹⁶² In August and September 1976 about 70 to 80 percent of workers supported the bus boycotts that were organised by students in Soweto. Workers also worked jointly with students to successfully implement the boycotts of liquor and Christmas shopping in december 1976.¹⁶³ Furthermore, students actively participated in the rent boycotts in urban areas in the 1980s. Due to that, the workers, students and the community campaigns were organised in places such as Mahwelereng, Vaaltyn Moshate and the surrounding villages of Mogalakwena.¹⁶⁴ The community and workers showed unity in workers demonstrations and consumer boycotts. They also pledged solidarity to each other

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Reuben Moabelo, 16/06/2012, Rustenburg.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/ 01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa village.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² P. Christie : **The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa**, p.242.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p.242.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Imran Hasaan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza Johannesburg.

whenever they were attacked or harassed by the police.¹⁶⁵ On other occasions, students would ask workers to help them solve some of their problems at schools. In Namakgale location, the students approached the executive committee members of the National Union of Mine workers (NUM) and that of the South African Chemical workers union to seek advice on how to help their fellow students who were arrested by the police.¹⁶⁶ Students saw it relevant to associate with the local trade unions as they believed that union matters were also community matters since their brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers were members of the trade unions.

Students were advised to organise school boycotts and work stoppages in their area to pledge solidarity with the arrested students.¹⁶⁷ The trade unions also advised them to call parents meetings at their school whenever they experienced problems.¹⁶⁸ The Circuit Inspector of that area even summoned the trade union executive to a meeting where he complained about their negative influence on the school children.¹⁶⁹

The organised youth, called “Comrades,” were able to work hand in hand with community structures such as Street Committees and Crisis Committees that were also established at Mogalakwena in the 1980s.¹⁷⁰ The establishment of such committees was ascribed to the initiative of Nelson Mandela in 1953 about the formation of the ‘M Plan’ which had to consist of cells, zones and wards in South African townships.¹⁷¹ Street Committees at Mahwelereng performed duties such as spreading information about campaigns such as consumer boycotts, rent boycotts etc, to blow a whistle in case of attacks by police, soldiers or even criminals. The Crisis Committees ensured that residents assisted each other on matters or problems that were common to the people as they had a chance to elect their leadership, take part in decision making and had freedom of expression, which they did not enjoy in the South African political system. Although they were community structures, they were controlled by the youth activists or Comrades. The emergence of the youth congresses

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ File Ref.No. 7/11, 1986/04/14, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo government offices, A letter from Relebogile Secondary School to the Circuit Inspector of Thabina Circuit.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

¹⁷¹ J. Blumefeld. **South Africa in Crisis**. London, Croom-Helm, p.86.

was further stimulated by international sympathy on Blacks resistance to apartheid. This encouraged the youth to question some of the rural legislations which burdened their parents, such as the Stock Limitation Act, the pound system and the tax collections. The youth political activities were a national phenomenon. This forced the State President, P.W. Botha, to voice out a word of protest in parliament. He argued that there were countries which formed a coalition with the intention of destabilising or waging a war, which he referred to as the “Third World War” against South Africa.¹⁷²

He further argued that the Third World War was fought at military, propaganda, and psychological level.¹⁷³ Botha asked for peace in Rhodesia and South West Africa, which according to him, were harbouring terrorists from South Africa. The president also blamed Marxist countries such as Cuba and Moscow for the African problems since the soldiers of Umkhonto We Sizwe received military training in those countries.¹⁷⁴

According to Botha, Marxist countries could bring hunger, violence, and chaos not only in South Africa, but also in other Southern African countries. He even tried to win the favour of the Southern African countries by saying that their problems could be solved if they related themselves with South Africa. One apartheid parliamentarian, Vause Raw of the Republican Party, accused the National Party government for all the political problems. He further said that the political situation would be worse as the National Party government lost credibility.¹⁷⁵ Alan Paton, who belonged to the Liberal Party pointed out that peace could only be available in the country if the government narrowed the gap between White and Black earnings.

He further rejected the Christian view of the South African government that used a man’s labour but rejected his wife, children and his freehold right.¹⁷⁶ Alan Paton wanted the South African government to open all city centres to all traders, industrialists and professional people and the abolition of detention without trial.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² The Natal Mercury, 01 January 1979, p.5.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

The parliament's concern was justified by the political time of trouble which manifested itself strongly in the second half of 1970s. The political situation in South Africa was further worsened by the killing of Steve Biko in September 1977 by the South African police. Steve Biko was a member of the Black Consciousness Movement. He was killed for his political belief, that the liberation of the Black man starts first with the liberation from psychological oppression of himself through inferiority complex.¹⁷⁸ The second form of liberation is the physical one, accruing out of living in a White racist society. The political situation was also aggravated by the death of the president of the Pan Africanist Congress Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe on 26 February 1978.¹⁷⁹

Robert Sobukwe's funeral was attended by international dignitaries such as the British ambassador to South Africa Sir David Scott, the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid chairperson, Lesley Harriman, and the UN ambassador to South Africa, William Bowdler.¹⁸⁰ The British foreign secretary, David Owen, sent Mrs Sobukwe a telegram which read: 'His long struggle in the cause of freedom and equality will live in the memories of all who shared the commitment'.¹⁸¹ The international sympathy on the death of Robert Sobukwe and Steve Biko encouraged South Africans who fought against apartheid that their efforts and struggle were acknowledged by the world. It gave them courage that their fight against apartheid was justified, which fuelled and intensified the fight against apartheid in all parts of South Africa including, Mogalakwena. The banishment of Mosibudi Mangena to Mahwelereng motivated them even further.¹⁸²

2.2 THE STOCK LIMITATION ACT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE OF MOGALAKWENA

Due to the presence of youth congresses, the Mogalakwena community started to oppose most of the apartheid legislations that they experienced in their area. The rural community of Mogalakwena was largely agricultural. They depended on cattle farming and crop farming for their living. They felt that the promulgation of the Stock Limitation Act of 1951

¹⁷⁸ M. Phoko. **Apartheid. The story of a Dispossessed People**. London, Marran Books, 1984, p.171.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ The Rand Daily Mail, 11 March 1978, p.5.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² M. Mangena. **The Quest for true Humanity**. p.1.

prohibited their cattle farming.¹⁸³ In terms of the Act, rural people were prohibited from having many cattle. Those who had livestock that were more than the prescribed number had to reduce them. Sechele Monare testified that a person was allowed to have 7 cattle: 6 were meant for ploughing while the seventh served as a reserve in case one died or got lost.¹⁸⁴ Only two donkeys were allowed for a cart for local family transportation, for collection of wood and harvest from the field.

The Stock Limitation Act was enforced by the Department of Agriculture which had some offices in each tribal authority. Those offices were called Ga-Mmahlaretsaka (trees belong to me) or Ga-nama ga e jewe (the meat is not eaten) by local people, given that people were not allowed to cut trees and hunt for wild animals. Every year the livestock were taken to the kraals to be counted, dipped and branded with the number of the village they belonged to for identification.¹⁸⁵ During counting if it was found that the livestock or cattle were more than the prescribed number they were branded with TC (Trust Council).¹⁸⁶

Cattle branded with TC were sold very cheaply to the White farmers who took advantage of the situation by frequenting villages.¹⁸⁷ Those who refused to sell their cattle were either arrested or their cattle were taken from them by force.¹⁸⁸ The Black community of Mogalakwena was worried that the Stock Limitation Act did not affect White people and that they lost their wealth for no apparent reason. The introduction of youth congresses in villages was welcomed by many people as they served as organisations which enabled them to voice out their protests to the government.

The Department of Agriculture also monitored the preservation of the environment in general. This monitoring caused dissatisfaction amongst the people of Mogalakwena. According to their environment regulations, people were not allowed to hunt wild animals unless they had licences.¹⁸⁹ The hunting licences were only given on strict conditions to

¹⁸³ South African Democracy Education Trust. **The Road to Democracy in South Africa 1960-1970**, Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2004, p. 150.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11 July 2011, Rapadi village.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa.

¹⁸⁶ South African Democratic Education Trust. **The Road to Democracy in South Africa**, p.151.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11 July 2012, Rapadi village.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11 July 2012, Rapadi village.

those who had guns. This denied the people an opportunity of hunting as the majority of the ordinary rural people had no guns. The people were further disallowed to either cut wood or trees for making fire.¹⁹⁰ This created a serious problem as they were not provided with electricity. The environmental police called the Game Rangers moved from place to place on bicycles to monitor and arrest those who did not comply with the ruling.¹⁹¹

The people were further worried as they would be arrested when they were found in possession of axes. They were suspected of being part of those who fell trees. As the Game Rangers rode bicycles from place to place, they arrested those who were found hunting, jumping over the fences of cattle camps and having a heap of wood at home.¹⁹² The Rangers did not have guns; they would simply write down your name and place of residence or force you to go with them to their offices where they would call the Lebowa police to arrest you. The people found the environment regulations very oppressive because even if they found wild animals destroying their crops in their fields, they were not allowed to kill them but to inform the agricultural department.¹⁹³ This atmosphere created a fertile ground for acceptance of the youth congresses when they were introduced in villages in the 1980s.

The villagers were also subjected to numerous taxations by the government. Every year a household had to pay levy tax to their traditional authority. Levy tax was divided into many categories such as levy tax for water, for dipping and for fencing. The money from the levy tax was also used to maintain the property of the traditional authority and to pay the people who worked in the traditional authority's offices and the traditional council members.¹⁹⁴ At Bakenberg traditional authority, all men who worked in urban areas had to pay a certain amount of money every time they came home to see their families.¹⁹⁵ The youth saw that as a sign of oppression and refused to pay.

The villagers also paid bicycle tax. Every bicycle had to have a ticket attached to it to prove that the required tax had been paid for. They paid dog tax for every dog they had, and hut

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Chief Dennis Matlhaba 11, March 2011, Bakenberg Mothoathouse Village.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11 July 2012, Rapadi Village.

tax for the number of huts they built. The paying of taxes angered the communities as they did not know how this money was used since financial statements were never read to them.¹⁹⁶ At Taueatsoala village their tribal authority introduced a tax which was to be paid by every girl who became pregnant without being married.¹⁹⁷ The youth congress of that area felt that their human dignity and privacy were being violated. They once staged a sit in in the tribal offices to ensure that such oppressive taxes were removed.¹⁹⁸

All community members who had livestock had to pay money for the dipping of their animals. During that time livestock were dipped twice a year.¹⁹⁹ The agents of the UDF moved from village to village to influence the people to stop the payment of such taxes. One of those agents was Godfrey Molekwa. According to the chief of Bakenberg, Mr Dennis Matlhaba 11, Godfrey Molekwa was very instrumental in influencing the people not to pay levy tax in villages under his authority.²⁰⁰ He further said that Godfrey influenced the youth to frighten their parents from paying levy tax.²⁰¹ The payment of Levy tax was stopped in almost all villages of Mogalakwena in the late 1980s. The tribal authorities realised that people were no longer coming to the offices for payment and decided to go to the villages to urge the people to pay.

The old people found themselves between a rock and a hard place as the tribal authorities urged them to pay, while on the other hand, the youth ordered them not to . The old people respected the instruction of their chief, and thus resorted to pay the levy tax in many villages. In Taueatsoala village, the youth congress tried to convince the elderly through their children the importance of not paying.²⁰² When that strategy failed, they threatened those who paid or rumoured to have paid by subjecting them to the people's courts.²⁰³ The comrades were deployed to monitor those who were going to the traditional chief's offices secretly so that they could cross question them in court. Their people's court was located at a small mountain in the eastern part of the village called Thabatsatsi (Mountain of the Sun).²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Max Motabo, 10 July 2012, Taueatsoala village.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11 July 2012, Rapadi village.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Chief Dennis Matlhaba, 11 March 2011, Bakenberg Mothathase village.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Interview Simon Malowa, 10 July 2012, Taueatsoala village.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

The villagers of Mogalakwena also complained about the capturing of their cattle by Rangers. Rangers acted as the police who were used by the department of agriculture to stop the people from damaging the environment. As a result, the people were not allowed to cut trees or to kill wild animals. These captured cattle were placed in government camps known as pounds. The pounds were places or camps where the captured cattle were kept until they were released after having paid money.²⁰⁵ The cattle that were captured were those found at tar road or those which trespassed into the government's agricultural plantations. At times the villagers were not informed that their cattle were captured. This worried them because of the fact that if they stayed in those pounds for a particular period without being released, they were sold by the department.²⁰⁶ The people felt that they were being robbed of their cattle. The complaints about the pound system spread to the whole Lebowa from 1986 to 1987 as people lost many of their cattle in that period through the system. The pound system worried the people of Lebowa because most of them were largely cattle farmers. The minister of justice in Lebowa even included the pound issue in his budget speech, where he emphasised that the government had no intentions of abandoning it. He indicated that the government was compelled to maintain the pound system because domestic animals caused danger or accidents on national roads where lives were lost and the property damaged.²⁰⁷

He further showed the extent to which stray animals trespassed on farms and destroyed crops of farmers.²⁰⁸ Moreover, stray animals fell prey to stock thieves, and thus the only solution was to capture them.²⁰⁹ Due to the dissatisfaction over the pound system, many villagers welcomed the emergence of the youth congresses because they enabled them to register their dissatisfaction on the pound system to the government. While the village communities challenged the oppressive legislations that they experienced in rural areas, the urban dwellers also challenged the oppressive legislations that they experienced in urban areas concerning housing and rent. By that time the only urban area in Mogalakwena was Mahwelereng location on the outskirts of Mokopane town. The youth struggle against apartheid was

²⁰⁵ Interview with Max Motabo, 10 July 2012, Taueatsoala village.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11 July 2012, Rapadi village.

²⁰⁷ File Ref. No.6/5/2, Policy and Budget speech by Hounarable Minister of Justice in Lebowa for the 1986/1987 financial year, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

motivated further by the attainment of independence by other Southern African countries which shared borders with South Africa.

2.3 THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER NEIGHBOURING INDEPENDENT AFRICAN COUNTRIES

As has been mentioned earlier, the people of Mogalakwena were further motivated by the struggle for freedom in the neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe and Namibia. In Zimbabwe the people took it upon themselves to fight against the oppressive white government. The Zimbabweans realised that the only way of attaining freedom was to fight for it.²¹⁰ They were dismayed by the fact that the United Nations Organisation was taking good decisions which they felt were sabotaged by imperialists and capitalist countries such as Britain, France and the United States of America. The patriotic front of ZANU (Zimbabwean African National Union) and ZAPU (Zimbabwean African People Union) began to launch a series of attacks against the Smith government of Rhodesia.²¹¹ They attacked the main targets of government in both cities and towns.

They entered villages and familiarised the people about their struggle for freedom.²¹² This helped the Zimbabwean guerrilla soldiers in that the villagers were able to hide them whenever the government forces were around. They were also able to provide them with food, and nurse them in cases of casualties. The Zimbabwean people were organised as “militia” against the government troops. Many Zimbabwean white farmers were forced to leave their farm properties as a result of the guerrilla attacks.²¹³ What impressed the freedom fighters in South Africa was that the Smith government entirely depended on South Africa for armaments and other resources. Due to that, they viewed the defeat of the Rhodesian government as tantamount to the defeat of South Africa.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ A. Lerumo. **Fifty Fighting Years: The South African Communist Party 1921-1971.** London, Inkululeko Publications, 1987, p. 167.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Mercury, 03 January 1979.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ A.Lerumo. **Fifty Fighting Years: The South African Communist Party.** p. 167.

Furthermore, they were motivated by the fact that they had already fought against both the Rhodesian and South African army at the battlefield of Wankie.²¹⁵ At that battlefield and other fronts they believed to have inflicted massive and serious damage against both white forces.²¹⁶ The attainment of independence in Zimbabwe worried the South African government because Zimbabwe shared a border with South Africa. The fear that the enemy was near engulfed them in that Umkhonto we Sizwe's forces had secret camps in Zimbabwe.²¹⁷ The independence of Zimbabwe politically conscientised the people of Mogalakwena in that many trained guerrillas who returned to the country were protected by the community.

Unlike in the past, the people did not alert the police about the presence of guerrilla soldiers in their villages and locations. In Mahwelereng there were guerrillas who were hiding in the location and fought the South African police and the South African National Defence force almost daily in the late 1980s.²¹⁸ This was a group of guerrillas of Azapo who were fully armed.²¹⁹ According to Khazamola Shibambo, it was rumoured that they obtained most of their rifles from Kokstad near Bloemfontein.²²⁰ They used to hide in the Methodist Church near Mahwelereng Cemetery. They attacked the police, and mostly the South African soldiers. The community was told not to reveal them to the police or SADF. The church members and their priest did not inform the police as well. The police did not know where they stayed since the door to door raiding of the location yielded nothing. In those raids, the people of Mahwelereng were persecuted as they refused to divulge information about the guerrillas, which was a mark of political awareness.²²¹

The people of Mogalakwena were also motivated by the attainment of freedom in Namibia. In 1980 the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) under Sam Nujuma won the general elections in Namibia. Before those elections, the Namibians embarked on an armed struggle against South Africa hence she was politically under the control of South Africa. The people of South Africa supported SWAPO because they saw it as the ANC of

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ A. Lerumo. **Fifty Fighting Years: The South African Communist Party**. p.167.

²¹⁸ Interview Khazamola Shibambo, 19/07/2013, Bakenberg Konaite village.

²¹⁹ Interview with Khazamola Shibambo, 19/07/2013, Bakenberg Konaite Village.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid

Namibia.²²² They even promoted the slogan “Namibia today, South Africa tomorrow”.²²³ When Namibia celebrated its independence, an agent of the UDF, Godfrey Molekwa, organised the “Viva SWAPO rally” which took place at Mahwelereng Community Hall.²²⁴

Although he was under police restrictions, he formed a preparatory committee composed of workers, students, and political activists to organise the rally.²²⁵ The Viva SWAPO rally was addressed by Jackson Mthembu of the ANC, who was also a member of the South African Council of churches.²²⁶ Ntate Monama, who was the leader of Northern Transvaal People’s Congress, was also present. The Northern Transvaal People’s Congress was concerned with the organisation of the hostel dwellers to be active in the struggle against apartheid.²²⁷ Thabo Masibe, who was the spokesperson of the former Deputy President Kgalema Mohlanthe, was also in attendance.²²⁸ The Viva SWAPO rally, had the reminiscence of the “Pro FRELIMO rally” which was organised by the student body of the University of the North on 25 September 1974 after Frelimo liberated the people of Mozambique from the political chains of Portugal.²²⁹ The Pro Frelimo rally led to the detention and expulsion of a number of students at the Turfloop Campus of the University of the North. The university was even closed for a long period of time. That proved that the students of the University of the North did not divorce learning and teaching from the broader struggle against racial domination and oppression, both nationally and regionally.²³⁰ The perpetual youth unrest in Lebowa and Mogalakwena in particular, compelled both the Lebowa government and the apartheid government to use its repressive state apparatus to deal with the youth.

2.4 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE COMRADE

In South Africa, and Mogalakwena in particular, comrades possessed particular characteristics. They existed because the youth were not staying in a conducive environment

²²² Interview with Imran Hassan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza Johannesburg.

²²³ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012/, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa.

²²⁴ Podium, 11-13 December 2008, p. 5.

²²⁵ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg, Wythoek Ga-Molekwa.

²²⁶ Podium, 11-13 December 2008, p. 5.

²²⁷ Interview Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Bakenberg Wythoek Ga-Molekwa.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ C.White. **From Despair to Hope: The Turfloop Experience**. Sovenga, University of the North Press, 1997, p.108.

²³⁰ Ibid.

where they were expected to be natural and innocent.²³¹ They were youths who had committed themselves to either death or freedom and took it upon themselves to liberate their own people.²³² Their ages ranged from 13 years to 18 years. A few were of 35 years of age. Comrades consisted of school children, students, political activists, full wage earners, unemployed youth, petty criminals, university graduates etc.²³³

During meetings they had to be punctual, accept criticism and conduct self-criticism since they believed that by accepting mistakes and criticism they would be able to correct themselves and grow. They behaved according to the code of conduct which emphasised honesty, seriousness, commitment, vigilance, resistance, defensiveness, listening to other people and social responsibility.²³⁴ Those who were not disciplined or violated the code of conduct were disciplined verbally, warned, beaten and even killed in extreme cases, which also happened in Mogalakwena.²³⁵ The same discipline was extended to members of the community. Those who violated rules or campaigns were subjected to disciplinary measures.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The Soweto Students Uprising of 1976 revived political activities in some of the villages as the leadership of the African National Congress was arrested, detained and exiled from the 1950s. However, in many areas of Mogalakwena, the people became aware of their political conditions due to the influence of the Soweto Students Uprisings of 1976. The youth started to question many oppressive practices in their areas. Forceful youth mobilisation was important in infiltrating politics to them. The youth in rural areas were mobilised by their frustrations which resulted in witch hunting. By that time witchcraft was also one of the afrocentric beliefs. Unfortunately it posed a social problem that had to be dealt with.

Trade union politics was well introduced to the youth who were already mobilised by witch hunting. The Youth of Mogalakwena also opposed the provisions of the Stock Limitation

²³¹ A. Levett. "Faces in the Revolution -The psychological effects of Violence on the Township Youth in South Africa" **Journal of psychology**, vol. 23, 1993.p.149.

²³² G. Straker. "From Victim to Valian", A Slight of Speech: Media Representation of the Township Youth, **South African Journal of Psychology**, Vol.19,1989, p. 125.

²³³ A. Sitas. "The Comrades", **Reality**, Vol. 23, 1991, P.6.

²³⁴ D.Hemson. " For Sure you are going to die: Political participation and the Comrades Movement in Inanda Kwazulu Natal", **Social Dynamics**, Vol.22, 1996, p.85.

²³⁵ Interview with Aubrey Ledwaba, 12/10/2006, Seritarite High School.

Act, which regulated the livestock of the people. Furthermore, the attainment of independence by Black neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, Botswana and Angola motivated them further. They realised that it is also possible for them to attain independence. The presence of Mosibudi Mangena in Mahwelereng resulted in the emergence of political organisations in Mogalakwena. Through those political and youth organisations, youth activists dominated the political activities of Mogalakwena, which is further illustrated in chapter three.

CHAPTER 3

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF YOUTH POLITICAL PROTESTS IN MOGALAKWENA, 1984-1988

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two discussed the impact of Soweto Students uprising of 1976 on the youth of Mogalakwena. It showed the extent to which the presence of Mosibudi Mangena in Mahwelereng contributed to the participation of the youth of Mogalakwena in politics. This chapter focuses on the role of the youth political activists in the economic activities of the people of Mogalakwena, and various causes of consumer boycotts in Mahwelereng and other areas of Mogalakwena. It explains the manner in which the Native Urban Areas Acts of 1923 and 1952 made it difficult for the people of Mogalakwena to establish their own businesses in towns. It depicts the extent to which business owners of Mogalakwena supported the youth struggle spiritually and materially, with specific reference to Molala, Hlahla and Motabo. It further focuses on the implementation of consumer boycotts at Sodoma village. Furthermore, it shows how consumer boycotts adversely affected ordinary people of Mahwelereng, including major business owners, hawkers and shebeen owners. Also, it shows the manner in which the Indian people who resided close to Mokopane town had their licences confiscated for supporting consumer boycotts and for having their children taking part in the implementation of the consumer boycotts. Finally, it shows the impact of consumer boycotts on industrial workers, commercial workers and domestic workers.

3.2 THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE PEOPLE OF MOGALAKWENA

The South African government introduced the Native Urban Areas Act in 1923 and the Native Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1952 to regulate black movement in towns. The Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 was enacted basically to promote public health.²³⁶ The occurrence of illnesses such as Tuberculosis, Spanish flu and Bubonic plague in South Africa from 1900 to 1918 were ascribed to the health problems that were allegedly brought by

²³⁶ T.R.H Davenport : **South Africa A Modern History**. 4th Edition, Mcmillan Press, London,1991, p.326.

Black people in the urban areas.²³⁷ The Act confined urban areas to white people while blacks were placed in locations which were outside towns. Places that were occupied by the Black people such as slums were eradicated from the cities. The main aim of the Act was to regulate Black people in urban areas. Black people were tolerated in urban areas only when they were employed by White people.²³⁸ Those who were unemployed were forced to return and stay in rural homelands.²³⁹ However, it was difficult for Black people as they had to pay tax in the form of money. Since there were no enough work opportunities in rural areas, they had to go to urban areas to seek for employment despite the prohibition of the Native Urban Areas Act. The Great depression of 1929, which was accompanied by a huge drought, forced many blacks to leave subsistence farming and to try their luck in the urban economy. The occurrence of the Second World War from 1939 to 1945 also brought with it an abundance of job opportunities. Furthermore, more workers were needed in industries that produced armaments. This led many people in the rural areas to seek for employment in towns. Due to the high influx of blacks in urban areas, the government enacted the Native Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1952. The Act introduced the proclamation of urban areas whereby black people were not supposed to be in those proclaimed areas for a period of 72 hours provided they complied with the set qualifications.²⁴⁰

According to Section 10 of that act, permanent residential rights were reserved for blacks who were born in urban areas.²⁴¹ Those who stayed in urban areas for a period of ten years and worked for one employer for a continuous period of fifteen years, were also permitted to stay.²⁴² The reference book called *dompas* was used as a form of identification and had to be produced when demanded by the South African Police. The South African government tried in vain to intensify the pass laws from time to time until the abolition of influx control in 1986.²⁴³ Despite the strict measures of the Native Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1952, and further intensifications of the pass laws in the 1960s and 1970s, blacks continued to infiltrate

²³⁷ Ibid, p. 326.

²³⁸ Ibid, p. 326.

²³⁹ N. Worden : **The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid.** Oxford, Blackwell, 1994, p.43.

²⁴⁰ D. Hindson : **Pass Control and the Urban African Proletariat in South Africa.**Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987, p. 22.

²⁴¹ W. Beinart : **20th Century South Africa**, p. 151.

²⁴² Ibid, p. 151.

²⁴³ B. Liebenson and S.B Spies : **South Africa in the 20th Century.** Van Schaick, Pretoria, 1993, p. 471.

the urban areas because of their economic problems. The homeland of Lebowa also did not have enough job opportunities. Mogalakwena was in the same situation. The economic problems in the homelands were aggravated by the fact that the government still continued the economic restrictions that were placed on the black businessmen.²⁴⁴ The National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC) tried to promote black business in the 1970s and 1980s, but black business was still not allowed in the city centres.²⁴⁵ The majority of the people in the villages of Mogalakwena worked as subsistence farmers.

Other village people worked in White farms as cheap labour. The town of Mokopane was built as a market centre for White people.²⁴⁶ The major businesses in the centre of Mokopane town were controlled by White people. Indians were allowed to have businesses on the outskirts of the town to avoid competition with White people. Black people worked in Mokopane as commercial workers, industrial workers, hawkers and domestic workers. They were not allowed to have businesses in town. They were only allowed to do so in their respective villages as shop owners. The consumer boycotts, which were waged by Comrades, had an impact on most of the economic activities of the White people, Blacks and Indians.

3.3 CAUSES OF CONSUMER BOYCOTTS IN MOGALAKWENA

From 1984 to 1986 political organisations in Mahwelereng started to wage consumer boycotts. Consumer boycotts were implemented in South Africa as part of the struggle against apartheid. It was done in the mid 1980s during the state of emergency to force the government to lift the state of emergency, to release political prisoners, to remove soldiers from the Black townships and to give serious attention to the grievances of Black people.²⁴⁷ White businesses were the ones mainly targeted even though other racial groups such as Coloureds and Indians who had businesses in town were also negatively impacted.²⁴⁸ The

²⁴⁴ T.R.H. Davenport : **South Africa: A Modern History**, p. 492.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 492.

²⁴⁶ T. Lodge. **Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945**. Johannesburg, Raven Press, 1983, p.218.

²⁴⁷ B.J. Barker et al. **Readers Digest's Illustrated History of South Africa -The Real Story**.New York, Readers Digest Association of South Africa LTD,1998, p.480.

²⁴⁸ G. Adler and Stainberg. **From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics and Transition to Democracy**. p.101.

consumer boycott was also seen as a means to extend the struggle from Black areas to White areas.

Prominent leaders of the UDF such as Allan Boesak even said that consumer boycotts should be sustained until the apartheid government was on its sickbed or until it was dismantled.²⁴⁹ At times people were not allowed to go to town at all except nurses and doctors since they had to help comrades whenever they were injured by the police when implementing the boycotts.²⁵⁰ It was also within this context that consumer boycotts were staged at Mahwelereng. It was also an idea of the UDF in the Northern Transvaal to stage consumer boycotts in smaller towns such as Mokopane, that were serving as market centres for the White farmers.²⁵¹ In Mahwelereng, the consumer boycott was sparked by discrimination that was prevalent in Mokopane town, where White people did not want to share facilities with Black people on an equal basis.

The people of Mahwelereng complained about bad practices of the management of OK shops where Black consumers were searched at the entrances while White buyers were not.²⁵² Furthermore, the people boycotted OK, pledging solidarity with workers who were expelled by the management of the shop for being members of trade unions.²⁵³ The people also complained about a food shop called Spur Domingo which did not allow Black people to enter or buy from.²⁵⁴ On the other hand, the United Bank of Mokopane town also practiced racial segregation in that there were different queues for Whites and Blacks.²⁵⁵

Consumer boycotts were further stimulated by the killing of Peter Nchabeleng, who was the leader of the UDF, by Lebowa Police and the South African Defence Force at that time. The youth in the whole Lebowa homeland were incensed after realising that Nchabeleng was forced to sign a document directing all the youth in Lebowa to leave politics and go back to school. Consumer boycotts were implemented in all small towns of Lebowa such as

²⁴⁹ T. Lodge and Nasson. **All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s.** p.80.

²⁵⁰ B. Hirson. **Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto Revolt: Roots of Revolution.** p.254.

²⁵¹ T. Lodge and Nasson. **All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s.** p.117.

²⁵² Die Bosvelder, 23 July 1980. p.1.

²⁵³ Interview with Aubrey Ledwaba, 12/10/2006, Seritarite High School.

²⁵⁴ Interview with Blantina Fatane, 12/09/2006, Bakenberg High School.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Magdelin Senoamadi, 13/09/2006, Bakenberg High School.

Mokopane, Tzaneen, Marble Hall, Makhado, Burgersfort, Phalaborwa and Groblersdal.²⁵⁶ The consumer boycott committee was established and consisted of all political organisations that were available in Mahwelereng.²⁵⁷ It collaborated with street committees where the people were to be informed in advance before boycotts were implemented. According to Dr Hlahla, the people also had an idea that by boycotting white shops money would not go out of Mahwelereng, it would circulate in the township so that the people would be economically empowered to grow their businesses.²⁵⁸ Consumer boycotts were implemented by youth activists who were called Comrades. They made roadblocks on the outskirts of Mahwelereng to monitor people who were going to and from the town.²⁵⁹ The members of Lebowa police serving at Mahwelereng police station confirmed in a court case that a group of boys were blocking roads with stones and drums.²⁶⁰ They were worried because even when the stones and drums were removed, the practice continued unabated on a daily basis. In some instances, the comrades threw stones at them (police), which showed the extent to which the comrades undermined the Lebowa police. At that time the people of Mogalakwena used buses as a form of transport to and from town. The comrades decided to damage those buses so that the consumer boycott would be successful. Lebowa Bus Services provided transport to the people. The buses were pelted with stones by comrades to prevent them from transporting people to town.

3.4 THE IMPACT OF THE BOYCOTTS ON WORKERS AND OTHER PEOPLE OF MOGALAKWENA

The people of Mogalakwena resorted to taxis which were expensive and many people could not afford.²⁶¹ At times, taxis were also not allowed to operate. Taxi drivers who worked without permission exposed themselves and their passengers to the danger of being attacked. In one incident, a taxi driver was stabbed while driving people to town.²⁶² He ran away and the passengers followed suit. This incident showed the extent to which people were always exposed to danger. Since the town was not very far from the township, many people resorted

²⁵⁶ T. Lodge and Nasson. **All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s.** p.124.

²⁵⁷ Interview with Mapule Seolwane, 12/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

²⁵⁸ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

²⁵⁹ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

²⁶⁰ Court Case No. 158/07/85, Mahwelereng Police Station.

²⁶¹ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 27/09/2006, Mokopane.

²⁶² Court Case no.19/01/88, Mahwelereng Police Station.

to walking, which also exposed them to criminals who took advantage of the situation to commit crime.²⁶³ The people who were mostly affected by the transport problem were town workers who stayed in the township and went to town on a daily basis. Most of the workers resorted to sleeping at their place of work to avoid arriving at work late. This also caused their families problems because their children were left alone at home.²⁶⁴ The children were in danger since soldiers often terrorised their homes searching for comrades. Those who persisted on using buses were injured as buses were not welcomed in the township. Most of the buses had broken windows due to stoning by comrades, which also exposed commuters to danger.²⁶⁵ The workers complained that they arrived at work very late which made them clash with their employers; some were even fired from their jobs.²⁶⁶ They also complained about arriving late at home, which also exposed them to bus stoning which resulted in serious injuries. At times they arrived in the township when soldiers were already patrolling, which also exposed them to the danger of being sjamboked.²⁶⁷

Bus stoning became the order of the day in Mahwelereng where bus drivers always lived in fear of being injured or even killed. The bus company was also expecting drivers to keep buses safe by driving in less dangerous places or sections of the township. One bus driver, Alfred Masibe, reported to the Mahwelereng Police Station that his passengers were injured when the bus he was driving was stoned by the comrades. One passenger, by the name of Mashilo, was even admitted at Mokopane Hospital.²⁶⁸ Bus stoning often took place in the evening, which made it difficult for the passengers inside to see the stone throwers and this consequently made them sustain injuries on a daily basis.²⁶⁹ Furthermore, domestic workers, some of whom were old, also experienced bus stoning. For example, one domestic worker by the name of Sylvia Mathobela who was 45 years old sustained serious injuries on her right ear and was admitted to Mokopane Hospital.²⁷⁰ Moreover, domestic workers at Mokopane hospital always complained about stoning of buses because it happened every time they saw groups of youth.²⁷¹

²⁶³ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 27/09/2006, Mokopane.

²⁶⁴ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Bakenberg Circuit Office.

²⁶⁵ Court Case no.62/07/85, Mokopane Police Station.

²⁶⁶ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 27/09/2006, Mokopane.

²⁶⁷ Interview with Ditsepu Maboia, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

²⁶⁸ Court Case no. 62/07/85, Mokopane Police Station.

²⁶⁹ Court Case no.62/07/85, Mokopane Police Station.

²⁷⁰ Court Case no. 50/03/86, Mokopane Police Station.

At times they were robbed and even raped by the comrade Tsotsis (criminals who pretended to be the comrades). Workers were in most cases expelled from their jobs for being absent, especially when Comrades blocked all roads to town to ensure that pedestrians were barred from going to town.²⁷² The practice of stoning buses was also extended to rural areas. In rural areas cars which belonged to White people were stoned on a daily basis. For example, Madumetsa Simon Montja reported to Mahwelereng police station that his car was stoned when he was transporting people from Johannesburg to Mmapela village.

When he arrived at Mmapela village, a group of youth threw stones at his car, resulting in the breaking of the windows of his car.²⁷³ This incident made it difficult for him to perform the work that earned him money. Madumetsa Joseph Bembi also reported to the police on 19 March 1986 that his car of registration number JMY 920 T was stoned by a group of boys at Steilooop.²⁷⁴ He reported that the boys were so many that it was not possible to count them. The stoning of vehicles in both urban and rural areas evidenced the prevalence of youth consciousness in the whole of Mogalakwena. It also frustrated workers in both urban and rural areas. The constant absenteeism of workers in town worried White business owners and employers. They formed a Central Committee to deal with the problem at hand. The central committee was composed of all employers in Mokopane town. Its aim was to encourage employers to work together or to assist each other since absenteeism lowered their production. They collected information about political issues in Mokopane and Mahwelereng in order to know the exact times in which there would be stayaways and consumer boycotts implementations by the comrades.²⁷⁵ They realised that such information would help them to get alternative workers at other places to assist when workers from Mahwelereng and the surrounding places were not coming to work.

Bus stoning went hand in glove with the burning of white people's cars which delivered food in both urban and rural areas. The burning of cars was in line with the decision taken by youth leadership at Mahwelereng hotel on 28 March 1986.²⁷⁶ Immediately after that meeting, they came across a car from Sportless Dry Cleaners on the stop sign near Mahwelereng

²⁷² Northern Review, 26 July 1985. p. 3.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Court Case Number 132/05/1986, Mahwelereng Police Station.

²⁷⁵ Die Bosvelder, 25 April 1986. p. 1.

²⁷⁶ Court Case Number 49/03/1986, Mahwelereng Police Station.

hotel. The driver of that car was told not to proceed and to vacate the car.²⁷⁷ The youth leader, Sophonia Mmamabolo, opened the petrol tank and used a pipe to drain the whole petrol from the car. That petrol was sprayed on the car and it was set alight. The remaining petrol was reserved for the making of petrol bombs.²⁷⁸ From that moment the burning of cars took place almost on a daily basis in Mogalakwena area. This was justified by Eric Matsemela, a bakery driver whose bakery was also set alight. Eric delivered bread at Ga-Madiba village a small place near Mahwelereng location. He parked his lorry outside the shop yard and left his two assistants to place an order and to collect money for the order.

While he was in the shop, his assistants came running and told him that the company lorry was being burned by the comrades.²⁷⁹ All those workers tried in vain to put out the fire as they were afraid of losing their jobs.²⁸⁰ Eric Matsemela reported the matter to the police but nobody was arrested. About R800.00 was burned in the lorry. They only managed to recover coin money amounting to R 48.03.²⁸¹ The practice of burning cars belonging to white people was extended to the villages. The white people did not make deliveries in Mahwelereng anymore. They only went to rural areas as it was less dangerous. Youth political consciousness was so widespread that even the youth in villages knew what to do in case they saw delivery lorries from town. Furthermore, the youth in the location also followed the delivery lorries to the villages, calling this strategy targeting.²⁸² As a result, many delivery trucks belonging to white people were burned by comrades in the villages. This was evidenced by the burning of a lorry which carried products for Archa at Bakenberg. It was not known whether it was burned by the youth of Bakenberg, or through the strategy of targeting. However, many youths of Bakenberg were arrested in connection with the burning of this lorry.²⁸³

The boycotts implementation affected the people negatively in that the boycotts were forceful than persuasive. People were compelled to pledge solidarity just like in urban

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Court Case Number 15/05/91, Mahwelereng Police Station.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Interview with William Mpyana, 10/ 09/2007, Mahwelereng location.

²⁸³ Ibid.

areas.²⁸⁴ Comrades usually waited at the bus stops to search the people who were suspected of having bought goods in town. Taxis and cars from town were stopped and searched every day.²⁸⁵ They confiscated groceries and parcels bought in town and reminded the people that boycotts were still on. Those parcels were either taken by the comrades for themselves or destroyed openly, which pained most of the victims. The punishment meted out to the boycotts violators was at times bad in the sense that they were forced to eat the products they bought even if they were poisonous.²⁸⁶ Violators had to eat raw meat, uncooked eggs, and powdered soap and drank cooking oil. They were also thrashed with sjamboks for violating the boycotts. In most cases, women had to drink liquids that they used for relaxing their hair.

Most of the violators were old people who were not active in politics or who were ignorant.²⁸⁷ These old people complained that decisions for consumer boycotts did not reach them or that they were not involved in the decision making for implementing the boycotts.²⁸⁸ These consumer boycotts also affected people who were outside Mahwelereng as they were not informed about them at all. Buses that were transporting them were stopped and all their products were smashed and destroyed and no one could dare open their mouth.²⁸⁹ As in urban areas, domestic workers had to be dispossessed of some groceries that they were given by their employers because comrades thought they were bought from White shops.²⁹⁰

3.5 THE IMPACT OF THE CONSUMER BOYCOTTS ON LOCAL BUSINESS

The consumer boycotts had an impact on local African businesses in Mogalakwena. On a positive note, the local businesses flourished during the consumer boycotts since the people only bought in the township. The shop owners, however, took advantage of the situation by increasing prices.²⁹¹ On the other hand, it was also difficult because the presence of soldiers and the police in the streets disturbed business activities since people were afraid of going to shops freely. Local businesses found it difficult to stock from town because the few stores

²⁸⁴ A. Sitas. "The Comrades" **Reality**, Vol.23, 1991, p.6.

²⁸⁵ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Provia Phahlane, 11/09/2006, Bakenberg.

²⁸⁷ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

²⁸⁹ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 27/09/2006, Mokopane.

²⁹⁰ K. Lehoko: "Who is Really a Comrade?" **Africa Labour Bulletin**, 1990, p.68.

²⁹¹ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 27/09/2006, Mokopane.

from which they were allowed to stock were either expensive or lacked most of what they wanted.²⁹²

Those who had means of transport had to buy from far places such as Polokwane and Mmokgophong (the old Naboom town), while those without transport found it difficult to do lucrative business. Shop owners who violated the consumer boycotts were regarded as sell-outs and their shops were boycotted. Due to that, all business people had to comply with the directives of the comrades and gave the comrades moral and material support.²⁹³ All business people were forced to collect money or donated money whenever some comrades were arrested in order to bail them out.²⁹⁴ They also collected money to bury comrades who were killed by the soldiers or the police. This cost them a lot of money because those who were not comrades also claimed to be involved and demanded free burials.²⁹⁵ During funerals they also had to provide the bereaved family with free food, which was the case in the funerals of two prominent comrades, Makompo Kutumela and Moses Makgai.²⁹⁶

Although all business people were involved in assisting comrades materially, Molala and Tshehla Hlahla emerged as outstanding business owners who were behind the activities of the comrades. Molala was regarded by the people of Mahwelereng as a rich man because he had a hotel and a dairy farm.²⁹⁷ He was not politically active but he helped all political organisations that operated in Mahwelereng then, with all that he had. He bought a very big tent for the people of Mahwelereng which was used to accommodate all the mourners who attended funerals. This tent was used in the funerals of all comrades who were killed during those days of trouble in Mahwelereng.²⁹⁸

However, he never bothered to buy groceries, maize meal and even an animal that had to be slaughtered during the funeral.²⁹⁹ Comrades who were active and wanted by the police were given free accommodation at his Mahwelereng hotel.³⁰⁰ All political parties in Mahwelereng

²⁹² Interview with Magdelin Senoamadi, 13/09/2006, Bakenberg High School.

²⁹³ Interview with Chuene Petrus Temo, 13/11/2006, Bakenberg.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

²⁹⁵ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

²⁹⁶ Interview with Blantina Fatane, 12/09/2006, Bakenberg High School.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

²⁹⁸ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

²⁹⁹ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

³⁰⁰ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

were allowed to hold secret meetings at his hotel and dairy farm during the night. During political meetings, he always ensured that members of the top executive of that organisation received free catering. He had transport such as taxis, lorries and vans which were used to carry comrades to whatever conference, rally or meeting at any place in Limpopo and South Africa at large.³⁰¹ This affected his businesses so negatively that all of them collapsed. Though he is now a poor man, he is seen by the people of Mahwelereng as a hero.³⁰² When the African National Congress took over in 1994, his role was acknowledged by many people in their political meetings.³⁰³ Promises of empowering him were made but to date, they have not been fulfilled.

Hlahla also gave comrades material support. Unlike Molala, he was politically aware and active in the politics of AZAPO, and was an AZAPO leader in Mahwelereng at that time. He supported the comrades with all his resources, including cars, accommodation and money. Many comrades who were in trouble were given money by Hlahla to flee the country.³⁰⁴ Mosibudi Mangena, for example, was financed by Hlahla to escape from South Africa in 1981.³⁰⁵ He used his surgery to give free medical service to the comrades who were injured by the police and soldiers during the campaigns. This was confirmed by the fact that he became the last person to examine Comrade Moses Makgai, who was injured by the police before he died. After Makgai's death, he was very furious with the police at Mahwelereng police station. Furthermore, he provided many comrades with money or bursaries to further their studies at higher institutions of learning, including universities. Prominent youth activists such as Perry Kekana were given bursaries to study at university.³⁰⁶

Another person who was behind youth political activities was Advocate Ramodipa. He was a popular lawyer in Mokopane, and he helped by giving all the youth who were arrested for political crimes free legal service or representation in courts.³⁰⁷ The business people of Mahwelereng are today seen as heroes since during the time of trouble, they did not run away

³⁰¹ Interview with Tente Morallane, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

³⁰² Interview with Tente Morallane, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

³⁰³ Interview with Tente Morallane, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

³⁰⁴ Interview with Aubrey Ledwaba, 12/10/2006, Seritarite High School.

³⁰⁵ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

³⁰⁶ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

³⁰⁷ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

from their people to the suburbs. They always identified themselves with the people, hence some of them are still operating today.

Shop owners also supported the activities of the comrades even in other places of the rural areas. This is evidenced by the support of a great businessman, Motabo, to the activities of the comrades at Taueatsoala village. He assisted the comrades with meat, maize meal, drinks and money whenever comrades had political campaigns, meetings, and when they took trips for political reasons.³⁰⁸ Furthermore, businessmen from Taueatsoala guided the comrades on various issues, especially in cases where the comrades needed help.³⁰⁹ On the other hand, business people in other villages such as Sodoma village were not supportive of the activities of the comrades. This was caused by the fact that one of the businessmen, Mohwibidu Setati, was a station commander of Gilead Police Station in the late 1980s and early 1990s.³¹⁰

The youth congress of Sodoma village held meetings many times to complain about his attitude to youth political activities. The youth even took a decision to boycott his shop, which was called Mohwibidu Cafe. All the people in the village were not allowed to buy or be near his shop. The message about the boycott of his shop was spread by using pamphlets, which were placed at other local shops and liquor restaurants. The message reached the entire village and all people complied. The youth congress also complained that he did not allow his children to attend the meetings organised by the comrades.³¹¹ The boycott was lifted when his children started to attend the meetings and pleaded for the boycott against their father's shop to be lifted.³¹²

Hawkers were also affected by youth political activities in Mahwelereng. During consumer boycotts, it was difficult for the comrades to take a stance on the question of hawkers because they were poor people who depended on selling fruits and vegetables to earn a living.³¹³ The comrades did not know whether to stop them from stocking in town or not as it was clear that

³⁰⁸ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala village.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Interview with Mawisha Mashiane, 17/06/2012, Sodoma village.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ P. Delius. **A Lion amongst the Cattle; Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal.** p.184.

they were not part of the oppressive system of the government. By then most of them were selling in the streets, on pavements, at bus stations and taxi ranks. The decision was taken that they be allowed to buy or stock in some of the identified Indians and Greek shops in town.

A committee was even appointed under a man by the name of Molebane from Mahwelereng to monitor hawkers and ensure that they only bought in the identified shops.³¹⁴ However, this idea caused a problem because they had no choice of buying wherever they wanted. Hawkers who were stocking secretly in shops that were not allowed had their merchandise taken by force and destroyed.³¹⁵ According to court records, some comrades did not have respect for hawkers. They were threatened daily by criminals who pretended to be comrades. This argument is evidenced by a court case that was reported by Peter Kutumela at Mahwelereng Police Station. Peter Kutumela was selling fruit and vegetables for his mother when the youth who claimed to be comrades arrived and demanded the fruit.³¹⁶ When he refused, he was dispossessed and kicked all over the body until he collapsed.³¹⁷

This was further evidenced by Edward Makama who used to transport his fruit and vegetables using a bicycle near Nico Bottle store at Sekgakgapeng village near Mahwelereng. One day a young man who claimed to be a comrade demanded the bicycle which Makama used to transport his fruits and vegetables.³¹⁸ When Makama refused, he assaulted him with two Iron Rods on his ribs.³¹⁹ He threatened to kill Makama as long as he refused him the bicycle. He further threatened that he would call other comrades that day to burn his house, which compelled Makama to surrender the bicycle.³²⁰ Such criminal activities were even committed by girls who also pretended to be comrades. They persecuted hawkers and robbed them of their products. A girl by the name of Flora and her friend once attacked an old man who sold peaches on the street.³²¹

³¹⁴ Interview with Francina Mongoane, 27/10/2006, Mokopane.

³¹⁵ Interview with Francina Mongoane, 27/10/2006, Mokopane.

³¹⁶ Court Case no 191/12/86, Mahwelereng Police Station.

³¹⁷ Court Case no 191/12/86, Mahwelereng Police Station.

³¹⁸ Court Case Number 37/01/92, Mahwelereng Police Station.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Court Case Number 328/11/91, Mahwelereng Police Station.

The old man sold peaches at the value of 5 cents each. Flora and her friend took some peaches but refused to pay. When the old man demanded payment he was forcefully pulled, brought down and bashed on the head and neck. The old man reported the matter to the police and the girls were arrested.³²² Similar incidents occurred in rural areas where criminals also pretended to be comrades persecuted hawkers. At Bakenberg, Hellen Mahlodi Maluleke was attacked by a boy who pretended to be a comrade. Hellen was coming from Marulaneng village where she sold old clothes called *ou klere* when a boy who claimed to be a comrade forced her to give him money. He alleged that the money was required by the comrades as part of collections that were taken from all community members.³²³ When Hellen refused, she was severely assaulted. Although hawkers were not usually harassed, some youths took advantage of the situation to do as they liked.

Youth political activities also affected shebeens and households which sold liquor to earn a living. There were many of such shebeen households in Mahwelereng such as Ga-ngwanana Mountainview, White-House, Sekoting, to name only a few.³²⁴ Shebeen owners were attacked by police and soldiers, especially at night and accused of harbouring comrades. This was revealed in the evidence by a shebeen owner, Maureen Manaka, who reported to the Lebowa police that one night a group of soldiers under Corporal van Rooyen came to her house to demand comrades.³²⁵

When they arrived, they just pushed the door open and started to search in wardrobes and fridges. They also raped them. They broke the outside door and damaged a fridge. Maureen and her brother Joseph were also searched and kicked on their ribs.³²⁶ When they threatened to call the Lebowa police, Corporal van Rooyen was not moved. His response was “Jou moer, jou gat, jy moet die Lebowa polisie bel ek is nie bang vir hulle nie” (you shit, your anus, you may call the Lebowa police, I am not afraid of them).³²⁷ Shebeen owners were accused of working with the comrades and were told to close their shebeens and were not allowed to sell liquor anymore. According to a shebeen owner, William Mpyane, the police

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

³²⁵ Court Case no. 90/01/88, Mahwelereng Police Station.

³²⁶ Court Case no. 90/01/88, Mahwelereng Police Station.

³²⁷ Court Case no. 90/01/88, Mahwelereng Police Station.

also confiscated their beers and stored them for their functions at the end of the year.³²⁸ This became a constant practice by soldiers and the White Commandos or volunteers who lived in Mokopane town, which was reserved for the White people.³²⁹ Soldiers removed their name tags from their uniforms so that they could not be identified.³³⁰

Moreover, consumer boycotts had both positive and negative impact on Indian businessmen. During that time shops for White people were in the centre of the town, while those of the Indians were mostly on the outskirts of the towns. Both Blacks and Indians supported the consumer boycotts. They were allowed to conduct their business because some assisted the comrades with transport, cold drinks, accommodation and food to ensure that they did not suffer as they were hunted by the police daily.³³¹ These Indians were allowed to stock at big wholesale shops like Metro.³³² However, those who conducted their businesses in the centre of the town were negatively affected by the boycotts.

Since the consumer boycotts were against White businesses, any business that was closer to the white shops was negatively affected. Indians who operated at the outskirts of the town benefitted from the boycotts as Black people were allowed to buy in their shops. Even hawkers were allowed to stock from them and from other shops which belonged to the Greeks. Indian business people who were selling in the centre of the town were those who were supportive of apartheid. They even formed an Indian Management Committee which was pro government. The committee was also supported by members of the Indian community since they were elected to represent Indians in some layers of the Tricameral government since 1983.³³³ The Indian management committee used its political power to suppress other Indians living in the Indian location on the outskirts of Mokopane town who were involved in the struggle against apartheid.³³⁴

Consequently, members and families of the leadership of the Akasia Youth Congress were badly treated by the Indian Management Committee. This was justified by the withdrawal of

³²⁸ Interview with William Mpyane, 28/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

³²⁹ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 27/09/2006, Mokopane.

³³⁰ Court Case no. 90/01/88, Mokopane Police Station.

³³¹ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/01/2012, Ga Molekwa Wythok village.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Interview with Imran Hassan, 08/02/2012, Oriental Plaza, Johannesburg.

³³⁴ Ibid.

the business licence of Imran Hassan's father who was the chairperson of Akasia Youth Congress. Imran's father had to close his business in town and the surrounding places due to Imran's involvement in the consumer boycotts.³³⁵ The closure of his father's business affected them emotionally and financially as a family, since they depended on it to make a living.³³⁶

3.6 CONCLUSION

Apartheid legislations tampered immensely with Black economic system. Blacks relied on their afrocentric economic system for centuries without problems. The apartheid government introduced the system of paying tax in the form of money. Taxation forced Blacks to abandon their economic system. They were employed by the white people as cheap labour. Some were involved in selling goods to survive. They challenged the apartheid economic system by staging consumer boycotts. The consumer boycotts depicted the extent to which ordinary people of Mahwelereng suffered in that they were not allowed to buy in town, while at home they were constantly harassed by soldiers in the streets. The consumer boycotts also had a negative impact on the rural people since their products were always destroyed by the comrades. This happened because they were mostly not well informed about the boycotts. They, in most cases, had their transport stopped and searched by the comrades. Consumer boycotts also took place in rural areas. This was evidenced by the consumer boycott of Mohwibidu Cafe in Sodoma village. Furthermore, Indians who were involved in the struggle against apartheid were negatively affected as their parents lost trading licences. Town workers were hard-hit because they were also assaulted by soldiers when coming from work, at the same time troubled by comrades who suspected them of violating consumer boycotts. At work, many workers were dismissed by their employers for either being absent or for late coming. The boycotts adversely affected local businesses such as hawkers, while shebeen owners had to close, forcing families to survive without incomes. The youth political activism was further justified by their protest against the education system in South Africa in chapter 4.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF THE YOUTH POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON THE PEOPLE OF MOGALAKWENA 1980--1994

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three discussed the role of the youth in distabilising the economic system of the apartheid regime in South Africa and Mogalakwena in particular. It discussed how the consumer boycotts were organised and the extent of their impact on people of all race groups in Mogalakwena. This chapter discusses the causes of education boycotts in Mogalakwena in relation to the national education boycotts. It shows the payment of school fees and the non-supply of stationery in schools as aspects which fuelled school boycotts. It depicts the role of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in the struggle against apartheid education system from 1990 to 1994. It shows the extent to which SADTU disrupted educational programmes in Mogalakwena and depicts how the education boycotts had a negative impact on teachers, principals, students and Lebowa government officials who worked and stayed in Mahwelereng together with members of the Lebowa police. Furthermore, it discusses the impact of youth protests on the African cultural values of the people of Mogalakwena.

4.2 CAUSES OF EDUCATION BOYCOTTS IN MOGALAKWENA

Since the 1976 Soweto Students Uprisings, students complained that the education system in South Africa was poor and practically valueless.³³⁷ They felt that through Bantu education, the South African government instilled the feeling or sense of inferiority, barbarism and dependence. They demanded an education system that would be based on the right values of the majority of the people, the people's education, which could be attained through forceful political transformation.³³⁸ They demanded the education system that would be able to link theory and practice to enable them to acquire skills to work on their own as in foreign

³³⁷ R.W.Turton,G.Straker and F. Moosa. "Experiences of Violence in the lives of the Township Youth in unrest and normal conditions", **African Journal of Psychology**, Vol.21, 1991, pp.77-84.

³³⁸ L.Callinicos. "Learn and Teach-Popular History in the Eighties" **Radical Historical Review**, Vol.4, 1986, pp.288-289.

countries such as Germany, the USA and Britain.³³⁹ Student movements such as the South African Student Organisation (SASO), the South African Student Movement (SASM), the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM) explored the shortcomings of the Bantu education system and urged students throughout the country to engage the government on the educational matter. It was within this context that the educational matter was dealt with by the youth in Mogalakwena. During that time the existing student political structures in Mogalakwena were AZASM, COSAS and Mokerong Confederation of Student Representative Council.

Student movements complained that principals at their respective schools did not allow them to elect their own representative councils (SRCs). They alleged that whenever they tried to assemble for SRC elections, they were disallowed by their principals or disrupted by the Lebowa police.³⁴⁰ Numerous demands were even made to the circuit inspectors Makgabo and Lepelle, who instructed them to submit their constitution to the circuit office for approval. They were further told that if their constitution was not in line with the policy of the department, it would be rejected.³⁴¹ That worried students because their fellow students in urban areas had SRCs that were recognised. They saw the presence of the SRC structure as essential in addressing their day-to-day problems, and to have a representation in the governance of their schools.

Students also complained about overcrowding in their schools, and demanded the building of new schools. In Mokerong, the magisterial district to which Mogalakwena fell, pupil-teacher ratio was at 59:1 in primary schools and 49:1 in secondary schools, which was unacceptable for normal teaching.³⁴² The question of overcrowding was a national problem as many urban areas experienced shortage of classes. Children were attending in garages, public tents or under the trees.³⁴³ Furthermore, children attended school on shifts. They also complained about the fact that their brothers and sisters were no longer admitted at schools simply

³³⁹ M.Grealy. "Black Youth in Trouble -Facing the future," **Journal of contemporary African Studies**, Vol. 11,1992, pp.151-152.

³⁴⁰ File Ref No. 7/11, 1986/01/29, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Makgabo to The Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education.

³⁴¹ Ibid

³⁴² Lebowa Politics and Government, Development Bank of South Africa, 1986, Sandton, pp.10-16.

³⁴³ Rand Daily Mail, 2 May 1980, p.2.

because they were active in politics. This problem was connected to the age limit rule which was introduced by the South African government to stop all learners aged 20 and above from attending public schools since they were seen as influential in school riots.³⁴⁴ The age limit rule was implemented in 1984 but student movements in South Africa opposed it.

Students who were not affected were also against the rule because they thought that it might affect them in future. They saw it as unnecessary given that many children in South Africa did not start school at the right time due to economic, political and social problems caused by the apartheid system. They demanded that those students who were expelled from schools for political reasons be reinstated. They further alleged that most youth activists were deliberately victimised and failed by school authorities because, according to their records, prominent youth leaders were not performing well in their classes.³⁴⁵

In the early 1980s, student movements released a document called “Education Charter Campaign”.³⁴⁶ This document was directed to all students and the community in general. The campaign was aimed at informing Black people to stop the payment of school fees. Students complained about the Standard 8 examination fee. They wanted the department to cancel the examination fee of R20 from 1984 since they found it difficult to pay both the examination fees and school fees.³⁴⁷ The rejection of the examination fees happened in many parts of the country, and resulted in the boycott of both the Standard 8 and 10 examinations of 1984.

Those who managed to write examinations were under the protection of the police. This did not help because they were still attacked by their fellow students when they returned home.³⁴⁸ The campaign condemned the fact that parents worked so hard for their money, yet they used the money on education which had to be free.³⁴⁹ The campaign urged learners not to pay

³⁴⁴ J.F. Seeking. **Quienscene and Transformation to Confrontation: South African Townships 1978-1984**. PhD thesis, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990.

³⁴⁵ File REF No.7/11, 1986/01/29, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Report from Inspector Makgabo to the Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education.

³⁴⁶ File Ref No. 7/11, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Sowetan, 30 October 1984, p.2.

³⁴⁹ File Ref No. 7/11, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices.

school fees anymore. Those who had already paid were instructed to demand a refund.³⁵⁰ The campaign concerned all students in primary and secondary schools up to university level. The order of the campaign was enforced by all student formations existing in South Africa, including in Mogalakwena. They also protested against other different financial charges they paid at their respective schools. Many Black learners in Mogalakwena became aware of the fact that education was a birth-right but not a privilege.³⁵¹ They realised that the current system of education was not beneficial to the Black children socially, politically and economically, since it deprived them of the right to learn by subjecting them to school fee-payment.³⁵² This was aggravated by an outcry in many rural communities that their children were expelled from schools for not paying school fees or for not paying it in time.³⁵³ Students and the community in general started to challenge their schools on school fee matters. At Sephuti Secondary School, students complained that the money they paid for school fees was not properly spent by the school principal. They embarked on the school boycott in demand of a school fee- refund. Chief Taueatsoala had to call the Lebowa Department of Education officials to conduct an investigation into the allegations of the misuse of money at that school.³⁵⁴ The investigations proved the allegations to be true that indeed the money was embezzled.³⁵⁵

Apart from school fees, students also complained about the sports fees. Students always demanded to be refunded sports fee or be given some of it because in most cases, it was impossible for them to undertake sports trips in the 1980s owing to the widespread of unrests in the whole country. They also advanced reasons that their sports equipments were not of the required standard or quality. This was evidenced by learners at Mohlapeng Secondary School in Mahwelereng Circuit, who demanded to be refunded their sports fees.³⁵⁶ Their demand for sports fees spread to other nearby schools such as Somavhunga, Gojela and Alfred Makapan Secondary School. The school principal involved the Circuit Manager by

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ File Ref No. 7/11, 1993/05/07, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Congress of South African Students to The National Minister of Education.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Verbatim Report of Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Special Session 13-28 May 1985.

³⁵⁴ Court Case Number 191/05/91, Mahwelereng Police Station.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ File Ref No 7/11, 1986/06/25, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpoo Archieves, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from the Principal of Mohlapping Secondary School to the Circuit Inspector of Mahwelereng Circuit Office.

the name of Maditsi who also advised him to involve the school committee and parents in resolving the matter. However, he advised the principal not to refund the students. According to him, the money was supposed to be spent for the purpose for which it was collected.³⁵⁷ He felt that if a refund was to be done, it might set a wrong precedent for further demands for refund related to fees.³⁵⁸

Students also complained about the building fee. The building fee was brought about by the fact that Black communities were building schools on their own with little assistance from the department.³⁵⁹ In some instances, the department was not able to provide subsidy at all. The communities felt compelled to do so as other villages had no schools which forced their children to travel long distances to attend schools in other villages which had schools. They were also experiencing overcrowding in classrooms and lack of libraries and laboratories. The communities took it upon themselves to collect money for building those structures. All community members were compelled to contribute an agreed amount of money irrespective of whether or not they had children in the schools.³⁶⁰

The contribution of that money was called building fee. Children were not allowed to attend school unless their parents had paid the building fee.³⁶¹ In some instances, they were allowed to attend without payment but they were not given their progress reports at the end of the year. All progress reports for those who did not pay were taken to the village traditional authority to ensure that they paid. Students were even angered by the fact that, at times, they were not allowed to proceed to the next standard for not paying the building fee. Every new learner who sought admission had to pay first, which dissatisfied some community members in that it was to be paid by all generations which came to school long after the school was built. The amount of money for the building fee differed from village to village. Students who came from different tribal chiefs and urban areas were made to pay a higher amount. Learners were, in most cases, expelled from school for failing to pay both the school fee and the building fee, which did not go well with the students.³⁶²

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Verbatim Report of Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Part 2, Volume 20, 5-16 May 1986.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Verbatim Report of Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Part 2, Vol 19, 13-28 May 1985.

At various schools in Mogalakwena, learners started to demand that payment of different monies that were paid to schools such as building fees, school fees and sports fees be stopped or refunded. The students in George Masibe Secondary School once demanded the refund of sports fee and building fee.³⁶³ They also demanded the refund of money which they had paid for their school trip to the Lebowakgomo provincial show which was held annually.³⁶⁴ It was common practice in Lebowa for schools to visit the Lebowa show, which was held every August to September. The students felt that it was the responsibility of the schools to transport them to the show annually and freely.³⁶⁵ The principal of George Masibe by the name of Molokomme, gave a report to teachers and learners about how they travelled to and from the show.

The students then interrupted the principal by shouting the word “change,” referring to the fact that they should be refunded the remaining money for the trip and the sports fee.³⁶⁶ They also demanded to be refunded the building fee which was R10-00 then. This resulted into a strike whereby learners destroyed school windows and threatened other teachers who were mostly strict at that school. The Lebowa police were called as the school property and teachers were in danger. The school boycott took a long time and became violent in such a way that the community felt that their tribal chief, Chief Matlhaba 11, be called as the school was under his tribal authority. The chief came to school with a rifle as all the chiefs in Lebowa were provided with one gun to protect themselves and their people from the terrorists (those who opposed the apartheid government and fought for its demise).³⁶⁷

That morning all the students came to school to be addressed by their chief. The chief was expected to calm the situation by convincing the learners to return to classes, instead, he instructed the learners by shouting “Back to class”.³⁶⁸ Learners grumbled and shouted back at him. Students went to the extent of throwing stones at him which nearly injured him. The chief realised that he was in danger and fired a number of shots in the air to protect himself.³⁶⁹ Some of the students ran away after being frightened by the sound of gun fire.³⁷⁰

³⁶³ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11/07/2011, Rapadi village.

³⁶⁴ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Tauetsoala Village.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Interview with Ratshilanal Digashu, 07/03/2011, Bakenberg Mmotong Village.

³⁶⁷ Interview with Chief Dennis Matlhaba 11, 10/03/2011, Bakenberg Mothwathwase Village.

³⁶⁸ Interview with Ratshilana Digashu, 07/03/2011, Bakenberg Mmotong.

³⁶⁹ Interview with Chief Dennis Matlhaba 11, 10/03/2011, Bakenberg Mmotong.

However, students' resistance and skirmishes with the chief showed the level of political consciousness and militancy in that they challenged the chief regardless of the threat of the gun.

In other villages of Mogalakwena, communities started to hold meetings to discuss the students' complaints about different fees that they paid at school. There were mixed feelings from parents on the issue of fees, especially school fees. Some felt that the school fees should be paid since they were used in the daily running of schools. They wanted parents to pay school fees themselves rather than delegating their children to pay because money was not reaching the school.³⁷¹ The village Indunas (traditional leader at the level of a village) were mandated to identify those who did not comply and send their names to the tribal chief for punishment through fines or banishment.³⁷² In other villages the community became very inquisitive about school finances. As a result, school principals and school committees were questioned about school finances almost daily. At Rapadi village, a group of young men who were employed in urban areas came home at night and confronted the school committee members to provide them with records of school fee collection.³⁷³ This was done because the community suspected that the principal, by the name of Nyatlo, was embezzling the school finances. Sechele Monare, who was one of the members of the school committee, told them that school records were lost, which made it difficult for them to justify their allegations.³⁷⁴

One activist, Thembi Makgai, who was instrumental in inquiring about school finances, suggested that the school be destroyed so that all the villages which contributed in the building of the school, such as Senita, Rapadi, Vianna, Dipere, and Tshere share the corrugated iron and bricks to build their own schools.³⁷⁵ They did not agree with his proposal as some villagers felt that their children's education would be disrupted. School committees were also conscientised in that they began to refuse to be controlled by the principals. They even began to question the manner in which the principals were managing the school finances. At Matsogella Secondary School, the school committee complained about financial

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ File Ref No.7/11, 22 September 1986, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Report on the meeting held by Parents, School Committee, Principals, Indunas and Tribal Authority.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Interview with Sechele Monare, 11/07/2011, Rapadi Village.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

malpractices, which resulted from the fact that some blank cheques were signed.³⁷⁶ They also alleged that they were not given financial statements since 1987.³⁷⁷ They complained that there was no good communication between the school committee and the principal. They further accused the principal of increasing the school fees by R40-00 without consulting them.³⁷⁸ The headman of Rooivaal Village, where Matsogella Secondary School is situated, accused the principal of not recognising his tribal authority because every time he went to the school, he was told that the principal had gone to the circuit office.³⁷⁹

At Mathulamisha Secondary School, students complained that they paid school fees twice a year while they still had to pay for school trips.³⁸⁰ Apart from that they were also forced to pay R1-00 for snapshots which were never given to students.³⁸¹ The students further alleged that whenever they inquired about the snapshots no answers were provided to them. The communities were angered by the fact that Circuit managers were not properly responding to their frustrations. At Bakenberg Circuit, the manager, Monyepao, blamed the communities for complaining about financial statements. He wanted the school committees to take responsibility of ensuring that every year, financial records were taken to the auditors and the financial statements were given to the community.³⁸² According to him it was not the responsibility of the principal, but that of school committees, to forward financial statements to the people. With regard to Matsogella's complaint about unilateral school fee increment, he promised that school fees would be reduced and those who had already paid would be given a refund of R15-00.³⁸³ The Circuit inspector encouraged good communication between school committees, teachers, and students when school decisions were taken.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁶ File Ref No.7/11, 27/02/1990, Boycotts and subversive activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A synoptic report on the disruption of lessons in Bakenberg circuit.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ File Ref No. 7/11, 26/06/1990, Boycotts and Subversive activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Governmental Offices, Report on Parents and Students Meeting at Mathulamisha Secondary School.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² File RefNo.7/11, 27/02/1990, Boycotts and subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Governmental Offices, A synoptic report on the disruption of lesson in Bakenberg Circuit.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

The complaint about the payment of fees was worsened by the failure of Lebowa Department of Education to provide books to schools. The people were worried that the central government had promised to improve the quality of life and education in Lebowa since the late 1970s, but that promise was never fulfilled.³⁸⁵ By that time, the Lebowa government had no enough budget to address the provision of books. The political pressure resulted from the 1976 Soweto student uprising compelled the central government to provide free books to Black schools from 1979.

The Lebowa government failed to provide books to schools due to lack of money. Students in Lebowa continued to buy both stationery and textbooks. In Lebowa, stationery was provided for free from 1987, but the department complained of lack of money to afford textbooks.³⁸⁶ The Lebowa government always shifted blame to the central government for not providing them with enough money. As a result, the school environment in Lebowa remained poor and inadequate regarding reading materials. School libraries were without textbooks as the school fee was not enough to purchase library materials. The government of Lebowa tried to solve the crisis in education by increasing tax from R2.00 to R10.00 so as to assist the Department of Education to deal with its problems since 1984.³⁸⁷ However, that did not materialise as the tax was boycotted by the communities.³⁸⁸ The Congress of South African Students embarked on a campaign for the demand of books. This was justified by the Mankweng branch of COSAS which sent a letter of demand to the National Minister of Education. In that letter, they demanded a single education system, provision of books to schools and the building of libraries in schools.³⁸⁹ The letter ordered the minister to meet their demand before 21 May 1993. The Mahwelereng branch of COSAS also wrote a memorandum to the inspector of education in Mahwelereng Circuit. In that memorandum, they demanded stationery which was not supplied to schools by then, laboratories in all schools, the cancellation of examination fees and the disbandment of school committees.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁵ Verbatim Report of Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Part11, Vol.20, 5-16 May 1986.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Verbatim Report of Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Part11, Vol.18, 11-28 May 1984.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ File Ref. No. 7/11, 07/05/1993, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Mankweng Branch of COSAS to The National Minister of Education in South Africa.

³⁹⁰ File Ref. No.7/11, 12/05/1993, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Mahwelereng branch of COSAS to the inspector of Mahwelereng circuit.

From 1989 the shortage of books resulted in numerous open protests by teachers, students and parents. The legislature of Lebowa homeland was so concerned about protests that it set up a commission to investigate the shortage and non delivery of books to schools.³⁹¹ That commission was headed by Eloff Abram De Meyer from Johannesburg and it was called De Meyer Commission.³⁹² The commission released its findings on 6 July 1990. It revealed gross irregularities in the Lebowa Department of Education. Those irregularities were as follows: the Lebowa government had mismanaged the money allocated for the buying of textbooks. It found that the people who were tasked with the responsibility of buying the books did not follow the tender procedures. Further, the officials did not have proper planning, which resulted in corruption, self-enrichment and similar malpractices.³⁹³ It found that despite the money allocated for the total purchase of books from 1986 to 1987, a substantial amount was spent on the purchase of only handbooks and other writing materials. The findings which angered the people were that the Minister of Education in Lebowa, P.S. Kwakwa and his secretary of education, Kobe, were directly involved in the scandal. In line with the provision of Article 25(3) of Act 12 of 1972, they were not allowed to involve themselves in the business of books as they were government officials.³⁹⁴ Both Kwakwa and Kobe were found to be bookshop owners and had failed to declare their business interests to the government.³⁹⁵ Many books were illegally taken to their bookshops while other booksellers were paid without having rendered services.

The shortage of books perpetuated mass demonstrations by students in various places of Mogalakwena. Due to that, schools in Bakenberg North Circuit such as Bakenberg High, Dennis Matlhaba Secondary and George Langa Secondary marched to their circuit offices on 13 February 1990. The students sang political songs such as “siyaya e Pitori” (We are going to Pretoria) and shouted political expression such as “Amandla Awethu” (power belongs to the people).³⁹⁶ They sent seven delegates to talk to the inspector. They informed the circuit

³⁹¹ Verbatim Report of Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Special Session, 23 March 1990.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ File Ref No. 7/11, 1990/02/27, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government offices, A synoptic Report on the disruption of lessons in Bakenberg Circuit.

inspector that they would not attend school until books were delivered to schools.³⁹⁷ They wanted books for their daily written work and textbooks or learner support materials in general, to be supplied. They threatened not to go back to school until their demands were met. They complained about overcrowding at their schools and demanded that enough classrooms be built by the department. The Circuit inspector responded that he was busy addressing the question of delivery of books to schools. However, he angered the delegates when he alleged that overcrowding in schools was caused by students who were failing in large numbers.³⁹⁸ The inspector worsened their anger when he said that when they boycotted classes, they wasted their own time. The delegates realised that the inspector did not care about their interests and left his office unceremoniously.

They reported their discussions with the inspector to their fellow comrades and dispersed. That afternoon another delegation of about 13 students from schools in the Bakenberg South such as Senoane Secondary School and Seshoatla Secondary School, arrived at the Bakenberg Circuit offices.³⁹⁹ The delegation instructed the inspector to summon all the student representatives of schools in Bakenberg Circuit to meet at the circuit office on 19 February 1990. They wanted the circuit inspector to accompany them to the national minister of education to hand over a memorandum because they said they were tired of empty promises that books would be delivered to their schools.⁴⁰⁰ These marches to the circuit office intensified the growth of political awareness among students who lived in the rural areas of Mogalakwena. It also showed the fact that the Confederation of SRCs and COSAS did their work to conscientise students in the rural areas of Mogalakwena about the political situation in South Africa. At the same time, the inspectors and the principals were also pressurised by political marches related to the demand of books. The Circuit inspector of Mahwelereng wrote a letter to the Secretary of Education in Lebowa to inform him his frustrations about the question of book shortages in schools under his authority. He informed the secretary that all secondary schools in Mahwelereng such as Mmantutule, Mpunye,

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

Ebenezer, Gojela, D.G Tsebe, Alfred Makapan, Somavugha, Mmadikana, Tetema and Ntata boycotted classes because the department had failed to supply stationery and textbooks.⁴⁰¹

He indicated that students waited for books for a period of two weeks after the schools had reopened but became impatient afterwards. He also wanted the Lebowa department of education to do something to stop the escalation of boycotts in Mahwelereng circuit.⁴⁰² On the other hand, the principals of Mahwelereng also tried without success to solve the problem of book shortage. All the principals held a meeting on 02 February 1990 to resolve that matter. In their meeting, they agreed to approach a bookselling company in Johannesburg, Maskew Miller, to supply books to their schools urgently. However, all their efforts remained fruitless as the department could not afford them.⁴⁰³

The perpetual shortage of books in schools influenced students to compel the department to perform its duty. COSAS and the Confederation of SRC's embarked on a campaign called "no book no school," which was aimed at boycotting schools permanently.⁴⁰⁴ The campaign also aimed at disturbing the smooth running of education in the whole of Mogalakwena area. The "no book no school" campaign was unfolded in the form of a relay.⁴⁰⁵ In line with the campaign, one school would march to another school to disrupt lessons. The school that was visited would also march to the next school to do the same disruption.⁴⁰⁶ That practice was done from school to school until all schools in Mogalakwena came to a standstill. The campaign started from secondary schools in Mahwelereng Circuit and spread to schools in the villages closer to Mahwelereng, and then schools in the Bakenberg Circuit.

⁴⁰¹ File Ref No.7/11, 06/02/1990, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government offices, Letter from the Inspector of Education in Mahwelereng to the Secretary of Education in Lebowa.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ File Ref No. 7/11, 1990/02/27, Bycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A synoptic Report n the disruption of lessons in Bakenberg circuit.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

In Bakenberg, it started at Bakenberg High School, which was then regarded as the seed of disorder in the circuit.⁴⁰⁷ The campaign then engulfed all the schools in Bakenberg North and South, and as far as schools under Seleka Tribal Authority near Ellisras.⁴⁰⁸ Students threatened to destroy schools which refused to take part in the campaign. Max Motabo, who taught at George Masibe Secondary School near Marken, testified that at George Masibe lessons were disrupted by students from Bakenberg. From there George Masibe continued the campaign to Mashamaite Secondary School, which also took it further to Sephuti Secondary School at Taueatsoala village. Sephuti Secondary School went as far as Matshwara Secondary at Shongwane village and it spread to the entire schools under Seleka Tribal Authority.⁴⁰⁹ In the process, every car was forced to transport students from school to school. When students from Sephuti Secondary School arrived at Matshwara Secondary School, they caused disruptions and had to face a huge group of the South African Defence Force which was based at Mabula Mountain which was not far from the school.⁴¹⁰

Those students were “sjamboked” (beaten with whips) ruthlessly by the soldiers. The distance from Shongwane village to Taueatsoala village is approximately 60 kilometres, and there are farms belonging to White people in between those villages. When the assaulted students returned home, they found a White farmer on one of the farm gates and vented their anger on him.⁴¹¹ They kicked the White farmer all over his body to the point where they thought he was dead when they left him. Due to that, soldiers who were based at Mabula Mountain went to Taueatsoala Village where they attacked every person they met in the street.⁴¹² The “no book no school campaign” shattered all schools in Mogalakwena from February 1990 to September 1990. Students returned to school towards the final year examinations, which resulted in high failure rates in all grades in 1990.

⁴⁰⁷ File Ref No.7/11, 1991/08/21, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector of Bakenberg Circuit to the Chief Inspector of Education.

⁴⁰⁸ File Ref No.7/11, 1990/02/27, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A synoptic Report on the Disruption of Lessons in Bakenberg circuit.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala Village.

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Mogobeng Machaba, 10/07/2011.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid.

The complaint about the shortage of books continued into the early 1990s. From 1991 to 1993 COSAS, the Confederation of SRCs and individual schools still confronted the Department of Education about the shortage of books in schools in Mogalakwena. The delegation of the Confederation of SRCs also submitted a memorandum about the shortage of stationery supply to their schools to the circuit offices in Mahwelereng on the 4 February 1993.⁴¹³ On 12 February 1993 all principals in Mahwelereng Circuit were evicted by students from schools.⁴¹⁴ Students wanted them to distribute stationery to schools.⁴¹⁵ On 19 February 1993 Standard 10 students from Gojela Secondary School marched to Mahwelereng Circuit offices to demand the supply of stationery to their school.⁴¹⁶ The complaints for book shortage peaked in 1993. That year experienced unrest up to its end. The students' unrests in 1993 were fuelled by teacher strikes by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in the second half of 1993.

The western region of SADTU, which operated in Mogalakwena also had its own demands. SADTU started by disrupting all activities in education in Bakenberg Circuit. It started by disrupting a sports meeting attended by sports organisers and principals at Matlou Memorial Primary School at Rapadi village.⁴¹⁷ The meeting was aimed at formulating a policy for the management of sports finances.⁴¹⁸ SADTU wanted the principals of Bakenberg Circuit to take part in its activities such as strikes. SADTU went on to disrupt lessons at Senoane Secondary School and Mookamedi Secondary School.⁴¹⁹ By 16 August 1993, almost all secondary schools in Bakenberg Circuit were closed. The Bakenberg branch of SADTU caused disruptions due to its dissatisfaction on the following: the manner in which educational issues in general were handled in Bakenberg Circuit. They accused the circuit for victimising teachers who took part in strikes. They wanted charges against all teachers to be withdrawn. They wanted the Principal's Council to be disbanded. They alleged that their members were discriminated against on the basis of their union membership when

⁴¹³ File Ref No. 7/11, 1993/02/25, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A Central Region Report on schools in Mahwelereng.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ File Ref No. 7/11, 1993/08/25, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist to the Chief Education Specialist of Western Region.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

promotional posts were filled by the circuit.⁴²⁰ The Bakenberg Circuit office was given until 03 September 1993 to respond to those demands and allegations. On the other hand, SADTU branch in Mahwelereng Circuit also made its own demands. The Mahwelereng branch of SADTU accused the circuit inspector of mobilising the community against SADTU members.⁴²¹ The actions of SADTU in Mahwelereng compelled the minister of law and order in Lebowa, Mr Tshoshane, to issue out an order to the police to constantly monitor Mahwelereng Circuit offices.⁴²²

Furthermore, students of Mogalakwena complained against corporal punishment. Corporal punishment was one of the reasons around which students formed the SRC. It was applied on the hands or buttocks of learners. Many students dropped out of school because of corporal punishment. They were always complaining that teachers slapped or sjamboked them for offences such as not wearing school uniform, not doing homework and assignments, failing tests, not knowing questions in the classroom, not paying school fees in time, late coming and asking difficult questions during lessons. A student by the name of Martha Galane reported her teacher to the police for thrashing her for asking a question which his teacher found difficult to answer.⁴²³ Many teachers viewed such questions as a serious challenge due to the fact that at that time, the majority of Black teachers were unqualified and yet sacrificed to teach higher classes than those they were trained for.⁴²⁴ Black unqualified teachers were at the level of 85 percent throughout the country. In Mahwelereng, most teachers only had Standard 8 and Standard 10 as their highest academic qualifications while only 0,3 percent of teachers had a university degree.⁴²⁵ At Lephadimisha Secondary School students once complained that they were beaten for cases or matters which did not take place at school.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁰ File Ref No. 7/11, 1993/08/25, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from the Secretary of SADTU to the Inspector of Bakenberg Circuit.

⁴²¹ File Ref No. 7/11, 1993/08/27, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A copy of SADTU demands.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Court Case number 122/09/87, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁴²⁴ Rand Daily Mail, 25 January 1980, p.8.

⁴²⁵ Lebowa Politics and Government, Development Bank of South Africa, 1986, Sandton, pp.10-22.

⁴²⁶ File Ref No. 7/11, 1990/02/27, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo government offices, A synoptic Report on the disruption of lessons in Bakenberg Circuit.

In a general meeting convened by the Chief Matlhaba 11 of Bakenberg tribal authority, students of Matsogella complained that their teachers insulted and subjected them to a ruthless corporal punishment daily. They wanted it to be stopped immediately because if it continued “barutiši ba ka tla ba itaola ka rena”⁴²⁷ (teachers would do whatever they liked with us). At George Langa Secondary School, students complained that it was excessively applied in such a way that their school clerk was allowed to punish them as well.⁴²⁸ Parents also felt that their children were heavily punished and wanted the practice to be stopped. However, parents wanted naughty students to be punished by the school principals not by teachers anymore.⁴²⁹ Chief Matlhaba also realised that corporal punishment was excessively applied and alleged that teachers who applied it at Bakenberg Secondary Schools were Shangaans (Tsonga speaking teachers).⁴³⁰

His allegation was based on the fact that at that time there were two strict Tsonga speaking teachers one at Bakenberg High School and the other at Dennis Matlhaba Secondary School. Those teachers were extremely feared by learners. This was evidenced by the fact that the students of Dennis Matlhaba Secondary School organised a meeting in order to register their complaints to the school principal. The teachers in that school were terrified that they might be attacked. One of the most feared teachers by the name of Maluleke (a Tsonga speaking teacher) went to the students and commanded them to go to their classrooms.⁴³¹ The students did not hesitate to take his order and the meeting stopped at once.⁴³² At Nakonkwetlou Secondary School, students complained about the wife of the principal, Charls Lesibe, that she abused them, insulted them, applied corporal punishment on them, disrespected them and looked at them with contempt.⁴³³ Lesibe’s wife beat female students for styling or relaxing their hair and wearing high heeled shoes, which she alleged was against the policy of the school.⁴³⁴ Students who were mostly affected were those who stayed in the school hostels, who mostly came from urban areas. The hostel dwellers of that school also protested about bathing with cold water and eating non nutritious food.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Interview with Jan Maluleke, 06/02/2012, Bakenberg High School.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Interview with Loggy Seshoka, 02/02/2012, Nakonkwetlou Secondary School.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

Students' complaints at Nakonkwetlou Secondary School resulted in classroom boycotts in 1986, which lasted three weeks.⁴³⁵ Students' strike at Nakonkwetlou also influenced other nearby secondary schools such as Kgotari Secondary School at Lekalakala village and Sephuti Secondary at Taueatsoala Village. At Sephuti Secondary School, the strike resulted in the detainment of their SRC chairperson, Simon Malowa, and other members of the SRC executive committee for a period of two weeks at Gilead Police Station.⁴³⁶ Corporal punishment was a source of authority which was further exercised in extra mural activities such as netball, athletics, soccer and music. Students in Mahwelereng even boycotted school music competitions that were run by the Transvaal United African Teachers Association (TUATA) in 1984 and 1985 because of corporal punishment during music practice and rehearsals.⁴³⁷ The music boycott was extended to the boycott of the Lebowa Agricultural show that was usually officially opened on Republic Day on May 01. That show was to be attended by learners in Lebowa to render cultural and musical items and to present their arts and craft objects. School riots in Mogalakwena were influenced by school riots in other parts of Lebowa, such as Hwiti High School in Turfloop where students at that school burned school buildings and the school library.⁴³⁸ At Mphahlele area, Ngwanamohuba Boarding School and many schools in Buchbuckridge, Nebo and Mapulaneng were also involved in political and educational protests.⁴³⁹ The Transvaal Student Congress held a meeting and took the decision that all schools in Lebowa should boycott classes until their demands were met.⁴⁴⁰

They demanded that the military and police stop harassing students at schools, detained students be released, and the removal of all soldiers from the entire Northern Transvaal. Many colleges of education in Lebowa also experienced riots including Mokopane, Kwena Moloto and Setotlwane, which had influence because many students from Mogalakwena attended there, for instance the popular Dudu Madisha.⁴⁴¹ School riots were stimulated by

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Interview with Simon Malowa, 10/07/2011, Taueatsooala village.

⁴³⁷ T.Lodge et al. **All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s**, p.120.

⁴³⁸ Northern Review, 14 September 1984.

⁴³⁹ R.J. Phaladi. **The Mphahlele people and the Uprising of 1986**, B.A Hons, UNIN, 2002, p.11.

⁴⁴⁰ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/06/20, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Segoa to the Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education.

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

the fact that pupils were given political education by the students of the University of the North, which became worse when the Azanian Students Organisation controlled student politics at the university. The resources of the university, such as cars and money, were used to capacitate the youth in Lebowa, including Mogalakwena. That made the University of the North to be called Lusaka.⁴⁴² This name was based on the fact that many political activists were provided with political materials such as T-Shirts of political organisations, books of political theory and cassettes containing political speeches of the leadership of political organisations. The top leadership of both AZAPO and UDF were there. In tertiary institutions students mainly complained about the expulsion of female students who became pregnant. Most pregnant students were withdrawn from colleges as from 1978. Caroline Maredi, a homecraft student from Mokopane Training College, was also expelled for pregnancy.⁴⁴³ Her expulsion caused a great uproar with the students of that college. School boycotts in Mogalakwena were also motivated by the members of AZAPO and UDF, who encouraged learners to leave school and pledge solidarity with them with their boycotts of municipal elections in 1984, especially in Mahwelereng and Seshego.⁴⁴⁴ Furthermore, the Lebowa homeland elections of 1983 were largely boycotted in Seshego and Mahwelereng.⁴⁴⁵

The South African government was very concerned about the spread of unrests in the field of education from 1976. This concern was evidenced by the fact that from the 1976 Soweto Students uprising, students from primary schools, secondary schools, colleges of education, technickons and universities started to engage the government on educational matters. This was aggravated by the fact that student movements began their serious political work of organising students nationwide. The government was so frightened that it began to constantly debate about education for the Black people in parliament. From 1978 the South African government attempted to apply the idea of indoctrination in the Black South African education system.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴² P. Delius. **A Lion amongst the cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in Northern Transvaal**, p.181.

⁴⁴³ South African National Archives, Pretoria, File Ref no.A819, Letter Ref no.A819/8, 1978-05-10, Inspector for Homecraft.

⁴⁴⁴ J.Seekings. **The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa,1983-1991**. p.180.

⁴⁴⁵ Lebowa Politics and Government, Development Bank of South Africa, 1986, Sandton, pp.1-6.

⁴⁴⁶ Rand Daily Mail, 11 March 1978, p.5.

They thought through indoctrination, children would be properly moulded, become obedient and true patriots. They believed that every government had the right to introduce indoctrination in schools. They wanted the education given to Black people to be based on Christian values. Teachers were to be trained on the basis of Christianity.⁴⁴⁷ However, the idea of indoctrination failed as other parliamentarians had a contrary view that indoctrination would cause people to lose their identity and ability to take decisions. Some even believed that schools should be used as places for reconciling people of different races in the country.⁴⁴⁸ The idea of indoctrination showed the extent to which the government was worried about the gradual political consciousness among Black students.

4.3 THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION BOYCOTTS ON TEACHERS

School riots had an impact on teachers as they were involved with learners on a daily basis. Teachers were seen as part of the system of oppression. As a result, during boycotts they were not allowed to go to school, and those who went to school were threatened and labelled as collaborators of the government.⁴⁴⁹ What affected teachers mostly was the fact that the majority of them were unqualified. At Mmantutule Secondary School, about five educators taught without teaching qualifications. Their highest qualification was Standard 10, which negatively affected their performance.⁴⁵⁰

There was also a shortage of educators which rendered the schools understaffed. The majority of schools under Shongwane and Seleka Tribal Authorities were run by teachers who had only a matric certificate from 1970s to 1980s.⁴⁵¹ As a result, the matriculated teachers from primary schools were transferred to secondary schools.⁴⁵² However, it became difficult to cope as they did not have enough content knowledge of the subjects taught at secondary schools. Despite being unqualified and the difficult political environment of that time, teachers were expected to produce good results. It was found that in 1984 standard 10 results were very poor at Mmantutule Secondary School. The teachers of that school were

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 26/09/2006, Mokopane.

⁴⁵⁰ File Ref No.13423, 1984/06/20, An inspection report of Mmantutule Secondary School, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices.

⁴⁵¹ File Ref No.13423,1973/08/9-10, A General Inspection Report on Post Primary Schools, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

blamed for poor performance.⁴⁵³ History was among the subjects that were extremely failed . According to their analysis, seven students out of 69 passed history, that is a 71 percent failure rate in history.⁴⁵⁴ The department was very concerned since the history teacher Semenya AD, was a highly experienced teacher. The department blamed him for failing learners.

The department went to the extent of reducing his salary by one notch for failing learners.⁴⁵⁵ Other teachers, whose subjects did not do well, were also affected. Among teachers whose salaries were also reduced included M.J Matlamela, M.J Masalesa, M.H Mphela, K.C Modiba and M.D Nyatlo.⁴⁵⁶ Poor qualifications were worsened by the fact that learners were political and refused their orders. This made it difficult for them to motivate learners to take education seriously, since corporal punishment as their source of authority was redundant. At that time, teachers took orders from youth activists who arrived at schools and ordered them to release learners. That pained them as they had to carry out those orders.⁴⁵⁷ Those who were unpopular with the learners were stoned, especially during boycotts, and had to flee for their lives.⁴⁵⁸ At Bakenberg Secondary School, students plotted to kill one of their strict teachers by the name of Chauke.⁴⁵⁹ Students planned to assassinate him at his place of residence. One of the students who loved Chauke informed him secretly about the plan. That night Chauke did not sleep at his room and abandoned the school for a period of three months.⁴⁶⁰ Chauke was indeed saved because students went to his room at night and destroyed the door and windows after realising that he was not available. The situation became unbearable as some teachers were beaten by learners outside the school premises, and their property was at times destroyed. During student marches to the police station, teachers in Mahwelereng were forced to be in the front so that when the police assaulted marchers teachers would be the first to be beaten.

⁴⁵³ File Ref No.13423,1984/06/20, An Inspection Report on Mmantutule Secondary School, Limpopo Archives, Lebowaqomo Government Offices.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ File Ref No. 7/11,1986/03/18, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowaqomo Government Offices, Letter form Inspector Doctor Lepelle to the Regional Chief Inspector .

⁴⁵⁸ Northern Review, 26 July 1986.

⁴⁵⁹ Interview with Jan Chauke, 12/09/2012, Bakenberg High school.

⁴⁶⁰ Interview with Misharck Machaba, 12/09/2012, Bakenberg High school.

This was evidenced in 1986 when students put all teachers from Ntata High School in front during the march to the police station. Their principal, Friddah Modiba, was even given takkies to dance during that march.⁴⁶¹ At the same time, soldiers troubled teachers at school. Teachers from other schools did not come to school that day of the march as their students warned them secretly of what would happen the following day. It was only teachers of Ntata who were not informed, which made them victims. During that time, soldiers were coming to the schools frequently to monitor teachers because they suspected that teachers were teaching learners politics.⁴⁶² Whenever the soldiers were at school, they would enter the classrooms and demand to know what they were teaching learners. At George Masibe Secondary School, the soldiers once entered the classroom to listen to what Ratshilana Digashu was teaching learners. Luckily Digashu was saved as that day he was teaching learners Afrikaans. The soldiers were impressed by the fact that he taught Afrikaans since they were Afrikaners.⁴⁶³ They would check the books that teachers were using, and they would instruct the teacher to explain the content of the book to ensure that it was not about politics.⁴⁶⁴ Many teachers felt threatened as they were also held responsible for the political messages that learners were writing on the school walls. If soldiers arrived at school and found any political message written on the wall, they would interrogate the class teacher of that particular class to explain or he would be arrested.

At Gojela High School they threatened to arrest the oldest lady teacher who was left with three months to go on pension, simply because the classroom that she was responsible for had political messages written on the walls. The acting principal, Phillip Mogolwa, had to go down on his knees to beg for the soldier's forgiveness.⁴⁶⁵ Furthermore, some young teachers were taken as school learners and beaten during school raids by the soldiers. Since their lives were in danger, many teachers requested the circuit officials to give them alternative posts or second them to other circuits that were less riotous.⁴⁶⁶ They were further frightened by the fact that comrades in other parts of Mokopane were beginning to burn witches and did not

⁴⁶¹ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁴⁶² Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁴⁶³ Interview with Ratshilana Digashu, 07/03/ 2011, Bakenberg Mmotong village.

⁴⁶⁴ Interview with Aubrey Ledwaba, 12/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁴⁶⁶ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/06/25, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebogakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Maronya to The Regional Chief Inspector.

want to be victims as well.⁴⁶⁷ They believed that they might be victims as teachers' homes in Buschbuckridge Mapulaneng were set alight.⁴⁶⁸ They also got the information that teachers at Mapulaneng were regularly assaulted and went to the extent of terminating their services due to the political pressure of the youth activists.⁴⁶⁹

Apart from students, teachers were also persecuted by the community. During that time, the majority of teachers were working far from their homes, and had to find accommodation at their places of work. They were accommodated in small one- roomed houses which were called cottages. They were subjected to pay a monthly rental despite the poor conditions of those houses. Those cottages were sometimes raided by criminals during school holidays when they went home.

The doors and windows of those cottages were broken by those criminals during their raids. The communities expected them to pay the monthly rentals despite their failure to repair the damaged doors and windows. Teachers refused to pay since the cottages were not repaired. In many areas of Mogalakwena, teachers were expelled from cottages for failure to pay monthly rentals. At Ranoko Primary School in Bakenberg Circuit teachers were chased away by the community of Vianna village for failing to pay the monthly rentals fee of R14-00.⁴⁷⁰ This problem spread to all schools in Bakenberg Circuit. In one community, a school committee meeting held at Bakenberg tribal hall, Chief Matlhaba 11 instructed teachers to pay monthly rent for their cottages.⁴⁷¹ The chief went on to blame the government by bringing useless teachers and officials to Mokerong District especially in Bakenberg.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid

⁴⁶⁸ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/06/27, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Kgopa to the Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ File Ref No.7/11, 1993/08/25, Boycotts and Subversive activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist to Chief Education Specialist of Western region.

⁴⁷¹ File Ref No.7/11, Boycotts and subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A synoptic report on the disruption of lessons in Bakenberg circuit.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

4.4 THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION BOYCOTTS ON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Principals were blamed for all problems in education under apartheid government as they were seen as organs of the state. They were largely blamed by student organisations for compelling students to purchase books and to pay school fees.⁴⁷³ Student organisations saw them as supporters of the government of the boers. The education charter campaign committee issued a statement in which they told principals that “Dihlogo tsa dikolo di tlogele go somisana le mmušo wa maburu, le batho baso, le dula le rena”⁴⁷⁴ (Principals must stop working together with the government of the boers, you are Black people, you stay with us).

The principals were told that the time had come for them to choose the camp to which they belonged, whether or not they were on the side of the oppressor or the oppressed.⁴⁷⁵ The Principals were in a predicament in that they were opposed from all sides by the community, teachers, students and department inspectors. At Mahwelereng Circuit, students and teachers of D.G. Tsebe Secondary School evicted their principal by the name of Ngwashu.⁴⁷⁶ This was followed by the eviction of all principals in Mahwelereng Circuit by students. They were told to return to school only when they had found stationery for their schools.⁴⁷⁷ Students blamed them for the shortage of books at schools.

The principal of Mathulamisha Secondary School in Bakenberg Circuit by the name of Matsapola was expelled from the school by students and members of the community. The youth of Mabula village had many complaints against the principal. Since their complaints were unresolved, they took it upon themselves to chase the principal from the school. The principal found it difficult to run away as the youth blocked the road.⁴⁷⁸ That day the principal managed to escape but his car was pelted with stones. Both students and the community members were angry and levelled the following accusations against the principal: the

⁴⁷³ File Rer No. 7/11, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from the Education Charter Campaign Committee.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ File Ref No. 7/11, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A central region report on Mahwelereng circuit.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ File Ref No. 7/11, 1990/03/26, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A report on a meeting by Parents, Students and Inspector at Mabula village.

community felt that the principal disrespected their headman when he said that he did not have jurisdiction at school. They alleged that he had said that parents taught their children prostitution, and that he taught all the youth of Mabula village how to wear long trousers.⁴⁷⁹ He further insulted parents by saying that they were coming to school without bathing, he promised to castrate one of the boys at his home, he insulted parents by saying that he taught them how to knock on the door, and that the minds of their parents were rotten.⁴⁸⁰ Furthermore, they alleged that the principal confronted some students with a knife, cancelled both mathematics and physical science without consulting them, and that he forced students to attend evening classes.⁴⁸¹

In addition to these accusations and threats, the principal was blamed by the inspector for failing to come to school or to the circuit office. The principal rejected all these allegations. He argued that the problem started when two boys, Setena and Mawelele, attempted to rape a nurse who was coming to pay him a visit.⁴⁸² The principal went to their homes and they admitted guilt and apologised. From that moment the boys from the village started to confront him in his office. He then produced a knife to defend himself. The boys threatened to necklace him to death. As a result, Matsapola had to report the matter to the police. The principal was further frightened by the fact that an influential activist, Alex Kgoele, accused him of having bought his car, Skyline, with school money. Alex Kgoele even said that he would not rest until the principal was removed from the school.⁴⁸³ The circuit office found it difficult to transfer him to another school as there was nowhere to place him. Matsapola had to stay at Mathulamisha Secondary School in fear. The principal had to be escorted to and from school by the police on a daily basis until the situation came to normal in 1994.⁴⁸⁴

In 1993 students of Nakonkwetlou Secondary School also expelled their principal, Danger Lekalakala. They accused him of embezzelling school money.⁴⁸⁵ Students told him that they did not want to see him anymore near the school. The students pushed his car out of the

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with Loggy Seshoka, 02/02/2012, Nakonkwetlou Secondary School.

school yard and told him never to set his foot in the school premises again.⁴⁸⁶ However, it was alleged that the students were influenced by teachers as SADTU leadership was at Nakonkwetlou Secondary School. Both the chairperson, Ndo Mangala, and the Secretary, Pax Sebatjane, were at that school and did not want to be ruled by a principal who was a member of the Professional Teachers Union (PEU).⁴⁸⁷ Furthermore, principals were blamed for poor performance despite the existing school riots. The principal of Mmantutule, B.M. Kekana, was heavily blamed by the departmental team which came to his school for inspection. Mmantutule performed very poorly in the 1993 examination for Standard 10, which forced the department to send an inspection team to investigate what led to the high failure rate. The inspection team came up with the following findings: educators were not giving learners enough written work, teachers were not giving learners weekly tests as required by the department and the principal was blamed for not strictly monitoring the work of educators.⁴⁸⁸

The principal was told to be against teachers who were not working according to the policy of the department including those who were not doing lesson preparations, not giving learners the required written work and those who failed to complete the syllabus of their subjects.. He was instructed to ensure that learners performed well at the end of the year despite the continuing riots.⁴⁸⁹ The circuit manager also recommended that the salary of the principal by the name of Kekana be reduced by one notch with immediate effect. The principal was also made to forfeit his yearly salary increment.⁴⁹⁰ Many principals found it difficult to perform their work properly as they had the same teaching time as the rest of teachers. As a result, they did not have enough time to deal with issues related to school management.⁴⁹¹ In one Parents and School Committee meeting, Chief Matlhaba blamed principals for poor performance. He thought the problem could only be solved if the department used the system of rotating principals as it was already rotating inspectors.⁴⁹² As principals were pressurised from all directions, they did not know whose instructions to follow.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ File Ref No. 13423, 1984/06/20, An Inspection report on Mmantutule Secondary School, Limpopo Archive, Lebowakgomo Government Offices.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² File Ref No. 7/11, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A synoptic report on the disruption of lessons in Bakenberg circuit.

School principals found it difficult to govern schools because they did not know whose orders to carry out since both youth activists and the department were giving them conflicting orders. There was a situation where a small boy came riding a bicycle, and ordered the principal to release learners threatening that if his order was not implemented, the school would be burned.⁴⁹³ At times, they also received telephone calls threatening them to release learners or keep them at school at their own risk.⁴⁹⁴ In these cases, principals were conforming to the instructions of the youth for the sake of safety.

On the other hand, the department blamed principals who followed orders of the youth and accused them of taking unilateral decisions without consulting the circuit inspector, school committee and parents. This was seen when the principal of Gojela High School was blamed for taking a unilateral decision to release learners on numerous occasions.⁴⁹⁵ Furthermore, school principals of the most affected schools in Mahwelereng were blamed for not providing the circuit office with adequate report about disturbances at their schools. They were advised to involve the school committee before closing the schools, and to submit full reports to the circuit inspector on a regular basis about the situation at their schools.⁴⁹⁶ They were also accused of failing youth activists and at one stage, the principal of Gojela High School was forced to pass all learners following the “pass one pass all principle” used nationwide in the 1980s.⁴⁹⁷ On the other hand, the department did not allow them to pass the failed students.

It was also a regular practice at Mahwelereng for principals to be called by SRCs to account for not admitting old learners or learners who were active in politics. The principal of Ntata High School, Friddah Modiba, once told the SRC when such accusations were levelled against her that there was no way in which she could not admit such students at her school because she was paid according to the number of learners at school.⁴⁹⁸ Principals found it

⁴⁹³ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁴⁹⁴ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/05/08, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from the The Principal of D.G Tsebe to The Regional Chief Inspector.

⁴⁹⁵ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/06/25, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Maditsi to the Principal of Gojela High School.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Bakenberg Circuit Office.

difficult to deal with members of the South African Defence Force who were always coming to their schools to disrupt lessons. This problem was reported to the circuit inspector on many occasions. It pained many principals that the circuit inspector found it difficult to bring about a solution and always told principals that the SADF was a peacekeeping force, and its activities did not fall within the jurisdiction of the department of education.⁴⁹⁹ This response dismayed principals since students were also not coming to school because of the SADF. The SADF at times suspected that principals were involved in youth politics. The SADF raided the house of Phillip Mogolwa, who was the acting principal of Gojela High School at night.

According to him, they asked him many questions about his involvement in youth politics, and searched all the books in his house. That night Phillip Mogolwa was not allowed to sleep by the members of the SADF.⁵⁰⁰ All the principals had to attend political and community meetings, and those who failed to attend were regarded as informers of the government. Furthermore, teachers also became rude and refused to take orders.⁵⁰¹ At that time, information from Bushbuckridge Mpulaneng that principals were expelled by the community, beaten by students, while some were under police protection, reached them. This made them realise that it might happen to them one day.⁵⁰²

4.5 THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION BOYCOTTS ON STUDENTS

School riots also had an impact on students themselves as they experienced constant arrests by Lebowa police. During the riots soldiers and police looked for them, and forced them to go to school daily. Those who were found during house raids were sjamboked severely.⁵⁰³ Many victims of those brutalities still have scars of sjamboks on their back.⁵⁰⁴ The Police

⁴⁹⁹ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/06/25, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebokgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Maditsi to the Principal of Gojela High School.

⁵⁰⁰ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵⁰¹ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/05/19, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebokgomo Government Offices, Letter from the principal of D.G Tsebe to Mahwelereng Circuit Inspector Maditsi.

⁵⁰² File Ref No. 7/11, 1986/06/27, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebokgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Kgopa to the Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education.

⁵⁰³ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Bakenberg Circuit Office.

⁵⁰⁴ Interview with Mapula Seolwane, 12/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

and soldiers were always involved in skirmishes with students in the streets of Mahwelereng on a daily basis, especially in 1986 during the 10 years anniversary of the Soweto Students Uprisings of 1976. From 1986, many youths were sent to police custody in Mahwelereng and Nylstroom (Modimolle) prisons.⁵⁰⁵ Sjamboking was brutally used by the police against anyone they met in the street. The representatives of Mokerong Confederation of SRCs even involved the local circuit inspector to discuss the problem of sjamboking by the police authorities. The circuit inspector by the name of Lepelle agreed to help but also urged students to co-operate.⁵⁰⁶ Student sjamboking was so brutal that Lepelle wrote to the head office about the extent to which students were beaten and arrested by the police. In that letter he expressed that students were detained for either damaging state property or for attending unauthorised meetings. He further stated that students would not go to school as long as their fellow students were still arrested.⁵⁰⁷

The Mokerong Confederation of SRCs also wrote a letter to Mokopane police authorities to complain about the manner in which they were beaten and arrested by the police. They promised to boycott classes until the detained students were released. They appealed to the captain of Mokopane police station to cancel all offences of the arrested students since they believed that they were arrested without valid reasons.⁵⁰⁸ The students wrote a letter to the police in which they accused the police as “Dimpša le baradia ba mmuso ba go swara bana ge ba rata tokologo, toka e bile ba hloile kgatelelo ye e hlakane le Apartheid ya ditšhila ya go šišimiša” (They accused the police of being dogs and crooks of the apartheid government who arrest learners just for being in favour of freedom, justice and the hatred of apartheid, which is dirty and stinks).⁵⁰⁹ Since then, the youth from universities, colleges and schools became united and celebrated events such as May Day jointly. They became more instrumental in politics than ever before. Because of that, many schools were closed down in

⁵⁰⁵ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵⁰⁶ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/01/29, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowa/gomo Government Offices, Report from Inspector Makgabo to the Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education.

⁵⁰⁷ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/03/18, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowa/gomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Dr Lepelle to The Regional Chief Inspector.

⁵⁰⁸ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/01/28, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowa/gomo Government Offices, Letter from the Secretary of Mokerong Confederation of SRC'S to Mahwelereng Circuit Inspector.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

the 1980s, which impacted negatively on youth.⁵¹⁰ The political impact on the youth led to serious problems of discipline at school since pupils were no longer taking the advice of their teachers. Unacceptable conduct such as late coming, basking in the sun during school hours and leaving school whenever they wanted were common.⁵¹¹ Late coming was so rampant that in many schools lessons begun at 10h00 instead of the recommended 7h30.⁵¹²

Learners were free to stroll in the school yard during school hours. Students were at liberty to be outside classrooms and returned at their own time. Students refused to be punctual as they interpreted it as perpetuation of the old system of apartheid.⁵¹³ School classrooms were no longer swept. Only few volunteers would sweep in the morning while others would play around the school.⁵¹⁴ Some students would come to school with neither textbooks nor stationary. In other places such as Sekhukhune, the SRCs had meetings with heads of departments to normalise schooling in that area. In that meeting the SRCs indicated that it was also difficult for them to normalise the situation as they were accused by students of being used by principals to further the old system.⁵¹⁵ They did not see the importance of schooling anymore, which worried many parents in Mogalakwena.

The situation was so terrible that even pupils at lower classes such as Standard 6 to 8 were refusing to do school work.⁵¹⁶ Their parents, school committees and teachers tried in vain to persuade pupils to take schooling seriously. This resulted in high dropout rates among them.⁵¹⁷ What further worried parents was the fact that the leadership of youth Congresses in Mogalakwena were at liberty to tell pupils not to attend school disregarding their attempt to bring schooling to normality.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁰ Northern Review, 03 May 1985, p.1.

⁵¹¹ File Ref No.7/11, 986/05/19, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from the Principal of D.G Tsebe to Mahwelereng Circuit Inspector.

⁵¹² File Ref No.7/11, 1986/05/14, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from the Principal of Mashupye Secondary School to the Inspector of Sekhukhuni Circuit.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Northern Review, 26 April 1985, p.1.

⁵¹⁸ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/05/20, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Inspector Segoa to the Secretary of Lebowakgomo Department of Education.

Students in Mogalakwena were further worried that soldiers and members of the Lebowa police were even raiding them at schools. The police and soldiers always arrested students for holding illegal meetings. This intensified student struggles in that they pledged solidarity with other schools whose learners were arrested. Students began to see schools as dangerous places to stay in, and responded by not going to school at all. The acting principal of Gojela, Mogolwa, pointed out that soldiers and police once raided his school.

That school raid was caused by a report at Mahwelereng Police Station that one municipal worker was attacked by students near Gojela Secondary School. As a result, Warrant Officer Molongoana of Mahwelereng Police Station ordered the police to patrol around Gojela Secondary School. The police found the students holding an illegal meeting when they arrived at the school.⁵¹⁹ When students saw the police, they started to sing freedom songs, whistled at them, while others threw stones at them.⁵²⁰ The police ordered the students to disperse but they refused. The police sjamboked them and sprayed them with teargas. On that day, students lied down all over Phillip Mogolwa's office. They tried to use water to reduce pains caused by teargas but that did not help.⁵²¹ The Confederation of SRCs wrote another letter to the inspector in Mahwelereng Circuit office so that he takes it to the captain of Mahwelereng Police Station. That letter complained about the way in which students were arrested and assaulted in large numbers by Lebowa police and the South African Defence Force. The letter demanded the police "gore ba phumule melato ya bona kgahlanong le barati ba tokologo" (That they cancel cases against lovers of freedom).⁵²² They further blamed the chief minister of Lebowa C.N Phatudi for buying the rain machine.⁵²³ It was alleged that C.N Phatudi bought the rain machine which cost millions of rands from China to supplement poor rainfall in Lebowa homeland. The letter stated "phansi ka machine wa pula" (down with the rain machine).⁵²⁴ The students also emphasised unity and solidarity in their fight against apartheid.⁵²⁵

⁵¹⁹ Cout Case number 57/02/1986, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵²² File Ref No. 7/11, 1986/01/28, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from the Confederation of SRCs to the Inspector of Mahwelereng circuit.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

They gave the police seven days to meet their demands or face the anger of students. This letter showed the extent of political consciousness on the part of the students in that they did not only challenge the police for the release of their colleagues but were also able to identify the weaknesses of the government of Lebowa for buying of the useless rain machine. This consciousness was solidified by the idea of unity and solidarity, which was encouraged by student movements such as COSAS and the Confederation of SRCs. The Confederation of SRCs influenced all schools in Mahwelereng and Mmapela to pledge solidarity with the arrested students. Because of that, schools in Mahwelereng and Mmapela such as Madikana, Seritarite, Mmantutule, Reholegile, Chitakekana, Ntata and Langalibalele pledged solidarity with schools whose learners were detained, which brought schooling to a halt.⁵²⁶ Students from Mahwelereng schools raided their circuit office to demand that the detained students be released.⁵²⁷ In their raid they damaged state property and vehicles. At Nakonkwetlou Secondary School, students were also beaten and arrested for holding an illegal meeting. During the meeting, the students locked up all the school gates to ensure that the principal did not escape.⁵²⁸ Students thought that if he could escape he would call the police. Unfortunately, the nearby shopkeeper by the name of Moloto informed the police about the illegal meeting. The police arrived with the Game Rangers (the police who monitored the environment to ensure that the people did not kill wild animals and cut trees). The police requested the students to come together so that they addressed them.

The students responded by insulting them and throwing stones at them.⁵²⁹ The police opened fire and students fled into the nearby cattle camp. The police sent the Rangers into the camp where they beat learners with knobkerries.⁵³⁰ Whenever the students went outside the camp, they were arrested and beaten by the police. Those who were arrested were tortured so that they could reveal the names of their leaders. As a result, one of student leaders by the name of Jack Moloantoa was arrested by Lebowa police. Moreover, students were beaten for writing and drawing pictures of political leaders on the walls of the school buildings. At

⁵²⁶ File Ref No. 7/11, 1986/01/28, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from the Inspector of Mahwelereng Circuit to the Regional Inspector.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Interview with Loggy Seshoka, 02/02/2012, Nakonkwetlou Secondary School.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

Bakenberg High School, a young boy, Donald Langa, drew Nelson Mandela on the school wall.⁵³¹ Teachers saw it and reported the matter to the principal by the name of Semanya. The principal regarded that as a serious matter and took it to the tribal authority.⁵³² The tribal authority council accused Donald Langa of involving himself in politics while he was still young. Donald was given some few lashes as a warning. He was not reported to the police as he was young.⁵³³ In other parts of Lebowa, the communities were influenced to be against the SRCs. They accused the SRCs for the existing school boycotts in that area. In a meeting held by school committees, headmen, tribal authorities and principals, a decision was taken to abolish the SRCs in schools.⁵³⁴ All headmen were mandated to ensure that the SRCs did not operate in their respective schools. The leadership of the SRCs were persecuted by members of the community and the police as well.

As a result, many members of the SRC dropped from school to avoid harsh persecution. Those who took part in the activities of the SRCs were identified and dealt with accordingly.⁵³⁵ The communities preferred the old system of monitors or prefects who assisted teachers as was done in the old system of apartheid.⁵³⁶ The police and soldiers knew all the classes of the specific activists. Whenever they arrived at school, they would go straight to the class of a particular activist.⁵³⁷ There was an activist at Ntata High School called Comrade Baloyi who behaved as if he knew when the police were coming to school. Every time he moved out of the classroom, the police or soldiers would come after some minutes and found that he had just left.⁵³⁸ Teachers released him since they knew that the police would come anytime after he had left. The police also knew all the homes of the activists. This surprised many comrades because the police happened to know whatever they discussed in their meetings and who spoke and what their discussions were all about.

Comrades who were arrested and released always reported about someone who was used by the police to identify them whether or not they were active in the struggle in prison. During

⁵³¹ Interview with Ratshilana Digashu , 07/03/2011, Bakenberg Mmotong.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ File Ref No.7/11, 1986/09/22, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowa Kgomo Government Offices.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Interview with Edwin Nyatlo, 28/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵³⁸ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 26/09/2006, Mokopane.

the identification parades, the police would point at the youth and he would always shake his head to indicate those who were not active, and nodded his head to indicate those who were active.⁵³⁹ At that time, it was difficult for the people to identify him as he was always wearing a balaclava.

What they knew about him was that he was always wearing red takkies. It was not long when it became known that the police informer was one of the youth who pretended to be a comrade by the name of Rodney Morifi. This angered all the youth activists that they resolved to kill him. He was then caught by comrades and necklaced.⁵⁴⁰ Rodney was burned to death and his family identified his body by the red takkies which were found on the scene.⁵⁴¹ The death of Rodney Morifi showed the extent to which the comrades were serious about their struggle against apartheid. At the same time, it made the people of Mogalakwena to take the instructions given by the comrades.

4.6 THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION BOYCOTTS ON PARENTS

The education boycotts had an impact on parents. At that time, schools were built by parents with little assistance from the government. The entire community was forced to contribute money for the building of schools. Whenever schools were damaged, it was also the responsibility of parents to ensure that they were rebuilt. In the 1980s, parents had to make constant collections to renovate damaged property in many schools of Mogalakwena. The collections were sometimes high as some schools had been burned. One of the classrooms of D.G Tsebe Secondary School in Mahwelereng Circuit was burned.⁵⁴² Daniel Mapaya, who used to monitor students during afternoon studies, which were conducted after school hours, testified that he locked the classroom after every study session. On 12 June 1984, he did not lock as he left early. On the following day it was found that the door of the classroom and other items which were inside were all burned.⁵⁴³ The police were called to investigate but nobody was found to be responsible. It was rumoured that some politically active students of that school were involved, but there was no proof to justify this allegation.

⁵³⁹ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵⁴⁰ Interview with Mapula Seoloane, 12/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵⁴¹ Interview with Ditsepu Maboya, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

⁵⁴² Court Case number 62/06/1984, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

This was further confirmed by the principal of Mmantutule, Phillip Rampedi, who reported to the police that on 21 May 1991, his clerk informed him that the office of the head of department was burned.⁵⁴⁴ He visited the affected room and found that some books and a heap of papers were still burning and making a terrific smoke. That day the schooling was disrupted as students did not enter their classrooms.⁵⁴⁵ Students who were responsible were the ones who were politically active at the school, but nobody revealed their names as they were afraid of being accused of being sell outs. This was followed by the burning of the principal's office of Kgabagare Primary School in the same village. The principal of Kgabagare Primary School reported that he found that the office had burnt when schools reopened on 06 January 1992. The items that were burned included the departmental supply materials, books, tables and a steel cabinet.⁵⁴⁶ He reported the matter to the tribal authority and later to the police. It was reported that students of Mmaserunyane were responsible.

At that time Mmaserunyane was still a new secondary school and used the classrooms in Kgabagare as the former was still under construction. Students burned the office because they did not receive school progress reports at the end of the year for not paying school fees, and for not returning textbooks given to them by the school at the beginning of the year. By burning the office, students wanted to obliterate information so that they did not pay anything so that they would get their books for free.⁵⁴⁷ Furthermore, many schools had broken windows and doors from the early 1990s school riots. Windows were mostly broken during the “no book no school campaigns” when students from the visiting schools damaged them to force students of the host schools to take part in the campaign. This impacted negatively on the parents as they had no money to build or renovate the damaged schools.⁵⁴⁸

Parents also complained about the fact that education was not running smoothly at schools. The loitering of learners outside schools showed them that things were not in order at schools. As a result, one of the parents who identified himself or herself as Mongongoregi Motswadi (the complaining parent) wrote a letter to the Department of Education of Lebowa

⁵⁴⁴ Court Case Number 148/05/1991, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Court Case Number 94/01/1992, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ File Ref No.7/11, 1990/02/27, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A synoptic Report on the disruption of lessons in Bakenberg circuit.

to complain about the poor conditions of schools in both Bakenberg and Mahwelereng circuits.⁵⁴⁹ In that letter, the complaining parent stated the following allegations: that teachers went to the liquor stores during school hours instead of teaching learners, teachers went to town daily during school hours, and that teachers were basking on the sun instead of teaching,⁵⁵⁰ that teachers stole the money of the state since they were paid for doing nothing and that since January up to July 1991 students in both circuits were not taught. Schools which were involved in Bakenberg Circuit were George Langa, Lephadimisha, Seshwahla, Senoane, Matsogella and Bakenberg High School. In Mahwelereng Circuit schools which were implicated were Madikana, Alfred Makapan, Tshukudu and Seritarite Secondary Schools.⁵⁵¹

She further alleged that there were problems at the offices of both circuits. She proposed that the department transfer inspectors and their secretaries elsewhere as they were responsible for the problems at the schools.⁵⁵² She advised the department to send watchdogs during the week to witness her allegations. She threatened that if the department did not attend to the matter, she would report it to the newspapers and to the national department of education.⁵⁵³

The letter of the complaining parent worried the Department of Education in Lebowa that the inspectors of both circuits were compelled to write a report about the conditions of schools in their circuits. The report from both Bakenberg and Mahwelereng showed that the conditions with regard to the teachers were in order. The circuit inspector in Bakenberg, Mr Monyepao, indicated that there was no problem in all schools alleged to be involved. Moreover, his investigations in all the schools showed that everything was normal.⁵⁵⁴ The report from Mahwelereng Circuit also showed that schools were running smoothly. On the basis of those reports, the Chief Inspector of western region found the allegations from

⁵⁴⁹ File Ref No.7/11, 1991/08/01, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from the Chief Inspector of the Western Region to the Secretary of Education in Lebowa.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ File ref N0. 7/11, 1991/08/21, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from the Circuit Inspector of Bakenberg to Chief Inspector of Education.

Mongongoregi Motswadi to be groundless.⁵⁵⁵ He regarded those allegations as the frustrations of someone who was jealousy when schools were operating properly.⁵⁵⁶ The letter showed the extent to which parents worried about the education of their children.

It also showed the extent to which parents in rural areas were becoming politically aware in that they asked questions about their dissatisfaction and the children's progress in the Department of Education. Parents began to hold meetings in order to resolve the problems about the education of their children. In Bakenberg, parents held a meeting with almost all the stakeholders in education to resolve the problems which disrupted education in their area. Amongst matters discussed included finances, corporal punishment and nepotism in their schools.⁵⁵⁷ Parents also accused learners from urban areas and semi urban areas as being responsible for school unrest in Bakenberg. Chief Dennis Matlhaba 11 also made an order that all students from Mahwelereng and other urban areas should not be allowed to take leadership positions of the SRCs in all schools under his authority.⁵⁵⁸ According to him they were politically influential on students in rural areas. The chief thought that the only way to bar students from urban areas was to ensure that the community and the principal worked together.⁵⁵⁹ In some communities, hostels were closed as an attempt to remove students from urban areas from rural schools as they were accommodated in them. The school riots affected the whole Lebowa homeland to the extent that parents, headmen, principals, school committees and tribal authorities resolved to form family groups in different communities to control and guide learners about the importance of schools.⁵⁶⁰ Those groups also cautioned learners that disrupting schools would never help them but would cause harm to them.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁵ File Ref No. 7/11, 1991/08/28, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from Chief Inspector of education to the Secretary of Education in Lebowa.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ File Ref No. 7/11, 1990/2/27, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A synoptic Report on the disruption of lessons in Bakenberg circuit.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ File Ref No. 7/11, 1986/09/22, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A Report on a meeting held by stakeholders in Bolobedu Circuit.

⁵⁶¹ File Ref No. 7/11, 1986/05/14, Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, A letter from the Principal of Moshupye Secondary School to the Inspector of Sekhukhuni Circuit.

4.7 THE IMPACT OF YOUTH PROTEST ON LEBOWA GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Youth political protests also had an impact on the government officials who worked and lived in Mogalakwena. This was due to the fact that whoever assisted the government of apartheid was seen as being part of the system of apartheid. This became a reality when clerks and circuit managers who worked at Mahwelereng Circuit offices were constantly threatened by the comrades. The government officials were once frightened by one of the greatest student mass actions on 28 January 1986, whereby students arrived at the circuit office being very vicious.⁵⁶² Students surrounded the circuit offices singing freedom songs. The circuit officials were very frightened because they thought they were going to be burned by the comrades. One of the female clerks named Shika, claimed to be transferred to Bakenberg and no longer working there when comrades demanded that she writes them a letter of demands. Shika was so frightened that she could not hold herself and found it difficult to even type a mere letter.

Teffo was then compelled to type that letter despite the fact that she was a new employee and without experience.⁵⁶³ These clerks were threatened that if they did not type that letter their government cottages would be burned. After this incident, the majority of clerks demanded to be transferred to other places like Bakenberg where they thought the situation was better than at Mahwelereng. Even the circuit inspector, Lepelle, had to take leave on many occasions to avoid the Comrades. Even during the day of the march he was still on leave. Students demanded to have a regular free access to the facilities of the circuit office such as typewriters, stencils and duplicating machines.⁵⁶⁴ They claimed that the materials were theirs because they were bought with their parents' taxes. They felt that they had the right to use them and no one could stop them.

Moreover, the government officials who were part of Lebowa government legislature and residing in Mahwelereng were also threatened and tortured as they were seen as being responsible for apartheid in South Africa, and in Lebowa, in particular. They were

⁵⁶² File Ref No.7/11, 986/01/31, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Report from Inspector Doctor Lepelle to the Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

threatened in various places of Lebowa. In Lebowakgomo, Tshoshane, who was also serving in the legislature of Lebowa was attacked by the youth and his house was burned.⁵⁶⁵ The Lebowa government felt it necessary to protect the houses of all members of the legislature. In Mahwelereng the houses of Jack Ramushu, who was then the director of education in Lebowa government, P.S Kwakwa and Fred Ledwaba, who were members of the legislature, were guarded by the army day and night.⁵⁶⁶ That was the practice until the situation came back to normal. According to Jack Ramushu, the presence of the army at his house made it difficult for him as he was not allowed to go out even during the day. It also made them to be viewed by the community of Mahwelereng as collaborators of the Lebowa government.⁵⁶⁷ However, the presence of the army was short lived as they were removed when the government realised that both Ramushu and Ledwaba were not hated by the people there.

The persecutions of Lebowa government officials worsened when the youth held a meeting at Mahwelereng Hotel on 27 and 28 March 1986.⁵⁶⁸ The meeting was convened by the top leadership of the youth such as Sophonia Mmamabolo, Thomas Matlaila and other unknown people. The meeting designed a plan to destroy property of top government officials and policemen who resided in Mahwelereng.⁵⁶⁹ In that meeting Sophonia Mmamabolo unfolded a plan to burn the house of the Minister of Education in Lebowa, P.S. Kwakwa, the Mahwelereng circuit offices and the houses of policemen such as Sekhu, Monyai, Molongoana and Seabi.⁵⁷⁰ To realise their plan, they hijacked cars which made delivery in the location from which they drained petrol. Boys were given small bottles of beer while others had buckets which were filled with sand. They poured sand in the bottles and mixed it with petrol. Match sticks were also placed inside to produce fire during the bombing. They started at the house of the Minister of Education in Lebowa, P.S. Kwakwa, where girls commenced by throwing stones. The house of P.S Kwakwa was burned by a group of comrades in daylight.⁵⁷¹ The comrades saw him as a symbol of oppression in Mahwelereng and hated him intensely. His cars were also set alight and he had to leave his home with only

⁵⁶⁵ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵⁶⁶ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Court Case Number 49/03/86, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Bakenberg Circuit Office.

a jacket.⁵⁷² His family was put under a tremendous pressure, especially his children. The bookshop that he owned was boycotted until it stopped working.

Immediately thereafter, the youth went on the rampage to the offices of the Superintendent. When they arrived there they threw stones and the security ran away.⁵⁷³ They entered the premises around 18h30 and bombed the offices. They proceeded to Mahwelereng Circuit offices which were near Gojela High School and burned them as well.⁵⁷⁴ After this public violence, which basically targeted government offices, they proceeded to the houses of policemen. Although the police tried their best, they found it difficult to put the student unrest under control, especially from 1985 to 1986. The Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education instructed all boarding schools in Lebowa to do away with hostels and only cater for day students.

He thought that the closure of hostels would help as many rebellious schools had hostels wherein students from the urban areas who were suspected of influencing students of Lebowa to make riots were accommodated.⁵⁷⁵ He advised the tribal authorities of the local communities to be responsible for permitting students from urban areas to be admitted at their schools. Structures such as regional authorities, circuit inspectors, student representative councils and school committees were encouraged to meet at intervals to solve matters related to schools and colleges in their own areas. Many boarding schools refused the instruction from the secretary of education and said that the closure of hostels could not solve problems since unrests were nationwide. They argued that the closure would intensify the problem instead of solving it.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷² Interview with Tente Morallane, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

⁵⁷³ Court Case Number 149/03/1986, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Aubrey Ledwaba, 12/10/2006, Seriterite High School.

⁵⁷⁵ File Ref. No.7/11, 1986/09/27, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from the Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education to All Principals and Inspectors.

⁵⁷⁶ File Ref No.7/11,1986/01/02, Boycott and Subversive Activities, Limpopo Archives, Lebowakgomo Government Offices, Letter from Seshego Ministers Fellowship to the Secretary of Lebowa Department of Education,

4.8 THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION BOYCOTTS ON MEMBERS OF LEBOWA POLICE

Members of Lebowa police who lived in Mogalakwena were constantly threatened because they were seen as informers of the government. The first targeted house was that of policeman Sekhu.⁵⁷⁷ His house was petrol bombed by Sophonia Mamabolo himself as a leader. This was followed by an attack at policeman Monyai's house. At Monyai's house they started by throwing stones and breaking windows. The wife of policeman Monyai, Rachael Monyai, testified that she left her house to visit her sister who stayed at another part of Mahwelereng.

When she left she closed all windows and locked all the doors. She got the information that the house of policeman Sekhu was burned. She returned home after suspecting that her house might be affected as her husband was a policeman.⁵⁷⁸ On her way back home she met people who told her that she faced a dangerous situation, without revealing its exact nature. Upon arrival at home, her neighbours told her that a group of youths had stoned her house. She then discovered that two bedroom windows were broken. She even noticed that smoke was coming out of her house. When she entered the house she found that her bed was on fire.⁵⁷⁹ She managed to put out the fire with the help of her neighbours. Some items which were burned included one base set, one mattress, two blankets, two sheets, one bed spread, one nightdress, two pillow cases, one headboard, R 300 cash and receipts.⁵⁸⁰

They also planned to burn the house of policeman Molongoana and to kidnap his child.⁵⁸¹ Most government buildings were burned down by the comrades through petrol bombs. Government house number 1445, in which the Lebowa police resided, was burned at night.⁵⁸² The properties of the police who stayed there were destroyed by fire. Police investigations also confirmed that a petrol bomb was used. Those responsible were not found or arrested except that it was established that the comrades were involved.⁵⁸³ Furthermore,

⁵⁷⁷ Court Case Number 49/03/1986, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁷⁸ Court Case Number 02/04/1986, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Court Case Number 49/03/1986, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁸² Court Case number 160/07/85, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

Constable Nkoana Mphahlele, who stayed at the government house number 1446 in Mahwelereng, reported about the petrol bombing of that house and the extent to which his property was damaged by fire.⁵⁸⁴

The shocking case was that of Makoma Sophia Masipa who worked for the Lebowa police in Lebowakgomo but resided in Mahwelereng. On 01 June 1986, her house was petrol bombed by the comrades at about 12h30 midnight. She was so terrified that she did not know where to run since she also had her own children to protect.⁵⁸⁵ According to the police report, the property that was destroyed by fire amounted to approximately thirty thousand rands which was a huge amount of money.⁵⁸⁶ The police later discovered that the youth who petrol bombed her house were so young that they could be doing standard five.⁵⁸⁷ The police lived in danger since their cars were stoned by the youths whenever they passed some streets.⁵⁸⁸ The police became the most hated members of the community. A campaign was made to isolate them in Mahwelereng. They were not allowed to use the local taxis, buy in local shops, and shebeens owners were also ordered by comrades not to serve them.⁵⁸⁹ They were also banned from using the local Mahwelereng Hotel which was owned by a man by the name of Molala.⁵⁹⁰ Apart from that, youth political activities also had a negative impact on the cultural values of the people of Mogalakwena.

4.9 THE IMPACT OF YOUTH PROTEST ON CULTURAL VALUES

Indigenous African people live according to certain cultural values, and those cultural values, such as Ubuntu (humanism), still anchor the lives of the African people. However, youth involvement in politics disturbed the African way of living nationwide. Most parents in Mogalakwena were shocked when they realised that their children were actively involved in politics.⁵⁹¹ In many areas of Mogalakwena, the youth lost respect of their parents and traditional institutions. That was seen as defiance of culture since in African culture, the chief is the most respected person in the community. Defiance of the chiefs's authority was s

⁵⁸⁴ Court Case number 160/07/85, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁸⁵ Court Case number 152/01/86, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ T. Lodge et al. **All, Here and Now: Black politics in South Africa in the 1980s**, p.121.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid, p.120.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid, p.121.

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Edwin Nyatlo, 28/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

punishable. However, the youth of the 1980s defied culture by disobeying and challenging the authority of their chiefs. They saw the chiefs as another layer of the apartheid superstructure as they enforced all the apartheid legislations in the villages. They realised that the starting point of dismantling apartheid was to oppose its oppressive legislations at the level of the traditional authority. The emergence of the youth congresses in the villages was seen as a means to challenge the power of traditional authorities. The youth took it upon themselves to antagonise all the oppressive laws and orders such as voluntary ploughing of the chief's field, unjustified collections of money for the chief, and the rejection of payment for being pregnant.⁵⁹² At Taueatsoala village the chief was summoned by the youth at night to account for all oppressive laws that were implemented by his tribal authority.⁵⁹³ A sit-in was once staged in the offices of the traditional authority to demand the scrapping of the oppressive regulations in the village.⁵⁹⁴

The constant demands and disrespect of the chief was viewed by traditional councils as a violation of the African culture. The scrapping of regulations by the youth threatened the chiefs since they saw it as a way of overthrowing their authorities.⁵⁹⁵ The youth refused the instructions of their chiefs and headmen in their respective villages. This was justified by the refusal of the headman's instruction at Kabeara village under Bakenberg tribal authority. At that village Thomas Matjeke refused the headman's order to repair the fence as all young men were expected to do.⁵⁹⁶ He was taken from his home by force to the traditional court. The traditional court ordered that he be given ten lashes on the buttocks.⁵⁹⁷ On the other hand, community members were not always at peace as other youths took advantage of the situation to intimidate them. They were at times threatened and told that if they did not do certain things that they were ordered to do, they would call comrades to necklace them. In line with that, Johannes Matlala reported to the police that Johannes Sekhu accused him of having raped Meissi Lebelo.⁵⁹⁸ Johannes Matlala was ordered to go to the place of Johannes Sekhu to receive his punishment as some of his friends received theirs. He was threatened and told

⁵⁹² Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala village.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Court case Number 145/05/1991, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Court Case Number 54/08/1986, Mahwelereng Police Station.

that if he fail to come some militant comrades would come to his place and necklace him.⁵⁹⁹ This frightened him because later a group of boys visited his home and made death threats.⁶⁰⁰ The practice of intimidation disturbed cultural harmony as the people lived in fear.

A similar practice of intimidation took place at Bakenberg, where a group of boys who claimed to be comrades woke up Simon Matjeke at night and assaulted him, and burned his house.⁶⁰¹ The old people felt that their homes were not safe as they were harassed by the youth. This was further evidenced by Shibe Elisabeth Matjiu who reported to the police that Jacob Monama assaulted her and her mother in their own home.⁶⁰² He even went to the extent of chasing them away and ordered them not to return. He threatened them that if ever they returned, their house would be petrol-bombed.⁶⁰³ This proved that the youth used the political punishments of that time such as petrol- bombing and necklacing to intimidate people. That destabilised the African cultural aspects such as humanism and respect.

The practice of intimidation was used again in most cases where the youth enforced their decisions in numerous campaigns at that time. The Mphelelo Youth Congress held meetings almost every week to intimidate their parents so that they did not pay levy tax.⁶⁰⁴ After most of their meetings they chanted in their village streets as a way of sending a threatening signal to those who wanted to pay tax.⁶⁰⁵ The old people of the village always lived in fear when they heard that the youth in other parts of Mogalakwena were killing old people on related grounds.

A similar intimidation was seen at Taueatsoala village. At this village, the youth once embarked on a huge march in all the streets of that village. The march was aimed at warning old people who continued to pay taxes at the tribal authority after being told repeatedly by the comrades not to do so. During that march the Lebowa police were called by the tribal authority to monitor the situation. Since that march, those who were suspected of paying

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Court Case Number 24/01/1992, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with William Molaiwa, 15/07/2013, Mphelelo Village.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

taxes were tried in the people's court.⁶⁰⁶ The police tried by all means to provoke the youth to attempt to cause violence but the comrades were advised to remain calm.⁶⁰⁷ Any warning by the comrades was taken seriously as the old people were attacked and even killed in villages such as Ga-Ramela, Ga-Rapadi and Setupulane. By the late 1980s the youth were so politically aware that they found it difficult to take any advice from the existing traditional courts at the villages. The militancy and awareness also had a negative impact on family relations.

The relationship in many families was strained because the children were no longer ready to listen to their parents. Many of the parents thought politics was making their children to abandon school. At the same time, parents found it difficult to remove their children from politics. On many occasions children no longer slept at home. They claimed to be attending political meetings at night, even if in most cases it was not true.⁶⁰⁸ Some of them claimed to be away from home because the police and soldiers were looking for them in their homes day and night. Since they were free, they had enough time to sleep around with different partners which resulted in an alarming rate of teenage pregnancy at that time.⁶⁰⁹ Youth politics also eroded respect from many children in Mogalakwena, which is the case even today. There is no respect between children and parents.

Whenever a parent or a teacher was talking to a youth, there was no difference or their instructions were not followed which is also manifesting itself even today.⁶¹⁰ Lack of respect for older people was shown by the fact that the youth who claimed to be comrades started to persecute old people. This became clearer when some girls were raped at their homes. This was evidenced by the raping of Marble Seneke at her home by Andrew Motsaung. She was beaten by Andrew with a clinched fist before raping her.⁶¹¹ She was even threatened that if she reported the matter to the police she would be in trouble. Andrew even attempted to follow her to the police station but returned when Marble insisted on going to the police station. This showed disrespect for old people because even if Marble's parents tried to intervene, Andrew remained obstinate.

⁶⁰⁶ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala Village.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Tente Morallane, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Court Case number 72/09/88, Mahwelereng Police Station.

Some of the youth also showed disrespect for the elderly people when they were beating girls in front of their parents. This was evidenced by Moses Makgopa and Piet Matlou when they attacked Magret Lebese in front of her parents.⁶¹² They alleged that she knew where their girlfriend Suzan was, and forced her to tell them where she was. When she told them that she did not know, they stabbed her with a knife.⁶¹³ The old people found it difficult to visit their relatives in some parts of Mahwelereng because they were robbed of their possessions on a daily basis. According to the court records, Frans Rakobela, who was going to visit some of his relatives was beaten by a boy unexpectedly and when he fell on the ground, he was robbed of his expensive watch, shoes and money.⁶¹⁴

The daily occurrence of such crime on the old violated tradition. Politics also made the youth in Mahwelereng to lack respect for public property which is a problem even today. Youth politics also disturbed cultural ceremonies in Mahwelereng. The cultural ceremonies that were usually done whenever there were marriages between Black people were disturbed. That happened in most cases when there were some police raids or consumer boycotts. Aubrey Ledwaba worried when he had to marry without performing a cultural celebration at his home since it was difficult to buy food for the celebration due to the consumer boycott.⁶¹⁵ It was also a usual practice and tradition for schools to organise farewell functions whenever some of the teachers were leaving or promoted to other levels. That happened at many schools in Mahwelereng. At Gojela High School they found it difficult to organise a farewell function for their popular principal, Abiel Kgathi, who moved to the University of the North as a lecturer in Mathematics.⁶¹⁶ According to Jack Ramushu, youth politics disturbed family relationships adversely, especially if a wife, and not a man was involved and vice versa. They usually blamed each other whenever one was arrested or injured by the police, or experienced any problem due to his or her involvement.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹² Court Case number 95/01/88, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Court Case number 41/11/87, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁶¹⁵ Interview with Aubrey Ledwaba, 12/10/2006, Seriterite High School.

⁶¹⁶ Interview With Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁶¹⁷ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

4.10 CONCLUSION

It is without doubt that youth protests had an impact on education at Mogalakwena. Students had various reasons for undertaking boycotts, including the non- recognition of their SRCs by the department. The complaint about the non supply of textbooks and stationery in schools sustained school boycotts in both urban and rural communities of Mogalakwena. The public protests by the youth and the marches against circuit offices indicated the extent of political awareness in Mogalakwena area. This justified the role of COSAS in organising the youth of Mogalakwena to challenge the apartheid education system. Education boycotts had a negative impact on all the people who were involved in education, including teachers, as they were seen as part of the system of apartheid. Students also challenged the education system of South Africa on the basis that it was more Eurocentric than Afrocentric. Youth activists who ran those boycotts became too hostile to the members of Lebowa police, who resided at Mahwelereng and some Lebowa government officials who also resided at Mahwelereng then. Youth protests had indeed adverse impact on the cultural values of the ordinary people of Mogalakwena. The youth militancy was further justified by their role in the rent boycotts in Mahwelereng and their joining of Umkhondo We Sizwe which was the military wing of the African National Congress as explained in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF YOUTH PROTEST ACTIVITIES ON THE PEOPLE OF MOGALAKWENA 1976-1994

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four showed how the youth opposed the Bantu Education System. It discussed the manner in which the education boycotts and campaigns like “no books no school” were carried out to destabilise the apartheid system in Mogalakwena. This chapter discusses the introduction of rent in 1976 in Mahwelereng by the new town council and the causes of rent boycotts, the role of the town council, councillors, and the manner in which such institutions were rejected in South Africa, in general. It shows an extent of complaints about rent increase and poor service delivery. It depicts the manner in which people were compelled and intimidated to pay rent.

Opposition to the township councils led to the burning of the municipal council in the mid-1980s and 1990s. It discusses the extent to which the South African government, and Lebowa government in particular, used their repressive apparatus such as the police and army to thwart youth politics at Mogalakwena. It explains the deployment of soldiers in villages to contain youth protests and the manner in which the people were persecuted by those soldiers. The persecution of the youth stimulated political awareness among the youth and the Mogalakwena community at large and encouraged them to be united in the struggle against apartheid.

5.2 CAUSES OF RENT BOYCOTTS IN MAHWELERENG

In 1950 the South African government passed the Group Areas Act. The act aimed at removing Africans from towns and dividing them into ethnic zones in places that were far from the city centres.⁶¹⁸ The areas that were initially occupied by Blacks such as slums, the blacks spots and the strategic and developmental areas were exclusively given to white

⁶¹⁸ L. Thompson . **A History of South Africa**, p.188.

people.⁶¹⁹ In places such as Sophiatown near Johannesburg and District Six in Cape Town people were removed by force.⁶²⁰ In line with that, the people of Mahwelereng were also removed from the town of Mokopane.⁶²¹ This removal was also carried out by force as it happened in other parts of the country. Most of the people who were removed were placed in the areas controlled by Chief Kekana. The new urban location of Mahwelereng was also created for those who were removed from the town. However, it was also under the Matebele tribe of Chief Kekane. Since 1974 Mahwelereng was detached from chief Kekana's area and developments were made to establish a township council to administer Mahwelereng location. Chief Kekana was promised another piece of land to replace the one on which Mahwelereng was placed.⁶²² In 1976, the Deputy Minister of Bantu Affairs, Mr Willem Andriaan Cruywagen, officially established the township council of Mahwelereng.⁶²³ However, Mahwelereng was still placed under Lebowa government. The Lebowa government introduced beerhalls in all Black townships in Lebowa to generate funds for their location.⁶²⁴ Lebowa Development Corporation Limited also donated monies to the councils to run Black townships efficiently. The main duties of the town councils included the refusal of new arrivals in locations, the provision of electricity and water, and the collection of rentals.⁶²⁵ The question of rent caused problems in Mahwelereng even though it was done in the national context. Rent boycott was one of the political campaigns that were run by the youth activists nationwide. One of the main aims of the rent boycotts was to destabilise the apartheid regime. Rent boycotts were embarked upon from 1984 when the apartheid government decided to increase rent in all Black townships.⁶²⁶ Black political organisations such as civics and trade unions decided to boycott rent since they felt that Black people were not consulted before the rent increase was made.⁶²⁷

⁶¹⁹ Ibid, p188.

⁶²⁰ Ibid, p. 188.

⁶²¹ Interview with Taiph Shadung, 11/08/2012, Mahwelereng.

⁶²² File No.60/5/1545/2, 1974/02/08, South African National Archives, Pretoria.

⁶²³ File Ref No.5134, 1976/05/21, Government notice 2137, South African National Archives, Pretoria.

⁶²⁴ Verbatim Report of Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Part 1, Vol. 18, 27 April to 10 May 1984.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ T.Nkosi. **The times of the Comrades.**Johannesburg,Scotaville Publishers, p. 35.

⁶²⁷ G. Adler and J. Stainberg. **From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics and Transition to Democracy,**United Kingdom, Macmillan Press, 2000, p.189.

Black political organisations complained that even if rent was meant for the development of townships, there were no improvements since the conditions in many Black townships were still poor. Lack of essential services was still the chief characteristic of many Black townships.⁶²⁸ Township residents wanted the government to improve services such as the cleaning of streets, the tarring of roads, the provision of electricity and water before they paid the increased rent.⁶²⁹ Since there was general poverty caused by lack of employment in the early 1980s, high rent increases remained unaffordable to many Black people. It was within this context that the rent boycott was carried out in Mahwelereng. Thus the nationwide rent boycotts also had an impact on the rent boycotts in the township. In Mahwelereng the people complained about rent when it was introduced in 1976. They also complained about the poor matchbox houses that were built for them.⁶³⁰ They further complained about lack of housing. Since the early 1980s Mahwelereng had a housing waiting list of about 540 people.⁶³¹ Furthermore, services such as electricity and water were still poor. This was accompanied by the rejection of township Councillors.

5.3 REJECTION OF TOWNSHIP COUNCILLORS

The people were also against township councillors who were running town councils. Youth activists always saw township councillors as corrupt, insensitive and as implementing unpopular policies.⁶³² The community also demanded for their resignation because they regarded them as unaccountable, and not doing anything to solve many of those prevalent township problems.⁶³³ Moreover, the community supported youth activists in their campaign to oust councillors from Black locations because most of them were not fulfilling the promises that they made to the people when they were voted into power.⁶³⁴ In the whole of the 1980s, Black councillors were opposed, threatened and attacked. This forced many of them to resign from their duties since they were seen as collaborators of the apartheid

⁶²⁸ Ibid, p.189.

⁶²⁹ P. Frankel. **State, Resistance and Change in South Africa**, USA, Croom Helm, 1988, p.205.

⁶³⁰ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

⁶³¹ Verbatim Report of Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Part 1, Vol. 18, 27 April to 10 May 1984.

⁶³² J.F. Seekings. **Quiescence and Transition to Confrontation: South African Townships 1978-1984**, PhD thesis, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.145.

⁶³³ Ibid, p.220.

⁶³⁴ P. Frankel et al. **State, Resistance and Change in South Africa**, p.219.

regime.⁶³⁵ Mr Olifant was a Councillor of Mahwelereng at that time. The youth activists implemented rent boycotts to ensure that no one paid.

The people of Mahwelereng found themselves in predicament because they did not know what would happen to them if they did not pay rent. Essential services such as water and electricity were stopped for a short period.⁶³⁶ Some officials who worked at the municipal offices were told that if they cut water and electricity supply they would be attacked by the comrades.⁶³⁷ The people were always sent letters of threats indicating that they owed huge sums of money for water and electricity.⁶³⁸ Meetings were called by the municipality to encourage people to pay for services. But all this was in vain. Government workers who resided in Mahwelereng were forced to pay for services. They received threats that if they did not pay for services, money would be deducted from their salaries on a monthly basis to pay for these services.⁶³⁹

Despite the threats, rent boycotts in Mahwelereng were observed by almost all the people. In other parts of the country such as Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vereeniging, Black people reacted violently to rent increases. In those urban centres, about four Black Councillors were killed for increasing rent.⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore, about 174 people were also killed for violating rent boycotts. The people went further and vandalised petrol depots, power installations and railway lines. About 21 attempts of attack were made at local police stations.⁶⁴¹ In Mogalakwena, the offices of Mr Olifant who was a local Councillor, were set alight by youth activists in the mid 1980s as a way of registering their dissatisfaction about poor services.⁶⁴² The magistrate offices, which were attached to Mahwelereng police station, were also burned by comrades in 1990 since the municipal offices were moved to those magistrate offices. Comrades burned those offices because files showing that people owed money for services were kept there. The main aim of burning the magistrate offices was to obliterate the information which showed the huge sums of monies owed for services and to hurt the

⁶³⁵ Lodge et al. **All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s**, p.83.

⁶³⁶ Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 26/09/2006, Mokopane.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Bakenberg Circuit Office.

⁶³⁹ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Bakenberg Circuit Office.

⁶⁴⁰ L. Thompson . **A History of South Africa**, p. 222.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid, p. 222.

⁶⁴² Interview with Edwin Nyatlo, 28/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

apartheid regime as well.⁶⁴³ From 1986 the backbone of the local government machinery was gradually breaking down.⁶⁴⁴ Many Black Councillors also resigned out of fear.⁶⁴⁵ The Lebowa government and the apartheid government became very concerned about the youth of Mogalakwena, and attention was then focussed on this area.

The rate of youth political protests in Lebowa compelled the chief minister of Lebowa C .N. Phatudi to voice out his concern in Lebowa's parliament in April 1986. His speech reflected largely on the current political trouble in Lebowa as perpetuated by the youth. It indicated that the current political crisis could only be solved through discussions with the youth to find a workable solution which could satisfy everybody.⁶⁴⁶ He urged adults people everywhere in Lebowa to co-operate with the youth to protect society from disaster. He urged all constituencies and local government to arrange meetings with the youth to correct matters in Lebowa.⁶⁴⁷ The Chief Minister even blamed Western countries such as Britain and the United States of America for not applying sanctions against South Africa. According to him, Britain and America were only interested in the acquisition of minerals such as gold, diamond, chrome, uranium and platinum in South Africa at the expense of the welfare of Black people.⁶⁴⁸

Those Western powers were also interested in South African products as they could not do without them. He urged all Black people to use their purchasing power to force the government to the negotiation table.⁶⁴⁹ At the same time he blamed the ANC for fighting against the government since he thought the government refused to negotiate with them on the basis of the armed struggle. He praised Lebowa as the only homeland which visited Robben Island to ask for the release of political prisoners. He boasted that these political prisoners did not regard them as stooges or sell-outs but as their fellow freedom fighters. He appealed to President Botha to abolish all remaining oppressive laws as he had already done with the Mixed Marriages Act, the Political Interference Act and the Job Reservation Act. He warned the national government that unless oppressive laws were repealed, Black people

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ L. Thompson . **A History of South Africa**, p. 222.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 222.

⁶⁴⁶ File Ref. No. 6/5/2, 1986/04/24, Parliamentary Speech by Chief Minister of Lebowa Dr CN Phatudi, Limpopo Archives, Lebowa kgomo Government Offices,

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

would never stop to oppose the Tricameral parliament.⁶⁵⁰ C.N. Phatudi's speech proved the level of political consciousness among the youth of Lebowa, including those of Mogalakwena.

5.4 THE REACTION OF THE AUTHORITIES AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE OF MOGALAKWENA

From 1984 youth protests in various Black townships including Mogalakwena gathered pace. This was justified by youth political campaigns such as education boycotts, consumer boycotts and rent boycotts. The wave of these youth protests nationwide forced President P.W Botha to declare a state of emergency in both July 1985 and May 1986.⁶⁵¹ President Botha had to withhold his ironic reforms as contained in his "Rubicon speech" he once made in parliament.⁶⁵² According to President Botha, it would be difficult to bring reform without security. President Botha promised his so called law abiding citizens that he would restore normalcy, law and order in all Black townships.⁶⁵³ During the state of emergency, the police and soldiers were given the permission to arrest, interrogate, search homes and confiscate possessions. At the same time, the people were not allowed to hold political publications such as stickers, pamphlets, posters and even to hold meetings of any kind.⁶⁵⁴

In villages the police and soldiers also worked together to thwart the youth political protest. In villages the police were called whenever the chiefs felt threatened by the comrades. At Taueatsoala village the chief called soldiers to punish the comrades who intimidated the old and prevented them from paying taxes at the tribal offices. Youth leaders of that village were arrested by the police at night where they were beaten, drowned and later imprisoned.⁶⁵⁵ The comrades compelled members of the community to contribute money that was used to hire a lawyer for defending those who were arrested.⁶⁵⁶ The chief of that place bribed some members of the youth not to testify in court against him or not to attend the court at all.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ G. Adler and J.Steinberg. **From Comrades to Citizens: The South African Civics and Transition to Democracy**, p.70.

⁶⁵²S.B. Spies and B.J.Liebensberg. **South Africa in the 20th Century**. Pretoria, Van Schaik, 1993, p.510.

⁶⁵³ P.Bonner and L.Segal. **Soweto: A History**, p.117.

⁶⁵⁴ T. Lodge et al. **All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s**, p.78.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala Village.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

Those who did not attend the court were captured, whipped and expelled by the comrades.⁶⁵⁷ The harsh punishment was also meted out on the ANC members of Ga-Matlala residents who challenged apartheid from 1950s. In the 1980s the Congress members of Ga-Matlala intensified their challenge of the apartheid legislations such as the Stock Limitation Act and the Land act of 1913.⁶⁵⁸ In accordance with the 1913 Land Act, Black people lost large parts of their lands to the apartheid government. Black people in rural areas were forced to stay in small measured stands for residential purposes. This led to a massive resettlement of Black people in both rural and urban areas.

The Congress people (as ANC members were referred to in Ga-Matlala) of Ga-Matlala refused to adhere to the provisions of the Land Act of 1913. They defied the government by continuing to stay in their large original stands and fields ploughing fields.⁶⁵⁹ They also refused to pay taxes. They did not want the government to interfere with their rearing of livestock. They refused to take their livestock for vaccination.⁶⁶⁰ Their resistance resulted in the killing of many congress people by Lebowa police. Furthermore, the punishment of the congress people of Ga-Matlala was aggravated by the formation of the Anti-congress group by Chief B.K. Matlala.⁶⁶¹ The Anti-Congress group used the resources of the chief such as tractors and lorries to transport the youth from village to village where they killed and burned the houses of the congress people. The properties of the Congress people were looted by members of the community who were brainwashed by the chief to hate and persecute them. At Phofu Village one man was seen carrying a window frame and when asked whether it was his he said, "It was theirs, they ran away," referring to congress members.⁶⁶² At Lekhureng Village which also falls under Mogalakwena, the house of a well known leader of the congress people was burned by the chief's supporters. Many of his cattle, goats, sheep and chickens were also killed.⁶⁶³ He ran away to villages such as Ga-Ramela Ternariffe, which was under Matlalane Tribal Authority. His children had to run away for cover. They were in most cases, arrested at school whenever their father was not found at home.⁶⁶⁴ Other known members of the Congress from that village were killed and their families' property

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Sunday Post, 10 February 1980.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ Interview with Eric Matlala, 7/6/2011, Lekhureng Village.

⁶⁶² Sunday Post, 10 February 1980.

⁶⁶³ Interview with Eric Matlala.7/6/2011, Lekhureng Village.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

completely burned.⁶⁶⁵ The congress people of Ga-Matlala played a huge role in motivating the people of Mogalakwena to fight against the system of apartheid.

The police and soldiers went out to arrest the leaders of the youth congress and the UDF in Mogalakwena. As a result of the raids, Godfrey Molekwa, the well known leader of UDF in Mogalakwena was arrested and kept in Nylstroom prison. However, most UDF leaders who were arrested were released in the middle of 1989 as a result of hunger strike that was embarked upon in all South African prisons.⁶⁶⁶ The use of hunger strike proved the South Africa Prison Police's weakness in that the information for the strike infiltrated all prisons and was implemented at almost the same time by all prisons. The high compliance of that strike forced the Minister of Law and Order, Andrian Vlok, to issue out release letters to many UDF activists, including Godfrey Molekwa.⁶⁶⁷ The letter to Godfrey Molekwa stated that he was released in line with regulation 3(8)(b)(i) of the security regulations of 1988.⁶⁶⁸

According to those regulations, he was not allowed to do or say anything without the consent of the security branch of the South African Police in the Northern Transvaal division. Amongst other things, that he was prohibited from doing or saying were as follows: not to take part in the activities of Mmapela youth congress, not to be outside the boundaries of Mokerong magisterial district, not to address a gathering of ten or more people, not to attend any gathering which was convened or advertised to attack, criticise or protest against any acts or policies of the Republic of South Africa, and not to attack, criticise or protest against the system of local government as applied in the Republic of South Africa.⁶⁶⁹ He was compelled to report at Gilead Police Station daily between 13h00 and 14h00 and between 17h00 and 18h00.⁶⁷⁰ If he failed to comply with those regulations he was to be arrested again.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ T. Lodge. The United Democratic Front in the 1980s. A paper presented at the thirty-third Annual meeting of the African Studies Association, Baltimore-Maryland 1-4 November 1990, p.9.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. p.9.

⁶⁶⁸ A letter from the Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok to Malesela Godfrey Molekwa. 07/12/1989.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ A letter from Mohamed Bham to the minister of Law and Order Mr Adriaan Vlok, Letter Ref No. MB/MOL. 112, 27/04/1988.

In Mahwelereng, the state of emergency was so harsh that it impacted negatively on ordinary people. The soldiers and Lebowa police made some few harsh regulations which the people of Mahwelereng had to comply with. These rules stated that all members of the Mahwelereng community were not supposed to be in the street from 07h00 in the evening, not to be in a group of two or more, and all meetings were not allowed.⁶⁷¹ In enforcing the above mentioned regulations, the people of Mahwelereng and Mogalakwena in general were ruthlessly treated. Lebowa police and the South African Defence Force had to make 24 hour patrols.⁶⁷² Anyone who was suspected of being a comrade was severely punished.

The police had to embark on a full swing of house-to-house raid on a 24 hour basis, and many comrades were arrested, including those who were innocent. Most of the house to house raids were carried out in Mahwelereng location. This was evidenced by the arrival of the police at the house of Molatelo Violet Makhafola of Mahwelereng. They found her washing clothes and ordered her to inform them where the boys were thus referring to the comrades.⁶⁷³ Molatelo thought they were referring to her small children and told them that her boys were still young. They accused her of harbouring the comrades and slapped her in the face.⁶⁷⁴ They proceeded into her house and searched under the bed and in the wardrobe, but did not get what they wanted. The police and soldiers also went to house number 1516 in Zone 1 Mahwelereng which belonged to Theresia Mogale.⁶⁷⁵ Theresia was asleep when they entered her house. She was surprised by her children who had rushed into her room while she was on bed.⁶⁷⁶ Thereafter a group of soldiers entered the room. They took Theresia out of her bed naked and accused her of keeping weapons belonging to the comrades.⁶⁷⁷ They damaged her property such as wardrobe, windows and doors. They also stole about R30-00.⁶⁷⁸ During their search, they damaged the landline telephone and confiscated AZAPO's T-shirts.⁶⁷⁹ Theresia was taken to Mokopane Police Station but she was released the following day.

⁶⁷¹ Interview with Jack Ramushu, 03/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁶⁷² Interview with Pepsi Mogotlane, 26/09/2006, Mokopane.

⁶⁷³ Court case No.168/7/85, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Court case No.119/03/1991, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

The police also received information that AZAPO held a meeting at Mahwelereng Hotel. The Lebowa police went there and parked their cars outside the hotel. AZAPO continued with the meeting despite the presence of the police.⁶⁸⁰ Captain Lebeso entered the place where the meeting was taking place and ordered them to stop the meeting.⁶⁸¹ The AZAPO comrades shouted at him and told him that he was a sell out. The police who remained outside were armed with guns and sjamboks. Upon hearing noise inside the hotel, they also entered and started to assault members of AZAPO.⁶⁸² Many comrades were injured when trying to escape through an open window. Some of the leadership of AZAPO such as Mmamokgethi Shika were arrested. The following day the children of Mahwelereng did not go to school, pledging solidarity with those who were injured. Workers did not report to work as some of their fellow workers were injured and arrested.⁶⁸³ The residents of Mahwelereng, workers and students marched to Mahwelereng Police Station to complain about the manner in which their people were beaten without any apparent reason.

Furthermore, SADF and Lebowa police intensified harsh measures against all activists and comrades in semi urban areas which were active in politics, such as Mahwelereng in Mogalakwena. Lebowa police's Liaison Officer, Colonel Phillip Moloto, promised that he would deal ruthlessly with the comrades of Mahwelereng so ruthlessly.⁶⁸⁴ He also encouraged the people to cooperate with the police in apprehending those who caused trouble.⁶⁸⁵ Because of that, many people were recruited to join the Lebowa police, especially the riot unit. In 1987, about 108 men and 72 women were trained so as to cope with the problems of unrests.⁶⁸⁶ Lebowa police were armed with sjamboks. Anyone suspected of being involved with the comrades was sjamboked until he either died or lost consciousness.⁶⁸⁷ It was so terrible in that thousands of youths were sjamboked daily for their involvement in politics.⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁰ Court case No.168/07/85, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Northern Review. 26 July 1985, p.3.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid, p.03.

⁶⁸⁶ Verbatim Report of the fourth Lebowa Legislative Assembly, Part 3, vol. 22, 24 April to 10 May 1988.

⁶⁸⁷ M.Gumbi. "Death in the Weeping Cells of Lebowa", **African Law Review**, Vol.01, 1987, pp.4-6.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid, pp.4-6.

The day and night patrols disturbed the free movement of the people since everyone had to explain himself whenever he or she met either the police or soldiers in the streets. According to court records, one of the youths, Jacob Langa, and his friends met soldiers in the street. They had to explain to the soldiers what they were discussing and where they were going. Unfortunately, their explanations did not impress the army and they were severely and kicked all over the body, including their ribs. Some were even admitted at Mokopane Hospital.⁶⁸⁹ They were beaten because, according to police regulations at Mahwelereng, they were not supposed to be in a group. Sjamboking was a popular method of punishment by the police and youth on those who violated their orders. It was also used by both police and youth to enforce their conflicting orders. Thus, the period between 1985 and 1986 in Mahwelereng was referred to as 'the era of the sjamboks.'⁶⁹⁰

The youth of Mahwelereng were brutalised in many ways, including imprisoning them with common criminals.⁶⁹¹ Even if they were young they were locked in cold police cells and forced to sit on bare cement floor in winter by the Lebowa police at Mahwelereng Police Station. Comrades were kicked by the Lebowa police on their faces and bodies with booted feet, whereby one comrade even said that police jumped high and came down on his face and body.⁶⁹² At times, comrades were denied water to drink and were forced to eat porridge only. Although many comrades were arrested, the pace of the youth struggle against apartheid increased in Mogalakwena due to the influence of national events such as the killing of Victoria Mxenge in 1985, who was a civil rights lawyer and the wife of Griffith Mxenge, who was killed a year earlier by the South African Police.⁶⁹³ This was carried further by the killing of Emma Sathekge of Attredgeville near Pretoria and Mathew Goniwe who was a militant school teacher in Cradock.⁶⁹⁴ In Lebowa, the pace of the struggle was fuelled by the killing of youth activists such as Shadrack Mafokoane at the University of the North, Ngoako Ramalepe and the injury experienced by Rejoice Mabudafhasi from the hand-granade thrown at her home in Mankweng location near the University of the North.⁶⁹⁵ The situation was exacerbated by the killing of the regional president of the UDF, Peter Nchabeleng.

⁶⁸⁹ Court Case number 42/01/88, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁶⁹⁰ M.Gumbi. "Death in the Weeping Cells of Lebowa", *African Law Review*, p.16.

⁶⁹¹ T.Lodge et al. *All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s*, p.88.

⁶⁹² M.Gumbi. "Death in the Weeping Cells of Lebowa", *African Law Journal*, p.6.

⁶⁹³ H.Hughes. "Violence in Inanda" *Journal of South African Studies*, Vol.13, 1987, p.331.

⁶⁹⁴ T.R.H.Davenport. *South Africa: A Modern History*, p.423.

⁶⁹⁵ T.Nkosi. *The Times of the Comrades*, p.35.

At the same time, the security also tightened its house- to- house raids. In the process both comrades and the community were equally persecuted. All the houses in Mahwelereng were searched day and night since the community was suspected of harbouring troublemakers who were referred to as comrades. In implementing their raids, the security forces entered houses without permission and used force to break doors of houses of poor people.⁶⁹⁶ The properties of the people were destroyed as the security forces turned fridges, wardrobes and beds upside down while looking for possible hidden comrades.⁶⁹⁷ Those who were unfortunately found were tortured and detained by the security forces. The army was so cruel that it started arresting priests of Mahwelereng during night raids because they were accused of collaborating with the comrades. The arrest of priests in Mahwelereng was informed by their active role during the funerals of the comrades, while the government was not expecting them to associate themselves with the troublemakers.⁶⁹⁸

Youth activists in Mahwelereng answered to the brutality of the security forces by resorting to guerrilla war tactics. The use of guerrilla war tactics was attributed to the fact that by the early 1980s, many youths were recruited from townships and villages to join military wings of various political movements, which also applied in Mogalakwena. These youths were trained in foreign countries such as Zambia, Tanzania and Lesotho. The joining of military training was ascribed to the discussions about “Operation Mayibuye” for which ANC and SACP activists were arrested and subjected to the Rivonia Trial in 1960.⁶⁹⁹ Operation Mayibuye was about the recruitment of a group of people who would be trained in foreign countries, who would then return secretly to mobilise the local people so that they wage a war against government forces.⁷⁰⁰ The formation of the guerrilla army was inspired by the success of guerrilla warfare in Cuba, Sierra Maestra, Algeria and Vietnam.⁷⁰¹ It was against this background that the ANC trained soldiers in foreign countries and brought them back secretly to the country to fight the apartheid government. They also trained in European

⁶⁹⁶ Court Case number 90/01/88, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁶⁹⁷ P.Bonner and L.Segal. Soweto: A History, p.126.

⁶⁹⁸ Interview with Todika Mashishi, 15/06/200, Mahwelereng.

⁶⁹⁹ D. Pinnock. **Writing left: the radical journalism of Ruth First**. Muckleneuk Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2007, p.217.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

countries such as Crimea by Crimean guerrillas with Second World War experience, who operated in mountains, forests and bushes with terrains similar to that of Southern Africa.⁷⁰²

The idea of bringing guerrilla armies secretly was tried since the late 1960s. At first the ANC tried to bring the guerrillas through Mozambique where they were assisted by Frelimo forces.⁷⁰³ But failed and retreated because it was difficult to defeat the apartheid forces from this entry point. They also tried to enter the country through Zimbabwe where they worked hand in hand with liberation forces in Zimbabwe who were engaging the Rhodesian and South African forces at Wankie.⁷⁰⁴ The commander of these guerrilla forces, Chris Hani, saw the Wankie operation as a success on their part because for the first time they fought face-to-face, pound for pound with the South African forces. They saw their enemy running away and trembling with fear, afraid that they would be killed by the liberation forces.⁷⁰⁵ It gave them confidence that one day they would win the war against the enemy.

Between 1977 and 1978, the guerrilla army succeeded in penetrating South Africa in large numbers. They were given special operation of attacking police stations, shopping centres, stadiums, bus terminals etc.⁷⁰⁶ The attack of targets was heightened during the Black Local Authority elections of 1988.⁷⁰⁷ Amongst the guerrillas, the youth were also involved. Many of them wanted to train and return to South Africa as soon as possible before they completed intense training due to their militancy and courage to fight against the apartheid regime. This worried the president of the ANC Oliver Tambo in that he thought they were not yet well equipped to face the enemy. Most of them were at times captured or killed by the enemy.⁷⁰⁸ He wanted guerrillas to make an impact in every attack that they launched, like the attack of Moroka Police Station in Soweto.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰² V. Shubin. **ANC a view from Moscow**. Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2008, p. 64.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid, p.62.

⁷⁰⁶ T. Lodge. The United Democratic Front in the 1980s: A Paper presented at the Thirty-third Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Baltimore, Maryland 1-4 November 1990, p.11.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ V. Shubin. **ANC a view from Moscow**. p.62.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

On the other hand, the Azanian Revolutionary Movement (APLA) also planned to burn and destroy South African buildings until the government met their demands.⁷¹⁰ They planned to receive military training in Tanzania and they would return when they were equipped to make demands and to cause destruction.⁷¹¹ In the 1980s the South African Defence Force fought against seven armed terrorists near Zeerust. These guerrillas entered South Africa through Botswana. One of those guerrillas was killed by the SADF. The police captured the Russian made AK47 rifles, Makarov pistol, binoculars, a transistor radio and 18 hand grenades denotators.⁷¹²

From 1985 to 1986 approximately 230 guerrilla forces were hiding in the townships and attacked the South African security forces, this also became a reality in Mogalakwena.⁷¹³ Comrade Lovis Baloyi of Mahwelereng was one of those popular guerrillas trained in foreign countries and was deployed around Mahwelereng area. From 1986 the majority of the soldiers from Taueatsoala village received their military training in Tanzania and Zambia. Abel Mosena and Mokgadi Mokoko were among those who trained in Tanzania.⁷¹⁴ From the late 1980s, the ANC recruited many youths from rural areas to join Umkhonto We Sizwe so that the majority of the ANC soldiers would be absorbed into the SADF during the democratic settlement as negotiations had already started. During the Convention for Democratic South Africa (CODESA), the same resolution of integration was taken whereby the ANC soldiers were to be integrated as non statutory forces.⁷¹⁵

The recruited youths were taken to Botswana and Swaziland to receive elementary military knowledge.⁷¹⁶ When they returned, they were organised into cells. They were further provided with formal military training so that they would smoothly be intergrated in the SADF. At Taueatsoala village, Simon Malowa was tasked with the responsibility of recruiting and training marshals. He managed to recruit about 237 marshals from Steilloop area. These marshals were used to guard meetings of the ANC at branch levels or

⁷¹⁰ The Natal Mercury, 13 January 1979, p. 7.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ B.J.Barker et al. **Readers Digest's Illustrated History of South Africa-The Real Story**, p.171.

⁷¹⁴ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala Village.

⁷¹⁵ Interview with Simon Malowa, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala village.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

regionally.⁷¹⁷ Furthermore, they were also taken to Venda to become part of group of other trainees in the whole Northern Transvaal called the Venda-Detachment.⁷¹⁸ The commander of the Venda-Detachment was Teenage Monama from Modimolle.⁷¹⁹ As the majority of the cadres were in exile, Simon Malowa was given the opportunity to assist with the training of soldiers. He was responsible for ensuring that cadres performed their duties and followed instructions as required.⁷²⁰ The youth of Mogalakwena were motivated to join Mkhonto We Sizwe by other people from their area who played a vital role in the struggle against the apartheid regime. One of such people was Theophilus Tlou Cholo from Lennes village in Steilooop area of Mogalakwena. He received military training in both Russia and China.⁷²¹ Tlou Cholo was one of the ANC members who helped to establish the initial camps of Umkhonto We Sizwe such as Luthuli and Mandela camp and Morogoro and Kongwa camp in Tanzania.⁷²² He was a member of group of soldiers within Umkhonto We Sizwe called the Luthuli Detachment, which received naval training in Russia. Luthuli Detachment tried to enter South Africa through the Indian Ocean in 1971.⁷²³ It further made another attempt to penetrate South Africa through Rhodesia and Botswana in 1972 where the entire unit was arrested. Cholo was imprisoned in the Robben Island until his release in 1988.⁷²⁴ Another political activist who motivated the youth of Mogalakwena to be actively involved in politics was Ngwako Ramahlodi from Segole village. He played an active role in identifying many youth from the university of the North to join Umkhondo We Sizwe in Southern Africa.⁷²⁵ Through his efforts many youths, including Collins Chabane went to Mozambique and trained as soldiers of the revolution.⁷²⁶ He went into exile where he was also trained as a soldier of Umkhonto We Sizwe.

The rate of political unrests in the country in the late 1980s compelled the South African government to introduce the state of emergency in 1989. In Mogalakwena, soldiers patrolled both urban and rural area on 24 hours basis. They established their bases in traditional

⁷¹⁷ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala village.

⁷¹⁸ Interview with Simon Malowa, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala village.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Interview with Tlou Cholo, 06/08/2009, Polokwane.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Interview with Godfrey Molekwa, 05/02/2012, Ga-Molekwa Wythoek Village.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

authority offices of all Mogalakwena chiefs. Traditional chiefs as superstructures of apartheid government called soldiers any time they felt threatened by the comrades. At Taueatsoala village the chiefs called the SADF after the comrades stopped the people from paying taxes at the tribal authority.⁷²⁷ The chief felt that the activities of the comrades were tantamount to removing him from power. The chief also called the soldiers when a group of youth attempted to burn the offices of his tribal authority.⁷²⁸ The youth felt oppressed as the chief refused to give them their identity books which the Department of Home Affairs submitted to his tribal authority for distribution.⁷²⁹ The youth refused to pay the amount of money that was required from them before they took their identity books.

The chief also called the soldiers when he suspected anything that was apparently against his chieftaincy or against the government. At Bakenberg the soldiers had too much power to persecute the people. The chief of that area did not want his subjects to walk during the night. Since he was a former police officer in Soweto he also patrolled the streets at night and whipped whoever he met.⁷³⁰ When soldiers arrived at Bakenberg, they took over from the chief and guarded the streets at night.⁷³¹ One group was based on the play-grounds of Bakenberg Traditional Authority, while the other was based at Limburg. Whoever they came across was sjamboked or given any form of punishment. Some of the cases were referred to the soldiers for investigation.

This was justified by the case of Simon Khazamula Matjeke, who was assaulted at his house by a group of boys at night.⁷³² They knocked at his house and attacked him when he came out to see who was knocking. They also went to the extent of burning his house. The matter was reported to Nduna (Village Headman) Mautjana who was the headman of Mautjana village in Bakenberg, who also referred the case to the tribal authority.

The chief found it difficult and referred the case to the soldiers.⁷³³ The soldiers investigated the case until they found that a boy by the name of Jan Langa was responsible. The boy was

⁷²⁷ Interview with Max Motabo, 10/07/2011, Taueatsoala village.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Interview with Chief Dennis Matlhaba, 09/04/2011, Bakenberg Mothoathoase Village.

⁷³¹ Ibid.

⁷³² Court Case No.119/03/1991, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁷³³ Ibid.

hunted until he was found. He was punished publicly before he was handed over to the Lebowa Police.⁷³⁴ The soldiers had more access in the village to such an extent that they slept with many women there. When their camp was moved from the village, many children had been born. Some of these soldiers married women that they found in Bakenberg.⁷³⁵ The soldiers were even used to restore order around the schools of Bakenberg. Whenever students came late to school, they were forced to carry big stones for long distances without dropping them on the ground.⁷³⁶

Those who dropped the stone on the ground were subjected to severe corporal punishment. Alternatively, they were forced to carry a soldier on their backs for a long distance.⁷³⁷ The youth of that area were very upset with the presence of the soldiers as they had no freedom of movement at night. They also found it difficult to organise youth congress meetings. A group of youth stabbed two soldiers with a knife at Thebethe Bar Lounge.⁷³⁸ The soldiers had come to Nakonkwetlou School in 1987 and assembled all the students in the school hall. They told the students to report terrorists in their villages to the police.⁷³⁹ They said that terrorists were not wanted because they would take all the minerals of this country to the communists of Russia.⁷⁴⁰

They gave students T-shirts which were written “I am a warrior’s friend” so that they win their trust and favour.⁷⁴¹ At Bakenberg, young boys were always at the base of the SADF, which was based at the traditional authority’s playground. They were given T-shirts, canned foods, fruits and sweets daily so that they revealed information about troublemakers in the village.⁷⁴² However, in other places such as Namakgale in Phalaborwa, the chief supported the activities of the youth congresses in all the villages under his rule. Chief Brown Malatji of Phalaborwa told the authorities to leave the youth of his area alone. He blamed the South

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Interview with Chief Dennis Matlhaba, 09/04/2011, Bakenberg Mothoathoase Village.

⁷³⁶ Interview with Jan Chauke, 12/09/2012, Bakenberg High School.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Interview with Longworth Sefora, 08/09/2012, Bakenberg Mmotong.

⁷³⁹ Interview with Loggy Seshoka, 02/02/2012, Nakonkwetlou High School.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

⁷⁴² Interview with Longworth Sefora, 08/09/2012, Bakenberg Mmotong.

African Police and the SADF for disrespect by entering his place without his consent.⁷⁴³ He blamed them for shooting youths, harassing people and disrupting the Namakgale youth congress.⁷⁴⁴ He even summoned the police chief Colonel Moloto of Lebowa Police to his home demanding that troops be removed from his villages. According to him, the youth were discussing their future and destiny.⁷⁴⁵ The reaction of the chief fuelled clashes between the police and the community.

The South African authorities saw the guerrilla tactics by comrades as a serious threat and went on the rampage and tortured anyone they met in the street. The security forces started to put roadblocks on all exit roads to town and patrolled everywhere to ensure that the comrades' activities were suppressed.⁷⁴⁶ All private cars, taxis and buses that were going to and from town were searched for comrades. In the process of searching passengers those who were uncooperative and obstinate were beaten severely.

The court records revealed that one passenger by the name of Gilbert Kekana reported to the police that the taxi that he was travelling in was stopped and searched by the soldiers. He further reported that one of the soldiers pulled his sister's hair which made him very angry, and tried to intervene to protect his sister.⁷⁴⁷ All the soldiers who had made a roadblock thought he was a comrade and kicked him all over the body.⁷⁴⁸ The Lebowa Police did nothing to arrest those soldiers as they were also dealing with comrades. The beating of innocent people showed how these people were also indirectly impacted negatively by the youth political activities. At one time, the Lebowa Police's Liaison Officer, Colonel Phillip Moloto ordered his police to go all out for the comrades of Mogalakwena, especially Mahwelereng and kill them.⁷⁴⁹

Sjamboking became an everyday activity and even civilians became victims. At night comrades hiding in darkness decided to start stoning police vans, which made the police and

⁷⁴³ File Ref.No. 7/11, "Leave the youth alone", Boycotts and Subversive Activities, Limpoo Archive, Lebowakgomo Government Offices,

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁶ Court Case number 155/08/87, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁹ M.Gumbi. "Death in the Weeping Cells of Lebowa", **African Law Review**, Vol. 01, 1987, p.6.

soldiers to shoot randomly in order to scare their attackers. This random shooting resulted in the killing of an innocent boy by the name of Moses Makgai, who was shot while going to the supermarket.⁷⁵⁰ Because of that incident, a local medical practitioner, Doctor Hlahla, who was always called whenever the youth were injured to give them free medication, was called to help as usual. According to police records, Doctor Hlahla arrived at Mahwelereng Police Station very furious, alleging that the police were responsible for Moses's death.⁷⁵¹ He reported to the police that he examined Moses Makgai at his home, house number 617 in Mahwelereng, and according to his examination, Moses died of bullet wounds, which resulted from the police shootings.⁷⁵² The killing of Moses Makgai angered many people in Mogalakwena, especially the youth in Mahwelereng. His killing also increased the rate of violence. Thereafter, government vehicles were set alight. During political turmoils, journalists were not allowed to make coverage of the proceedings since they were accused by the government of inciting the people to continue with violence.

5.5 THE KILLING OF MAKOMPO KUTUMELA AND THE RISE OF POLITICAL AWARENESS IN MAHWELERENG AND MOGALAKWENA IN GENERAL

The perpetual house-to-house raids of the security forces also resulted in the arrest of one of the most popular youth activists by the name of Makompo Kutumela. Makompo was a strong youth activist and a journalist of a newspaper that was attached to 'Die Bosvelder' called 'The Advertiser'.⁷⁵³ He was tortured by Lebowa Police until he died in a cell.⁷⁵⁴ The police reported that they did not know who killed him.⁷⁵⁵ The killing of Makompo Kutumela put Mogalakwena under the spotlight since it made youth activists and political movements such as the UDF and AZAPO to react sharply to the brutality of the Lebowa Police. His killing further united the people of Mogalakwena in the struggle against apartheid. Shortly after his killing, the Lebowa government passed the Internal Security Act, which provided that only 200 mourners would be allowed at Makompo's funeral.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid, p.4.

⁷⁵¹ Court Case number 50/03/86, Mahwelereng Police Station.

⁷⁵² Ibid.

⁷⁵³ Die Bosvelder, 25 April 1986, p.01.

⁷⁵⁴ M.Gumbi. "Death in the Weeping Cells of Lebowa", **African Law Review**, Vol.01, 1987, p.15.

⁷⁵⁵ Interview with Ditsepu Maboja, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

⁷⁵⁶ M.Gumbi. "Death in the Weeping Cells of Lebowa", **African Law Review**, Vol. 01, 1987, p.15.

The Act further provided that political speeches and placards were not allowed at the funeral. The people of Mogalakwena showed the extent of their political maturity by defying the Internal Security Act in that about 40 000 residents attended the funeral of Makompo Kutumela.⁷⁵⁷ Moreover, political speeches were made and people sang political freedom songs. It was during his funeral that it was made clear that the government knew what it did. This was justified by the fact that during his funeral, police helicopters were all over Mahwelereng.⁷⁵⁸ The Lebowa Police and the South African Defence Force blocked all roads around Mokopane town and Mahwelereng in particular. The manner in which the people of Mogalakwena reacted to Makompo's killing proved the extent to which the people were well organised and committed to the struggle against apartheid.

Furthermore, the people of Mahwelereng showed their commitment to the struggle against apartheid by putting dishes of water at the gate of each household so that the people would help themselves to remove the danger of teargas in case they were attacked at Makompo's funeral.⁷⁵⁹ This also showed the extent to which the people were ready to take instructions from the Comrades more than ever before.

During Makompo's funeral people showed unity by contributing money for his funeral.⁷⁶⁰ According to Mosibudi Mangena, political consciousness was there even when he was banished to Mahwelereng because the people who were lived near the house in which he was banished were told by the police not to associate with him or to isolate him since he was a terrorist. That was shown by the fact that the people ignored the orders from the government and had a good relationship with Mangena.⁷⁶¹ By that time there was a scarcity of water at Mahwelereng, which intensified his relationship with his neighbours because they were able to get water from his house since the apartheid regime provided him with water.⁷⁶² On Sundays his neighbours cooked delicious food and shared it with him at his house of banishment, despite the order from the police.⁷⁶³ The youth of Mahwelereng would secretly go to Mangena's house to get political education, which also showed their political

⁷⁵⁷ Die Bosvelder, 25 April 1986, p.01.

⁷⁵⁸ Interview with Tente Morallane, 30/10/2006, Bakenberg.

⁷⁵⁹ Interview with Blantina Fatane, 12/09/2006, Bakenberg High School.

⁷⁶⁰ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Bakenberg Circuit Office.

⁷⁶¹ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

⁷⁶² Ibid.

⁷⁶³ Ibid.

maturity.⁷⁶⁴ Even girls would pass at Dr Hlahla's surgery, which was Mosibudi's place of work by then, during school breaks to get political education.⁷⁶⁵

All in all, Mosibudi Mangena tried to show that the people of Mahwelereng surrounded him even if they were told to isolate him because they knew what he fought for. The political consciousness of the youth was even shown by the building of parks in Mahwelereng. Despite police harassment, the youth built parks in almost all main centres of the location.⁷⁶⁶ Those parks were named after political freedom fighters such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Zeth Mopheng, Robert Sobukwe, among others. The people were compelled to work in those parks, and those who passed by were stopped and told to help.⁷⁶⁷ The people's cars were compelled to collect stones and other necessities required for the parks.

Later, the Lebowa Police and the SADF destroyed these parks and arrested comrades who insisted on building them.⁷⁶⁸ Although the building of the parks was an anathema to the people as they were forced to work, it also showed how far the youth of Mogalakwena were committed to the struggle against apartheid. The whole community of Mogalakwena was ultimately aware of politics due to political incidents that prevailed at that time, such as the killing of Steve Biko, the banning of political organisations, the killing of local comrades such as Dudu Madisha, Makompo Kutumela and Moses Makgai.⁷⁶⁹ They were easily mobilised in the struggle against apartheid and tried by all means to work hand in hand with the comrades. By then, the youth were completely politicised and understood what they were doing. Many youths of Mogalakwena went into exile through the assistance of the community, which showed the prevalence of political solidarity.⁷⁷⁰ On the other hand, the elderly people were also absorbed into politics. This was evidenced by Todika Mashishi, who expressed that she understood the politics of AZAPO since then and she even voted for AZAPO in all previous government elections.⁷⁷¹

⁷⁶⁴ Interview with Tshehla Hlahla, 15/10/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁷⁶⁵ Interview with Mosibudi Mangena, 11/11/2006, Polokwane.

⁷⁶⁶ Interview with Phillip Mogolwa, 29/09/2006, Mahwelereng.

⁷⁶⁷ Interview with Aubrey Ledwaba, 12/10/2006, Seriterite High School.

⁷⁶⁸ T.Lodge et al. **All, Here and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s**, p.88.

⁷⁶⁹ Interview with Friddah Modiba, 18/10/2006, Bakenberg Circuit Office.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Interview with Todika Mashishi, 15/06/2007, Mahwelereng.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The youth's struggle against apartheid also took place in Mahwelereng which was the only semi urban area of Mogalakwena by that time. The people embarked on a nationwide rent boycott, including in Mahwelereng. The people complained that the rent increase was too high. They also complained about poor services. The youth protest was so widespread in Lebowa to such an extent that the Chief Minister of Lebowa Dr C.N Phatudi tried to intervene. The youth throughout the country complained about Eurocentric institutions such as the town councils and councillors. They wanted afrocentric institutions which could enable them to take part in decision- making. Phatudi acknowledged the youth protests and advised all his constituencies to have negotiations with the youth to bring about a workable solution. At the same time, the South African government declared the state of emergency to deal with the youth protests. The soldiers were sent to villages and tribal authority offices to contain these protests. The people were searched in their homes and beaten. Their cars were constantly stopped and searched. Prominent youth activists were killed, which galvanised the youth of Mogalakwena further against apartheid.

CHAPTER SIX

6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

The youth political protests did not take place in a vacuum as political organisations existed in Mogalakwena since the early 1950s. The existence of Ga-Laka branch and the Congress people of Ga-Matlala, which operated under Ga-Matlala Thaba Tribal Authority including Lekhureng Village, which is part of Mogalakwena, bore testimony here. The Soweto Student Uprising of 1976 revived the struggle against apartheid in the whole country, including Mogalakwena. It also had an impact on all the people, especially the youth, in almost all townships and rural areas of South Africa, including Mogalakwena.⁷⁷²

The Soweto Student Uprising of 1976 rekindled the spirit of resistance in both rural and urban areas to such a way that all the people were involved. For the first time almost all children, women, men, poets, writers and activists were united in their struggle for freedom in South Africa, including Mogalakwena.⁷⁷³ They further opposed the Eurocentric oppressive system of apartheid. The youth started to reject Afrikaans in most urban areas whereas in most rural townships, they developed a negative attitude towards Afrikaans. The youth became aware that language is the vehicle of culture, and that through Afrikaans, they would be taught Eurocentric values which they rejected. They demanded an education system that would be based on Afrocentric values. Their spirit of resistance was also enhanced by the killing of Steve Biko by the South African police in 1977. The political problem was further worsened by rising unemployment, living cost, falling living standards, the rising crime rate and anti-social behaviour.

Furthermore, the youth were mobilised by activities related to witch hunting. The witch hunting activities were politicised in that during the killing of witches, political songs were sang. The political method of burning people by necklacing was used. Trade unions also played a very important role of politicising the young by linking labour matters with community issues. Migratory workers found the opportunity to teach the youth about politics whenever they came home.

⁷⁷² L. Thompson. **A History of South Africa**, p. 222.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid*, p.207.

The banishment of Mosibudi Mangena to Mahwelereng rekindled political activities in the whole of Mogalakwena. The arrival of Mangena was followed by the establishment of political organisations such as AZAPO and the UDF on the political landscape of Mogalakwena. Mogalakwena became the stronghold of AZAPO. However, from 1985, the UDF replaced AZAPO as the dominant political organisation in Mogalakwena. This was caused by the fact that the leadership of the UDF found an opportunity to influence the majority of AZAPO members to join the UDF, especially in Nylstroom prisons. UDF activists also embarked on the door to door activities to recruit the people to join the UDF.

The rural people of Mogalakwena began to oppose the oppressive legislations of apartheid such as the Land Act of 1913, the Stock Limitation Act and all other oppressive regulations which applied in rural areas, such as the pound system, prohibitions on environment use, the dipping of livestock and the reduction of their livestock by force. The struggle against apartheid was fuelled by the emergence of youth congresses in the 1980s. The elderly people gradually accepted the emergence of youth congresses as they opposed the oppressive legislations as applied in rural areas. This political awareness was justified by the joining of military wings of political parties, which fought against the apartheid government. Many youths from Mogalakwena joined Umkhonto We Sizwe in villages such as Taueatsala and Rebone. In Mahwelereng, many youth joined Poqo which confronted the South African Defence Force on many occasions. In Urban areas the people rejected the introduction of municipal councils and councillors.

They also refused to pay rent and rejected the manner in which it was at times increased without their consultation. In semi-urban areas such as Mahwelereng, the people started to oppose the Lebowa government on certain matters, including the naming of streets whereby they wanted streets to be named after their own local heroes. This political mood was carried further by the arrival of Mosibudi Mangena in Mahwelereng. Although he was under house arrest, his presence led to the emergence of political parties such as AZAPO and the UDF and youth political organisations such as Mokerong Confederations of Student Representative Council, COSAS and AZASM. These political organisations organised campaigns that were implemented by the youth activists called comrades.

The political campaigns that were implemented by comrades included education boycotts, consumer boycotts, rent boycotts etc. The youth were against an apartheid education system .

They wanted people's education that would be based on the culture of the African people. They waged a series of boycotts in the 1980s, that disrupted schooling until 1994. Among the reasons for the causes of education boycotts was the shortage of books in schools in Mogalakwena. This problem of shortage of books was still experienced in 2012. It still existed in some schools of Limpopo in 2013. This led to the declaration of "No Books No School" campaign in the early 90s.

The comrades participated in rent boycotts because the rent increase was high while services were poor. They complained about the lack of consultation when rent increases were made. The rent boycotts were accompanied by the rejection of town councillors in Mogalakwena. The offices of Mokerong town Councillor were set alight by the comrades. The consumer boycotts were also embarked upon in Mogalakwena. During the consumer boycotts all businesses owned by the White people were boycotted. The main aim was to destabilise the economic system of the apartheid government. The consumer boycotts were also taken to rural areas where the collaborators of the regimes who had shops were boycotted. The consumer boycotts led to the vandalism of business properties of White people such as delivery cars, by the comrades. Those who violated the consumer boycotts were punished by the comrades.

The reasons for waging all these campaigns were different from those in urban areas even though they were largely influenced by national youth protests. All these campaigns had either direct or indirect impact on the people of Mogalakwena. They also had a negative and positive impact on the people of Mogalakwena. They impacted on all classes of people, including the youth themselves, parents, workers, government officials and members of the Lebowa Police residing in Mahwelereng. They impacted on the cultural life of the people of Mogalakwena as well. Above all, the youth protests brought about political consciousness to the youth and the community of Mogalakwena in general. The Mogalakwena community became one organic unit in their struggle against apartheid.

However, the political awareness was thwarted by the apartheid government of South Africa. The government sent the police and soldiers to all urban centres, including Mahwelereng and the rural areas of Mogalakwena, to deal with the youth activists. The South African Defence Force patrolled all urban and rural areas of Mogalakwena on a full time basis from the 1980s to the early 1990s. Given that situation, powerful politicians and the youth who were active

were arrested. The people were persecuted by soldiers both in the urban and rural areas of Mogalakwena. In Mahwelereng, the people were not allowed to be in the streets from 7h00 in the evening. Those who were found loitering were whipped with Sjamboks, hence the “Era of Sjamboks.”

In rural areas such as Bakenberg, the people were not allowed to be in the streets after dark. Petty cases of crime were taken to soldiers for adjudication where people were beaten in public. The schools in Mogalakwena were constantly raided by the soldiers. The killing of Makompo Kutumela showed a high political awareness and unity in Mogalakwena. The people went all out to bury him despite their different political affiliations and the government’s attempt to stop the people from attending his funeral. Despite the presence of the police and soldiers, the struggle against apartheid gained momentum due to the political awareness of the people of Mogalakwena. Their efforts culminated in the liberation of South Africa in 1994.

The study succeeded in achieving its main aim and objectives. The study explored the emergence of youth political activities in Mogalakwena local municipality and the impact of those activities on the lives of the people of that area. To a larger extent, the impact of youth political activities manifested itself on the socio-cultural, economic and political aspects as directed by the objectives and research questions. As a result, the main research question was satisfactorily addressed. However, the scarcity of source materials made it difficult for the researcher to investigate and address the research problem as he would have wished. This study would assist future researchers as a foundation from which to commence their investigations. The economic aspect still needs to be investigated further to find out who owns the means of production in the area hence the emergence of mines and the impact of those means of production on the people of Mogalakwena local municipality.

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ANNEXTURE 1 : INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Emergence of Youth Political Organisations
 - House arrest
 - AZAPO
 - UDF
 - Witch Hunting
 - Trade Unions
2. The Economic Impact of Youth Political Activities
 - Consumer Boycotts
 - Workers
 - Hawkers
 - Local Bussiness
3. The Socio-Cultural Impact of Youth political Activities
 - Education Boycotts
 - South African Democratic Teachers Union
 - No Book No School
4. The Political Impact of Youth Political Activities
 - Rent Boycotts
 - State of Emergency
 - Military Wings

ANNEXTURE 2



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20/02/2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This communication is meant to confirm that Mr MS Marotola is a fully registered PhD History student in the Department of History and Folklore Studies, School of Social Sciences. He is currently conducting research / collecting data in order to complete his PhD.

I will be grateful if you provide him with the assistance he requires.

Yours Sincerely

.....
A.V. Dhliwayo PhD History: Supervisor

